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# TEHRAN TIMES

16 Pages | Price 10,000 Rials | 38th year | No.12710 | Monday | **DECEMBER 5, 2016** | Azar 15, 1395 | Rabi' Al Awwal 5, 1438



## Cinema Verite kicks off at Tehran's Charsu Cineplex

**T A R T** TEHRAN — The 10th Cinema Verite, Iran's major international festival for documentary cinema, opened at Tehran's Charsu Cineplex on Sunday.

Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) Director Mohammad-Mehdi Tabatabaiejad, Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS) Director Farid Farkhondehkish and a number of documentarians attended the opening ceremony, Persian media reported.

Speaking at the ceremony, veteran documentarian Manuchehr Tayyab said that Cinema Verite has helped open a new path for Iranian documentarians to show their culture to the world, and has helped portray a true image of Iran to the world.

"Happily the international festivals warmly welcome Iranian documentaries, and many like to know more about them. Cinema Verite has provided a good opportunity for foreign audiences to find out more about life in Iran and learn about the positive and negative points," Tayyab said.

He also hoped that the festival encourages more young filmmakers to be active in the field of documentary.

A collection of documentaries from different countries will be competing in different categories of the festival this year. →16

© Tehran Times/Majid Haghdoust



See page 2

## Rouhani stresses zero tolerance on JCPOA breach

## Japan's ITOCHU signs €320m petchem deal in Iran

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Japan's general trading firm ITOCHU has signed a contract, worth €320 million, for financing petrochemical projects in Iran.

The deal was signed with Iran's Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) in Tehran on Saturday, Shana reported.

Back in September, Japan's integrated trading and investment business conglomerate, Marubeni, signed a deal with the same value with PGPIC on financing petrochemical projects in Iran.

PGPIC has announced that it plans to attract €1.5 billion in foreign investment within the framework of short-term (usance) and medium-term contracts by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2017).

Managing Director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company Marzieh Shahdaie said in August that Iran needed more than \$50 billion for completing its semi-finished projects in the petrochemicals sector.

Companies from Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, South Korea, Japan and even the U.S. have indicated readiness to participate in Iran's petrochemical projects, she noted.

Last year, Iranian companies exported about \$12.8 billion of petrochemical products. Iran currently produces 60 million tons of petrochemicals a year. This capacity will increase by 8.5 million tons by March 2017 when a number of new projects become operational.

## Think twice before walking out of nuclear deal, Zarif cautions U.S.

**NEW DELHI** — Iran does not believe its nuclear agreement is in jeopardy despite the election of Donald Trump as the next U.S. President.

Addressing a think tank here on Saturday, Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif said, "We have options, but I don't believe the agreement is in danger." Zarif said it's an agreement not just with the U.S. but the international community.

"It's an agreement that came about after everything else failed. It came about when they found sanctions did not work." The sanctions, he said, hurt Iran economically. But the U.S. too gained little. "Before the sanctions, we had 200 centrifuges. Afterwards, we had 20000. What did the US gain?"

He said if the U.S. goes back to sanctions, Iran would reserve the right to walk out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The U.S. president-elect and his national security team have made no secret of their view that Iran is the U.S. prime enemy. Some of his advisers have even threatened to walk back from the hard fought nuclear deal.

This week, the U.S. Senate's decision to extend the Iran Sanctions Act came as a source of dissatisfaction in Tehran. Earlier on Saturday, Zarif told the Iranian state broadcaster that "the extension of sanctions against Iran shows the unreliability of the American government.. America is acting against its commitment". Zarif was confident the U.S. would not get international consensus to break the nuclear deal.

Speaking about dealing with international terrorism and radicalization, Zarif blamed the growth of these forces in West Asia on two factors. First, the U.S. interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, which contributed to the people in these countries feeling powerless and humiliated.

"The interventions removed two of our mortal enemies, Taliban and al-Qa'eda and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. But it is the logic of occupation which causes extremism," he said. He attributed the second reason to "failure of nations of our region to address fundamental needs of the people".

(Source: The Times of India)

## ISA real threat to JCPOA

By Hamid Reza Gholamzadeh

On Thursday December 1, The US Senate unanimously voted for an extension of Iran Sanctions Act (ISA), which was supposed to end by the end of current year, for more ten years until end of 2026. The motion was passed likewise on November 15 with 419 representatives voting for and only 1 Republican voting Nay for it.

The Iran Sanctions Act was originally introduced in 1996 in Congress to impose economic sanctions on firms doing business with Iran and Libya. On September 30, 2006,

the act was renamed to the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA), as it no longer applied to Libya after the country decided to stop its nuclear program, and extended until December 31, 2011.

The act is considered as "additional efforts to deny Iran the financial means to sustain its nuclear, chemical, biological, and missile weapons programs." Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) who had proposed the motion to pass the two chambers of US Congress emphasized in his opening speech for introducing the motion that "the goal was to

stop significant foreign investment in Iran's energy sector — denying the Iranian regime the ability to financially support international terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and missile proliferation. Since then, this legislation has been reauthorized and expanded on several occasions."

Such emphases along with clear mentioning of the ISA in Annex II of JCPOA among sanctions implementation of which was supposed to be ceased first indicate that all in all, it is categorized as a nuclear-related sanction against Iran. →7

## Putin: Trump is clever, will understand new responsibilities

The United States President-elect Donald Trump is a clever man and will quickly understand his new responsibilities, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview with NTV TV.

Putin has spoken previously of his hope that Trump will help restore U.S.-Russia relations, and analysts said he was unlikely to want to dial up anti-Western rhetoric before Trump's inauguration in January.

"Trump was an entrepreneur and a businessman. He is already

a statesman, he is the head of the United States of America, one of the world's leading countries," NTV quoted Putin as saying in the interview on www.ntv.ru on Sunday.

"Because he achieved success in business, it suggests that he is a clever man. And if (he is) a clever man, then he will fully and quite quickly understand another level of responsibility. We assume that he will be acting from these positions," Putin said.

Putin's comments appeared to address criticism from

Trump's opponents who say his unconventional actions since the election - including railing at the cast of a Broadway show and early-morning invective on Twitter - show Trump is out of his depth.

China lodged a diplomatic protest on Saturday after Trump spoke by phone with President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan, the first by a U.S. president-elect or president since Jimmy Carter switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979, acknowledging Taiwan as part of "one China".

Speaking about Russia's relations with the West, Putin said attempts to create a unipolar world had failed: "The situation is changing. I think it is not a secret to anyone, everyone sees it, that many of our partners already prefer to stick to principles of international law, because the world's balance is being gradually restored."

Putin said when building relationships with other countries, Russia would respect their interests.

(Source: Reuters)



© Fars/ Javad Hadi

## Amir Kabir University hosting 6th Intl. robotics contest

**Tehran Times** — The sixth International Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Competitions, December 1-5, is being held at Amir Kabir University of Technology, Tehran, Iran.

The event has brought together 65 foreign and 80 Iranian teams together, where robots with various capabilities, particularly with a focus on soccer, are vying for a top place in the competitions.

The competitions have been organized by the Iranian university in collaboration with the Federation of International Robot-soccer Association.

## PERSPECTIVE

By Abolqasem Naghavi

## Arbaeen: Practice of justice and equality

During Arbaeen, 40 days after the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), people with flags and banners of Ashura in hand make the Arbaeen march from various cities to Karbala, where the shrine of Imam Hussein is located.

Pilgrims mostly walk past the shrine of Imam Ali (AS) and move towards the shrine of Imam Hussein in Karbala.

Looking closely at the Arbaeen procession, in addition to the love for Imam Hussein, one can sense a truth-seeking culture centered on justice.

To revive the truth, about 14 centuries ago, Imam Hussein, his acquaintances, relatives and 72 of his disciples were martyred in 680 AD in the Battle of Karbala. The Imam's family was also taken captive.

After passage of 14 centuries since that sorrowful tragedy, today, during Arbaeen, Muslims across the world practice a new lifestyle that goes against all odds of modern life and rocks the very foundations of today's life's priority.

In an era dominated by money and avarice, on the roads to Karbala everything not only is free of charge, but locals, who barely make ends meet, beg pilgrims to take their offerings, as the approach of Imam Hussein gives money a dressing-down.

In the age of self-indulgence and material bliss, pilgrims, along with local residents, wander in deserts and barren lands of Karbala while enjoying the fatigue of their trip.

For the love of Imam Hussein, pilgrims go on foot for hours or days. Iraqis plead with pilgrims to honor them with their presence in their homes for even a few minutes, while giving their guests all they have at home as a warm reception. Simple yet colorful table food can take you to another world, the world of humanity.

During Arbaeen when over 20 million people participate in the ritual, providing food and water would be of an enormous task for any sovereign state, yet no one feels hungry or stuffed. No one wrestles with the idea of water and bread.

The path of Imam Hussein wipes away pride, arrogance, and selfishness. Arbaeen is a witness that love of Hussein has no boundary.

Hussein's love draws people from all walks of life, race, tribe or religion to Karbala. The road to Karbala is an everlasting light illuminating the world and leading the way to freedom.

In other words, Arbaeen is the practice of justice and equality.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



‘Iran-China economic ties have increased in post-sanctions time’

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s deputy foreign minister for Asia and Pacific affairs said on Sunday that Iran’s economic relations with China has expanded in the post-sanctions era, referring to China as Iran’s first trade partner.

Ebrahim Rahimpour said Iran will never cut off its relations with China since the two countries have some common interests, Mehr reported.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said the 5+1 states are against the renewal of anti-Tehran sanctions by the U.S. Congress.



Iran’s nuclear chief off to Vienna

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran departed Tehran for Vienna on Sunday to attend the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security.

Heading a technical and expert delegation, Ali Akbar Salehi is scheduled to address the meeting, which is to be held from December 5 to 9.



Judiciary deputy chief to speak on Student Day

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The deputy Judiciary chief is going to address students at the University of Tehran on the occasion of Student Day which falls on December 6.

Qolamhossein Mohseni Ejei will deliver his speech at Ferdowsi Auditorium of the School of Literature and Humanities starting 14:00, Tasnim reported on Sunday.

News outlets on Saturday reported that President Hassan Rouhani was going to address students at the university.



Trump’s foreign policy will vary from the past: Iranian deputy FM

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi believes U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has showed that his administration’s foreign policy will be different from those of his predecessors, Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee spokesman Hossein Naqavi Hosseini said on Sunday.

Naqavi Hosseini said in a session with MPs sitting on the parliamentary committee Majid Takht-Ravanchi noted he expects changes in the U.S. foreign policy under Trump, Nasim reported.

Takht-Ravanchi further said that Iran is ready for all scenarios and will come out a winner, the MP added.



Ambassador: No negotiations with Russia for visa waiver

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian ambassador to Moscow said on Saturday that no negotiations have been held with the Russian Federation so far for a general visa cancellation.

However, Mehdi Sanaei said, Iran and Russia have signed an agreement on easing visa requirements for special groups such as tourists and businessmen, ILNA reported.

The agreement will exempt tourists taken by the tour agencies in groups between five and fifty people from the need for individual visas, he stated.



Iranian, Kyrgyz FM’s meet in India

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Kyrgyz counterpart Erlan Abdyldaev on Sunday held talks on topics of mutual interest in India’s northern city of Amritsar.

Zarif and Abdyldaev explored avenues for expansion of relations between Tehran and Bishkek in all fields, Fars reported.

The meeting of the two foreign ministers was held on the sidelines of the 6th conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process.

# Rouhani stresses zero tolerance on JCPOA breach

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani of Iran has warned the U.S. of the final approval of an anti-Iran bill, saying Tehran will show zero tolerance on it which breaches the terms of an international nuclear deal Iran reached with world powers last year.

“We will not tolerate the violation of BARJAM (JCPOA) and respond properly,” said Rouhani on Sunday, adding, “The recent bill passed by the U.S. Senate is in contravention of BARJAM and violates it.”

Rouhani was making the comments while attending the Majlis to submit an annual budget bill to the legislative body.

“We are determined to implement BARJAM in a proper way, but will act resolutely in the face of it not being honored, implemented hesitantly or violated,” the president added.

The U.S. Senate on Thursday voted 99-0 for the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) which, once signed into law by President Barack Obama, would extend sanctions against Iran for a ten-year period.

The House of Representatives had already passed the act with an overwhelming vote of 419-1.

If not extended, the ISA expires by the end of 2016.

The ISA, which was the Iran and Libya Sanction Act until 2006 after it was ratified in 1996, was introduced during the first term of the Clinton administration to rule out investment in Iran’s energy sector.

The Senate’s move to reinstate the bill stirred an argument in both Iran and the United States.

Iran says the measure, once ratified and enforced, will amount to a violation of the JCPOA, the nuclear deal Iran and six world powers concluded in July 2015.

Under the deal, Iran was guaranteed re-engagement with the global economy after it accepted to curb its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

However, the U.S. administration



**President Rouhani says, “We are determined to implement BARJAM in a proper way, but will act resolutely in the face of it not being honored, implemented hesitantly or violated.”**

thinks the otherwise, ruling out the anti-JCPOA nature of the act.

“While we don’t think an extension is necessary, we’ve also been clear that a completely clean extension, as this one is, is entirely consistent with our commitments in the JCPOA,” U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby said on Friday.

Washington will violate the JCPOA if it does not remove all individuals and entities set forth in the ISA in connection with Iran’s nuclear program, as stipulated in the nuclear deal.

This is in line with the U.S. administration’s commitment, acting consistent with

the respective roles of the president and the Congress, to refrain from re-introducing or re-imposing the sanctions specified in the JCPOA.

Rouhani urged President Barack Obama to make good on his commitments.

“The American president is obliged to use his authority to prevent its ratification and implementation,” Rouhani asserted.

Other Iranian officials have preemptively vowed to retaliate against any move which does not honor the JCPOA.

“It is obvious that we have all options and alternatives in Iran [to respond to] the U.S. violation of its commitments,” Zarif

said at a meeting with a group of Indian intellectuals in New Delhi on Saturday.

Previously, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on Iran’s foreign policy, had warned the anti-Iran act, if passed and enforced, “would certainly be in breach of BARJAM.”

Also, Iran’s nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi, who helped finalize the deal, said a week ago plans had been envisioned in the event Washington failed to make good on its JCPOA commitments, seeing the ISA “a clear violation” of the nuclear deal.

The most explicit stance was taken by Alaeddin Boroujerdi, head of the Iranian parliamentary committee for national security and foreign policy.

“If America extends sanctions and violates BARJAM (JCPOA), we increase production and enrichment of uranium up to 190,000 SWU,” Boroujerdi said last week.

## Tehran reaffirms support for Afghanistan

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s foreign minister has renewed support for Afghanistan as the country is transitioning sluggishly to a more stable, secure and advanced country, according to ISNA on Sunday.

Mohammad Javad Zarif made the remarks at the 6th Heart of Asia ministerial conference in New Delhi, India, on Sunday.

“Our region still suffers from a worrying rise in extremist violence and the growing trend in drugs production threatens our societies,” Zarif noted.

He also hailed Afghan government’s achievements in making peace with the Hezb-i-Islami militant group, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.



“We have made some progress but we have a long way to go,” said Zarif, referring to the measures taken by

regional countries to restore peace to Afghanistan.

The senior Iranian diplomat further noted that the challenges facing Afghanistan and the region are interconnected.

Zarif also met with Afghanistan’s President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai on the sidelines of the Heart of Asia Conference on Sunday.

According to IRNA, the two sides discussed development of security, political, and economic cooperation.

The Heart of Asia was launched in November 2011 to expand practical coordination between Afghanistan and its neighbors and regional partners in facing common threats, including counterterrorism, counternarcotics, poverty, and extremism.

## Larijani rails against Washington for sanctions renewal push

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Parliament speaker Ali Larijani has chided the United States for renewing anti-Iran sanctions, saying the move clearly violates the nuclear deal, IIRB news agency reported on Sunday.

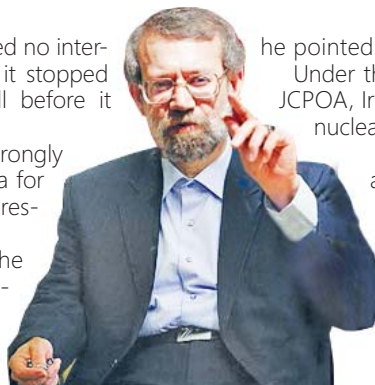
Addressing a parliament session on Sunday, Larijani called on the Rouhani administration to take retaliatory measures against Washington for violating the deal.

The U.S. Congress and Senate voted in favor of a bill — the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) — which extends sanctions against Iran for ten more years, on Thursday overwhelmingly. The legislation is waiting U.S. president’s approval to become law.

Meanwhile, the White House showed no interest in opposing the sanctions act as it stopped short of threatening to veto the bill before it reached Senate floor.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Larijani strongly criticized U.S. President Barack Obama for “lacking reliability” to defy the congressional decision.

“The fact that nearly half of the members of the Congress are Democrats but no one voted against the act shows that the entire U.S. establishment is in favor of the sanctions,”



he pointed out.

Under the nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, Iran agreed to limit certain aspects of its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief.

Since the deal went into effect in January 2016, Tehran has been complaining that Washington does not keeps its side of the bargain.

The recent renewal of sanctions has pushed the tension between the both sides to the brink after a shore moratorium of nuclear-related hostilities.

## Russia sends ‘important message’ to Iran on Syria

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Russia’s special envoy on Syria Alexander Lavrentiev has conveyed an important message to Iranian officials, Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian Supreme

Leader’s senior advisor, said on Saturday. Lavrentiev was in Tehran to convey a very important message, Velayati said without elaborating. “Today, we see hope-inspiring advance on the ground in Syria by

Syrian forces and according to Lavrentiev’s report, government forces are advancing from the west to east of Aleppo. This is a great achievement in pinning terrorists into the city quarters,” said Velayati.

During the meeting the two sides agreed that Syrian army and government as well as Iranian and Russian allies and Hezbollah will continue the fight until Aleppo city is fully liberated, he added.

## Majlis urges government to counteract anti-Iran move

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Two hundred and sixty four members of Iran’s Majlis have urged the government to take appropriate measures to retaliate against a piece of anti-Iran legislation approved by U.S. senate on Thursday, IRNA reported on Sunday.

“In a showy move, members of the U.S. Congress renewed the unfair law of the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) against the great Iranian nation,” said the parliamentarians in a statement read out at the end of Sunday’s session.

They described the move as a shattering blow to the nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, which was reached in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran and six world powers.

The parliamentarians added that the move came as international authorities, American officials included,

have repeatedly acknowledged Iran’s fulfillment of its obligations.

They further denounced the United States for its irresponsible action and for failing to abide by its international commitments.

The members of the parliament also urged the government to take retaliatory measures as soon as possible.

On Thursday, the U.S. Senate approved the legislation which extends sanctions on Iran for another 10 years.

The White House has questioned the usefulness of the legislation, but indicated the president will sign it into law.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Saturday warned that the Islamic Republic will halt the implementation of the nuclear accord if the U.S. sanc-

tions are re-imposed on the country.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration has said that the extension has no executive effect, indicating that the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry would use his authority to waive all of the relevant nuclear-related sanctions authorized by the legislation.

Tehran has on numerous occasions questioned Washington’s commitment to the deal, rapping the country for placing obstacles in the path of JCPOA implementation.

Addressing the Iranian parliament on Sunday, President Rouhani said Iran will not tolerate the JCPOA’s violation by any of the P5+1 group of countries.

He added that the renewal of the ISA is “in blatant contravention of the JCPOA, and will be followed by Iran’s decisive response.”



# Syria urges northeast Aleppo residents to return home

Rebels tell U.S. they won't leave Aleppo; army sees operation over in weeks

The Syrian army has called on the displaced residents of liberated districts of northeastern Aleppo to return home as the Syrian forces advance against terrorists on the battlefield in the flashpoint city.

The general command of the Syrian army and armed forces made the call in a statement released on Saturday, saying that the state institutions had already begun the rehabilitation of the liberated neighborhoods in the city.

Reports say over the past two days, hundreds of Syrian families have returned to the strategic eastern Aleppo district of Masaken Hanano, which was retaken from militants last month.

The army has managed to restore security and stability to the area, while authorities are working to provide services and utilities to the locals.

■ **Rebels & the U.S.**

Meanwhile, rebels in Aleppo have told the United States they will not leave their besieged enclave in the city after Moscow called for talks with Washington over their withdrawal, signaling they will fight on even as their top commander was wounded.

A Syrian military source said the



army aimed to take full control of Aleppo within weeks, Reuters reported on Sunday.

With more than 30,000 people uprooted by the latest fighting, residents who fled eastern Aleppo for government-held areas early in the war began returning to the Hanano district recently captured from the rebels to inspect their homes.

Under relentless attack, the rebels may have no choice but to negotiate a withdrawal from their shrinking, besieged enclave in eastern Aleppo, where tens of thousands of civilians are thought to be sheltering.

The Western and regional states that have backed the rebellion appear unwilling or unable to do anything to prevent a major defeat for the oppo-

sition fighting to topple the Syrian legitimate government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Restoring full control over Aleppo would mark the biggest triumph yet for the Syrian government. The campaign waged by the Syrian army and its allies in Aleppo is one of the most ferocious of the war, with hundreds reported killed in recent weeks alone.

Russia, whose air force has helped the government close in on eastern Aleppo this year, said on Saturday it was ready for talks with the United States over a full withdrawal of rebels from Aleppo.

Speaking to Reuters from Turkey, senior rebel official Zakaria Malahifji said groups fighting in Aleppo told U.S. officials on Saturday they would not leave the city.

The U.S. officials had asked the rebels "do you want to leave, (or) do you want to be steadfast", Malahifji said.

"Our response to the Americans was as follows: 'we cannot leave our city, our homes, to the mercenary militias that the regime has mobilized in Aleppo'," said Malahifji, the head of the political office of an Aleppo rebel group.

"They listened to the response and did not comment," he said, adding the rebel groups had reiterated calls for humanitarian corridors to be opened for the delivery of food and medicine into eastern Aleppo and the evacuation of the wounded.

The United States has yet to comment on the proposal made by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday for talks on the withdrawal of all rebel fighters "without exclusion" from Aleppo.

■ **Army expects to take eastern Aleppo "in weeks"**

The rebels said the Russians had retreated from proposals agreed at talks with rebel groups in Turkey that would have resulted in terrorist fighters leaving the city, a ceasefire and humanitarian aid deliveries.

The Syrian army has vowed to crush the rebels in Aleppo.

"The expectation is weeks," the military source said, referring to the timeframe for taking back the whole city.

Pro-Damascus sources have previously said the army aimed to take back all of Aleppo by the time the United States President-elect Donald Trump takes office on Jan. 20. The reason was to mitigate the risk of a shift in U.S. policy on Syria, though Trump has indicated he could end U.S. support for the rebels.

The United Nations estimates that close to 30,000 people have been displaced by the latest fighting, 18,000 of them leaving to government-held areas, a further 8,500 going to the Kurdish-controlled neighborhood of Sheikh Maq-soud and the rest moving within rebel-held areas.

UN envoy Staffan de Mistura has said more than 100,000 people may still be in the rebel-held area. The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a Britain-based group that reports on the war, said it could be as many as 200,000 people.

The rebels, including foreign-backed groups, say they have been abandoned to their fate in a war against better armed enemies including the Russian air force and Lebanon's highly trained Hezbollah.

In another blow to the rebels, the head of a new rebel alliance was seriously wounded on Saturday, rebel officials said. Abu Abdelrahman Nour will be replaced as head of the "Aleppo army" he was appointed to lead last week.

The army and its allies have opened numerous fronts against the rebel-held east in what rebels see as an effort to deplete their ammunition and men. Malahifji said the rebels could remain steadfast for "an excellent period" of time.

The SOHR said the army or its allies were attacking in at least eight places. It says rebels have lost more than 60 percent of the area they held until recently. Rebels say the amount captured is less.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Afghan Taliban hang university student in public

Taliban fighters publicly hanged a university student after accusing him of killing a senior intelligence officer.

The militia took Faizul Rehman, a fourth-year student at Kabul Polytechnic university, from his car as he travelled home to visit his family in the Chak district of Maidan Wardak province, about 60km west of the capital Kabul on Thursday.

"They hanged him on Friday in front of [the] public. Local elders tried to mediate to release him, but they failed," Abdul Rehman Mangal, a spokesman for the governor of Maidan Wardak, told AFP news agency on Saturday.

"They accused him of killing Mullah Mirwais, the head of their intelligence in the area," he said.

The Afghan interior ministry confirmed the execution and said they had launched an investigation "to arrest and punish the perpetrators of this criminal act".

Zabiullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesman, said they were investigating the case.

Since their ouster in 2001, the Taliban have executed people they accuse of spying for foreign or Afghan forces, and have staged public stonings or lashings of those found to have committed adultery, or had sex outside marriage. (Source: AFP)

## 4 Palestinians die as Egypt floods Gaza tunnel

Four men who had gone missing after a tunnel connecting the Gaza Strip with Egypt collapsed on them have been confirmed dead by a Palestinian official.

Emergency workers have recovered the bodies of three men but the body of the fourth man is still missing, Ashraf al-Qudra, spokesman of the Gaza-based health ministry, told DPA news agency on Sunday.

Search crews had been looking for the bodies since last week, when the tunnel collapsed after being flooded.

Al-Aqsa Radio, run by Gaza's Hamas, said the men drowned in the tunnel were Palestinians, but the identities of the deceased have not been confirmed by officials.

The tunnel collapse is the latest in a series of cave-ins to claim Palestinian lives. Dozens of Palestinians have been killed in collapses since the beginning of the year.

Egypt has been using waste water and sea water to flood the tunnels over the past three years in an effort to fight the spread of cross-border routes.

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi has cracked down on the tunnels since assuming office in 2014.

Before him, there were an estimated 1,800 tunnels under the border, used to smuggle goods into Gaza.

In the same year, an Israeli assault on Gaza killed more than 2,200 Palestinians and more than 70 Israelis.

Thousands of houses were damaged or entirely destroyed by Israeli bombs, leaving tens of thousands of Palestinians with nowhere to live.

The Gaza Strip, has been under a tight Israeli blockade since June 2007. (Source: agencies)

## Stein plans federal lawsuit in quest for Pennsylvania recount

Green Party presidential nominee Jill Stein said early on Sunday that she will file a lawsuit in federal court on Monday seeking a statewide recount in Pennsylvania.

Stein in a tweet said she would "escalate" #Recount2016 and demand a recount on constitutional grounds.

"The people deserve answers," she added.

Stein also said the state's election law and recount process raise questions about due process and whether fundamental democratic rights are protected.

Her lawyer on Saturday withdrew a state lawsuit seeking a recount in Pennsylvania, saying in a filing that the petitioners are "regular citizens of ordinary means" who "cannot afford to post the \$1,000,000 bond required by the Court."

Stein has raised almost \$7 million toward her recount efforts in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

She questioned late on Saturday why millions of dollars must be raised in order to trust the results of the election.

She added that the recount is so expensive because leaders have refused to invest in modern voting systems.

Stein also said the state court was ill-equipped to handle the challenge.

Stein is scheduled to hold a press conference and rally outside Trump Tower in New York on Monday, defending her push for recounts in several states. (Source: The Hill)

## Divided Austria votes in rerun of presidential contest

Voters in Austria head to the polls to pick a new president, in a replay of the closely contested May runoff between a left-leaning Green Party contender and his far-right anti-immigrant rival.

Sunday's election pits anew Alexander Van der Bellen, who narrowly won in May, against 45-year-old Norbert Hofer of the Freedom Party, who could become the first elected far-right leader in the European Union.

The voting provides Hofer a second chance to win Austria's top job after he lost to Van der Bellen by a margin of only 0.6 percent.

Hofer's Freedom Party successfully challenged the vote in the Constitutional Court by bringing evidence that ballots were counted without proper oversight in many towns.

The court ordered a repeat election, which was planned to go ahead in October, but had to be pushed back to December.

Hofer, one of the deputy presidents of Austria's parliament, has won support from half of the voters by criticizing the government for allowing 90,000 refugees and migrants to enter the country last year.

The former aviation engineer has also chided German Chancellor Angela Merkel for her welcoming stance in the face of the wave of arrivals.

Hofer said Austrian taxpayers were footing Germany's bill, as many of these refugees and migrants ended up in his country.

Van der Bellen, the Green Party's candidate, had warned that Hofer's recent soft EU stance only masks his wish to destroy the bloc, in line with like-minded populist movements in France and Germany.

On the migration issue, Van der Bellen stands by the many Austrians who have spontaneously formed grassroots projects to help arriving refugees and migrants.

Although polls predict another neck-to-neck result on Sunday, Van der Bellen's position on refugees and migrants is becoming increasingly isolated.

Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz has been successful with his strategy of closing down the Balkan migration route, pushing for restrictive immigration policies, and demanding the end of Turkey's accession talks with the EU.

The Social Democrats, who form the government coalition with Kurz's center-right People's Party, have also gone along with Austria's immigration about-turn, and have reluctantly supported a cut-off limit for the number of asylum seekers that can enter each year.

A vocal wing in the Social Democratic party has been mulling cooperation with Hofer's Freedom Party after the next parliamentary election, which is due in 2018 at the latest. (Source: agencies)

## Two-Stage Public Tender Notice on Purchasing Chemicals

**JONDISHAPOUR COMPANY** intends to supply the following required items through the public tenders. Hereby, all qualified legal Iranian and non-Iranian entities are invited to participate in the tender as follows:



No	PRODUCT DESCRIPTION	DENSITY (kg/m3)	TOTAL WEIGHT(kg)	PACKING TYPE
1	Octadecyl-3- (3,5-di-t-butyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)-propionate (Antioxidant 1)	1,020	285,703	25 kg bags
2	n,n-ethylene-di-stearamide (Antioxidant 2)	990	1,194,168	750÷1000 kg big bags
3	1,1 di-(t-butyl peroxy)- cyclohexane (50%wt solution in mineral oil) (Peroxide)	990	76,404	25 kg Plastic can
4	Tertiary dodecyl mercaptan	860	31,809	2 m3 capacity mobile metallic drums
5	Normal dodecyl mercaptan	850	329,444	2 m3 capacity mobile metallic drums
6	Polydimethylsiloxane + filler (<4.0% emulsion in water)	1,000	38,173	1 m3 capacity mobile plastic drums
7	Thermal oil	800	365,000	
8	Tris (nonylphenyl) Phosphite (TNPP)	1,000	375,841	18 m3 Isocontainer heated 0.2 m3 Drums
9	Tetrahydrofuran (THF) (Activator)	869	4,984	0.2 m3 Drums
10	Silicon Tetrachloride (SiCl4) (Coupling Agent)	865	24,355	1m3 Cylinder
11	Trimethyl Chloro Silane (Short Stopping Agent)	835	21,308	1m3 Cylinder
12	Di Phenyl Di Chloro Silane (DPDCS)	825	25,293	1m3 Cylinder
13	OROTAN (Dispersant Agent) - Diluted (25%wt) in water.	1,000	149,423	18 m3 tank truck 1m3 IBC
14	2,6-di-tert-butyl-4-(4,6-bis (octylthio)-1,3,5-triazin-2-ylamino) phenol – Antioxidant (Irganox)	820	29,242	25 kg powder bags
15	N- Butyllithium (NBL) (Initiator) 15% solution in hexane	650	509,167	18 m3 Isocontainer
16	CaCl2 – Calcium Chloride		27,748	25 kg powder bags
17	Aromatic Oil (rubber extender oil)	1,000	225,827	18 m3 tank truck
18	Calcium stearate Emulsion (CaStEm) – diluted (50%wt) in water)	1,050	283,063	1m3 IBC
19	Actrene (Anti polymerant)		5,000	1-1.5 m3 IBC
20	Calcium Stearate (CaSt)		66,000	25 kg powder bags
21	Hydraulic Seal Oil (Paraffin Oil)	870	1,079	
22	Solvent ( 90% Cyclohexane , 10% n-Hexane) (Liquid)	753	1,564,930	Truck tank
23	Ammonia	683	10,200	
24	Ethylene glycol	1,110	85,100	
25	Cooling tower chemical(Corrosion inhibitor)	1,370	35,296	
26	Cooling tower chemical(Dispersant)	1,230	35,329	
27	Cooling tower chemical(Nonoxidizing biocide)	1,030	5,745	
28	Oxidizing biocide(NaClO 12%)	1,200	131,282	
29	Caustic soda 50%	1,530	12,340	
30	Calcium nitrate 50% solution	1,450	193,016	

■ **Applicants' Terms and Conditions:**

- Submitting the registered documents of the company including articles of association, establishment advertisement and all changes mentioned in the official gazette,
- Submitting work experience (resume) including concluded contracts, certificates and approval letters of the previous employers related to the subject of contract and also documents related to the financial ability in accordance with the subject of tender,
- Applicants are cordially urged to submit their request along with necessary documents on each of the aforementioned tenders in business hours maximum within one week as of publishing date of this advertisement to the secretariat at the following address and take a written receipt:

**Jondishapour Bldg., No. 12, Parsia Alley, Nesa St., Mirdamad Blvd., Tehran**

- Applicants are obliged to submit a banking check amounting to 300,000,000 rials for each item of tender.
- After evaluation of applicants willing to participate in the tender, qualified and eligible applicants will be invited to participate in the tender.







## Call for Prequalification of Tenderers



Tabas Parvadeh Coal Company intends to prequalify tenderers for holding the below mentioned project as per the paragraph C of the article 12 of the tenders bylaw.

- 1- Client: Tabas Parvadeh Coal Company
- 2- Tender subject: (Offshore) Financing and Procurement of a complete set of equipment to commission and operate a Mechanized longwall panel including engineering, procurement, installation, commissioning, performance test, training and supply of two years' spare parts with guarantee and aftersales services.
- 3- Deadline to purchase the documents: Up to 13:00 o'clock on Tuesday 20 Dec. 2016
- 4- Deadline to submit the completed documents: Late by 13:00 o'clock on Saturday 4 Feb. 2017
- 5- Date to open the received documents: 17:00 o'clock on Saturday 4 Feb. 2017
- 6- Delivery Address: TPCCO Commercial Department, Tabas Parvadeh Coal Company, ShahidMotahari Blvd., Tabas , South Khorasan, Iran

### Notes:

- A- Tender documents will solely be handed over to representatives of the tenderers upon the submission of letter of introduction, signed and sealed by the tenderers.
- B- Submission of the tender documents will not grant any right to the tenderers.
- C- Advertisement costs shall be borne by the successful tenderer.
- To buy the tender documents, real and legal persons, who are eligible to take part in the tender, are invited to pay one million Rials to the account no. 4444/71 at Sepah Bank, main branch in Tabas, and hand over the original receipt together with their letter of introduction to TPCCO Commercial Department, Tabas Parvadeh Coal Company, ShahidMotahari Blvd., Tabas OR to TPCCO Office (12), Number 15, 8th Ahmad Ghasir street, Ahmad Ghasir Ave., Argentina Square, Tehran, Iran.
- This notice is available also on the website of National Database Portal of Iran tenders' Information.

For further information, please contact (+98) 56 32824551-5.

## Electric cars could take an OPEC-sized bite from oil demand



A boom in electric vehicles made by the likes of Tesla Motors Inc. could erode as much as 10 percent of global gasoline demand by 2035, according to the oil industry consultant Wood Mackenzie Ltd.

While battery-powered cars and trucks today represent less than one percent of total vehicle sales, they are expected to take off after 2025 as governments move to tackle pollution and costs fall, the Houston-based analyst said. By 2035 so-called EVs may remove one million to two million barrels a day of oil demand from the market -- in the range of the production cut OPEC and its allies agreed this week in order to end a three-year crude surplus.

"Anything that reduces the demand for transportation has an impact on the oil market," Alan Gelder, vice president of refining, chemicals and oils markets at Wood Mackenzie,

said in an interview in London. "The question is how big it is going to be and what's the time frame."

Wood Mackenzie's view echoes the International Energy Agency, which last month forecast global gasoline demand has all but peaked because of more efficient cars and the spread of EVs. The agency expects total oil demand to keep growing for decades, driven by shipping, trucking, aviation and petrochemical industries.

That's more conservative than Bloomberg New Energy Finance's forecast for EVs to displace about 8 million barrels a day of demand by 2035. That will rise to 13 million barrels a day by 2040, which amounts of about 14 percent of estimated crude oil demand in 2016, the London-based researcher said. Electric cars are displacing about 50,000 barrels a day of demand now, Wood Mackenzie said.

On Friday Athens, Madrid, Mexico City and Paris pledged to phase out diesel vehicles by 2025 in a battle against pollution, a move that could further stimulate demand for EVs that have zero tailpipe emissions.

Regulation and government subsidies alone won't be enough to spark a boom in EVs, Gelder said. "If there's a technology revolution, so battery technology gets cheaper and EVs don't need a subsidy, then it comes down to consumer preference. If the consumers like something, it'll switch far faster."

Tesla alone won't be able to supply enough EVs if demand really takes off, Gelder said. Major automakers including Volkswagen AG and Ford Motor Co. will need to produce them on a larger scale. "At the moment they can't, and changing manufacturing lines takes time."

(Source: Bloomberg)



## Extension Advertising AMENDMENT OF INVITATION FOR SUBMISSION OF PREQUALIFICATION BIDS

Tender no. 95/1003  
(Project Type EPCF)

First announcement

On the basis of Clause (C) defined in item 12 of the Operational Regulations of Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) Tendering Laws and Regulations circulars 100/50252 dated 23/08/09 and 100/135946 dated 12/11/2009 issued by the offices of the Presidential Deputy of Strategic Planning and Control, The Khuzestan Water and Waste Water Company proposes to tender the project below on an EPCF (Engineering, Procurement, Construction and installation and Finance) basis to Bidders with the required qualifications and with sufficiently open capacity as follows:

Tender no.	Title of Tender	Specialization Required (Having at least one of the requirements below)	Location of Document Sales	Duration For Procurement of Bidding Documents	Date and Place for Opening of Tenders
95/1003	The Construction of the Primary Module for Urban Wastewater Treatment Plants in the Cities of Shosh, Andimeshk, Izeh, Behbahan and Boştan On an EPCF Basis	1- Bidders with a number one ranking of EPC in Water, specializing in Water and Waste Water 2. Bidders with a number one ranking in Water, conditional to the introducing of a Consulting Engineer with the same ranking in Water Engineering specializing in Water and Waste water Installations (in the form of public joint ventures)	Anhar Jonoob	Until 27/Nov/2016	At 10 o'clock in the morning on 03/Jan/2017

### Criteria For The Evaluation Of Prequalification Bids

In addition to the criterion defined in the Prequalification documents of the aforementioned tender, and with due regards to the fact that the estimated project costs exceed that of Bidders with a number one ranking in the required specializations, all participants in the Bid must

have the following conditions:

- 1- The Bidder's company must be registered in the IRI National Tendering Data Base i.e. <http://iets.mporg.ir> and that of the Presidential deputy for Strategic Planning and Control's data base i.e. <http://tec.mporg.ir>.
  - 2- The having of an Open Capacity in the First Class ranking of the specialization(s) required
  - 3- The execution and implementation of at least one similar project within the past five years with a total cost of at least one third of the current project's estimated project costs updated on the basis of current global inflation indices.
- Meanwhile the contractors shall provide an agreement with foreign funder to supply 85 percent of the project funding requirements.

### Address and Location for Purchasing Of Prequalification Bidding Documents

Anhar Jonoob Consulting Company no. 1075 -11<sup>th</sup> floor, Apartment 1103 Vali-e-Asr Ave. Before Sayee Park opposite the Filling Station Shahab Building, Tehran

Tel: +98-(0) 21-88701438 and 88727855

Anhar Jonoob Consulting Company no. 98<sup>th</sup> West Mihan Street at the end of Phase II, Kianpars area Ahwaz, Khuzestan

Tel: +98-(0)61- 33914548

The final date for the submission of completed Prequalification Bid documents will be before nine o'clock in the morning on the day of opening of Tenders.

### Address and Location for the Submission of Prequalification Bidding Documents

Security and Confidential Matters Secretariat's Offices -Fifth Floor -The Khuzestan Water and Waste Water Company - 1<sup>st</sup> square -Kianpars -Ahwaz

The Prequalification Bids submitted will be opened in the Contractual Department of the Ahwaz Water and Waste Water Company in presence of the Bidders.

Electronic Address of Tender: Main Client [www.abfakhz.ir](http://www.abfakhz.ir) and IRI National Tendering Data Base <http://iets.mporg.ir>

Public Relations and Education Department  
Of  
The Khuzestan Water and Waste Water Company



# "NOSTRAK" Corridor, Suitable Way for Broadening Trade and Economic Ties between Europe and Asia



سازمان منطقه آزاد تجاری - صنعتی انزلی

Anzali Free zone Organization

"Calling for Broadening and Enhancing Cooperation among Entrepreneurs between Iran and Germany"

A couple of days ago, high-ranking trade and economic delegations from northern states of Germany visited infrastructures of Anzali Free

tages, Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone has paved suitable way for the attendance of domestic and foreign investors."

Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone is designed in order to broadening trade and economic activity between Caspian Sea Littoral States and CIS (Commonwealth Independent States), he maintained.

Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone is the best hub for production and exporting products to CIS states, he said, adding: "Benefitting from NOSTRAK (North-South) Corridor, Asian

Trade-Industrial Zone and held talks with Eng. Reza Masrour chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Executive of Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone Organization, Public Relations Department of the Organization reported.

In the beginning, the senior official of the Organization expounded on the legal capacities of free zones and developmental-infrastructural projects of the zone especially Caspian Port Complex and welcomed the presence of German trade and economic delegation in the zone.

He pointed to the age-old and longstanding cooperation between Iran and Germany and said: "With the coordination made in this regard, it is hoped that cooperation and interaction will be broadened and enhanced between the two countries more than before."

From now onwards, foreign investors are authorized to import their required equipment and machinery without paying customs duties to these zones, he said, adding: "Benefited from tax exemptions and its salient advantages,

and European continents will be connected to each other, so that this corridor plays an important role in this respect."

Given the above issue, time will be saved and traders and businesspersons can transport their products with fair and reasonable prices using NOSTRAK Corridor, the senior official of the Organization maintained.

Attracting foreign investors in line with expansion of downstream industries as well as transferring technical knowhow and knowledge are of salient advantages and priorities of the Zone, he said, adding: "Gilan Province enjoys natural tourism attractions with breathtaking view and is a suitable hub to attract tourists from across the world."

However, suitable ways have been paved

for foreign investors who are willing to invest their capital in tourism sector of this province, he stressed.

It should be noted that a 50-strong trade and economic delegations from two northern states of Germany paid a visit to Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone and held talks with Chief Executive of the Organization.

The visiting trade-economic delegation called for broadening and enhancing cooperation between Iran and Germany in related fields.

For his part, *Franc Hourch Economy, Port and Transport Minister of Germany's Hamburg* pointed to the necessity of developing and broadening economic ties between the two countries and stated: "Free Zones are considered as the most suitable hubs for expanding and developing economic cooperation due to their fundamental infrastructures and rules."

Golden opportunity has been opened for Iran's trade and economic sector in international arena after a landmark nuclear deal inked between Iran and P5+1 (the five permanent members of UN Security Council plus Germany), he maintained.

Considering the Iran's agreement in nuclear talks and new international interactions, giant steps can be taken in line with accelerating and improving investment trend and fulfilling joint projects, the official added.

He pointed to the positive approach of German investors with regard to investment in

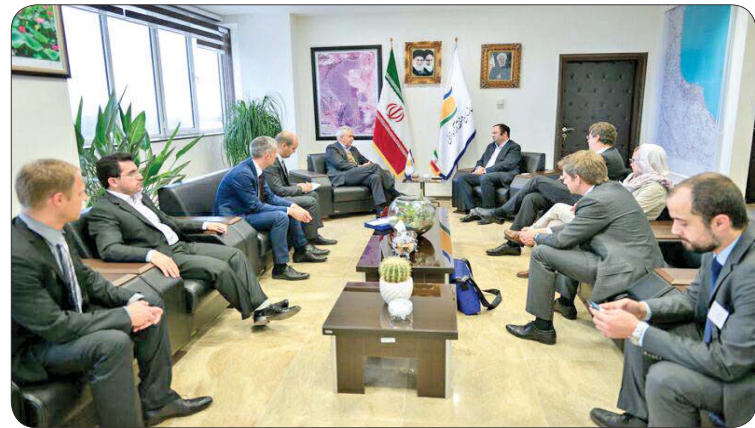
Iran and said: "As a large trade and economic hub, Hambourg Port can be a suitable place for supplying and transferring Asian products to northern Germany and vice versa using NOSTRAK (North-South) Corridor."

Elsewhere in his remarks, German's Minister

of Economy in Hambourg State pointed to the significance of connecting Helsinki transport chain and Southeast Asia using NOSTRAK Corridor and said: "Considering the remarks of the chief executive of the Organization and serious determination available in this zone with regard to the completion and activation of NOSTRAK Corridor, success of this project is of paramount importance in line with boosting and developing communications of transport and stevedoring companies."

*The Economy and Labor Minister of Germany's Schleswig-Holstein State Reinhardt Meier* was the next speaker who pointed to the success of Iran in nuclear talks and lifting of sanctions and added: "We are interested in broadening and enhancing economic ties with Iran without any sanctions restriction." He pointed to the high influence of Germany's Northern Trade-Economic Delegation with regard to the acceleration of completion of infrastructures at Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone and

also measures conducted in line with attracting foreign investors and added: "Since free zones are administered under the strict supervision of the Presidential Office, less bureaucratic measures can be observed in these zones, so that all activities will be implemented rapidly."



## AFZ Economic and Investment Deputy: Value of Mercantile Exchange Transactions Up 17% in Current Year

The Economic and Investment Deputy of Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone said that value of mercantile exchange transacted in Anzali Free Zone during the first eight months of current Iranian calendar year (March 20 - Nov. 21) corroborated 17 percent hike.

Given the above issue, value of mercantile exchanges transacted in the zone indicated 17 percent hike in the same period as compared to a year earlier, he maintained.

Member of the Board of Directors of Anzali Free Zone Eng. *Vahid Talebpour* announced the above statement and put the value of products exchanged and transacted in the zone in the same period at over 464 billion rials.

He further put the volume of goods and products exchanged in the same period in the zone at 34,554 tons, showing 26 percent growth as compared to a year earlier.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the increased diversity of products transacted in the zone in the same period and said: "A number of eight items of goods had been supplied at the bourse market of the zone in the past year in 1394 (ended March 19, 2016), the rate of which hit 11 types of goods in current year."

Of salient products transacted at Mercantile Exchange of the zone, it should be referred to melamine crystal, acetic acid, di-ethanol amine, styrene, di-ethyl glycol, baking soda, light sodium carbon, urea, sulfuric acid, granule sulfur, corn, barley, caustic soda, etc.



## Investment Rate Up 51% in Anzali Free Zone in Current Year



Investment and registration of companies in Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone increased 51 and 40 percent respectively during the first eight months of current Iranian calendar year (March 20 - Nov. 21).

Given the above issue, investment and registration of corporations soared in the zone, showing a considerable 51 and 40 percent hike respectively in first eight months of current year as compared to the same period last year, Public Relations and Intl. Affairs Department of Anzali Free-Trade Industrial Zone reported. The manager of Public Relations and Intl. Affairs put the investment volume made in the zone since the beginning of current year at

14,097 billion rials, showing a considerable 51 hike as compared to the same period of last year.

The report put the investment volume made in the last Iranian calendar year in 1394 (ended March 19, 2016) at approx. 9,328 billion rials. Continuation of logical policies adopted by the organization since the previous year in line with improving business environment and offering constructive services to investors through creating infrastructures and reducing administrative and office bureaucracy in the field of offering investment licenses have been cited as the main reasons behind significant investment growth in this zone, he reiterated.

With the coordination made in this regard, domestic and foreign investors have shown high interest to investment their capital in this zone, he said and put the number of companies and intellectual properties registered at companies' registration department in the zone since the beginning of the current year (started March 20, 2016) at 278, showing a considerable 40 percent hike as compared to the same period of last year.

With due observance to the said issue, a number of 241 companies, 30 foreign firms, three branches of Iranian companies and two branches of foreign companies along with two associations have been registered in the first eight months of current Iranian calendar year in 1395 (March 20 - Nov. 21), he said, adding: "Totally, 278 companies have thus far been registered in the zone."

These companies established in the zone are busy active in the fields of production, services and trade, he said, adding: "Totally 278 companies registered in the zone have been set up with the investment of 999.6 billion rials." However, foreign companies and branches of foreign companies registered in the zone have been set up with the investment over 27.2 billion rials.

Accordingly, the number of companies registered since 1384 (ended March 19, 2016) i.e. when the zone was set up to Nov. 21 at 1801,

173 and 21 of which are foreign and branches of foreign companies respectively.

It should be noted that members of the Board of Directors of the companies registered in Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone have different nationalities from countries including Russia, India, Germany, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Syria, South Korea, UK, Poland, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan, Italy, Iraq, Ukraine, Nigeria, Tur-

key, Sweden, Georgia and Greece, accounting for 33-100 percent share of stocks.

Hereunder are the salient advantages of registering companies in the zone: benefiting from 20-year tax exemptions since establishing date, and also fully freedom for entry and exit of capital, taking advantage of foreign investment opportunities as joint venture and also customs duties for entry of goods manufactured at the zone inside the country as much as the value-added rate.





# ISA real threat to JCPOA

➔ Meanwhile, Article 26 of JCPOA declares that "The U.S. Administration, acting consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Congress, will refrain from re-introducing or re-imposing the sanctions specified in Annex II that it has ceased applying under this JCPOA, without prejudice to the dispute resolution process provided for under this JCPOA. The U.S. Administration, acting consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Congress, will refrain from imposing new nuclear-related sanctions. Iran has stated that it will treat such a re-introduction or re-imposition of the sanctions specified in Annex II, or such an imposition of new nuclear-related sanctions, as grounds to cease performing its commitments under this JCPOA in whole or in part."

As of the moment news about the 99-0

vote spread, several Iranian officials and figures slammed the United States for re-introducing sanctions by renewing some legislation which was about to fade away in less than a month. Iran sees the move as breach of the nuclear deal which was clinched in 2015. The Americans, though, justify the act by claiming that it is based on a current regime of sanctions already in place. But Ed Royce seems to have a different idea; "After years of bipartisan work in the Congress, the Iran Sanctions Act has served as the statutory foundation of the Iran sanctions regime. Of course, President Obama's dangerous nuclear deal with Iran dismantles it. Indeed, just last week we heard that a major European energy firm is close to investing \$6 billion in Iran to develop its natural gas, which will in turn enrich the regime," Royce admits that

the regime has been dismantled by JCPOA.

Another point is that, even if this fact is not considered that this is a re-introduction of sanctions already removed by JCPOA, the other argument in Iran is that according to US political procedures, when a legislation passes the House and Senate and needs Presidential approval to turn into a law, it is considered as a new legislation, thus must be interpreted as imposition of new nuclear-related sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Yet another reasoning from the American side is what the White House officials have announced; that President Obama will sign the Act into law and issue executive orders to waive parts considered in JCPOA. One way to interpret this argument is that it admits that it is re-introducing and re-imposing sanctions against Iran just before being ceased by presidential order.

Yet a different way to face this argument is that according to ISA, where it discusses waiver possibilities, two waiver plans have been considered in the legislation; based on a general waiver "the president may, on a case by case basis, waive for a period of not more than six months the application of section 5(a) with respect to a national of a country, if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees at least 30 days before such waiver is to take effect that such waiver is vital to the national security interests of the United States."

On the other hand, president can request "waiver with respect to persons in countries that cooperate in multilateral efforts with respect to Iran. The President may, on a case by case basis, waive for a period of not more than 12 months the application of section 5(a) with respect to a person if the President, at least 30 days before the waiver is to take effect."

Both these articles clarify that a presidential request for a waiver must be presented to



Congressional committee at least 30 days before the date of effectuality. When signed into law – as White House has stated it will be – it will be effective by beginning of January, less than a month from now; leaving President Obama with less than deadline mandated by ISA act for a waiver request.

As a legal and political document, the JCPOA can be discussed over for days and months and different interpretations might be drawn from it. But from a pragmatic point of view, what is important to Iran and all the 5+1 countries is that the nuclear deal which was achieved after 12 years of hard work, can survive. When President-elect Donald Trump stated during his campaigns that he would tear the deal, many European countries opposed his positions and considered it against survival of the deal.

Now with less than two months for him to come to office, current administration seems to taking measures putting the JCPOA at risk. It once imposed visa waiver program against people who visited or will visit Iran and has

not yet allowed global banking system work for Iran and thus has still Iran's banking transactions under ban in practice. It more seems that Washington is trying hard to irritate Iran over JCPOA, not allowing it to benefit from the benefits of the deal, to force the country into violating it. Iran has always emphasized that it will not be the first to violate the deal it has signed, but if the other side continues to sabotage its commitments, Tehran will certainly return to its pre-JCPOA status in its nuclear program. The risky game Obama administration has already begun since implementation of the deal, can end up in a dangerous destination considering that the next president of the US is supposed to be a figure as unpredictable as Donald Trump.

Unlike what the American negotiators had promised during negotiations, to make any efforts, to convince the Congress not to renew Iran Sanctions Act, the overwhelming votes in both chambers of the Congress show that the Obama administration has done nothing in this regard and has been an onlooker. Now, if either the US or other members of 5+1 are serious in saving the JCPOA, they would better convince the United States to play more rationally and less ambitiously and leave a legacy which can be defended by other European parties, even if Trump's America would be dangerous to it.

**"After years of bipartisan work in the Congress, the Iran Sanctions Act has served as the statutory foundation of the Iran sanctions regime. Of course, President Obama's dangerous nuclear deal with Iran dismantles it," Ed Royce says.**



**When a legislation passes the House and Senate and needs Presidential approval to turn into a law, it is considered as a new legislation, thus must be interpreted as imposition of new nuclear-related sanctions against Iran.**



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**Mr.king: 09128440154**
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kitchen, 5500 USD  
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- Duplex Villa in Qeytariyeh**  
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4 rooms, furn, Pkg, \$5000  
**Mr.king: 09128440154**
- Duplex Villa in Farmanieh**  
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pool, garden, Pkg, renovated,  
*Suitable for Residency & Embassy,*  
\$15000  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**
- Duplex Villa in Darous**  
1200 sq.m built up in 700 sq.m  
land, 6 rooms, pool, stone floor,  
*Suitable For Embassies,* \$18000  
**Mr.king: 09128440154**
- Duplex Villa in Mahmoudieh**  
400 sq.m built up, 5 rooms,  
balcony, garden, pool, \$8000  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**



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# Non-gassy foods

By Barbara Bolen

## 1. Foods to eat to avoid intestinal gas and bloating

Sometimes you find yourself in an important situation where the last thing you need to be dealing with is excessive intestinal gas. Fortunately, there are some foods that are less likely to cause gas. These are the foods you can turn to when you need to feel confident that you won't experience the embarrassment of flatulence.

As a general rule of thumb, gassy foods are those that contain certain types of carbohydrates and/or soluble fiber. These substances are not fully absorbed in the small intestine and therefore make their way down to the large intestine where they are set upon by gut bacteria. The by-product of this process is gas. Therefore, to avoid gas, you need to eat the opposite -- foods that are not broken down by intestinal bacteria.

It is important to know that some intestinal gas is normal and that many gassy foods are good for you. Therefore choose the following foods primarily for those times when it is absolutely essential that you be gas-free.

### 2. Animal protein

Our bodies are well-adapted to digesting protein. Animal sources of protein contain no carbohydrates to be fermented by those pesky gut bacteria. Therefore, choosing to eat any of the following is a safe bet when you want to avoid embarrassing gas or uncomfortable bloat. Be sure to eat these items plain, as glazes and gravies may contain added sugar, garlic and/or onions, all of which can be gas-producing.

- Beef
- Chicken
- Eggs



- Fish
- Turkey

If you choose not to eat animal products, no worries, there are plenty of other non-gassy food options that you can take advantage of.

### 3. Non-gassy vegetables

As you can see, there are plenty of vegetables that are low enough in carbohydrates that they are not likely to contribute to intestinal fermentation. They are all good for you, so feel free to pile them on!

- Bell peppers
- Bok choy
- Cucumber
- Fennel
- Greens, such as kale or spinach
- Green beans
- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini

### 4. Non-gassy fruits

The following fruits have a reputation

for being less gassy. However, on days when you need to be less gassy, eat them only in moderation. There is a limit as to how much fruit-based carbohydrate your body can absorb at a time. The more fruits you eat, even of these less gassy options, the more likely you will be to experience unwanted gas.

- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Clementine
- Grapes
- Honeydew
- Kiwi
- Pineapple
- Raspberries
- Strawberry

### 5. Yogurt and other fermented foods

Fermented foods are foods that have been prepared in a way that any fermentable carbohydrates are pre-fermented by the bacteria within the food. This results not only in foods that contain gut-friendly bacteria, but foods that are less likely to cause gas. Here are some good

choices:

- Fermented vegetables
- Kefir
- Kombucha
- Yogurt (without added sugars)

### 6. Least gassy grains

You may be surprised to learn that there are certain carbohydrates in wheat products that can contribute to gas. Therefore, the following choices are better options for the times when you just do not want to deal with gas:

- Gluten-free bread
- Rice bread
- Oats
- Rice, brown or white
- Quinoa

### 7. Non-gassy snacks

Along with the non-gassy vegetables and fruits that we covered in previous slides, here are some good non-gassy snack choices:

#### Nuts

- Macadamia
- Pecans
- Walnuts

#### Cheese:

- Cheddar
- Mozzarella
- Swiss

### 8. Food choices for chronic gas and bloating problems

Unfortunately, as you can see, the safe food list is a little limited. Thus it is not a good idea to follow as a daily meal plan. Stick to these safe foods only on those days when it is especially important to be gas-free. If you tend to deal with intestinal gas and bloating on a regular basis, you may want to look into the low FODMAPs diet. This diet has scientific backing for identifying foods that contribute to problems with gas and bloating.

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

## What air pollution does to eyes and vision

Air pollution, no doubt, has had numerous health impacts on humans, but when it comes to air pollution in relation to eyes and vision, there seems to be a gap. This phenomenon has not been studied in depth in the way that perhaps pollution in relation to our pulmonary system has, but there is evidence to suggest that pollution is hurting our eyes. Our eyes are incredibly exposed and sensitive. If you've ever had the misfortune of getting dust or sand in your eyes (which everyone is likely to have experienced at least once), then you know the irritation and discomfort involved. Though pollution is a little sneakier than dust and sand, it can have an equal or worse effect on our eyes in the long run.

A study done in Paris in 2003 found a strong link between urban pollution and a spike in ophthalmological emergencies in the area. Though fewer studies have been done in other parts of the world, reports from Beijing, China and the India Times seem to suggest that vision health is being affected by smog and other forms of air pollution.

### ■ Dry eye syndrome and pollution

The most frequently reported vision problem that is most probably linked to air pollution is dry eyes. This is especially common in places like Beijing, where air pollution is found in the form of smog (a combination of smoke and fog). Fog may be harmless enough, but smoke can be incredibly harmful to the eyes.

Though an exact cause as to why pollution causes dry eyes has yet to be found, researchers suggest that it may have to do with the lack of humidity in highly polluted areas. Areas with higher humidity are less likely to suffer from pollution-related dry eyes.

### ■ Symptoms of dry eye syndrome

Live in an urban area and think you may have dry eye syndrome? Have a look at the following symptoms and see if any of them apply to you.

#### ■ Symptoms of dry eyes:

- Feeling of dryness
- Stinging or burning sensation in the eye
- Eye soreness
- Stringy mucus both in and around the eye
- Intense sensitivity to wind or smoke (eyes become more watery than normal)
- Eye redness
- Sticky eyelids
- Blurred vision (normally at the end of the day)
- Photophobia (light sensitivity)

General rule of thumb: if two or more symptoms apply to you, give your eye doctor a call and make an appointment!

If left untreated, dry eyes can lead to several complications including loss of vision, worsened photophobia, and pain in the eyes.

### ■ How is dry eye syndrome treated?

Unfortunately for the time being, dry eyes cannot be cured, but numerous methods have been developed to treat them.

The most used treatment for dry eyes is artificial tear drops and/or ointments. Artificial tear drops are generally available over the counter. However, be warned that no one artificial tear drop is the same and will react differently with different people. You may have to play around and find which drop is best for you. As for ointments, they provide thicker moisture, which is best suited for overnight use. A fairly new medical invention called Lipiflow uses heat and pressure to unblock glands. Once unblocked, these glands begin to produce the much needed oil to keep the eyes hydrated for longer.

A super effective prevention method, which many people overlook, is proper nutrition. Research is beginning to suggest that a daily intake of fish oil and omega-3s may help improve the condition of those with dry eyes.

### ■ How to protect your eyes

It would be unrealistic to recommend never leaving your house or never going into the city to avoid pollution and potential dry eye. Air pollution is, for the most part, out of your control. However, there are steps you can take to make sure that your eyes are getting the best protection they can get.

The first and easiest thing you can do is to stay hydrated. Your body needs to be hydrated for your eyes to produce the correct amount of tears. Experts suggest about eight glasses of water a day is sufficient. Next, wear sunglasses! Not only do they make you look like a celebrity, sunglasses are great for providing your eyes with a basic protection from dust, debris, or sand blowing in the wind. Protective goggles are also a viable option.

Another easy way to protect your eyes is to increase the indoor humidity in your home. The air outside may be dry, but that doesn't mean the air in your home needs to be. This will help your eyes keep moist and has several other health benefits like keeping your sinuses clear! (Source: [rebuildyourvision.com](http://rebuildyourvision.com))

## Easy practices to feel better about your life

### The power of small, simple and mindful acts

Our thoughts condition the quality of our emotions. Taking care of our emotional health will make us feel better about ourselves and about life. It will improve our ability to connect with others and to build meaningful relations.

The stoic philosopher Epictetus taught us that our own freedom depends on the ability to let go of the things we cannot control:

Freedom is the only worthy goal in

life. It is won by disregarding things that lie beyond our control.

Ergo, the philosopher admonished us, we need to concentrate on the things that are under our control, such as the thoughts that dwell in our mind.

It is when we are unaware of this ability that our mind becomes hostage to negative thoughts. We lose our freedom, our inner peace, and our lucidity.

The quality of our thoughts determines the quality of our emotions. In turn, emotions shape the quality of our life; they govern our actions (or lack of actions) which in turn determine the results we produce in life. In other words, the life we get mirrors the thoughts we entertain in life.

For example, self-doubt (a negative thought about ourselves) produces fear and anxiety in our lives (negative emotions) and might prevent us from taking advantage of an opportunity or to accomplish a task (inaction). As a result, we don't get the desired result (and we experience failure). In reality, failure is feedback on the thoughts that occupied our mind.

The good news is that we can do a lot to feel better about ourselves and about life by taking

care of our mind and the quality of its thoughts.

As a conflict resolution specialist I often find myself working in hostile environments and taking care of my emotional health has been important for self-mastery, rapport building, and problem-solving.

Here are some easy practices you can adopt to feel better about yourself and about your life (these are practices that I have tested) :

### ■ Recall a memory of enchanting scenery.

It might be a landscape your recall from your childhood, or from a recent trip you took. Connect with the memory of that passage and with the positive feelings you experienced at the time. In addition to connecting with the image, connect with the experience as well. Visualize the experience, re-create the feelings. Contemplate that scenery.

### ■ Mindful walking

Stop what you are doing, get up, and walk very slowly, feeling every movement of your foot and of your leg as they move forward. To focus on your walk is also a great way to clear your mind of thoughts that might bring you anxiety or discomfort. Practicing mindful walking will enhance your capacity to concentrate

when you get back to work. Do this for 3-5 minutes.

### ■ Let people know that you care about them

Love and friendship need to be expressed. Take the time to connect with someone you love and whose friendship you appreciate. Make the commitment to write an email or to call someone you love every day. It can be a family member or a friend. Share something about your life and express appreciation for the presence of the other in your life. If someone did something nice for you, express heartfelt gratitude. On your way home, stop and buy some flowers for your significant other, even though it's not an anniversary. Find ways to express your love and appreciation.

### ■ Listen to music

Find a comfortable corner in your office or your home. Sit down and put your headphones on. Listen to music that relaxes you. Focus on the music and lose yourself in the experience. Deeply enjoy the melody caressing your mind.

### ■ Express gratitude

Take a few moments every day to annotate in your journal the gratitude you feel for the people who are in your life and the opportunities you are given.

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

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## 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** Microsoft Surface 5 with Windows 10 Redstone 3 will be released Fall 2017.

MS could upgrade the screen with a built-in fingerprint scanner, Intel Kaby Lake processor, 16 GB RAM and 256GB of fast storage.

**2** U.K. cops steal criminal's iPhone to keep it from locking.

Instead of bringing the battle into the judicial system, the U.K. cops decided to take matters into their own hands by mugging a criminal and taking control of his iPhone before the bad guy had the time to lock his handset.

**3** Apple said iPhone 6s battery problem is from too much air in the manufacturing process.

The problem usually happens when the battery indicator indicates that there is 30% of life left on the cell.

The phone then shuts down and won't turn back on until the charger is plugged in

**4** Microsoft has announced that its HoloLens augmented reality headset - which has only been available in the US and Canada so far - is now also available for purchase in Australia, Ireland, France, Germany, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

HoloLens is currently up for pre-order in Japan, with shipments scheduled for next month.

**5** A couple of days ago a report surfaced revealing a very weird problem that some owners of the Google Pixel and Pixel XL have been facing. It has to do with the camera, but unlike the lens flare thing that's probably caused by hardware issues, this one looks like it's 100% software-related. That is, in a way, good news, because it means a fix can be implemented through a software update which should make it go away completely.

**6** Taiwanese prosecutors indicted a former senior level Foxconn manager for allegedly stealing and selling 5,700 iPhone handsets in China, to pocket around \$1.56 million, according to AsiaOne.

"Tsai", A senior level manager from an Apple supplier stole thousands of iPhone handsets from the testing line, prosecutors said.

**7** British Telecom (BT) has appointed a new general director for its operations in Brazil.

Alex Ingles joined the company eight years ago and spent his four initial years working at the company's London offices before returning to Sao Paulo.

**8** Sony is dropping its anti-science stance against old games, and it is bringing back some of its most beloved franchises. That includes the Wipeout Omega Collection and remasters of PaRappa The Rapper, LocoRoco, and Patapon.

**9** Hackers stole more than 2 billion rubles (\$31 million) from correspondent accounts at the Russian central bank.

Central bank official Artyom Sychyov discussed the losses at a briefing, saying that the hackers had attempted to steal about 5 billion rubles.

**10** Microsoft Word and PowerPoint will use AI to automatically write photo descriptions.

Tech giant company said that starting in early 2017, its Word and PowerPoint applications will be able to automatically come up with descriptions of photos that users can add into documents.

## First Panasonic's IPS LCD against OLED for professionals and industries

Panasonic's salad days in the consumer TV space are in its past, but today the company announced a new IPS display technology that might help it win back some of the professional market. Essentially, it's making an LCD panel with the precision backlighting capabilities of an OLED. Thanks to a new backlight technology, these panels can turn off the backlight on a per-pixel basis, granting them an advertised " over 1,000,000:1" contrast ratio. Meaning that blacks will be absolutely black while whites could be eye-searingly bright — within the same image — and HDR and colors should look incredibly life-like.



The company says that these are perfect for use in video production work, while one of the provided sample images shows a 31-inch panel being used to display an x-ray image. Sony has dabbled in the medical display space, as well. What's more, the new light-modulating cells help the screens hit a maximum (and stable) brightness of 1,000 cd/m2. For context, Samsung's KS8000 TV hits 137 cd/m2, and 766 cd/m2 with HDR on, out of the box. So yeah, this could be pretty impressive.

Whether we see this tech hit a TV you can grab from Best Buy is anyone's guess. These types of panels are usually incredibly expensive and not meant for folks like you and me.

(Source: business wire)

# Your computer is now a "crime scene"

By Violet Blue

In a blow to privacy on par with the Patriot Act, changes to the rules around warrants grant the US government unprecedented hacking powers in any jurisdiction, and on as many devices as it wants.

The changes to a measure known as Rule 41 were made earlier this year but went into effect Thursday after lots of opposition. Basically, they let any judge issue a warrant to remotely access an unlimited number of computers and devices located in any jurisdiction. There was plenty of objection from senators and congresspeople, groups like the Center for Democracy and Technology and companies such as Google, who said it's unconstitutional and invades citizens' rights to privacy.

All that came to a head this week when months of opposition and requests for inquiry and review came to nothing. In Congress, a bipartisan bill called the Review the Rule Act was introduced, but that failed in Washington on Wednesday afternoon.

In a last-ditch effort, civil-society organizations, trade associations and companies sent a letter to lawmakers dated Nov. 21 pleading to delay the implementation of Rule 41's changes and subject them to further review. "The consequences of this rule change are far from clear, and could be deleterious to security as well as to Fourth Amendment privacy rights," they wrote.

The letter explained the changes "could be abused to obtain a single warrant to search millions of targets" and "would allow a judge to issue a warrant that would permit law enforcement to search the computers of hundreds of entirely innocent crime victims without their consent." It's kind of like searching all the houses on your block, without clearing with the owners first, just to find one bad guy.

Also concerned were 22 senators and congresspeople, who wrote the attorney general at the Department of Justice in October with a lot of specific questions about implementation.

The DoJ responded to the lawmakers in kind, with a letter. It didn't answer their questions. Instead, the DoJ reminded them that the use of remote searches isn't new and that warrants for these searches are already issued under Rule 41, including ones for multiple computers. Warrant applicants will still have to get the prop-



**Except trying to fight botnets by expanding FBI hack and search powers is a quick-and-dirty, but highly problematic, way to solve this problem. Not to mention how horribly it could be abused. If there's anything we learned from the Silk Road bust, it's that if there's a chance for abuse, there exists someone within the authorities who consider it a chance worth taking.**

er probable-cause ducks in a row for the judge, they assured.

But, of course, it remains to be seen whether or not the judges will actually understand what it is they're rubber-stamping approval for. The letter was also pretty light on explaining the part where if someone gets hacked, the FBI gets to poke around in their computers or devices without the user's consent -- or knowledge -- until after the fact.

By examining the DoJ's response, it's easy to tell that this whole messy mix of desires and half-cocked protectionism is slightly personal for the authorities. The main thrust of Rule 41's changes is about dealing with its ongoing irritation with on-line anonymity tool Tor. The main changes to search warrants and jurisdiction, Justice said, specifically apply to when a suspect is using anonymizing software. It named Tor specifically.

In that letter, the DoJ included a long digression about Tor and the FBI's investigation into a vile darknet child-sexual-exploitation website called Playpen. The FBI had taken control of the site and exploit-

ed vulnerabilities in Tor to unmask visitors, some of whom are currently being prosecuted. It said that despite successes with the Playpen investigation, "Federal courts have ordered the suppression of evidence in some of the prosecutions because of the lack of clear venue in the current version of Rule 41."

Pedos can die in a million fires; unquestionably, this is the kind of fighting we want to see the FBI doing, as long as it's being done properly. Consider the FBI's willingness to take over darknet sites and own site visitors, and it shines a fresh light on how things are about to change in the world of underground sites.

With the legal framework to make anything it finds stick, it's safe to say that the golden age of buying illegal stuff on the darknet is over. It also feels increasingly like the use of anonymity tools automatically makes you a suspect, which is already true in repressive regimes around the world that target Tor users.

Where Rule 41's changes get weirder is when it comes to botnet victims. The

DoJ made a case in its letter that the warrant changes are needed for investigation when the victims of computer crime (botnet and ransomware) reside in different jurisdictions. In a blog post, U.S. Assistant Attorney General Leslie Caldwell likened the computers of botnet victims to a crime scene -- that authorities need access to.

Unlike a regular warrant for search, in which the homeowner is notified by authorities before they enter and search the premises, targets under Rule 41 are notified only after they've been hacked and searched.

Imagine the FBI breaks into and enters your house in order to find out who you are, to tell you that your house was burgled. And after, it's like oh, here's the paperwork that gave us permission to burgle you in the first place.

On one hand, I get what it's trying to do here, sort of. It's attempting to deal with things like the Mirai botnet, which shut down half the internet (and is still a growing threat). To do that, current thinking is to intervene and stop the attacks on the victims' devices. Which means accessing the computers and DVRs of people who don't know they're infected with a botnet.

Except trying to fight botnets by expanding FBI hack and search powers is a quick-and-dirty, but highly problematic, way to solve this problem. Not to mention how horribly it could be abused. If there's anything we learned from the Silk Road bust, it's that if there's a chance for abuse, there exists someone within the authorities who consider it a chance worth taking.

Combine the anonymity-tool-unmasking intentions and the interest in accessing botnet victims' devices, and now there's a whole lot of people who are gonna get legally hacked by their own government. Thinking about what this means under a Trump presidency gives it all a much darker cast.

Our president-elect is unapologetically vindictive, openly advocates hacking his opponents, and has called for expanding the NSA's domestic spying programs -- abuse seems all but unavoidable. International cyberwar incidents also appear highly likely, because no one's said jack about what happens when one of the computers the FBI hacks, surveils and gathers evidence from is across a border.

I suppose we'll find out.

(Source: engadget)

## MIT's AI figured out how humans recognize faces

It appears machines may already be catching up to humans, at least in the world of computational biology. A team of researchers at the MIT-based Center for Brains, Minds and Machines (CBMM) found that the system they designed to recognize faces had spontaneously come up with a step that can identify portraits regardless of the rotation of the face. This adds credence to a previous theory about how humans recognize faces that was based studies of MRIs of primate brains.

The as-yet-unnamed system is a computational model of how the human brain recognizes faces, and was trained to identify particular visages from a battery of sample images it was fed. In the process of learning to spot faces, the program created an intermediate processing step that looked at "a face's degree of rotation - say 45 degrees from center - but not the direction."

In layman's terms, this means the system, which was looking for invariance (or non-difference) between faces, was able to do so regardless of whether a face was flipped, as long as it was rotated in the same angle. That property is known as "mirror symmetry."



This discovery excites scientists because it duplicates a previously observed feature of how primates process faces, indicating that the system might be doing something similar to the brain. However, it's not for sure. "This is not a proof that we understand what's going on," says Tomaso Poggio, a professor of brain and cognitive sciences at MIT and director of the CBMM.

## The Kodak Ektra will officially be available for purchase on December 9

Nowadays, it seems like smartphones are trying to be the best at virtually everything - the best gaming device, the best web browser, the best MP3 player, the best fitness tracker, etc. Among all of this, the camera seems to be one area that phone manufacturers are constantly working on improving. Whether it be with dual-sensor setups, improved OIS, laser auto-focus, etc., tons of time and attention are being put into the cameras of our smartphones.

Kodak used to be one of the biggest names in the photography world, and the company announced an all-new smartphone back in October by the name of the Kodak Ektra. The name comes from Kodak's memorable rangefinder from all the way back in the mid-twentieth century, and as you'd expect, the Ektra is a smartphone with a tremendous amount of emphasis put towards its camera experience. It certainly is one of the most interesting-looking handsets we've seen this year, and Kodak has just announced that it will officially go on sale starting on December 9th.

Germany will be the first country to get the



phone, and other countries are set to follow after it. The European price is currently est at €499 (\$531.97 USD), and it will initially be available for purchase through Amazon, Media Markt, Ringfoto,

Saturn, kodakphones.com, and notebooksbilliger.de. Following this, the Ektra will be on sale through Telekom on January 16, 2017.

In regards to some of the actual camera specs the Kodak Ektra is packing, we're met with a 21-megapixel sensor with PDAF, OIS, f/2.0 aperture, and a dual LED flash to light up your surroundings while shooting in low-light situations. 4K video recording is also possible with the rear lens, and, as you'd expect, full manual options are also available when taking photos. Kodak isn't messing around with the front-facing shooter either, as the one on the Ektra features a 13MP sensor with PDAF as well.

Rounding out the rest of the specs list is a deca-core Helio X20 processor, 3GB of RAM, 32B of expandable storage, a 3,000 mAh battery, USB Type-C, and Android Marshmallow. The Kodak Ektra is definitely a niche smartphone, but for photography nuts, it just might prove to be one of the best cameras on a smartphone that we've seen yet.

(Source: Android Authority)



# Scientists probe mystery of Pluto's icy heart

Scientists are offering several new scenarios to explain the formation of Pluto's frozen heart-shaped feature, first spotted by NASA's New Horizons spacecraft in 2015.

Researchers have focused on the heart's western lobe, informally named Sputnik Planitia, a deep basin containing three kinds of ices — frozen nitrogen, methane and carbon monoxide — band appearing opposite Charon, Pluto's large, tidally locked moon.

While many scientists suspect that the western half of Pluto's heart formed within a basin created long ago by the impact of a large Kuiper Belt object onto Pluto, at least one new scenario requires no impact.

## Impact basin

Research by University of Maryland astronomy professor Douglas Hamilton and New Horizons colleagues, published last week in the journal *Nature*, shows that this nitrogen ice cap could have formed early on, when Pluto was still spinning quickly, and did not necessarily require an impact basin.

"Once the ice cap forms, it provides a slight asymmetry that either locks toward or away from Charon when Pluto's spin slows to match the orbital motion of the moon," Hamilton said.

Using computer models, Hamilton and coauthors found that Sputnik Plan-



itia's initial location could be explained by Pluto's complex climate, itself forced by the 120 degree tilt of Pluto's spin axis.

NASA's New Horizons mission to the dwarf planet Pluto has provided scientists on Earth with countless puzzles and mysteries. From impossible "sand dunes,"

which were never expected on the tiny planet's frozen surface, to equally unexpected giant mountains, to a surprising absence of so-called impact craters, and selective regional cratering, with highly circular craters not to be expected on any Kuiper Belt object.

**Modeling Pluto's temperatures showed that when averaged over Pluto's 248-year orbit, the latitudes near 30 degrees north and south emerged as the coldest places, far colder than either pole.**

## Pluto's temperature

Modeling Pluto's temperatures showed that when averaged over Pluto's 248-year orbit, the latitudes near 30 degrees north and south emerged as the coldest places, far colder than either pole. Ice would have naturally formed around these latitudes, including at the center of Sputnik Planitia, which is located at 25 degrees north latitude.

Hamilton's model also showed that a small ice deposit naturally attracts more ices by reflecting solar light and heat. As a result, temperatures there remain low, which attracts more ice, and the cycle repeats.

Called the runaway albedo effect, this phenomenon would eventually lead to a single dominating ice cap, like the one observed on Pluto's heart. Under Hamilton's scenario, the ice cap may have been heavy enough to sink a few miles or kilometers into Pluto's crust, which could explain why Sputnik Planitia is lower than the surrounding terrain.

One of those papers, by lead author Francis Nimmo of the University of California Santa Cruz, and New Horizons colleagues, modeled how Sputnik Planitia could have formed if its basin was produced by an impact, such as the one that created Charon.

(Source: [spacecoastdaily.com](#))

## Climate system 'feedback' could push for change in global warming estimates

Global Warming models have been predicting tough times ahead as the planet copes with higher amount of carbon dioxide. A new research paper suggests that the release of CO2 trapped in the soil could aggravate the global warming issue to a much higher magnitude.

The climate system 'feedback' could lead to further warming of our planet and climatologists have reported in a new research paper about excess carbon dioxide released by our planet as it warms up.

The newest culprit fanning global warming concerns in the carbon dioxide trapped in earth over the centuries and scientists are warning that it is re-entering our atmosphere. This excess carbon dioxide could change climate further and we might not be ready for it. The research paper published in journal *Nature* has indicated that the amount of carbon dioxide released in such a process is massive.

## Global warming

The research paper compared the release of carbon dioxide trapped in earth to be as bad as adding an industrialized country of the size of United States. This could lead to more trouble in battle against global warming. The so-called 'feedback' climate system is leading to release of massive amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The risk of such release has been

discussed in the past as well but the new research paper informed that it is already happening.

As our planet warms up, organisms and microbes living in the soil will face a rise in their respiration rate and will release additional greenhouse gases the atmosphere. Methane is bigger trouble to deal with, compared to carbon dioxide. This increase can lead to a feedback loop and higher temperature will only increase the release of greenhouse gases.

The research paper added, The "exchange of carbon (C) between the soil and atmosphere represent a prominent control on atmospheric C concentrations and the climate. These processes are driven by the organisms (plants, microbes, and animals) that live in the soil, the activity of which could be accelerated by anthropogenic warming."

Study lead author Tom Crowther the Netherlands Institute of Ecology said, "If climate change isn't stopped, an additional 55 trillion kilograms of carbon will be released into the atmosphere by the year 2050."

## Carbon feedback

Crowther argues that until now, the science community has often left this potential carbon feedback from planetary soils out of its calculations because it wasn't well enough understood.

A report published by CNN further informed, "Another



er researcher who focuses on Arctic soils and reviewed the study for the Post, permafrost expert Ted Schuur of Northern Arizona University, agreed with Crowther on plant growth, suggesting that even if models predict it may offset soil losses, field studies like the ones summarized here don't support that."

The study team further added that world leaders should not waste any more time and take quick action to deal with climate change.

(Source: [perfsience.com](#))

## The coldest decade of the millennium? How the cold 1430s led to famine and disease

While searching through historical archives to find out more about the 15th-century climate of what is now Belgium, northern France, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, Chantal Camenisch noticed something odd. "I realized that there was something extraordinary going on regarding the climate during the 1430s," says the historian from the University of Bern in Switzerland.

Compared with other decades of the last millennium, many of the 1430s' winters and some springs were extremely cold in the Low

Countries, as well as in other parts of Europe. In the winter of 1432-33, people in Scotland had to use fire to melt wine in bottles before drinking it. In central Europe, many rivers and lakes froze over. In the usually mild regions of southern France, northern and central Italy, some winters lasted until April, often with late frosts. This affected food production and food prices in many parts of Europe. "For the people, it meant that they were suffering from hunger, they were sick and many of them died," says Camenisch.

She joined forces with Kathrin Keller, a cli-

mate modeller at the Oeschger Center for Climate Change Research in Bern, and other researchers, to find out more about the 1430s climate and how it impacted societies in northwestern and central Europe.

They looked into climate archives, data such as tree rings, ice cores, lake sediments and historical documents, to reconstruct the climate of the time.

## Climatic conditions

The "reconstructions show that the climatic conditions during the 1430s were

very special. With its very cold winters and normal to warm summers, this decade is a one of a kind in the 400 years of data we were investigating, from 1300 to 1700 CE," says Keller. "What cannot be answered by the reconstructions alone, however, is its origin - was the anomalous climate forced by external influences, such as volcanism or changes in solar activity, or was it simply the random result of natural variability inherent to the climate system?"

(Source: [EurekAlert](#))

## Enjoy the Experience of High-Speed Internet for the 1st Time in Country

For the first time in the country, high-speed internet over 100 megabyte per second (MBPS) was inaugurated in Iran at Tehran ARTEMIS Administrative-Trade Complex in a prestigious ceremony in the presence of Eng. Saraeian Chief Executive and Member of Board of Directors of Telecommunications Company of Iran (TCI).

Most modern engineering and architectural techniques have been used in designing and constructing the complex such as optical fiber and FTTH using world's cutting-edge and up-to-date technology, the report added.

With the coordination made in this regard with TCI, high-speed internet, over 100 MGPS, started working as pilot project for the first time in ARTEMIS Administrative-Trade Complex.



It should be noted that high-speed internet will be offered as free to all visitors and shoppers inside the

Complex.

Mr. Saraeian the Chief Executive of TCI was the first speaker in the inaugural ceremony of this internet package at the Complex who expressed his special thanks to those who forged cooperation and cooperation mutually for launching this modern projects and said: "ARTEMIS Administrative and Trade Complex is equipped with 60 administrative units, 33 trade units, food court, restaurant, coffee shop and 430 parking lots, constructed in 24 stories."

Collocation of magnificent set of brands and valuable products have been juxtaposed along with one another in a calm and snug environment in this grand complex. Broadly speaking, this Complex brings about a unique experience of delightful shopping for all family members in a high-speed internet environment.

## Official Urges Focusing on New Model of Oil Contracts Strictly

New model of petroleum contracts should be taken into consideration in an expert-level session.

Dr. Jahanbakhsh Amini, Former Majlis Energy Committee announced the above statement and said: "Alleviating the degree of Iranophobia among prestigious international investors is one of the salient achievements of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official title of nuclear deal."

A landmark nuclear deal was inked between Iran and world's six major powers in mid-July 2015, he said, adding: "After the im-

plementation of JCPOA in Jan. 2016, many prestigious international investors voiced their readiness to attend Iran's lucrative market especially in oil and gas sectors."

Although Iran's oil industry has experience of over a century, the country stands at low level in terms of technology of extraction and production, he said, adding: "Due to lackluster performance of oil officials in this regard, nowadays, it is observed that neighboring countries have overtaken Iran in the field of more exploitation from oil wells."

For instance, neighboring Qatar has overtaken Iran in South Pars Gas Field in terms of more extraction of gas per day, he criticized.

He called on responsible officials in the country to take more logical measures in order to get lion's share of gas in South Pars Gas Field.

Principally, international oil firms are not ready to conclude contract within the framework of "buyback" due to the current international conditions of oil market, he said, adding: "Unlike the buyback contracts, new model of contract

will generate more job opportunities in crisis-stricken Iranian labor market."

In new model of oil contract, foreign party will benefit if foreign partner is found profitable for Iranian party, otherwise, any contract will not be concluded in this respect with other foreign partners, he maintained.

In technological sector, foreign party in formulation of new contract is obliged to cooperate with Iranian oil companies in the field of transfer of technology and technical knowhow, he ended.

## Why is a blue cloud appearing over Antarctica?

Noctilucent, or night-glowing, clouds appear over the South Pole each year. This year they arrived much earlier than usual, puzzling scientists.

The South Pole's special blanket of clouds usually rolls in during late November and early December, just in time to give the Southern Hemisphere its very own light show for the holidays.

But this year, NASA says that the South Pole's annual noctilucent, or night-shining, cloud show arrived much sooner than expected, in mid-November.

Usually, NASA uses the unusual clouds to decode the surrounding mesosphere, the atmospheric layer directly above the stratosphere, explained NASA's Lina Tran in a blog post.

The noctilucent clouds provide clues to the mesosphere's "connections to other parts of the atmosphere, weather, and climate," she wrote. They are summer phenomena, appearing above the Arctic in July and August and above the Antarctic in November and December.

"This is when the mesosphere is most humid, with water vapor wafting up from lower altitudes. Additionally, this is also when the mesosphere is the coldest place on Earth - dropping as low as minus 210 degrees Fahrenheit - due to seasonal air flow patterns," she explained.

Not only are clouds in the mesosphere incredibly cold, they are also incredibly dry - about a million times dryer than the Sahara Desert, according to noctilucent cloud expert Gary Thomas.

The noctilucent clouds are best known for their vivid color - they appear to be wispy and shining from the ground, and bright blue from space. While most clouds are made of droplets of water or ice clustered around grains of ordinary dust, noctilucent clouds are seeded by the fine debris left behind by disintegrating meteors, and they "glow a bright, shocking blue when they reflect sunlight," said Ms. Tran.

(Source: [The CSM](#))

## NASA photo reveals a startling 300-foot-wide rift in Antarctic Ice Shelf

The breakup of the massive Larsen C Ice Shelf in Antarctica is getting closer and will eventually produce an iceberg the size of Delaware prowling the Southern Ocean, according to new NASA data.

On Friday, NASA released an astonishing new image taken by researchers flying above the ice shelf on Nov. 10 showing the crack is getting longer, deeper and wider. Scientists think it will eventually cause a large section of the shelf to break off.

The scientists associated with a NASA field campaign known as Operation IceBridge measured the Larsen C fracture to be about 70 miles long, more than 300 feet wide and about a third of a mile deep.

The "crack completely cuts through the Ice Shelf but it does not go all the way across it - once it does, it will produce an iceberg roughly the size of the state of Delaware," NASA said in a press release.

When this iceberg calving event happens, likely within the next decade, it will be the largest calving event in Antarctica since 2000, the third biggest such event ever recorded and the largest from this particular ice shelf, scientists say.

Larsen C lies next to a smaller ice shelf that disintegrated in 2002 after developing a crack similar to the one now growing in Larsen C.

Ice shelves breaking off into icebergs don't directly increase sea levels, since their ice is already resting in the ocean like an ice cube in a glass.

However, because they act like doorstops to the land-based ice behind them, when the shelves give way, the glaciers can begin moving into the sea.

(Source: [The Mashable](#))

## The brain has more than one multitasking mode

Despite how much noise pop psychology makes about being left-brained or right-brained, the brain is really a very cohesive unit. The right and left hemispheres have some differences, but they communicate with each other via dedicated neural connections that bridge the two halves of the brain.

Some people, though, have the two halves of their brains separated as a treatment for severe epilepsy. What's remarkable is that this has fewer effects than you might imagine. Although there certainly are differences in how a split brain behaves, people who have this surgery tend to behave largely as we'd expect anyone else to, and they're actually better at certain kinds of dual tasks.

These split-brained individuals are interesting because they can help us understand how the brain processes information and how it integrates or separates tasks that are running concurrently. For instance, we know that the two hemispheres in a split brain have to process tasks separately from each other (the connection between them is gone, remember), with each hemisphere unaware of what the other one is up to.

A group of neuroscientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison suspected that healthy brains might sometimes process tasks separately when they multitask. Although the brain wouldn't literally split, the researchers thought they might be able to detect two separate networks operating independently of each other.

(Source: [arstechnica.com](#))



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# Deadly bombings hit Iraq's Kurdistan region

Iraqi forces reclaim 4 villages north of Mosul

At least 13 people have been killed or injured in twin bomb attacks that rocked the province of Sulaymaniyah in Iraq's semi-autonomous region, local media say.

On Sunday, two bombers detonated their explosive belts near residential areas at a village close to the town of Darbandikhan, Shafaaq News website quoted a Kurdish military source as saying.

A third bomber also failed to set off his explosives and was killed by security forces.

The exact number of casualties is still unknown.

Following the blasts, clashes broke out between a group of armed men and Kurdish security guards in the area.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attacks, which bear the hallmarks of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists.

The latest terrorist attacks come as Iraqi forces are engaged in large-scale battles to drive ISIL out of the northern city of Mosul, the terrorist group's last remaining bastion in Iraq.

The Iraqi army has the backing of different military groups, including Kurdish



Peshmerga forces, in its military push to liberate Mosul.

ISIL has in recent weeks stepped up its terror activities in different parts of Iraq, particularly Baghdad, in revenge for the heavy blows it is taking on the Mosul front.

The United Nations said in a report earlier this week that the acts of terrorism and violence left nearly 3,000 people

dead in Iraq in November.

## ■ New victory

Meanwhile, Iraqi army soldiers have managed to liberate four villages north of the strategic city of Mosul as government forces, backed by fighters from Popular Mobilization Units (al-Hashd al-Sha'abi) and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, press ahead with an operation to expel

ISIL terrorists from the area.

The commander of Nineveh Liberation Operation, Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Yarallah, said in a press statement on Saturday that the 16th Infantry Division of the Army had recaptured the village of Gara Tepe, and hoisted the Iraqi national flag over a number of buildings there, Arabic-language al-Sumaria television network reported.

Yarallah added that Iraqi government forces inflicted heavy losses on ISIL during clashes with the Takfiri terrorists.

Iraqi soldiers also established control over the villages of Kuri Ghariban, al-Darawish and Abu Jarbouah north of Mosul, located some 400 kilometers north of the capital, Baghdad.

Moreover, Iraqi Special Operations Forces managed to liberate al-Kafa'at neighborhood in the eastern quarter of Mosul on Saturday.

Iraqi Federal Police also announced that security forces had foiled an infiltration attempt by ISIL terrorists into the village of Azbah south of Mosul.

(Source: agencies)

## World must end 'genocide' of Rohingya Muslims: Malaysian PM

Malaysian premier has called on the global community to help stop the "genocide" of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, slamming the country's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi for her inaction on the bloodletting against the minority community.

On Thursday, Najib Razak joined some 5,000 Malaysians, who had taken to the streets of Kuala Lumpur to show their support for Myanmar's long-persecuted Rohingya community.

"The world cannot sit by and watch genocide taking place," the prime minister said in an address to the large crowd.

Najib further called on the United Nations, the International Criminal Court and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to intervene and help stop the plight of Rohingya Muslims.

The Malaysian leader slammed Suu Kyi for failing to act on the sufferings of Myanmar's Muslim community.

Suu Kyi heads Myanmar's National League for Democracy, which holds parliamentary majority. Promoted in the West as a democracy icon, she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her efforts towards "democratization" of the country.

"What's the use of Aung San Suu Kyi having a Nobel Prize?" asked Najib. "We want to tell Aung San Suu Kyi, enough is enough... We must and we will defend Muslims and Islam."



lims and Islam."

In a strongly-worded statement on Saturday, Malaysia's Foreign Ministry slammed the Myanmar government for engaging in the "ethnic cleansing" of its Rohingya minority.

"The fact that only one particular ethnicity is being driven out is by definition ethnic cleansing," said the statement.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims have fled to neighboring countries in recent years, it noted, adding the influx "makes this matter no longer an internal matter but an international matter."

The 1.1 million-strong minority, which the government

brands as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, has been suffering widely-reported systematic aggression for years.

The Myanmar army has recently stepped up its crackdown on Rohingya Muslims in the state of Rakhine following a deadly attack on the country's border guards on October 9. The government blamed the assault on armed Rohingyas.

The state has been under a military lockdown that came with a "counterinsurgency" operation following the October raid, which killed nine police officers.

The UN says more than 10,000 Rohingya have in recent weeks fled to Bangladesh, escaping a bloody army crackdown being waged against them in the name of security measures.

Those arriving in Bangladesh have recounted stories of gang rape, torture, and murder at the hands of Myanmar's forces.

Myanmar has denied allegations of abuse, but has also banned foreign journalists and independent investigators from the area.

Government-allied Buddhist extremists have been waging communal violence in the Rakhine State, where the Rohingyas are concentrated, since 2012. Hundreds of people have been killed and tens of thousands forced from their homes as a result.

(Source: Press TV)

## Australian PM 'confident' Trump will keep refugee deal

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has said he is confident a refugee resettlement deal with the United States will go ahead, despite White House comments which seemed to cast doubt about its future under a Trump administration.

White House deputy spokesman Eric Schultz told reporters the deal to resettle in the U.S. refugees currently held at Australian-funded offshore detention centers was reached with President Barack Obama, and it was the prerogative of each president to set policies.

"We have one president at a time," Schultz said on Friday. "The president-elect, Donald Trump, will set the policies once he takes the oath of office."

Turnbull downplayed the comments when questioned by reporters in Sydney on Sunday.

"It's a very good arrangement and we are confident that we'll continue through the change of administration," the Australian Associated Press quoted him saying.

Australia announced last month that the Obama administration had agreed to take a substantial number

of the 1,200 refugees held on Nauru and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea.

The resettlement deal with U.S. came after Turnbull agreed in September to take part in a U.S.-led program to resettle refugees from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador as part of Australia's annual intake of 18,750 asylum seekers.

Whether Trump, who has advocated a ban on people from nations that had been "compromised by terrorism", honors the agreement is uncertain.

U.S. Homeland Security officials were scheduled to begin assessing asylum seekers on Nauru this week.

Many asylum seekers at the camps are Muslims who have fled conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Ian Rintoul, from the Refugee Action Coalition, said it was very clear the deal Australia struck with the U.S. was not airtight.

"The announcement was very hastily put together because they weren't expecting Trump to win and then it came very clear the whole deal could roll over," he said.

(Source: agencies)

## Uzbekistan votes in first polls since Karimov's death

Polls have opened in Uzbekistan to elect a successor to the late Leader Islam Karimov, with long-serving Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev expected to score a comfortable victory in the ex-Soviet state.

Uzbekistan's Election Commission said in a statement carried by Russian news agencies that the turnout in the vote was nearly 70 percent by 3pm, five hours before the polls were to close.

Voting at over 9,300 polling stations throughout the Muslim-majority Central Asian country with no tradition of competitive elections began at 01:00 GMT and was due to close at 15:00 GMT.

Mirziyoyev, who was appointed prime minister in 2003, became interim president following Karimov's death at the age of 78 in September from a stroke.

Representing the same Liberal-Democratic Party that Karimov stood for in the last presidential vote in 2015, Mirziyoyev is facing three other challengers in a bid to secure a five-year term.

But analysts noted that the candidates are not critical of Mirziyoyev or the regime in the country bordering Af-

ghanistan where Beijing, Moscow, and Washington all vie for influence.

Two of the candidates challenged Karimov in past elections, each receiving about 3 percent of the vote.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which deployed an observer team to monitor the election, has described the campaign as "strictly regulated" and "moderately visible".

Karimov's 27-year reign began in 1989 at the tail-end of the Soviet era, and was often criticized for extreme abuses of human rights.

Few expect 59-year-old Mirziyoyev to make serious political changes if elected, after serving at the top of his predecessor's state for so long.

But since coming to power Mirziyoyev has offered clemency to at least one prominent political prisoner, while indicating his government will prioritize reforms to the heavily regulated state economy.

Almost all Western media long have been barred from reporting inside Uzbekistan, and the country's independent journalists and activists have faced sustained harassment.

(Source: agencies)

## Fake U.S. embassy in Ghana shut down after 10 years issuing visas

Authorities in Ghana have busted a fake United States embassy in the capital Accra run by a criminal network that for a decade issued illegally obtained authentic visas, the U.S. State Department has said.

Until it was shut down, the sham embassy was housed in a rundown, pink two-storey building with a corrugated iron roof and flew an American flag outside. Inside hung a portrait of the U.S. president, Barack Obama.

"It was not operated by the United States government, but by figures from both Ghanaian and Turkish organized crime rings and a Ghanaian attorney practicing immigration and criminal law," the State Department said in a statement.

Turkish citizens who spoke English and Dutch posed as consular officers and staffed the operation. Investigations also uncovered a fake Dutch embassy, the State Department said.

Officials in the Netherlands were not immediately reachable for comment on Sunday.

The crime ring issued fraudulently obtained but legitimate U.S. visas and false identification documents, including birth certificates at a cost of \$6,000 (£4,700) each, the statement said.

During raids that led to a number of arrests, authorities also seized authentic and counterfeit Indian, South African and Schengen zone visas and 150 passports from 10 different countries along with a laptop and smartphones.

The statement did not say how the gang obtained the authentic visas or how many people were believed to have illegally entered the U.S. and other countries using visas issued by the crime ring.

"The criminals running the operation were able to pay off corrupt officials to look the other way, as well as obtain legitimate blank documents to be doctored," the statement said.

There was no immediate comment from Ghana's Criminal Investigations Division.

Visas for western countries are in high demand in Africa and embassies say the visa market is a big target for organized crime.

The real U.S. embassy in Ghana is a prominent and heavily fortified complex in Cantonments, one of the capital's most expensive neighborhoods. Lines of people queue outside each day for visa appointments and other consular business.

The fake embassy was open three mornings a week and did not accept walk-in appointments. Instead, the criminals advertised on billboards in Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast and brought clients from across west Africa to Accra where they rented them hotel rooms in nearby hotels.

U.S. authorities conducting a broader security operation were tipped off about it and assembled a team including the Ghana Detectives Bureau and police as well as other international partners to shut down the ring.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Thousands bid farewell to Cuba's Fidel Castro

President Raul Castro has led tens of thousands of Cubans in a pledge to defend the socialist legacy of his brother Fidel Castro, who died last week aged 90 and will be interred in the city where the Cuban Revolution was launched.

"This is the unconquered Fidel who calls us with his example," the president, dressed in his four-star general's uniform, told a crowd that had burst into chants of "I am Fidel" on Saturday night.

"Yes, we will overcome any obstacle, turmoil or threat in the building of socialism in Cuba," Raul Castro, 85, said in a speech before Santiago's packed central plaza.

Castro's ashes will be entombed near the remains of Cuba's independence hero Jose Marti, in a private ceremony beginning on Sunday at 7am (12:00 GMT), concluding nine days of national mourning.

Raul Castro was joined on the stage by leftist foreign dignitaries and the Cuban political leadership to bid farewell to the man known to most Cubans as "El Comandante" - the commander - or simply "Fidel".

After two days of events in Havana, Castro's funeral cortege departed on a three-day, 800km journey east, retracing the route that the triumphant rebels took upon overthrowing US-backed Fulgencio Batista in 1959.

Raul Castro said "millions" had come out to pay tribute. Crowds have greeted the caravan along the whole route, with volunteers sprucing up bridges and houses with fresh paint in Castro's honor.

Although billboards with Castro quotes stand throughout the country and his portrait hangs from numerous government buildings and in private homes, Fidel Castro's image will not be immortalized with statues and public places will not be named after him, Raul Castro said.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## U.S. Officials fear dozens are dead in Oakland fire

California officials fear dozens may have died in a massive fire that swept through an Oakland warehouse where a concert was taking place on Friday night.

Nine people have been confirmed dead, and dozens of others remain missing, officials said.

In a news conference on Saturday, authorities said they expected the death toll to rise, but they did not know by how much. "We're expecting the worst — maybe a couple dozen victims here," Sgt. Ray Kelly, spokesman for the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, told reporters.

Drones equipped with thermal technology were being used to scan the building for possible survivors, Kelly said. Initial reports, however, were grim.

The building was still too unstable to enter, Mark Hoffmann, deputy chief of the Oakland Fire Department, said on Saturday. He told Reuters about a dozen people survived the blaze, including one who went to a local hospital for treatment.

The three-alarm fire was reported at about 11:30 p.m. on Friday at a building off 31st Avenue and International Boulevard, about three miles outside of downtown Oakland, according to the Oakland Police Department.

The fire broke out during a party featuring musician Golden Donna's 100% Silk West Coast Tour. Oakland Fire Chief Teresa Deloach-Reed told The Washington Post that more than 50 people were inside the building, a warehouse known as the Oakland Ghost Ship that served as a venue for artist exhibits and parties.

Authorities said it wasn't clear whether electrical issues, pyrotechnics, or errant candles or cigarettes had started the fire, and that an arson investigation would also be underway. Fire officials said the building did not have sprinklers.

The fire is not being investigated as a crime, Officer Johnna Watson, a spokeswoman for the Oakland Police Department, said Saturday.

The concert was being held on a second floor, where most of the nine bodies were later found. By the time firefighters arrived at the scene, the staircase to the second floor had burned away, Hoffman said of the Oakland Fire Department said.

(Source: The Washington Post)

## Indonesians rally for unity after blasphemy protests

Tens of thousands of Indonesians have rallied in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, calling for tolerance and unity after massive protests were held against the city's Christian governor.

The crowds on Sunday filled a major traffic circle in Jakarta and sprawled into its main thoroughfares, waving "We Are Indonesia" signs and a giant red-and-white national flag was held aloft.

The rally was held in response to protests against Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, who is being prosecuted for alleged blasphemy.

Jakarta has been rocked in the past months by major protests against Purnama, who is accused of insulting Islam by criticizing opponents who used Quranic references to attack him ahead of an election in February.

Protesters took to the streets on Friday in the latest rally targeting him, demanding Purnama be jailed on blasphemy charges. A similar rally was held on November 4, both attracting tens of thousands of people.

Purnama is a long-term ally of President Joko Widodo. He denies wrongdoing, but has apologized for the remarks.

Conservative Muslim groups are demanding his immediate arrest. Police say his detention is not necessary and have called for the respect of the legal process.

Sunday's counter-rally for tolerance and unity coincided with a weekly car-free morning in Jakarta when a central artery of the city is handed over to pedestrians for a few hours.

Purnama is popular with many for pushing through tough reforms to modernize the traffic-plagued capital.

However, opinion polls have shown him slipping into second place in the race for re-election as governor.

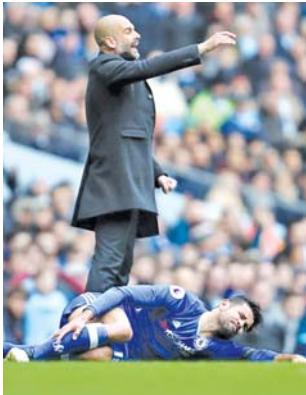
Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population, and less than nine percent of Indonesians are Christians.

(Source: agencies)



## How Antonio Conte beat Pep Guardiola in the battle of three-man defences

The tactical battle explains the pattern of a football match, but the result is dependent upon small moments – and Chelsea's 3-1 victory over Manchester City was a perfect example. Had Kevin De Bruyne, the game's outstanding player for the first hour, converted an open goal to put Manchester City 2-0 ahead, the story would have been about how Pep Guardiola had exposed Antonio Conte's 3-4-3 system. Instead, De Bruyne somehow contrived to hit the bar, and Chelsea's subsequent comeback means Guardiola's system is questioned. The reality isn't quite so simple.



This was a frantic, energetic, end-to-end contest that was both highly tactical and ludicrously open. Guardiola's choice of formation was, as ever, unpredictable even once his starting XI was announced, but was something approaching a 3-2-4-1. Guardiola would go three against three at the back, which depended upon wingers Leroy Sané and Jesús Navas tracking Chelsea's wing-backs

diligently. It meant that there were essentially two major tactical features of this game: first, it was about the wing-backs switching off and neglecting their defensive responsibilities; second, it was about City leaving themselves three against three in defence and Chelsea breaking past them with ease.

The wing-back situation was obvious throughout the first half. Despite some impressive recent showings, Victor Moses is not a natural in the position and his defensive shortcomings were exposed when David Silva floated a wonderful ball over the top for Leroy Sané, breaking past him as he ball-watched. Sané couldn't quite convert. Going the other way, however, the attack-minded Sané had serious problems when forced to track Moses.

On the opposite flank, Jesús Navas sometimes ended up at right-back, pushed there by Marcos Alonso. Sometimes he was attracted too easily to his fellow Spaniard, which was the case for Chelsea's first good goalscoring opportunity, when Eden Hazard accelerated into the space behind him, rounded Claudio Bravo, but surprisingly elected not to shoot from a very tight angle.

Alonso, meanwhile, is a more natural wing-back than Sané, Navas or Moses and initially performed his defensive responsibilities well, sticking tight to Navas. However, Hazard's lack of interest in defending meant there was space towards that flank, so De Bruyne drifted into that zone and repeatedly tried powerful, low crosses from an inside-right position. Alonso started to struggle, though, and eventually it was Navas who provided the cross for City's opener, clumsily diverted into his own net by Gary Cahill.

Navas also crossed for that crucial De Bruyne miss, and while City continued to dominate possession, Chelsea took charge – and took advantage of City's lack of a spare man at the back, too. Whereas Guardiola used Silva and De Bruyne to overload Chelsea in midfield, ensuring that City dominated possession, Hazard and Willian – on for Pedro at half-time – quickly moved high up against the City back three. If Chelsea could transfer the ball quickly into attack, the attackers simply had one man to beat to get through on goal. That's exactly what happened repeatedly throughout the second half.

Chelsea's goals were all particularly direct. First, Cesc Fàbregas received a short just pass inside his own half, glancing up twice to check Diego Costa's positioning even before controlling the ball, and then launched a long, pinpoint pass to the Spaniard's chest. Costa only had Nicolás Otamendi to outmuscle before smashing the ball past Claudio Bravo. It was wonderful play from Fàbregas, who was making his first start in this 3-4-3 system and offered a greater range of passing than the injured Nemanja Matic, which was perfect for a direct approach.

The second goal was entirely different – a classic counter-attacking move involving the front three: Hazard bringing the ball out of defence, and Costa coming short and playing the ball perfectly into the path of the onrushing Willian to smash home. But again, it only needed one Chelsea attacker to beat his opponent, Costa getting the better of Otamendi again by turning him smartly in the centre circle.

The third arrived in stoppage time, after Guardiola had gambled by introducing the striker Kelechi Iheanacho in place of centre-back John Stones. But it was, yet again, entirely simple and involved one Chelsea attacker beating a City defender, with Hazard streaking away from Aleksandar Kolarov, before finishing coolly to cap an outstanding counter-attacking performance after half-time.

Eventually Chelsea's win felt comfortable – but more than Conte getting the better of Guardiola, this was a fascinating, complex tactical battle unlike anything the Premier League has seen before: 3-4-3 against 3-2-4-1. In a tactical sense, the summer arrival of Guardiola and Conte has taken the Premier League to a new level.

(Source: Guardian)

## Modric: Clasico draw feels like a win

Luka Modric says Saturday's 1-1 draw with Barcelona feels like a win for Real Madrid because of the way they salvaged a point late in the game.

Madrid's 33-match unbeaten run appeared to be set to come to an end following Luis Suarez's opener, but Sergio Ramos powered in a header from Modric's free-kick in the 90th minute to preserve Madrid's six-point lead at the top of La Liga.

"It is a hugely important and deserved point. We fought right up till the end and we never gave up," the Croatia international told the club's official website. "We played well, especially in the first half. They were more dominant in the second half and they went ahead, but we never gave up and a goal like that in the Clasico feels like a win.

"It is vital that we remain leaders and we do not let up, we must continue in the same way we have until now.

"We are on a very good run of form and are playing with confidence. "Going 33 games unbeaten is no coincidence. With the quality and the world-class players we have, if we play as a team, giving everything out on the pitch, we are very difficult to beat"

(Source: Goal)

# Iniesta's Clasico cameo gives hope of brighter days for Barca

There was little to cheer in the end for Barcelona. Luis Enrique's side were within minutes of a vital victory at home to Real Madrid in the Clasico at Camp Nou and when Sergio Ramos headed home a late leveller, it will have felt more like a defeat to the Catalan club.

And while Madrid's players celebrated wildly, there was doom and gloom among the Barcelona boys. They knew a chance had been missed to claim an important three points and close in on their fierce rivals at the top of La Liga.

For the first 45 minutes of the match, Barcelona had not been themselves at all. That, in fact, is nothing new lately. In games against Malaga and Real Sociedad and away to Manchester City, the midfield has looked ordinary. And it did again here as Luka Modric ran the show for Real.

But for a period in the second half, Barcelona looked like Barcelona again. The long-awaited return of Andres Iniesta changed everything for Luis Enrique's side. After he came on for Ivan Rakitic with 59 minutes on the clock, Sergio Busquets left Isco in a daze with an outrageous piece of skill in midfield. It ushered in the start of a period of dominance. Suddenly, the supporters had their Barca back.

With Iniesta on the field, Busquets now had a partner in crime, a player with whom he could link up and associate. It brought his and Barca's best football of the match and also allowed Lionel Messi to move further forward. With Andres available, the Argentine no longer had to drop deep to create openings.

And later on, those two men combined wonderfully in a move that could and perhaps should have led to the decisive second goal for the Blaugrana. Already ahead through a Luis Suarez header when Iniesta came on, the midfielder produced a moment of vision and real class as he threaded through a lovely pass for the Argentine attacker. Messi, though, could only drag his shot wide with just Keylor Navas to beat.

That was with eight minutes remaining and still Barca appeared comfortable. In the end, however, Sergio Ramos headed home from a Modric free-kick carelessly given away by Arda Turan.

"The indication was clear," Luis Enrique complained afterwards. "Don't give away any fouls." In this fixture last season, the introduction of Arda saw the game turn in Madrid's favour and it had happened again here. The Barca boss had not learned the lesson.

There were question marks about the Asturian's selections, too. Javier

Mascherano started instead of Samuel Umtiti, recently returned from injury, and the Argentine was nowhere near Ramos as the Madrid skipper scored in the 90th minute. Although lacking full fitness, the Frenchman may well have been a better option.

Likewise Iniesta. Sidelined since injuring his knee on October 22, he has been badly missed by Barca and against Madrid, Andre Gomes started instead, the summer signing receiving his first jeers from frustrated fans. The Portuguese has shown glimpses of quality and has sound technique, but has failed to adapt to this team and his contribution is a million miles from Iniesta's influence. Even at 70 per cent, Andres could surely have offered more.

"It's obvious that Iniesta is a player who is different, a player who is world class," Luis Enrique said afterwards when asked about the midfielder. "He gave us clarity and vision. Also hard work. I am happy he is back."

And Barcelona fans will be too. Because even though it was not enough to win this Clasico or to close the six-point gap on Real Madrid at the top of La Liga, Iniesta's impressive return gives hope that better times lie ahead for the Blaugrana in the coming weeks and months.

(Source: Goal)



## Aubameyang admits he doesn't know if he will be at Dortmund next season



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang admits this season could be his last at Borussia Dortmund, amid reported interest from Spanish giants Real Madrid.

Aubameyang has been repeatedly linked with a move to the Bernabeu and openly admits he promised his grandfather, who died two years ago, that he would one day sign for the club.

The Gabon international has been in sensational form for Dortmund this season and has now scored 18 goals in as many appearances after bagging a brace in a 4-1 win over Borussia Monchengladbach on Saturday.

Aubameyang's current contract at the Signal Iduna Park is due to expire in 2020 but the 27-year-old admits he may look for a move in the summer.

"I don't know if I will stay," he said. "I just think about playing good football

right now. I want to give my best and win titles. I just think about the sport and nothing else.

"Last year I scored 18 goals before Christmas. I hope I can do better this year. But I also want to focus on the second half of the season."

Despite Aubameyang's impressive form, Dortmund have struggled for consistency in the Bundesliga and remain fifth in the division after the win against Monchengladbach.

Thomas Tuchel's side have enjoyed far more success in the Champions League and currently lead Group F by two points ahead of Aubameyang's reported admirers, Real Madrid.

Dortmund will secure top spot in the group if they avoid defeat at the Bernabeu on Wednesday night.

(Source: DailyMail)

## Emery: PSG must learn from Montpellier defeat



Paris Saint-Germain head coach Unai Emery urged his team to learn and move on from Saturday's stunning defeat to Montpellier, turning his attention to the club's upcoming Champions League fixture.

PSG suffered a shock 3-0 defeat at Montpellier as the Ligue 1 champions missed the opportunity to climb to the top of the table.

Goals from Paul Lasne, Elyes Skhiri and Ryad Boudebouz condemned PSG to their third defeat of the season and first in the league against Montpellier since 2010.

Speaking afterwards, Emery lamented the result but quickly turned his attention to Tuesday's European clash against Ludogorets.

"We didn't play well, even though I think we started well. But we conceded a first goal just before the break and the

second one just after," Emery said.

"It's hard for us. Montpellier were clinical and took advantage of our mistakes. At 2-0, we created a lot of chances to get back into it, but we weren't clinical enough.

"We're now going to think about the game on Tuesday, learn the lessons of this evening, have more motivation, more concentration, not make mistakes and not allow our opponents to get into the game as we did this evening."

PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi added: "The most important thing is the next game in the Champions League. I hope for the revival of the team. The season starts for us on Tuesday.

"In football, nothing is guaranteed. If you are not at your level, you can lose anywhere."

(Source: Goal)

## Gerard Pique: Barcelona can be 'unstoppable' if we recover our style

Gerard Pique says Barcelona can return to being an "unstoppable" force despite a poor run of form that has seen them slip six points adrift in the La Liga title race.

Barca were denied the chance to reduce Real Madrid's lead at the top of the table to three points at the Camp Nou on Saturday after Sergio Ramos's last-minute equaliser secured a 1-1 draw for the visitors.

The Catalan club have now gone three games without a win in all competitions, while they have drawn their last three in the league, but Pique is confident his side can turn their season around.

"Everything is going right for Real Madrid and the goal in the 90th minute keeps their unbeaten run going, but experience tells me that this [the season] is



very long," Pique is quoted as saying by Sport.

"The first year of Luis Enrique [in charge of Barcelona], in 2014-15, we were in a similar situation.

They were on a great run of form and had a four-point lead, [and we still won the title].

"It all depends on ourselves and how we play football. If we recover our style, which we in part recovered today, we're unstoppable and we can turn things around. We're on a good path, we've competed for the whole game and you have to be calm because there's a long way to go. I've seen worse situations."

Barcelona will hope to return to winning ways when they take on Borussia Monchengladbach on Tuesday in the Champions League -- where they are already through to the round of 16 as group winners -- while they will aim to get their title challenge back on track at Osasuna next Saturday.

(Source: ESPN)



# We'll qualify for the World Cup if defeat Qatar and China, says Pouraliganji

**T S P O R T S** Iranian international defender d e s k Morteza Pouraliganji, who is currently playing for Qatari side Al Sadd, believes that winning the next two games against Qatar and China will seal Iran's fifth appearance in the FIFA World Cup.

## ■ Road to World Cup

Fortunately, we've done a good job in the first round and we're currently at the top. If we beat Qatar and China I am sure we will qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia but football is not a predictable game and we must not underestimate any team.

Team Melli is full of young talents who can easily play in Europe. I'm sure if players like Mehdi Torabi, Milad Mohammadi or even me play in the World Cup a number of European clubs will show interest in signing us.

## ■ Playing alongside Xavi

Xavi is a world class player and has won everything with Barcelona. Apart from his on-field qualities, he is a true gentleman off the field and I am learning a lot from him. It's an honor for me playing at a big team like Al Sadd who has legends like Raul and now Xavi.

## ■ Move to Europe

I had decent performances while I was in China so obviously I have some offers from Chinese clubs but I'm going to gain experience ahead of the 2018 World Cup. If there is a way to play in Europe I'll take that but I won't settle for bench warmer role at European teams.

## ■ Al Sadd vs. Esteghlal

According to the draw we will face Esteghlal of Iran in the AFC Champions League playoff. Esteghlal is a club from my country but I'm currently playing for Al Sadd so I'll try my best to have good performance.



## Tabriz to host World ParaVolley World Club Cup



**T S P O R T S** North western Iranian city of Tabriz has been chosen to host the 2017 World ParaVolley World Club Cup.

The competition will be held in Tabriz from May 1 to 6.

"The World Para Volley organizers and the Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled, are expecting at least eight teams to participate in the competition," World Para Volley President Barry Couzner told Tehran Times.

"Given Iran's recent men's Gold Medal at the Rio Paralympic Games and the exceptionally strong domestic

competition, it is expected that the Iran teams will perform extremely well," he added.

"With an ancient history, a reputation for handicrafts, and designation as a World Heritage Site, the beautiful city of Tabriz was jointly chosen by the Organizer and World ParaVolley," Couzner stated.

Gostaresh Foolad Tabriz will represent Iran in the competition.

Iranian teams have won four times in the past four editions.

Zob Ahan Isfahan claimed title three times and Pegah Tehran won once.

## Iran's Izadyar satisfied with performance at Rio 2016 Paralympics



**T S P O R T S** The Iranian sole swimmer at the 2016 Paralympic Games is happy with his performance in the competition.

Shahin Izadyar represented Iran in the 2016 Paralympic Games in the Men's 50m Freestyle - S10 and Men's 100m Breaststroke - SB9.

"I advanced to the final in the Men's 100m Breaststroke, bettering my personal best by three seconds. I think it's a great honor for me," Izadyar told Paralympic.ir.

"I also had a good performance at the Men's 50m Freestyle, beating my own previous record by 15.0 seconds," he added.

"I am training now since I will have to book a place at the 2018 Para Asian Games in Indonesia. My goal is to show a good performance in the event," Izadyar said.

"My long-term goal is to win a medal in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics and I need to participate at the more warm-up competitions to prepare for the event," the 24-year-old para swimmer concluded.

## Lewis Hamilton hopes to remain driving in F1 'for another 10 years at least'

Nico Rosberg joked he could help Lewis Hamilton learn to speak German now he has retired, while Hamilton said he hoped to remain a Formula One driver for the next decade as the duo addressed Mercedes fans at the constructor's end-of-season event in Stuttgart.

Rosberg, the newly crowned F1 champion, who clinched his maiden world title in Abu Dhabi on Sunday, stunned the sporting world on Friday by retiring with immediate effect. The 31-year-old German initially told only a handful of people – including his great rival Hamilton – before announcing his decision before the FIAs annual prize-giving ceremony in Vienna.

On Saturday, Hamilton apologised to the onlooking crowd for his lack of German and asked: "I'm going to try a little bit of German... how do I say 'I'm so happy to be here?'" Once his request was translated, he added: "I have been with the Mercedes family since the age of 13 and I hope by the time it comes to my retirement that I



can speak German to you."

Rosberg, who had earlier started a rendition of Queen's We are the Champions to the delight of his

cheering audience, told Hamilton: "If you're looking for a German teacher, call me up, as I'm looking for a job." Hamilton was quick to reply, saying: "Nico's the worst German teacher; he tells me all the wrong words."

Hamilton, 31, was then asked how long he expected to continue driving an F1 car: "I plan to be here for another 10 years at least."

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel, the four-time champion, and McLaren's double world champion, Fernando Alonso, have been mooted as candidates, but both drivers are under contract with their teams next season. Pascal Wehrlein, a protégé of the Mercedes junior driver programme, and Valtteri Bottas, of Williams, are also in the frame.

"We have to consider all options, but it will be very hard to replace him," the Mercedes motorsport chief, Toto Wolff, said. "We will start to look at this on Monday."

(Source: Guardian)



It added that allegations arising from the probe will be published in the coming weeks, giving "an unprecedented look into the gloomy depths of the modern football industry."

(Source: Soccer.net)

## England's Southgate questions need for winter break

England manager Gareth Southgate has questioned whether the introduction of a winter break in the Premier League would improve the country's fortunes in major tournaments.

Southgate, who was handed a four-year contract last week having impressed the FA during four matches as interim manager, said any negative effects of England's fixture-packed winter schedule were an "assumption".

The lack of a winter break during the season has often been considered one of several factors contributing to England's international failures in recent years, with some Premier League managers claiming the gruelling festive period pushes players to their limits. "It's an interesting debate. The idea of a winter break will be flagged at this point but I don't ever remember this debate happening when I was playing in 1996 or 1998," Southgate, who was appointed England manager on Thursday, was quoted as saying by British media.

"When I look at the league, there are as many players from abroad playing here in our league, if not more, so they have the same problem and maybe we can over-egg that. It's another thing that is an assumption, rather than what is the reality.

"We can put hurdles in our way that maybe are not there. You then have to get the level of your training bang on at the end of a season and get the loading correct in order to peak for the right moments. That is the bit you can control."

Many of Europe's major leagues, including the Bundesliga in Germany, Spain's La Liga, Italy's Serie A and France's Ligue 1, include a mid-season break.

English football traditionally has a busy Christmas period when teams frequently play several matches in a short period, with just a few days rest between games.

"If there are things that can happen on a wider scale around fixture planning and breaks, then fantastic and that sure could help," Southgate added.

"But I don't want to get distracted by that. I have to plan within the boundaries we've got."

Southgate said he hoped to speak to Crystal Palace winger Wilfried Zaha, who has announced his intention to switch his international allegiance to Ivory Coast, after failing to break into England's senior team.

"I cannot assess that until I speak with him. I would like to speak to him before we make a decision and happy to make that happen," Southgate said when asked whether he felt Zaha's decision was final.

"He has played very well this season."

(Source: Reuters)

## Chapecoense to be named Copa Sudamericana champions after plane crash disaster

Chapecoense will be posthumously crowned Copa Sudamericana champions after the plane crash that saw 19 of their playing squad perish on their way to face Atletico Nacional in the final of this year's tournament.

Atletico had asked the South American Football Federation (CONMEBOL) if Chapecoense could be awarded the title of honorary champions, the South American equivalent of European football's Europa League.

71 people on board the flight to Colombia died on November 28 when the plane ran out of fuel before going down over the Medellin mountains.

"Conmebol have testified that they will crown Chapecoense as champions of the Copa Sudamericana," interim club president Ivan Tozzo told Brazilian newspaper Globo.

"We are receiving support from all federations. The CBF, Conmebol, FIFA, and especially the people of Chapecó. Right now we are beginning to rebuild the team. People want football, people love football in Chapecó."

"Therefore, we must continue this. Let's talk and do well, let the dust settle and rebuild the team for next year."

Chelsea's Brazilian players Willian and David Luiz paid their own tribute to remember the plane crash that killed the Chapecoense players and staff travelling on the flight.

Chelsea's Brazilian duo displayed black armbands with the words #ForçaChape on them to celebrate Willian's goal against Manchester City.

Only three players have so far survived the crash: defenders Alan Ruschel, Helio Zemper Neto and goalkeeper Jackson Follmann. All three were in intensive care due to the extent of their injuries.

Manchester City wore t-shirts with the Chapecoense badge and the message on the back "Manchester is with you" before their match with Chelsea in the Premier League.

There was a minute's silence observed at the Etihad Stadium for the victims of the tragedy, scenes that were replicated at football matches around the globe.

As they look to rebuild the shattered club, Chapecoense will not be relegated from Brazil's top division for three seasons because of the disaster.

(Source: Eurosport)

## England, Spain authorities call for inquiry into Mourinho's taxes

Government officials in England and Spain have called for Jose Mourinho's tax bill to be examined after reports that say the Manchester United coach's advisers hid more than £10 million.

The Sunday Times analysed the millions of leaked documents detailing the tax arrangements made by several top football players and coaches, including Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo and Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil.

The newspaper said it found evidence that Mourinho's advisers misled investigators while hiding money in a Caribbean tax haven. Julian Lopez Milla, a member of the Spanish parliament's tax committee, told the Times that he would "call on the authorities to reopen the case and investigate whether Mourinho has committed the

criminal offence of tax fraud."

In England, MP Meg Hillier, the chairwoman of the Commons public accounts committee, called the documents "extraordinary and warrant a close examination by the UK tax authorities."

Gestifute, the firm representing Mourinho and Ronaldo, has denied designing ways to help clients evade millions in taxes.

Information was originally passed from the Football Leaks whistle-blowing site to German publication Der Spiegel earlier this year, and investigated by 60 journalists in the months following.

The European Investigative Collaborations (EIC) consortium said the documents include photographs, spreadsheets and emails.



