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Zarif says no limit for cooperation with China

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## 'China fits for playing stronger role in Iranian economy'

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran has called on China to step up its economic relations with the country in the post-sanction era.

"As China expanded its economic relations with Iran during the sanctions, the country fits for playing stronger role in the Iranian economy after the removal of the sanctions," Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Chairman Gholam-Hossein Shafeie said during Iran-China Business Forum in Beijing on Tuesday.

"China can collaborate on establishing industrial parks in Iran's free zones," he suggested.

Non-oil trade between Iran and China amounted to \$17.682 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2015-March 2016), naming China as the biggest trade partner of the Islamic Republic, according to Iran Customs Administration.

China and Iran mapped out a wide-ranging 25-year plan to broaden relations and expand trade during the meeting of Chinese President Xi Jinping with his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani in Tehran in January. The two sides discussed promoting bilateral relations of up to \$600 billion over the next 10 years.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif accompanied by a 70-member high-ranking politico-economic delegation, started its three-leg visit to India, China and Japan late Friday to balance communications and interactions with different countries around the world.



## Rouhani to review measures against Senate act

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has said he will sit down on December 7 with other members of a committee to come up with commensurate, firm responses to a recent anti-Iran act passed by the U.S. Senate.

"The session of the supervisory board of BARJAM (the Persian acronym for the nuclear deal) is due tomorrow (Wednesday) when we will discuss an appropriate reaction to the violation of BARJAM," Rouhani said on Tuesday at University of Tehran on the occasion of Student Day.

He did not give any specifications.

The supervisory board includes Rouhani himself, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan, Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani, Ali Akbar Velayati, senior foreign policy aide to the Supreme Leader, and Saeed Jalili, the former nuclear negotiator under Ahmadinejad.

Tehran says the move to pass the Iran Sanctions Act infringes a nuclear deal finalized with six world powers in 2015 if President Barack Obama signs it into law. ➔2

## Iran offers incentives for foreign investment

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ali Tayyebnia said Iran welcomes foreign investment and offers investors with a variety of incentives, IRNA reported.

Speaking at the 20th general meeting and conference of Asia-Pacific Central Securities Depository Group (ACG20) in Tehran on Tuesday, the minister explained some of incentives which

foreign investors can benefit from in the country.

Tayyebnia also voiced Iran's readiness to broaden mutual economic cooperation with world economies, saying "Iranian economic institutions welcome other countries' plans for further development of economic ties."

According to the official, a 20-year tax exemption and easy visa-free residency are among advantages awarded to foreign

investors in Iran's free zones.

Addressing the same gathering, the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Shapour Mohammadi said that SEO is paving the way for foreign investors entering Iran's capital market.

"Affected by post-JCPOA atmosphere, Iran's capital market has become one of the world's most attractive markets for investors," he highlighted. ➔4

## Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi: Takfiri terrorism threatening the entire world

### It is necessary to introduce 'moderate Islam': Indonesia's Zulkifli Hasan

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — A senior Iranian cleric on Tuesday termed Takfiri terrorism as a great danger for the entire world.

Ayatollah Nasser Makarem Shirazi made the remarks in a meeting with Chairman of Indonesia People's Consultative Assembly Zulkifli Hasan, IRNA reported.

"All of us should be vigilant and join hands against terrorist groups to foil the danger of Takfiri terrorists," he stressed.

The ayatollah also warned about the spread of Takfiri Wahhabism in Indonesia, citing enmity against Shia is one of the programs of Takfiri Wahhabism.

In a separate meeting with Zulkifli Hasan, President Rouhani also said Iran and Indonesia as two "friendly" countries in the Islamic world can co-operate in the campaign against terrorism and help resolve the problems facing Muslims.

Rouhani also called Islam the religion of "mercy and moderation" and said currently unity is one of the main necessities of the Islamic world.

"It is through unity that we can safeguard the Islamic culture and promote the power of the Islamic world," Rouhani noted.

The president added it is necessary that cultural and religious figures from Iran and Indonesia to find solutions to the problems afflicting the Muslim world.

"We should enlighten the world public opinion about the true Islam and drive out terrorists from Islamic lands."

Rouhani went on to say that terrorism is posing major threats to the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the world.

For his part, Zulkifli Hasan said it is necessary to introduce "moderate Islam" to world and urge Muslims to set aside their differences.

Indonesia and Iran, as two nations with great Muslim populations, can take effective steps in line with this purpose, the senior Indonesian lawmaker suggested.

## 133% budget jump for Iran's Department of Environment

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — The national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (March 2017-March 2018) has proposed a 133 percent rise for the environment protection sector.

The bill has allocated about 6.5 trillion rials (nearly \$185m) to the sector which is run by the Department of Environment (DOE).

"The budget for the environmental bodies implies how important environmental issues are to the current administration," Mehr news

agency quoted the DOE deputy director Mohammad Mojabi as saying.

While the environmental budget in [Iranian calendar] year 1392 (March 2013-March 2014) constituted to some 0.08 percent of the country's total budget, the next year's environmental budget accounts for some 0.21 percent of the total budget, Mojabi highlighted.

Mojabi went on to say that "based on the budget bill proposed to the Majlis (Iranian parliament) the budget should be spent on projects to fight air pol-

lution, climate change and sand and dust storms."

President Hassan Rouhani presented the administration's draft of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1396 to the Majlis on Sunday.

The proposed national budget amounted to about 10.849 quadrillion rials (about \$486 billion), an 11 percent rise year on year.

Next year's national budget is set with a focus on unemployment, water resources, railways and the environment.

## Russia, China block UNSC resolution on Aleppo truce

Russia and China have vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution which would have mandated a seven-day ceasefire in Syria's Aleppo.

Russia stated that a truce would only permit the militants to regroup and that the subject requires further talks between Moscow and Washington.

The resolution, drafted by New Zealand, Egypt and Spain, was also blocked by Venezuela, while Angola abstained from voting with the remaining 11 members voting in its favor.

"These kinds of pauses have been used by fighters to reinforce

their ammunition and to strengthen their positions and this will only worsen the suffering of civilians," said Vitaly Churkin, Russia's permanent envoy to the UN.

"The draft resolution contradicts the work of the Council because it was put in a late time today, and it is not possible to vote on it before tomorrow, in addition there was no consensus on this issue," he added.

He noted the draft resolution also contradicts upcoming talks between Russian and American experts aimed at removal of all militants from eastern Aleppo.

"The draft resolution put for

voting today didn't include any talk about the exit of gunmen from the eastern neighborhoods of Aleppo, but about an immediate ceasefire, thus, it will be left ten days for the gunmen to mobilize their forces and re-organize their ranks," he said.

Syria's envoy to the UN Bashar al-Ja'afari said that the draft resolution had been an attempt by Western countries to support the militants in Aleppo.

He noted that the United States, France and Britain, who all voted for the resolution, were turning a blind eye towards the suffering of civilians in Aleppo by

supporting the terrorists.

He further vowed that the Syrian army would continue to battle the terrorists until they are all destroyed.

### ■ Aleppo situation

Elsewhere, Syrian army soldiers and allied fighters have managed to recapture two militant-held eastern Aleppo districts in their latest push against foreign-backed terrorists on the battlefield in the contested city.

Lebanon's al-Manar television channel reported on Tuesday the liberation of Qadi Askar and Tiberet Lala neighborhoods as well as the southern part of Aleppo's residential area of Sha'ar. ➔13



© Mizan/ Mohammadreza Sharif

## International hand-woven carpet exhibition feasts eyes

The city of Isfahan is hosting the 19th edition of an international hand-woven carpet exhibition where visitors feast their eyes on unique pieces.

Starting on Sunday, the event runs until December 9.

Traditionally, Iran has been a beacon of unrivalled carpet designs, and continues to lead the international market.



## ARTICLE

By Yuram Abdullah Weiler  
Analyst and journalist

## Post-reality America: Trump's (s)election and the irrelevant recount

"If voting could change anything it would be made illegal!"

—Robert S. Borden, M.D. in 1976

Donald Trump won the U.S. presidential election, or did he? In a surrealistic scenario, third party candidate Jill Stein is feverishly filing for recounts of the popular vote in an expensive exercise that, if not irrelevant, appears to be of no benefit to her. Moreover, with the Obama administration accusing Russia of hacking to influence the election, and Trump having warned of rigging beforehand, we are seeing the advent of what could be termed a post-reality America.

### ■ The popular vote

We begin by noting that the U.S. government does not do an official tally of the popular vote. Instead, this task is left to the 50 individual states and the District of Columbia, which must submit official results by the December 19 deadline when the members of the Electoral College do the voting that actually counts. The votes cast by the electors are then counted in the U.S. congress on January 6, and the result will be announced by the current vice president.

Since verifying the popular vote count would require checking with each individual state's election office, let us accept that, according to numerous sources, Hillary Clinton has won the popular vote in the recent U.S. presidential election with an unofficial 48 percent versus 46 percent for Donald Trump. But in the convoluted U.S. system, winning the popular vote does not assure the required 270 electoral votes to clinch the presidency, and this year, once again, the loser of the popular vote should win the electoral vote, provided the electors vote as expected. ➔13



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



**Judiciary says ready to try 2009 election dissident leaders**

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Judiciary said on Tuesday that it is ready to bring to justice the dissident figures who claimed vote rigging and rejected the result of the 2009 presidential election.

"A legislation of the Supreme National Security Council is still binding and the Judiciary is ready to put the sedition ringleaders to trial," Judiciary spokesman Qolamhossein Mohseni Ejei said, Tasnim reported.

However, he stressed, the legislation about house arrest is still in force.



**Domestic knowhow has 'immunized' Iran against threats: Army chief**

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The commander of the Iranian Army on Tuesday said domestic technological knowhow in defense industry has "immunized" the country against all threats.

"Thanks to the domestic knowledge of defense, our armed forces are prepared to confront any threat in the region," Ataollah Salehi said, ILNA reported.

"Depending on other countries for the procurement of defense equipment is like being a patient who is not aware of his illness," Salehi said.

"Right now some regional countries have this disease but don't know."



**Kremlin confirms Putin wrote confidential letter to Rouhani**

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Kremlin says Russian President Vladimir Putin's point man on Syria has delivered a "confidential" letter penned by the Russian head of state to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

"I can confirm the submission of the Russian president's letter to his Iranian counterpart but cannot reveal its details," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency reported that Peskov had confirmed the delivery of the message in the form of a letter.



**Iran: Yemeni national salvation govt. open to peace talks**

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The formation of the Yemeni national salvation government is not in contradiction to peace talks in the country, Iranian deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs has said.

Speaking in a meeting with his Russian counterpart Mikhail Bogdanov in Tehran on Tuesday, Hossein Jaber Ansari stressed that the future of Yemen will be decided by its people, ISNA reported.

The influential players should also help Yemeni-Yemeni talks in the meantime, the Iranian deputy foreign minister stressed.



**Jalili: Students should read JCPOA**

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Former chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili said on Tuesday that students should read the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), official name of the Iran nuclear deal.

Speaking at Sharif University of Technology on the occasion of Student Day, Jalili said, "The system's aim of accepting the JCPOA was for people to gain experience," Rajanews reported.

"Today, when... all testify to the enmity of America with the Iranian nation, it is the best time to assess the kind of relations with America," Jalili stated.



**'20 terrorist groups crushed during Arba'een'**

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian interior minister on Tuesday said during the Shia pilgrimage season of Arba'een "20 terrorist and suicidal groups" were identified and crushed.

"During this time period five groups were arrested but one, unfortunately, managed to carry out terrorist operation (in the city of Hilla inside Iraq)," Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said, YJC reported.

The people and officials of Iran and Iraq made some very good effort, with the welcome effect that millions partook the pilgrimage, the Iranian interior minister said.

# Rouhani to review measures against Senate act

**1→** The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have overwhelmingly voted to renew the act.

The act, instated in 1996 during the first term of the Clinton administration to ban investment in Iran's energy sector, would authorize sanctions against Iran for a ten-year period.

At dispute is nuclear-related sanctions on Iranian individuals and entities.

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.

"The act, if implemented, is a gross violation of BARJAM, and will face our very strong reaction," Rouhani vowed.

The White House says the act is unnecessary, yet it does not go against the nuclear deal.

"We believe the Iran Sanctions Act extension is not necessary, but we also believe it won't interfere with the Iran deal," spokesman Eric Schultz said last week.

Schultz also said that "inside that legislation, it includes a provision that would allow the secretary of state to waive relevant nuclear-related sanctions."

Tehran sees the renewal push not a new normal but a continuous hostility by Washington surmountable only through resistance.

"There is no doubt that the United



**Rouhani says, "There is no doubt that the United States is our enemy, and it intends to mount pressure on Iran to the extent it can,... so we should resist and find out appropriate solutions."**

States is our enemy, and it intends to mount pressure on Iran to the extent it can," Rouhani noted, adding, "So we

should resist and find out appropriate solutions."

Apart from the ISA, President-elect

Donald Trump also said during his presidential campaigns that he wants to renegotiate the terms of the deal.

Rouhani appeared unfazed about the future of the JCPOA, saying, [Trump] wants to do many things, but none of his actions would affect us."

On Sunday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman stressed that Tehran has made on contact with Trump and his transition team over the deal.

## Zarif says no limit for cooperation with China

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that there are no limits for Iran-China cooperation, urging both sides to take measures to further improve ties.

Zarif made the remarks during Iran-China Business Forum in Beijing on Tuesday, ISNA reported.

Expressing gratitude to Iranian and Chinese delegations for their efforts in providing a platform for the business forum, Zarif said, "I announce that Iran sees China as a strategic partner and a friend in difficult times."

Zarif also expressed optimism that the friendly relations between the two countries would further develop.

The Iranian foreign minister asserted that the both sides are determined to expand comprehensive mutual ties.



He added that Iran would be a trusted partner for China as well.

"The two countries share the same worldview and follow a win-win policy in international affairs," Zarif pointed out.

The Iranian foreign minister arrived in the Chinese capital on Monday at the head a large political and economic delegation after a two-day visit to India.

During his stay in China, Zarif held separate meetings with his counterpart Wang Yi, Chinese Deputy Premier Zhang Gaoli and the President of Peking University Lin Jianhua.

Zarif and his team, later on Tuesday, left Beijing for Tokyo to complete their trilateral tour of Asian countries.

## International nuclear deal cannot be unilaterally killed, Larijani says

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A senior Iranian lawmaker asserted on Tuesday that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - the official name for nuclear deal between Iran and great powers - is an international accord which has been approved by the UN Security Council and it cannot be violated by one side.

Ali Larijani, the parliament speaker who served as Iran's chief nuclear ne-

gotiator from 2005 to 2007, said the nuclear agreement is not a deal just between Iran and the U.S. and therefore one country cannot make decisions on it or violate it.

However, he said, Iran has worked out plans to take proper action if the JCPOA is violated.

The U.S. Senate voted on Thursday to extend the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) for another 10 years. It was first

approved by the House of Representatives.

Iran's top officials, including President Hassan Rouhani, have said if the ISA is implemented it will violate the nuclear deal. Rouhani has asked his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama to use his authority to veto the ISA.

The ISA was first adopted in 1996 to punish investments in Iran's energy industry.

**■ 'Syrian crisis should be settled through dialogue'**

Larijani also said that the conflict in Syria should be settled politically and through dialogue.

Some countries used military force to solve problems in Syria and this led to the current volatile situation in the region, he noted.

Elsewhere, he said that territorial integrity of Iraq should be protected.

## Iran-Russia cooperation thwarts spread of terrorism: Velayati

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Velayati, the senior foreign policy advisor to the Leader, said on Tuesday that cooperation between Iran and Russia has prevented a further spread of terrorism in West Asia.

In a televised interview, he also said regional situation entails "strategic" relationship between Iran and Russia.

"Strategic relations in defense area have been established and the sale of S-300 defense system and advanced planes are examples," the veteran politician explained.

Commenting on nuclear cooperation with Russia, he said Moscow has been providing Iran with peaceful nuclear technology to produce electricity, a reference

to the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant and a plan to build two more nuclear facilities at the site.

Velayati also said it is Iran, Russia, China and India which will determine the future of Asia.

**■ 'Iran will respond if ISA is enforced'**

In a press conference on Tuesday, Velayati also said an implementation of the Iran Sanctions Act violates the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the

official name for the nuclear deal.

He said Iran will respond if the ISA is enforced.

The ISA was first adopted in 1996 to punish investments in Iran's energy industry. The extension was passed unanimously on Thursday by Senate. The ISA was first approved by the House of Representatives.

Velayati also said that Tehran Security Conference is scheduled to be held on December 11.

**Velayati says it is Iran, Russia, China and India which will determine the future of Asia.**



## Iran boosting ballistic missile arsenal: commander

**IT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force said on Tuesday that Iran has increased production of ballistic missiles along with improving their precision and quality.

Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh made the remarks while addressing Students Day at Imam Hossein University, Tasnim news agency reported.

Boasting the country's achievements in missile production, the commander said Iranian experts have used innovative methods to produce inexpensive missiles.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he admired the Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei for his wisdom that has pushed the country forward.

"The only way out of oppression and conspiracy spearheaded by America is to follow the Supreme Leader's orders and guidance," Hajizadeh stated.

The commander added, "Whenever the [Supreme Leader's] orders were obeyed, we were able to overcome problems and sanctions."



Hajizadeh further noted that the Islamic Republic has overcome problems and become self-sufficient in defense industry.

The comments came weeks after the Foreign Ministry

said the Islamic Republic's missile power is not open to any negotiations or compromise.

"Iran's missile tests are carried out within the framework of the country's defense policies and Iran's defense capabilities are not open to negotiation or compromise at all," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on November 14, according to Press TV.

Iran has said on numerous occasions that its missile tests are not in violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that upheld a nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

Also, Iran's defense minister said back in August that the Islamic Republic sees "no limit" for the range of the ballistic missiles that it is developing.

"We don't have any limits for the range of liquid or solid-fueled ballistic missiles," Dehqan said in a meeting in Isfahan, Fars reported.



# Iraq army launches fresh Mosul assault, raises nat'l flag over hospital on left bank of Tigris

Iraqi army soldiers have wrested control of al-Salam Hospital situated on the left bank of Tigris River as part of their operation to liberate the strategic city of Mosul from the grip of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group.

Major General Walid al-Khalifah, the deputy of the army's 9th Division, said the Iraqi national flag was hoisted over the hospital building on Tuesday.

He further announced the recapture of another Mosul medical institution, called al-Talimi Hospital, by the Iraqi forces.

Meantime, Iraqi army units advanced from southeast Mosul towards a bridge across the Tigris in the city center on Tuesday, in an attack that could give fresh impetus to the hard fought, seven-week battle for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL/Daesh) northern Iraq stronghold.

Campaign commander Lieutenant General Abdul Ameer Rasheed Yaraallah was quoted by Iraqi television as saying troops had entered Salam Hospital, less than a mile (1.5 km) from the Tigris river running through the center of Mosul.

If confirmed, that would mark a significant advance by the army's Ninth Armored Division, which had been tied up for more than a month in deadly, close-quarter combat with ISIL terrorist group fighters on the southeast edges of the city, Reuters reported.

A colonel in the armored division said Tuesday's assault, launched at 6



**“We’ve liberated six villages and we are heading to Hawija and we will liberate, God willing and then we will head to Mosul,” said an officer from the army’s 17th Division.**

a.m., aimed to push towards the river and ultimately reach Mosul's Fourth Bridge, the southernmost of the five bridges spanning the Tigris which splits the city in two.

The bridge, like three others, has been hit by the United States-led air strikes to prevent ISIL terrorist group sending reinforcements and suicide car bombs across the city to the eastern front, where coun-

ter-terrorism troops have spearheaded the army campaign.

The last and oldest bridge, built of iron in the 1930s, was targeted on Monday night, two residents said. The structure was not destroyed, but the air strikes made two large craters in the approach roads on both sides.

## ■ New gains in southeast Mosul

Meanwhile, advancing Iraqi forces have pushed into the southeast regions of the ISIL terrorist group held city of Mosul.

Gunfire and blasts could be heard throughout the southeastern part of the city on Monday as Iraqi troops pushed ahead with their operation to purge Mosul of its ISIL occupants.

“We are now at Intisar neighborhood, Nineveh province. We are the defensive lines of al-Karama district and in front of us there is al-Salam neighborhood, which is the last point for the forces of the 3rd Brigade, First Division,” said the division's commander.

In another event, the Iraqi army has announced that six villages located to the south of the city have been retaken from the terrorists.

“We’ve liberated six villages and we are heading to Hawija and we will liberate, God willing and then we will head to Mosul,” said an officer from the army's 17th Division.

Around half of the eastern side of Mosul has so far been liberated by the Iraqi army and volunteer forces that launched an offensive to retake Mosul, the last urban area in control of ISIL in Iraq, on October 17.

(Source: agencies)

## Dozens of Rohingya Muslims missing as boat sinks off Bangladesh

Dozens have been reported missing, feared drowned, after a boat packed with Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence in Myanmar and trying to reach Bangladesh sank in a border river, according to the AFP news agency.

A Bangladeshi fisherman told AFP that he had rescued on Monday one woman, who told him that the “overcrowded” boat had sunk in the Naf river, after it was chased by a Myanmar army speedboat.

“We heard a woman's desperate cry for help in the morning while we were fishing in the Naf. We quickly paddled to the spot and saw she was fighting to stay afloat,” fisherman Suman Das said by phone.

“The woman told us that their boat was overcrowded with Rohingya villagers who tried to cross the river to enter Bangladesh.”

The woman did not know what had happened to the others, and Das could not say how many people were on the boat.

But the private UNB news agency, quoting a Bangladeshi village councilor, said there were at least 31 Rohingya on board.

A Rohingya source told AFP by phone that the bodies of 13 women and children, two of whom had bullet wounds, had washed ashore in his village on Myanmar's side of the Naf.

This could not be independently confirmed, however, and Bangladesh police and border guards said they were not aware of the incident.

----- IOM: 21,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar crackdown to Bangladesh

Meantime, the International Organization for Mi-



gration (IOM) says nearly 21,000 Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar have fled persecution and violence to Bangladesh in the past two months.

“An estimated 21,000 Rohingyas have arrived in Cox's Bazar district between October 9 and December 2,” Sanjukta Sahany, head of the IOM office in Bangladesh's southeastern district bordering Rakhine, said on Tuesday.

Most of those who crossed the border have taken refuge in makeshift settlements, official refugee camps and villages, she added. The figure is based on the data collected by UN agencies and international NGOs.

Myanmar's military has launched a fresh wave of crackdown on Muslims since an alleged attack on the country's border guards on October 9 left nine policemen dead. The government blamed the Rohingyas for the assault.

There have been numerous accounts by eyewitnesses of summary executions, rapes and arson attacks against

Muslims since the crackdown began. The military has blocked access to Rakhine and banned journalists and aid workers from entering the zone.

At least 30,000 Rohingyas have been internally displaced in Rakhine, while thousands of others have tried to reach Bangladesh over the past month to seek refuge among the Rohingya people who already live there.

The United Nations has warned that ongoing human rights violations against the Rohingyas in Rakhine could be tantamount to “crimes against humanity.”

The Bangladesh government has also come under fire for pushing back Rohingya refugees, with Muslim groups and the opposition urging the country to open its border to the displaced people.

On Tuesday, Bangladesh police said its forces had banned 10,000 Muslim protesters from marching to the Myanmar embassy in Dhaka to demonstrate against the ongoing “genocide” of the Rohingyas.

Rakhine has been the scene of communal violence at the hands of Buddhist extremists since 2012. Hundreds of people have been killed and tens of thousands have been forced from homes and live in squalid camps in dire conditions in Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The government denies full citizenship to the 1.1 million-strong Rohingya population, branding them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. However, many believe the Rohingyas are a community of ancient lineage in Myanmar.

According to the UN, the Rohingyas are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world.

(Source: agencies)

## Bernard Cazeneuve named French PM as Valls quits

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has resigned after announcing his candidacy for the Socialist nomination in next year's presidential election.

Stepping down on Tuesday after serving as prime minister for the past two-and-a-half years, Valls said he would now try to rally the fractured left in the run-up to the party's primary in January.

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve was named as his successor for the six months until the next legislative elections.

Cazeneuve has overseen the French government's response to recent attacks in France claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

The government's crackdown, under the special “state of emergency” status, has met harsh criticism from rights groups and the country's Muslim population.

Valls' announcement on Monday came four days after President Francois Hollande announced he would bow out after a single term, paving the way for Valls to try to become the left's new standard bearer.

In his speech, the 54-year-old vowed

to take the fight to the conservative opposition and the far-right National Front, both of whom are leading the Socialists in election polls.

“My candidacy is one of reconciliation,” Valls, seen as a divisive figure, said in a speech from his political base in the Paris suburb of Evry.

He warned of the risk of far-right leader Marine Le Pen pulling off a repeat of France's 2002 electoral upset when her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, edged the Socialist candidate for a place in the presidential runoff.

Le Pen's nationalist policies would “ruin the working class”, he said.

Polls show Marine Le Pen winning or being placed second in the opening round of the election on April 23, but later being defeated by the conservative Francois Fillon.

Valls attacked the Thatcherite, Fillon, accusing him of reshaping “the old recipes of the 1980s” by promising to cut spending and social programs.

Valls faces an uphill task to unite the divided French left, reeling after four tumultuous years under Hollande.



The prime minister himself is a polarizing figure who has turned off many lifelong Socialists by using decrees to force contested labor reforms through parliament, and endorsing controversial bans last summer on the so-called “burkini” swimsuit.

His government's bleak economic record could also clip his wings.

On Monday, he said he wanted to help the working class “regain its dignity” in the face of globalization.

He faces a challenge from at least seven other candidates in the two-round primary on January 22 and 29.

Martine Aubry, a veteran Socialist and the mayor of the northern city of Lille, said on Monday it was “not a given” that

she would back him.

Polls show Valls nonetheless winning the nomination, but trailing in the presidential race, dragged down by competition on the left from business-friendly former economy minister Emmanuel Macron, an independent, and the hard-left Jean-Luc Melenchon of the Left Party.

When Valls last sought the Socialist nomination five years ago, he garnered only 5.6 percent.

He went on to become a spokesman for Hollande's campaign and was later rewarded with the interior portfolio.

In 2014, he was promoted to prime minister with a mandate to rein in a group of unruly ministers who were undermining Hollande's authority.

Within months he had a rival for the title of reformer-in-chief in the telegenic banker-turned-economy minister Macron, a protégé of Hollande.

In August, Macron walked out on his boss to further his own leadership ambitions while Valls remained by Hollande's side.

(Source: Reuters)

## Putin signs new Russian information security doctrine

An updated doctrine on information security was signed into effect by Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday. It's based on foreign states intensifying their efforts to affect Russia's internal affairs and cyber-attacks against its key infrastructure.

The doctrine states that the limitless flow of information has a negative impact on international security, as it can be employed to pursue geopolitical and military goals, thus favoring organized crime, extremists and terrorists.



One of the main impacts on information security is from the build-up in “capacities to influence information infrastructure by a number of countries in pursuit of military objectives.”

Notably, intelligence agencies of certain countries launch information and psychological operations to destabilize societies in various regions. In this way, they undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states. These operations, coupled with the widespread use of information technology, may involve faith- and ethnicity-based organizations, as well as human rights groups.

In turn, terrorist and extremist groups make use of psychological operations to stir up ethnic and religious discord, intensify tensions in communities, propagate extreme views, and recruit new followers.

Russia and its allies are not immune to these threats, the doctrine stresses, as certain states deliberately use various information technology to undermine Russia's political and social stability.

In the meantime, the doctrine notes, Russian government agencies, scientific centers, and military industries are being targeted by foreign intelligence services by means of electronic and cyber surveillance.

This alarming trend is also seen in the increasing bias against Russian policies in foreign media, while Russian journalists working abroad are subject to “blatant discrimination,” facing numerous obstacles in the course of their work.

The Russian population, particularly the young, is affected by these information and psychological operations, which aim to “erode the spiritual and moral values inherent in the Russian people.”

To counter threats and challenges in the information environment, Russia will build “strategic deterrents” and step up efforts to “prevent armed conflicts that stem from the use of IT,” as well as neutralize psychological operations targeting “historical foundations and patriotic values.”

The doctrine also instructs government agencies to counter “extremist ideologies, xenophobia, and ethnic exceptionalism” which could undermine Russia's sovereignty and stability.

Russia will also strengthen critical information infrastructure to protect against cyber and computer network attacks.

(Source: RT)

## Security raised at L.A. rail line after threat warning from foreign country

Federal and Los Angeles officials said on Tuesday they had been alerted by authorities in another country to a “specific” threat against the city's Red Line commuter rail system, prompting them to beef up security and alert the public.

“This threat is imminent, it is very specific,” Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck told an evening news conference. “But the credibility still needs to be vetted.”

Law enforcement officials at the news conference said the threat had been relayed to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by a law enforcement agency in another country, where the threat had originated. Officials did not identify the country.

The male caller, speaking in English, had warned authorities in that country of an attack against a Red Line station across the street from the Universal Studios theme park on Tuesday, Beck said.

The caller did not threaten to carry out the attack but said he was alerting law enforcement.

The Red Line runs between downtown Los Angeles and northern neighborhoods, including Hollywood and North Hollywood, and carries about 145,000 passengers a day as part of the city's larger transit system. It does not operate between the hours of 2 a.m. and 4 a.m.

Beck and Los Angeles County Sheriff Jim McDonnell said law enforcement would be stepped up at the Universal City/Studio City station and elsewhere along the city's rail lines.

“You will see additional measures but they are out of an abundance of caution,” Beck said.

Mayor Eric Garcetti said he would board the train at the Universal City station himself on Tuesday as a show of confidence.

“Everybody should go about their normal day tomorrow,” Garcetti said. “People may see heightened security ... But don't let those (additional officers) frighten you.”

(Source: Reuters)



## IPCC 2016 kicks off in Tehran

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — The 16th edition of Iran's International Paint, Resin, Coating and Composites Fair (IPCC 2016) kicked off Tuesday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.



According to IRIB news, during this 4-day event the latest products and services of more than 270 domestic companies and over 150 foreign participants active in the field of paint and related industries are being presented.

Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Indonesia, Taiwan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, China, Spain, India, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Malaysia, Britain, South Korea, the United States, India, Russia, Lebanon, Thailand, Australia and Slovenia are among the countries participating in this year's event.

## Tehran to host ICES-Expo 2017 in early Feb. 2017

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — The 1st Iran Consulting & Engineering Services Exhibition (ICES-Expo 2017) will be held at the Permanent Fairground of Tehran Municipality (Boostan-e Goftegoo) from February 1 to 4, 2017, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Some 500 foreign guests from the Middle East, Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) will attend the event, organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO).

India and Turkey are to have their own pavilions in the exposition, while representatives from Italy and France will also participate in it.

## Ahead of deal to cut, OPEC oil output hits record high: Reuters survey

OPEC's oil output set another record high in November ahead of a deal to cut production, a Reuters survey found on Monday, helped by higher Iraqi exports and extra barrels from two nations exempted from cutting supply - Nigeria and Libya.

The latest rise in supply means the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will have a bigger task in complying with a plan to cut supply starting in 2017 - its first production-reduction deal since 2008.

Supply from OPEC increased to 34.19 million barrels per day (bpd) in November from 33.82 million bpd in October, according to the survey based on shipping data and information from industry sources.

Brent crude rose above \$55 a barrel on Monday, trading at a 16-month high, on prospects of a tighter market next year following OPEC's deal. Prices are still half their level of mid-2014.

"OPEC's decision to cut production has removed a lot of downside risk for 2017," said Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst at SEB, even though "some cheating is a natural habit among OPEC's members".

Based on the November survey, OPEC is pumping 1.69 million bpd above the 32.50 million bpd production target that it agreed last week to adopt from January 2017, following an outline agreement reached in September.

Supply has risen since OPEC in 2014 dropped its historic role of fixing output to prop up prices as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran pumped more. Production also climbed due to the return of Indonesia in 2015 and Gabon in July as members.

November's supply from OPEC excluding Gabon and Indonesia, at 33.23 million bpd, is the highest in Reuters survey records starting in 1997. At last week's meeting, Indonesia suspended its membership again.

In November, Angola provided the largest supply boost as planned maintenance on the Dalia crude stream ended.

Output also climbed in Iraq due to record exports, lifting supply to 4.62 million bpd in November according to the survey. Iran, which was allowed to raise output under the OPEC deal as sanctions had limited its supply, pumped 40,000 bpd more.

Indonesian output rose by 10,000 bpd.

(Source: Reuters)

## JUMP

## Iran offers incentives for foreign investment

1→

ACG was founded in November 1997 as an informal international organization and has been holding annual meetings since then.

The organization has 34 members from various countries in the region including Iran, China, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Singapore, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Uzbekistan.

# EU-Iran 9-month trade up 63% yr/yr: Eurostat

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — The European Union's trade with Iran amounted to €9.11 billion in the first nine months of 2016, a 63 percent rise year on year, based on the latest figures released by the European Union's statistics agency Eurostat.

The figure was €5.577 billion during January-September 2015.

During the first nine months of 2016, the EU's exports to Iran increased by 20 percent and reached €5.63 billion, from €4.679 billion in the same period of time in the past year.

Iran's exports to the EU stood at €3.48 billion from January to September 2016, quadrupling from €898 million during the same time span in 2015.

In mid-April, Iran and the EU issued a joint statement in Tehran setting the road map for cooperation. The statement was released by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and EU Foreign Policy Chief Federica Mogherini who visited Iran along with seven European commissioners.

The two sides taking stock of their long standing relations, based upon mutual respect and interests, reiterated their intention to develop a broad and comprehensive agenda for bilateral cooperation.



## India's biggest shipping firm resumes Iran oil transport with insurance in place

Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) will resume sailing to Iran this month after a four-year gap, transporting an oil cargo for a state-run refiner, the chairman of India's biggest shipping company said on Tuesday.

SCI stopped sailing to Iran in 2012 when sanctions targeting Iran's nuclear program prevented the company obtaining insurance cover for oil and other shipments. Following the lifting in January of some western sanctions, International Group of Protection and Indemnity (P&I) Clubs - which generally insure the tanker market - have been able to obtain "fall-back cover" from non-U.S. markets.

"The level of cover provided by the fall-back cover has been recently raised to 100 million euros (\$111.30 million), which is fairly high and provides substantial levels of protection," B.B. Sinha said in a telephone interview.

SCI will this month use one of its Suez-max-sized tankers to ship an oil cargo for state-refiner Hindustan Petroleum Corp. Ltd. from Iran. "It is not yet decided ... which SCI-

owned vessel is going to Iran," Sinha said.

SCI had contracts with HPCL, Bharat Petroleum Corp (BPCL) and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. to ship crude from Iran, he said. HPCL will resume Iranian oil imports from July after three years because insurance was now available for plants processing Iranian oil, its head of refineries B.K. Namdeo said.

Similarly, BPCL's head of refineries, B.K. Datta, confirmed it also planned to import an oil cargo from Iran this month, although it would use the Panama-flagged tanker "Vito." India's Iranian oil imports are set to hit a seven-year high in the year from April first, with refiners buying at least 400,000 barrels per day.

Iran currently supplies the bulk of its oil to India using its own vessels. Some Indian refiners such as Essar Oil and Reliance Industries have already begun importing Iranian oil in tankers flagged from other countries. Sinha hoped the lifting of sanctions would boost trade between India and Iran.

(Source: vanguardngr.com)

## Oil dips as OPEC joins Russia in upping output ahead of production cut

Oil prices eased on Tuesday as crude output rose in virtually every major export region despite plans by OPEC and Russia to cut production, triggering fears that a fuel glut that has dogged markets for over two years might last well into 2017.

International Brent crude oil futures LCOc1 were trading at \$54.75 per barrel at 0807 GMT, down 19 cents, or 0.3 percent, from Monday's close.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$51.47 a barrel, down 32 cents, or 0.6 percent.

Traders said the price falls were due to rising output from within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia.

Matt Stanley, fuel broker at Freight Investor Services International in Dubai, said the oil market was trying to find "some kind of level it is happy settling at."

"I have a feeling it is more toward the \$50 per barrel range than \$55 per barrel, not least because there is still ambiguity around production levels."

OPEC's oil output set another record high in November, rising to 34.19 million barrels per day (bpd) from 33.82 million bpd in October, according to a survey based on shipping data and information from industry sources.

Russia on Friday reported average daily oil production of 11.21 million bpd for November - its highest in almost 30 years.

That means that OPEC and Russia alone produced almost half of global oil demand, which stands just above 95 million bpd.

The news came just days after OPEC and Russia agreed an historic deal to cut output in 2017, triggering a more than 10 percent rise in prices, in a bid to end a fuel supply overhang that has dogged markets for over two years.

In a further sign that the fight for market share is not over - especially in Asia, the world's biggest consumer region - Saudi Aramco cut the January price for its Arab Light grade for Asian customers by \$1.20 a barrel versus December. (Source: Reuters)

PICTURE OF THE DAY SHANA/Reza Rostami



## NIOC awards PTTEP 3 oil fields' development study

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Thailand's state-run PTT Exploration and Production Company (PTTEP) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for carrying out development studies on three Iranian oilfields.

The MOU was signed by Gholam-Reza Manouchehri, the deputy managing director of NIOC for development and engineering, and Prapat Soponpongpiat, the executive vice president of geosciences and exploration group at PTTEP, in Tehran on Tuesday, Shana reported.

Based on the MOU, the Thai company will be in charge of carrying out studies on three Iranian oilfields namely Changouleh, Balal and Dalpari; PTTEP is to hand the results of the study and its proposals to NIOC in six months.

In the signing ceremony Manouchehri noted that the MOU has been based on the country's new oil contracts (IPC) and PTTEP will receive a copy of IPC drafts soon.

Soponpongpiat for his part asserted that PTTEP will do its best carrying out the agreed task and expressed wish that the MOU would lead to a contract on at least one of the fields.



## Asian stocks post biggest daily gain in two weeks

Asian stocks posted their biggest rise in two weeks on Tuesday and the euro steadied as investors judged the selloff after Italy's referendum to be overdone, with robust U.S. economic data also helping sentiment.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan bounced 0.7 percent, its biggest daily rise since Nov. 22, breaking two days of falls. Korea climbed 1.4 percent while Japan rose 0.4 percent.

European stocks are likely to open higher though gains may be subdued as U.S. stock futures are in the red. "Global risk sentiment roared back after falling prey to the initial Renzi fallout and whatever negatives Italy creates for the eurozone, yesterday was not the time for a euro implosion," said Stephen Innes, senior trader at online FX platform, OANDA.



## Euro steady near three-week high, big bets on market volatility

The euro held steady near a 3-week high on Tuesday while bets on market volatility stayed close to their highest since June's Brexit vote ahead of this week's European Central Bank meeting due to give new guidance on its quantitative easing programme.

The Australian dollar dipped about a quarter of a percent after the Reserve Bank kept interest rates on hold but sounded a note of caution on the pace of growth.

But other major currency pairs were all trading in a tight range after a rollercoaster ride following Sunday's Italian constitutional referendum that saw the euro dip to a 21-month low before bouncing more than 1.5 percent.



## Egypt, China seal \$2.6b currency swap transaction

Egypt and China signed a currency-swap deal for about \$2.6 billion, allowing the North African nation to shore up foreign reserves after floating its currency last month.

The countries' central banks signed the 3-year swap agreement for 18 billion yuan against the equivalent in Egyptian pounds. The transaction can be extended, the Chinese regulator said.

The swap "complements a series of measures taken which aim to unleash the vast potential of the Egyptian economy and instill confidence by bolstering economic activity," Egypt's central bank said in a statement.



# IKCO Implements 1<sup>th</sup> Post-JCPOA Deal

With the establishment of a joint venture with the French car manufacturer, Peugeot, (IKAP), Iran Khodro officially implemented the first international deal signed after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The establishment of IKAP reveals that the national automotive industry has made significant progress. This, in turn, has paved the way for the full development of Iran Khodro as the largest national car company in Iran.

The deal to set up the JV was made possible only after several months of series talks held at the request of the French car manufacturer.

Peugeot 2008 is set to be the first product of IKAP. With the preparation of IKAP's production line underway in Tehran, Peugeot 2008 is expected to enter the market by March 20th.

## ■ Localization of Part Making Industry

IKAP's products are to be unveiled under Peugeot brand and the production is supposed to be localized with Iranian part manufacturers playing a key role. This, in turn, will prepare the ground for Peugeot and its affiliates to step in the part-manufacturing market of Iran and promote the quality standard of the market by their knowhow and technologies.

According to the deal between IKCO and Peugeot, the joint products are set to be localized in Iran by 70 percent in the third year of their cooperation. Along with the deal implementation, IKCO has opened talks with two other leading car manufacturers across the world to establish new joint ventures in part-manufacturing industry with the aim of further localization of the industry.

IKCO is planning to export IKAP vehicles

to the target markets. On the other hand, IKAP is expected to produce other type of vehicles which are economically viable.

## ■ IKCO's Efforts to Enter Export Markets

Over the past years, production with no direct investment has been the main strategy of IKCO in the export markets. The car company has already launched a project to establish an assembly line in

Turkmenistan is among other international projects carried out by Iran Khodro over the past months. The Iranian car company is also seeking to increase its share in the Commonwealth of Independent States' markets through Eurasian Customs Union. To this end, IKCO has put export to Turkmenistan and Belarus and setting up of production lines in Azerbaijan and

To this end, 40 percent of the company's production portfolio makes up the national brand. Dena is among the products which have been designed with the aim of meeting foreign customers' needs. It is expected to enter the market soon.

Iran Khodro has managed to raise its daily production (commercial vehicles and pickups) to about 2,400 commercial

the past year. It is now seeking to preserve and raise it further with producing more new vehicles.

The significant growth of IKCO's sales in 2016 reveals the warm welcome that the company's products are receiving in the national and international markets. It goes without saying that the growth was the result of effective policies adopted by the company's top management.

Among various methods employed by IKCO to sell its products in this year, one can refer to meeting the needs of different customers and satisfying their preferences like sales in cash and installments.

Iran Khodro Sales and Marketing Department usually conducts in-depth research to have a clear understanding of the market. Holding clinic for a product is one of the main evaluation methods for getting the feedback of the market and the customers.

## ■ Investment in Die Industry

Automotive Industry is the largest customer of tool and die industry across the globe. Supplying Automotive Parts Company of Iran Khodro (SAPCO) is planning to invest \$100 million in the development of the dies of the three IKCO and Peugeot joint products. Meanwhile, an estimated \$ 45 million has been allocated for the renewal of the dies of the vehicles to be produced next Iranian year. Iran Khodro is confident that with taking advantage of the expertise and knowhow of its local staff, it can achieve its goals defined under the economic resilience principle and leave the posterity with a lasting legacy in the progressive automotive industry of the country.



Azerbaijan.

According to a deal signed earlier this year, Iran Khodro is not required to make any investment in the project. Instead, it is only pledged to offer technical and engineering services. The project is set to be accomplished by the first half of the next year with a 14-million-dollar investment by the Azeri side and an annual production capacity of 10,000 vehicles. Dena, Runna, Samand and Soren are among the main vehicles to be produced in the site.

According to the IKCO's CEO, Hashem Yekehzare the next phases of the project is bus and commercial vehicles production lines.

Dispatching police vehicles to

Kazakhstan on top of its priorities.

According to the stated objectives of IKCO for 2016, the car manufacturer has exported 30 percent of its products (between 6 to 9 thousand units) to CIS. It also exported SKD vehicles including commercial cars to Iraq. Plans have been developed for export of trucks to the country in the near future.

Just recently, IKCO exported over 300 units of Dena to Algeria restoring its shares in North Africa's markets.

## ■ Improving National Brand

Along with expanding its international cooperation, IKCO is also seeking to improve the national brand in the markets abroad.

vehicles, producing more than 400,000 units in 8 months i.e. March 20 to November 20, 2016. With its high production, the car company is now more concerned with promoting the quality of its products.

Products' quality has always been among the outlines of IKCO's main strategies. To this end, various quality projects are underway in different production lines of the company. Reports by the Iranian General Inspection Organization confirm the growing quality of IKCO's products.

## ■ Raising Market Share

Iran Khodro Industrial Group has managed to raise its market share to 54 percent over

## Extension Advertising

# AMENDMENT OF INVITATION FOR SUBMISSION OF PREQUALIFICATION BIDS

**Tender no. 95/1003  
(Project Type EPCF)**

**Second 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 f the Presidential 's 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**



## Italian leader steps down: Day of reckoning for Renzi

By Hans-Jürgen Schlamp

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi failed to get the result he wanted in a critical referendum on Sunday. With the announcement of his intention to resign, Italy and Europe face storms ahead.

"I lost," a visibly moved Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said around a half-hour after midnight during a news conference at Rome's Palazzo Chigi. "And the post that gets eliminated is mine." On Monday afternoon, Renzi is expected to convene his cabinet, thank them for their work and submit his resignation to Italian President Sergio Mattarella.



It was a clear response in the wake of a clear defeat. Around 60 percent of Italian voters rejected Renzi's proposal to reform of the country's parliamentary system in a referendum on Sunday. Turnout proved extraordinarily high, with around 70 percent of eligible voters casting ballots, rendering any possible excuses moot. The result is clear. And because Renzi had early on tied the result of the vote to his own future as Italy's leader, there was likewise a second clear message sent by the electorate: "Ciao Renzi!"

That message was sent by voters from opposite ends of the political spectrum. The right, the far right and the far left all saw the reform referendum as an opportunity to push its initiator, the unpopular Social Democrat Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, out of office.

### ■ Left vs. left

One of those who campaigned against the referendum was Rossana Rossanda, 92, an icon of the Italian left. During the 1950s and 1960s, she was part of the leadership of the Communist Party. She was expelled from the party in the 1970s for failure to support key party positions and, together with others who had run afoul of the party, formed Italy's most important left-wing newspaper, Il Manifesto. Like many on the Italian left, the leftist icon Rossana voted against the referendum and against Renzi.

Rossana said the "pack" she had joined forces with was abhorrent to her. It included groups like the right-wing nationalist, xenophobic Lega Nord; the anger-fueled euro-skeptic, anti-everything party led by former comedian Beppe Grillo; and the remnants of those who in the past supported former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Ultimately, though, Renzi is "just as bad" as them, she says.

Indeed, many members of Matteo Renzi's own Democratic Party voted against him for the same reason, including heavy-hitters like former Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema or Pier Luigi Bersani, who served as the party's chairman for years.

### ■ A revolt of the abandoned and forgotten

Above all, though, the high voter turnout and the clear anti-government line underscores just how extremely dissatisfied Italians are with state leadership, state authorities and their lives in general. And not without reason. Years of crisis in the country have largely devoured the once strong middle class. As in so many other countries, globalization has created a small class of wealthy winners and a large class of losers. Social harmony in these countries, as in Italy, is based on the belief that children will have better opportunities than their parents did. But with half of the country's young no longer able to find jobs, that dream has now died.

When young Italians gather in bars or on city squares, anger with the state quickly comes to the fore. The vote against Renzi is the rebellion of those who feel abandoned and forgotten. It's a vote, as Renzi said at many of his appearances, "against the political caste" -- just that Italians, particularly young ones, have long since come to see him as being a representative of that very caste. Not much is left of the man who once called himself "Il Rottamatore," the "scrapper" or "wrecking ball" who vowed to drive out vested interests and ossified political cliques. For now, the discontented and the new scrappers have now driven him out.

### ■ Italy's future? not funny at all

It's difficult to make any clear predictions about what the outcome of the referendum will mean. One thing, though, is clear: Italy's banks are likely to slide deeper into crisis. And with the uncertain situation likely to lead to an unwillingness to invest in the country, it seems likely that the economy as a whole will follow. Prime Minister Renzi may be stepping down, but the Social Democrats, together with their current coalition partner, the New Center Right party of former Berlusconi protégé Angelino Alfano, still have a majority in parliament and will seek to remain in power.

Italian President Mattarella could accept Renzi's resignation, but he could also theoretically reject it. It's possible that a transitional or technocrat-led government could be installed until the next parliamentary elections are held in 2018. But it's also possible that snap elections could be held next year.

(Source: Spiegel)

**The right, the far right and the far left all saw the reform referendum as an opportunity to push its initiator, the unpopular Social Democrat Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, out of office.**

# No one knows Trump's next move on Taiwan

By Shannon Tiezzi

On the face of it, it's hard to believe that a simple phone call could cause such a furor. When U.S. President-elect Donald Trump spoke with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, the conversation may have seemed routine, but it was a potentially devastating breakdown in the elaborate dance between China, the United States, and Taiwan that downplays the reality that Taiwan is, in fact, a self-governing democracy.

Donald Trump has now broken with this careful charade by becoming the first U.S. president to speak directly with a Taiwanese counterpart (at least publicly). Though Mike Pence went on television Sunday to try to mollify all parties by asserting the call was simply "a moment of courtesy," his attempts to diffuse the tension fail to address the fact that, given the personalities and context involved, Trump's move has the potential to grow into a perfect storm: a downward spiral, where Beijing retaliates and Taipei stiffens its resolve in response.

Taiwan's President Tsai already faced a headache in cross-strait relations even without adding a call to Trump into the mix. Since she began running away from her opponent in the presidential election polls in summer of 2015, Beijing has been adamant that it will only engage with her government should Tsai embrace the "1992 consensus." That agreement, openly accepted by Tsai's predecessor Ma Ying-jeou, holds that there is only one China, although it does not define which government, precisely, is the rightful ruler of said China. Both the PRC and Taiwan's Republic of China government have maintained they can claim that mantle.

Tsai, as the candidate of the Democratic Progressive Party, or DPP, which was founded on a sense of unique Taiwanese identity, could not enter into a straightforward embrace of the "1992 consensus." Beijing rejected her offer at compromise -- accepting the "historical fact" of the 1992 talks that led to the consensus and pledging to uphold the "status quo" in cross-strait relations -- and severed official communication channels with Tsai's government the day of her inauguration.

### ■ A little trick

Beijing seems inclined to place the blame mostly on Taiwan, with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi dismissing the Trump-Tsai conversation as a "little trick" played by Taiwan. China may seek to apply coercive economic measures to Taiwan to "punish" Tsai and her administration; such a move would doubtless outrage Taiwanese. That was the case in 1996, when Beijing fired missiles into the Taiwan Strait in an attempt to prevent the re-election of Taiwanese nativist president Lee Teng-hui; Lee won in a landslide. Likewise, Beijing's attempts to freeze out the only previous DPP president, Chen Shui-bian, forced Chen to make an abrupt about-face; he went from advocating liberalized cross-strait economic ties in his first term to pursuing a referendum on Taiwan's UN membership in his second.

Cross-strait ties were already at their frostiest in eight



Tsai Ing-wen



Donald Trump



Xi Jinping (R)

## Beijing's censors have moved to block conversation about the Trump-Tsai phone call on social media, hoping to prevent a groundswell of public anger.

years; this phone call to Trump ups the ante at a sensitive time for China, which will soon undergo its own leadership transition. In fall 2017, the Communist Party holds its 19th Congress. This gathering, held once every five years, will extol the achievements of the Xi Jinping-led government, cement his approach in party doctrine, and reshuffle the top echelons of leadership. While Xi will stay on, five of those on the seven-member Politburo Standing Committee are due for retirement. There are also persistent rumors that current No. 2, Premier Li Keqiang, could see himself officially replaced, forced to play scapegoat for slowing economic growth.

What this means is that domestic political wrangling is at its peak in China at the moment. In such times, Beijing would keenly prefer a quiet external environment; that's likely a large contributing factor to the current calm in the South China Sea. However, should a crisis emerge -- such as, say, a paradigm shift in the U.S.-Taiwan relationship -- China's current leaders will feel immense pressure to respond swiftly and harshly.

Chinese leaders are incredibly wary of the risk of being outflanked by nationalistic sentiment on the cross-strait issue. Beijing's censors have moved to block conversation about the Trump-Tsai phone call on social media, hoping to prevent a groundswell of public anger. But if the trend toward an open U.S.-Taiwan relationship continues, Beijing won't be able to keep a lid on domestic fury forever.

In the United States as well, uncertainty rules. Trump will not officially take office for another six weeks, but even as President-elect he has the ability to send strong foreign policy signals. The question is whether he understands those signals -- or even means to send them.

The phone call with Tsai is even more complex.

Though, as he pointed out on Twitter, Tsai placed the call, Taiwan's presidential office spokesman Alex Huang confirmed that Trump's team helped arrange it. "Of course both sides agreed ahead of time before making contact," Huang told Reuters. Several Trump affiliates, including adviser Peter Navarro and rumored secretary of state candidate John Bolton, have argued for a much closer relationship with Taiwan, despite (or even gleefully because of) the immense anger that would cause in China.

That means Trump's call with Tsai can be interpreted in two ways. One, it could be a simple nicety extended to a foreign leader, without much forethought on Trump's side. That lack of understanding would be a dangerous sign for the future of U.S. foreign policy in general, but not an indication that U.S.-Taiwan (and thus U.S.-China) relations are about to change forever.

However, the call could also be taken as a sign of Trump's future Taiwan policy. Trump's latest tweets, which take a biting and sarcastic tone in criticizing China's actions on currency, taxing U.S. goods, and the South China Sea, certainly indicate that possibility.

If Trump's advisers are advocating a wholesale change in the way Washington relates to Taipei, that could very well translate to actual policy decisions. This week, it's a phone call; next year, we could see U.S. Cabinet officials traveling to Taiwan, or Taiwan's President making a visit to the United States. This would shake the foundations of the awkward diplomacy that has kept peace across the Taiwan Straits -- and between the United States and China -- since Washington normalized ties with Beijing in 1979.

For now, uncertainty reigns in the United States, and that sets the stage for a crisis, especially if neither Taiwan nor China can correctly interpret what Trump will do next.

(Source: CNN)

## Duterte: During phone call, Trump praised my drug war as the 'right way'



By Emily Rauhala

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's plan to "kill all" the country's suspected drug users and dealers has many foreign critics, including the United States, the European Parliament and the International Criminal Court. It now has at least one high-profile supporter: President-elect Donald Trump, at least according to Duterte.

In a statement Saturday, Duterte shared details of a seven-minute conversation that took place Friday. He said that during the call, Trump endorsed his campaign against drug users and dealers -- a campaign that has left at least 4,500 Filipinos dead in about five months. Trump told Duterte that he was doing it the "right way," according to Duterte's account.

"I could sense a good rapport, an animated President-elect Trump," he added. "And he was wishing me success in my campaign against the drug problem." The comments, which have not been confirmed by Trump's team, could signal another significant twist in U.S.-Philippine ties.

The Philippines is a former U.S. colony that has been a close U.S. partner for decades. Since sweeping to power last spring, Duterte has repeatedly lashed out

at his longtime ally, threatening to ditch the United States for China and Russia.

In September, when President Obama raised questions about the bloody anti-drug crusade, Duterte lectured him on colonialism, referring to him with a slang term that translates, roughly, as "son of a wh\*\*e."

In the weeks that followed, he made several surprise announcements on U.S.-Philippine military ties, calling for the ouster of U.S. Special Operations forces from the southern island of Mindanao and the end of joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises -- only to backtrack repeatedly.

But Trump's triumph in the U.S. presidential race saw Duterte switch direction again. Weeks after railing against "uncivilized" Americans, Duterte greeted the U.S. president-elect with an enthusiastic "long live" Trump. Duterte also mused that they might get along -- because they both like to swear.

For the Philippine president, an expression of support from Trump could help reset ties with the United States. But endorsing Duterte's crackdown may put Trump at odds with allies such as the European Union, whose parliament issued a resolution urging the Philippines to halt "extrajudicial executions and killings" in connection with the drug war.

(Source: The Washington Post)

## Why the EU can't let a crisis go to waste



The shared values of the European Union will not only help it survive each new challenge, such as the current one in Italy, but reshape how it lives up to its promise of continent wide peace and prosperity.

In March, the European Union plans to celebrate the 60th anniversary of its founding document, the Treaty of Rome. The event could not arrive at a better time.

As the EU struggles with multiple cracks and crises -- which now include instability in Italy after a Dec. 4 vote revealed strong anti-EU feelings -- the Union needs reminders of its original purpose. Despite all the woes, such as migration and slow growth, the EU remains a live laboratory in how diverse countries can act together on shared ideals. And it is still a model in how to manage globalization. A majority of EU citizens regard globalization as an opportunity, not a danger, according to a recent Bertelsmann Foundation survey.

Many other countries along Europe's borders, such as Ukraine and Turkey, seek to join it. And in a counterpoint to Italy's referendum, Austrian voters rejected an anti-EU candidate in a Dec. 4 election for the federal presidency.

The pro-EU candidate won on a platform of pluralism and tolerance -- values the EU rests on.

Italians may rest up with the ruling elite in both the EU and Rome. But many rely on the EU as a safety value. Over the past eight years, more than 150,000 Italians -- mostly young people -- have used the Union's internal openness to relocate to Britain. In Greece, people may protest the conditions set by the EU in rescuing an over-indebted Greek economy. But a majority prefer to stay in the eurozone.

One of Europe's strongest legacies is the free exchange of ideas, grounded in notions of individual liberty and mutual respect. The election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency has served as a reminder of the need for European unity and strength.

Yet for every crisis, EU leaders have defied the doomsayers and found a way to prevent the Union from unraveling. Next March's anniversary celebration should provide some perspective, especially if it is laced with gratitude for how far Europe has come since its mid-20th century darkness.

(Source: The CSM)



INTERVIEW

By Ali Kavooosi Nejad

Pakistan is one of the Muslim countries and neighbors of the Islamic Republic of Iran which shares a long history and huge cultural commonalities with Iran. Tehran Times correspondent has sit for an interview with Mr. Asif Durrani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Tehran. We have discussed regional issues including recent conflicts on Pakistan-India border, Pakistan and Turkey relations, commercial and economic relations of Iran and Pakistan, and the implementation of the gas pipeline project between the two countries, reviewed the regional changes and also the relations between Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.

Ambassador Asif Durrani, who is from Quetta in Pakistan, speaks Pashtu, Urdu, Dari and also Farsi with a sweet accent. The ambassador of Pakistan joined his mission in Tehran 4 months ago. Earlier he was ambassador to UAE. With 30 years of experiences in the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan, Mr. Durrani had previously fulfilled a mission as the first secretary in a 4-year term 18 years ago at the Embassy of Pakistan. Earlier he served in Pakistan's missions in Afghanistan, India, England and the United Nation.

Asif Durrani is well familiar with the culture and civilization of Iran and wants to promote the relations of Iran and Pakistan in all fields.

**In recent days, we are witnessing conflicts on the border of Pakistan and India in Kashmir. What is the reason of such conflicts?**

After the independence of Pakistan, India unlawfully entered Kashmir and occupied a large part of this Muslim majority state. Then, the opposition of Kashmiris against the government of India began. The government of India took the Kashmir dispute to the UN Security Council. Since the partition plan envisaged that Muslim majority areas would accede to Pakistan and Hindu majority areas to India, it was but natural that Jammu and Kashmir would join Pakistan. But, India breached the partition agreement and contrived an agreement with the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir to annex the state to India. Based on this shady agreement, Kashmir was claimed as its territory by In-

dia. After the revolt in the Kashmir state, this issue was brought to the UN Security Council by India which accepted the decision of the Council to hold a plebiscite in the state. But, India initially dilly dalled and later refused to hold plebiscite in total disregard of the UN resolution. UN resolutions on Kashmir dispute were made from 1948 to 1967 and all stress settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Currently, two important issues are on the UN Security Council's agenda, one is the issue of Palestine and the other is Kashmir, and both states are considered occupied. We see that people are not satisfied with the current condition in Kashmir which is why there are frequent uprisings in the state where Indian state repression continues unabated to suppress the voice of the Kashmiris to submission.

Pakistan always has tried to settle the Kashmir dispute through peaceful and diplomatic means. Pakistan has never used military power to settle the Kashmir dispute and seeks a diplomatic solution. Pakistan is one of the party to the dispute and if India is thinking to put Pakistan under pressure by using state terrorism in



**Pakistan has never used military power to settle the Kashmir dispute and seeks for a diplomatic solution.**

occupied Kashmir, it is utterly mistaken.

After the death of Borhan Muzaffar Wani in Kashmir by Indian security forces, people of Kashmir reacted to the action of the Indian security forces. More than 200 thousands of Kashmiris participated in his funeral. Even in the funeral pro-

cession, Indian security forces killed and injured many people. For the first time, Indian security forces used pellet guns to blind the people for life.

More than 150 Kashmiris have lost their eyesight due to pellet guns while over 700 are partially blinded. Such bru-

tal tactics can have drastic and deadly outcomes. Since 8 July 2016, Indian security forces have resorted to suppress the civilians in Kashmir by force. The people of the occupied state have not stopped their protests; they call it the "Second Intifada".

After an attack on the brigade headquarters of Indian army forces in Uri Kashmir, India called it a terrorist act and blamed Pakistan for it. However, it might be possible that India itself had orchestrated such an act in order to divert world's attention on Indian atrocities against the innocent Kashmiris.

India must know that it cannot put Pakistan under pressure by starting shootings on the border. Only solution to Kashmir dispute is peaceful negotiations. On the other hand, since India and Pakistan are nuclear countries in the region, they must take measures to contain the situation from further aggravation.

**The head of the Zionist regime has visited India in last few days and has stated in his meetings with Indian officials that the Zionist regime is planning to celebrate the anniversary of their 25-year relations and this**

**has provoked some Muslim Indians to protest. Would you give some explanations in this regard?**

I cannot comment on this matter as India is an independent country and can have diplomatic relations with any country. In fact, the Indian government used to be a supporter of Palestinian cause, but in recent years it has changed its position towards the Palestine issue. The policy of India in the region reminds the English expression of "Running with the hare and hunting with the hounds". On the other hand, India is one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, but it seems it doesn't play a significant role among the non-aligned member states.

If there are 1 billion poor people in the world, half of them are living in India. Indian intransigence would only increase the poverty of its people.

**Last week Turkish president had a visit to Pakistan and delivered a lecture in the Parliament of Pakistan. How will be the relations of Pakistan and Turkey in different fields?**

When in 1920s, the "Khilafat Movement" was started in the subcontinent, the Ottoman dynasty was under pressure from the world powers. Muslim women of the subcontinent sold their jewelries to support the Ottoman Caliphate against British aggression. Muslims of the subcontinent and Turkey have relations much before the independence of Pakistan.

Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan, and we always remember this gesture. Similarly the people of Turkey have never forgotten this historical support of the Muslims of the subcontinent for the Ottoman Khilafat.

We are proud of our relations with Turkey. Both countries have always stood by each other on various issues. We are grateful to Turkey for always supporting the just cause of the Kashmiri people.

(End of Part one)



**Pakistan is one of the victims of terrorism in the region and around 70 thousand people have been the victims of terrorism in the last decade.**

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# 8 things you need to stop believing about sleep

By Macaela Mackenzie

We're supposed to spend one third of our lives catching zzzs, so we've had enough experience at this point to call ourselves bona fide experts. But some of our most basic assumptions—REM sleep is the most important; if you're waking up in the middle of the night, you're not sleeping well; you shouldn't sleep with the TV on—are not exactly true. We asked the real sleep experts to pull back the curtain on our biggest misconceptions. Get their take below.

## ■ You can get by on less than seven hours per night

Some rare people truly can, but the overwhelming majority need the proper seven to eight hours that we recommend. The initial consequences may be subtle, such as slightly delayed reaction time, increased irritability, or craving more junk food. Long term, the consequences of lack of sleep can be higher blood pressure and increased risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes." — Daniel Barone, M.D., sleep medicine specialist at New York-Presbyterian

## ■ Waking up in the middle of the night means you're not sleeping well

"The truth is that we go through stages and cycles of sleep throughout the night, and it's normal to wake up (briefly) between cycles. If you feel relatively rested during the day, waking up to roll over a few times a night is probably not a reason to worry." — Haley Byers, Ph.D., board-certified specialist in behavioral sleep medicine

## ■ You get sleepy when you're bored

"Boredom unmasks existing sleep deprivation but does not make you sleepy on its own." — Rafael Pelayo, M.D., clinical professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford Center for Sleep Sciences and Medicine



**Slow wave sleep is by far the deepest stage. This is considered to be restorative sleep. It is also the stage of sleep in which most of your growth hormone is secreted—it is secreted in bursts throughout the day, but there is a very large release about an hour after sleep onset during SWS."**

## ■ Sleeping with the TV on is a big no-no

"I personally have the TV on every night as I fall asleep. I'm probably the only sleep doctor in the universe who will say that it's OK for a few reasons. Number one is that most TVs have sleep timers, so they will turn off in the middle of the night, and number two is that the blue light emitted by the TV is extremely limited. Television is often used as a distraction,

and we want to do something that's calming, relaxing, and distracting as we prepare to go to sleep." — Michael Breus, Ph.D., board-certified sleep specialist and author of Good Night

## ■ High achievers don't need to sleep a lot

"Sleep is for everyone. Is crucial for optimal performance and physical and mental health. High achievers appear to need less sleep, but so far this is limited to

anecdotal evidence. In fact, scientific investigations have shown that in children and adolescents, more sleep is associated with better school performance." — June Chi-Yan Lo, Ph.D., research fellow in the Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience at Duke Medical School

## ■ The brain rests while you sleep

"Sleep is not only important for the brain but also for the body. A recent study showed that fat cells taken from the abdominal area respond differently to insulin following a period of sleep loss, suggesting that sleep may be an important regulator of energy metabolism in peripheral tissues. Plus, there are stages during sleep when the brain is quite active—as active as it is during waking hours." — Erin Hanlon, Ph.D., research associate in endocrinology at the University of Chicago

## ■ REM sleep is the deepest and most important phase

"This is not true. Slow wave sleep is by far the deepest stage. This is considered to be restorative sleep. It is also the stage of sleep in which most of your growth hormone is secreted—it is secreted in bursts throughout the day, but there is a very large release about an hour after sleep onset during SWS." — Kimberly Fenn, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at Michigan State University

## ■ All sleep is created equal

"Overweight people who snore, for example, may not even realize that their sleep is very disturbed. They may think they get enough sleep and don't understand why they feel tired during the day. The same applies to alcohol: It can help you get to sleep, but the normal pattern of sleep will be disturbed, and you may not get enough deep sleep. So your time in bed may be OK, but sleep duration is not." — Simon Archer, Ph.D., head of the department of biochemical sciences at the University of Surrey

(Source: greatist.com)

## Ban praises volunteers for their commitment to building a future of peace, prosperity and dignity for all

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message on International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2016, praised UN Volunteers for their commitment to building a future of peace, prosperity and dignity for all.

## International Volunteer Day



The full text of his message reads:

Volunteers work tirelessly to create a better future for all. They contribute to national well-being and show global solidarity at times of crisis. We see this in action all over the world, most notably over the past year as volunteers have provided shelter and wide-ranging support to millions of refugees forced from their homes by armed conflict and persecution.

Volunteers help to eliminate poverty and reduce the impact of disasters. In Haiti, we saw the efforts of thousands during the recent floods, helping to re-build devastated communities. In Sri Lanka, volunteers were instrumental in achieving the great feat of eradicating malaria. In Mali and Colombia, UN Volunteers are among those working to achieve peace.

Volunteering gives the most marginalized people in society an opportunity to get involved in the decision-making process. Volunteers can use their voices to shape conversations, question social norms and promote the values we all hold dear. Volunteers are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the more than 6,700 United Nations Volunteers, 12,000 United Nations Online Volunteers and the one billion community volunteers worldwide. You are all instrumental to the future of people and the planet. Your commitment and passion can act as inspiration to us all.

On this International Volunteer Day, let us recognize the immense value of the world's volunteers. As they lend a hand to others, let us give volunteers a hand by applauding their global citizenship and their commitment to building a future of peace, prosperity and dignity for all.

(Source: UNIC)

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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** Internet-connected toys accused of spying on kids. Complaints to regulators say that some toys collect the voices of children without permission.

**2** Facebook is asking users' help to ID misleading news. It's actually trusting users to verify stories posted on the social network.

**3** When a Seattle-area BMW 550i owner's car was stolen from a parking garage, police got BMW to remotely lock the luxury sedan while the thief was sleeping inside with the motor running. The culprit briefly tried to drive away when police woke him up, but it's not as if he could get very far being trapped in the cabin.

**4** Demand for wearable tech is growing (not smart-watches). IDC estimates that wearable device shipments grew ever so slightly (3.1 percent) in the third quarter of 2016, but that fitness trackers were almost exclusively responsible for the increase. Fitbit, Garmin and other activity band makers improved their shipments by the double digits, while the smart-watch world actually shrank.

**5** According to a report out of Korea published, the LG G6 will be waterproof with wireless charging. One LG executive was quoted as saying that there is high demand for a waterproof handset in Japan because of the humid and rainy weather.

**6** Amazon has created a grocery store to make this a reality, and they're calling it Amazon Go and will let you skip check-out lines once and for all Amazon Go is a physical grocery store that will be launching in Seattle, Washington in early 2017, and it's packing in some pretty impressive tech.

**7** Google has just published the Android 7.1.1 Nougat factory images and OTA files for a couple of Nexus and Pixel devices. If you don't own a Pixel or Pixel XL smartphone, you will get some of the features that were only available for these devices since they were launched with Android 7.1 Nougat right out of the box.

**8** Owners of the Apple iPhone 7, iPhone 6s and even the Apple iPhone 5s are complaining that their phone application is freezing. This is preventing them from making and taking phone calls, or handling other phone related operations. It appears that for many, this problem started after the update to iOS 10.1.1. For some, the problem came with the update to iOS 10. Soft and Factory resets are not helping.

**9** Google releases a chart with the latest distribution numbers for its different Android builds. In the latest release dated December 2016, Android Nougat (7.0) was found on just .4% of devices powered by Google's open source OS. That is up from the .3% of Android phones that carried Android 7.0 last month. Nougat, of course, is the latest build of Android.

**10** 2016 is a year in which we've seen a lot of companies taking bold steps into the world of Virtual and Augmented reality.

The concern that several market watchers share is that the demand for this technology in 2017 won't be as high as predicted, due to a combination of high pricing per unit and a lack of content. This skepticism is further confirmed by the lower-than-expected sales of Google's Daydream View, Oculus Rift, Samsung Electronics' Gear VR, Sony's PSVR and HTC's Vive.

## Twitter in 2016 was a pretty depressing place to be

Let's not be mealymouthed: 2016 sucked. As a stark reminder, Twitter has released its "Top 10 Global Conversations" for the year, a change from last year's #YearOnTwitter format. This time, it lumped events into categories like #RIP, #Brexit, #Trump and #Oscars, perhaps as a way to give equal time to the rare good news stories. Otherwise, the list would be pretty much death, politics and Trump. First, the grim -- at least one person you love or admire died in 2016. The unfortunate #RIP list includes Muhammad Ali, David Bowie, Prince, Leonard Cohen, Alan Rickman, Garry Shandling, Garry Marshall, Gene Wilder, Kenny Baker, Anton Yelchin, Arnold Palmer, Gwen Ifill, Florence Henderson and Fidel Castro. Let's hope 2017 isn't so cruel.

As for #Election2016, #Trump and #Brexit, I think we've all had enough of those for four years, let alone one -- but feel free to revisit them if you really want to. #BlackLivesMatter carried over from last year, 2014 and 2013 because, unfortunately, violence and systemic racism is still a problem for black people. Large protests happened in NYC, Chicago and Washington DC. On a more positive note, we have #GameOfThrones season 6, which drew record viewers thanks to, well, death and politics (plus dragons, a resurrection and a few epic battles). #PokemonGo was, if nothing else, a great distraction from other events on this list. It gave us all some much-needed exercise and outside time, then sort of died -- hopefully, the latest tweaks will give us new reasons to play. #Oscars is another welcome category, because we can finally stop talking about Leonardo DiCaprio's lack of one. The ceremony also notably featured Chris Rock's biting satire on the lack of diversity in Hollywood, along with Joe Biden's speech and Lady Gaga's emotional performance for survivors of sexual assault. (Brie Larson hugging every survivor was also a great moment.)

#Euro2016 was also inspiring, especially for winner Portugal and underdogs Iceland and Wales, but not so much for also-ran France (le sigh). Oh, and the finals were a great night to be a moth. Twitter optimistically placed #Rio in first place, which is nice, as it featured moments like Usain Bolt's cheeky 100 meter victory, Mo Farah's historic UK win, anything to do with Simone Biles and Phelps winning his 23rd gold medal with his game face on. (Source: Twitter)

# What's the Microsoft's real problem with mobile?

By Mary Branscombe

At the Microsoft shareholders' meeting last week, some unhappy Windows phone fans who also happen to be shareholders asked CEO Satya Nadella what Microsoft was doing for the consumer market on its own platform, not just on iOS and Android.

Nadella's answer was that consumer and enterprise users are still just people who use the same device at home and at work, whatever platform they're on.

"I don't think of these as separate markets. I think about users, people, and their devices. The basic construct that we think about architecturally and technically is that it's not about just one device, it's about all the devices for the person. In other words, whether it's the app or the operating system, we want to build it for the person across their devices," he said.

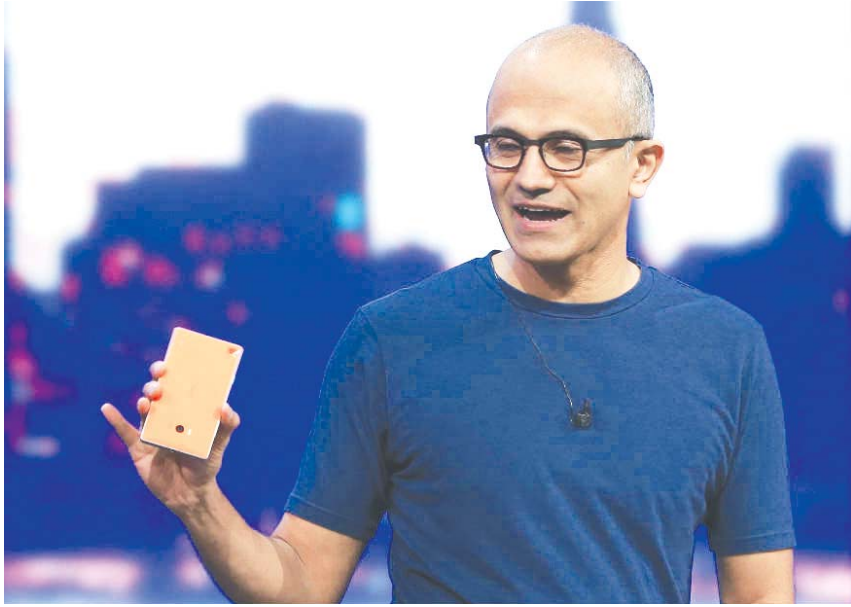
In other words, the shareholders didn't need to worry about not finding Outlook or Pix in the Windows phone Store because they already have them. "Outlook, interestingly enough in the context of the Windows Phone, is the mail client, you don't need to go look for another client because it's built into the phone, whereas, in your own operating systems, the camera will have the smarts, you don't need a separate application. You will not need another separate mail program. When we control things silicon up, that's how we will integrate those experiences."

It certainly makes sense for Office and plenty of other Microsoft apps to be cross platform -- what Nadella calls the mobility of the experience rather than the device. Wherever you go, there's Office and you need Office 365 to get all the features.

That keeps users who'd otherwise switch to different tools.

"We're not stepping away from supporting our Windows Phone users," Nadella reassured the shareholders. "But at the same time we are recognizing that there are other platforms in mobile that have higher [market] share and we want to make sure that our software is available on this."

It also makes sense for Microsoft to create new apps first on platforms where there's the largest market for that app, so whether it's an experimental Garage project or a new offering like Sway, it will of-



**Microsoft isn't going to give up on Windows Phone; it has customers like the NYPD who will have signed a long-term support contract. And developing the Windows phone OS ought to be far less work, because so much of it can simply fall out of developing Windows 10 -- although the continuing problems with features like the Word Flow keyboard show it's not quite that simple.**

ten show up first on iOS or Android. The machine learning that Sway uses to lay out text and images is now part of PowerPoint. Outlook on all platforms will soon combine the Exchange Clutter feature with the focussed inbox that started in Accompli on iOS. It's obvious how that's useful to Microsoft and to Windows users, even though they're no longer Microsoft's only customers.

Of course, they never were Microsoft's only, but 'best on Windows' is now about features that only Windows supports, like laptop touchscreens, rather than basic features you could have on any OS: witness the large numbers of Windows features coming to the Mac version of Office in the regular monthly updates, or the way Outlook on iOS can look up free times in the calendar of the person you're arranging a meeting with.

Getting more users for Microsoft ser-

vices is a no-brainer. Putting Cortana on iOS and Android creates Bing users (even if they don't know it). OneDrive on every platform is just common sense. The features in the Pix camera app for Android and iOS were on Windows Phone first (as the now-defunct Blink app, and in some Nokia camera features that went away) but the photos do get saved onto OneDrive.

But what about utilities like the Swift-key keyboard on iOS and Android, that make the OS and devices of other companies better without bringing those users onto any Microsoft services? If the idea is to test things out and bring them back to Microsoft's own platform, why is the Word Flow keyboard on Windows 10 Mobile still so bad (when it was such a superb feature on Windows Phone)?

The problem is that 'what's happening with Windows 10 Mobile?' may not be the

right question for understanding mobile strategy at Microsoft.

Microsoft isn't going to give up on Windows Phone; it has customers like the NYPD who will have signed a long-term support contract. And developing the Windows phone OS ought to be far less work, because so much of it can simply fall out of developing Windows 10 -- although the continuing problems with features like the Word Flow keyboard show it's not quite that simple.

When speaking to shareholders, Nadella promised to stick with Windows phones, but he also made it clear the target for those phones is enthusiasts and enterprise.

Windows 10 needs modern, secure, sandboxed apps that don't make themselves and the OS vulnerable by relying on desktop APIs that were designed for a more trusting (or simply more naive) world. That's not about Microsoft controlling the app economy; it's about keeping people using Windows PCs rather than giving up and switching to iPads because they look less likely to get ransomware. UWP is a big part of the answer to many of the problems that have plagued PCs for years. But if UWP apps only run on PCs -- even desirable PCs like Surface Studio -- is there enough incentive for developers to build them?

If Microsoft concentrates on enterprises and enthusiasts, security ought to be a huge selling point for Windows phones. Security company Lookout says that their data shows 3 to 5 percent of phones have malware (they track both iOS and Android), mostly adware and spyware.

And battery life is often far better on Windows phones; my Nokia 1520 routinely has 50 percent battery life at the point in the day when an Android or iOS phone is already plugged into an external battery for a top up. Concentrating on the basics might help Microsoft not just not back away from phones but get back to differentiating.

Because to keep Windows 10 healthy in the long run, Microsoft needs to up its game on Windows Mobile, from CEO promises to delivering something that does what Windows phone always has: delights users.

(Source: zdnet)

## The biggest threat to artificial intelligence: Human stupidity

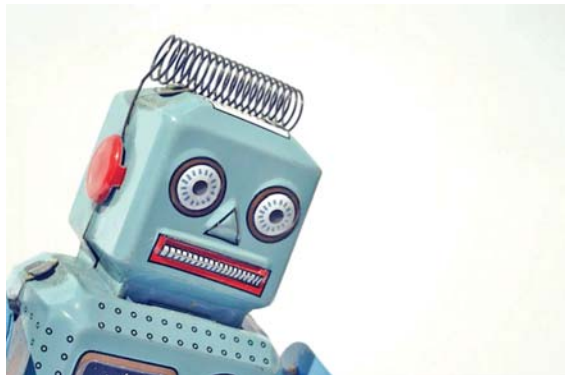
By Steve Ranger

There's a huge difference between the modest aims of the artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning being used today, and the grand ideas of creating an artificial general intelligence that could match -- and then rapidly exceed -- the capabilities of a human mind

As they develop, AI and machine learning will be able to take on even more complicated tasks, but it could still be half a century or more before AI capable of human-level intelligence is built. And, then, even longer before the sort of super-intelligence emerges that excites some, terrifies others and has provided plot lines for science fiction for decades. One may (eventually) lead to the other, but conflating today's AI and machine learning with tomorrow's Skynet is not helpful.

Indeed, that confusion has encouraged many to exaggerate the short-term potential of existing (and often somewhat mundane) AI and machine learning technologies. But it also means we may be under-estimating some of the real risks and potential downsides.

Today's AI is helping companies to improve customer services or fine tune their decision-making by spotting trends in data that would otherwise be invisible, and helping them automate mundane tasks, or even create whole new services. You can read about the role of AI and machine learning in digital transformation projects in our latest in-depth special report. But there are also



some pitfalls and risks too.

AI is a fast-growing and intriguing niche, but it's not the answer to every problem. In particular, beware 'AI washing': the application of those two letters to the branding of a product or service does not necessarily mean it's better than one that does not mention those talismanic initials (see also: 'cloud washing').

In addition, a lack of skilled staff to make the most of the technologies, along with massively inflated expectations, could create a loss of confidence -- this happened before in the so-called 'AI Winter' and could occur again if these AI investments don't pay off.

But perhaps more dangerous is the assumption that we treat AI as a magical, mystical source of truth. As the introduction to our special report makes clear, the out-

## Samsung boss denies role in presidential scandal

Samsung vice chairman Lee Jae-yong has apologized for the conglomerate's involvement in South Korea's political scandal involving the president, but denied that the group paid bribes.

Lee, the de facto boss of the entire Samsung Group, and six other bosses of the country's biggest conglomerates were called as witnesses in the biggest National Assembly hearing of its kind for their alleged role in the political scandal involving President Park Geun-hye.

Choi Soon-sil, the president's close friend, allegedly used her influence to collect bribes from large businesses for herself and her family's gain.

It was revealed that the bosses of local family-owned conglomerates, the so-

called chaebols, met the president one-on-one. They allegedly agreed to give financial support to foundations that her friend made in return for favors in businesses. Samsung also allegedly paid additional bribes by giving financial support, nominally, for Choi's daughter's equestrian career.

The conglomerates have denied that they paid bribes and said they were victims of extortion.

Asked repeatedly by different assemblymen on whether he knew Choi well, Lee said he could not remember when he made acquaintance with her, adding that he did not know her for long.

The vice chairman also denied that Park asked for "donations" or "financial

support".

Samsung's office was raided twice by local investigators over allegations that it bribed Choi to gain support for a controversial merger between two of its affiliates. This allegedly resulted in the formation of a de facto holding company and more control over the conglomerate by the founding Lee family.

Lee, who was appointed inside director of Samsung Electronics in November in a shareholders meeting after the Galaxy Note 7 fiasco, admitted meeting the boss of the national pension service -- which owned a large stake in Samsung C&T. However, Lee denied the firm bribed Choi to use her influence to force the national pension to vote in favor for

the merger, which US hedge fund Elliott Associates fought against.

President Park Geun-hye's popularity has now dropped to 4 percent, the lowest ever for a Korean president. Street demonstrations demanding her resignation have been going on for near two months with no sign of abating.

The scandal has also put the Creative Economy & Innovation initiative in jeopardy. The program was a co-initiative with the government and conglomerates to create incubators nationwide to support startups. Since the scandal, the initiative has lost steam and related conferences have seen attendance and support drop.

(Source: CNBC)



# Iran, Sweden discuss joint brain mapping projects

**SCIENCE TEHRAN** — Iran and Sweden discussed possible cooperation on brain mapping projects during a meeting which was held at University of Tehran.

Swedish Minister for Health Care, Public Health and Sport Gabriel Wikstrom at the head of a delegation met with the university's brain mapping lab director Mohammad-Reza Aye to negotiate possible future combined efforts on brain mapping projects, IRNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

The delegation comprising representatives of universities, research centers, and commercial companies also paid a visit to the lab which is equipped with modern technologies for analyzing brain function.

The meeting was aimed at raising fund and attracting investment, the lab director Aye explained, adding, the meeting was fruitful and would certainly result

in improved relations.

He further highlighted that Sweden is a pioneer country in brain mapping and

applying it into practice.

Brain mapping is a set of neuroscience techniques predicated on the mapping of



(biological) quantities or properties onto spatial representations of the (human or non-human) brain resulting in maps. In other words, brain mapping is a technique used to show parts of the brain and how they work together and provides a solid understanding of the anatomy of the brain.

The brain's wiring diagram may help us better understand how we learn and adapt. It is also of practical use to doctors. Neurosurgeons use brain mapping to plan safer surgeries.

Brain imaging is not only used in treatment. It is used to diagnose neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Scientists have also sought to illustrate the effects of various mental illnesses in the brain, with some success. Panic disorder, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, eating disorders and more are being examined using different brain imaging techniques.

## Extreme storms will be a lot more frequent as climate warms

The number of heavy downpours in much of the U.S. could increase five-fold by the end of the century, causing flash floods, mudslides and ruining crops, climate researchers predicted Monday.

People need to start getting ready for these catastrophic storms now, because most places aren't prepared to handle such extreme weather, the team at the National Center for Atmospheric Research said.

And yes, climate change is to blame, the experts said. As the average temperature warms up, the air will get warmer and moister and more prone to these heavy storms, they reported in the journal Nature Climate Change.

"Imagine the most intense thunderstorm you typically experience in a single season. Our study finds that, in the future, parts of the U.S. could expect to experience five of those storms in a season, each with an intensity as strong or stronger than current storms," said NCAR's Andreas Prein, who led the study team.

### ■ The intense thunderstorms

A map shows the projected increases in extreme precipitation across the U.S. A value of zero indicates

no changes in the probability of while, for example, 300 percent means a fourfold higher chance of an extreme change.

"Extreme precipitation intensities have increased in all regions of the contiguous United States and are expected to further increase with warming at scaling rates of about 7 percent per degree Celsius, suggesting a significant increase of flash flood hazards due to climate change," the team wrote.

They ran a computer model for their study, plugging in recent details about climate and weather from 2000 and 2013 and adjusting for widely accepted predictions about how average temperatures will rise.

UN studies project that average world temperatures are set to rise by at least 5.4 Fahrenheit or 3 degrees C by 2100, based on current trends. And 2016 is expected to be the warmest since records began in the 19th century, beating 2015.

"We showed that hourly extreme precipitation events are projected to significantly increase in almost all North American land regions under the assumption that weather patterns in the future and current climate are

similar.

### ■ The frequency of extremes

At the same time, many areas will be drier overall — meaning those heavy rains will wash over desiccated ground. The "frequency of extremes increases by a factor of more than five in large parts of Canada and over the western U.S. in December, January and February," they added.

And that will affect roads, bridges and dams as well as communities built in low-lying areas and on hillsides.

"Extreme precipitation events affect our infrastructure through flooding, landslides and debris flows," said Anjali Bamzai of the National Science Foundation, which paid for the research.

Weather patterns are unpredictable and climate experts agree that as temperatures warm, weather patterns will become more extreme and unpredictable. That means heavier rain but also heavier snow, floods as well as droughts and changes in ocean circulation patterns that can make some areas colder than they are now.

(Source: nbcnews.com)

## The first photo from a new Earth-gazing satellite is insanely detailed

A brand new satellite orbiting hundreds of miles above Earth's surface has just opened its eyes.

DigitalGlobe released the first public photo taken by the company's Earth-gazing WorldView-4 satellite, and it's a beauty.



The new image, taken on Nov. 26 and unveiled last week, shows Tokyo, Japan's Yoyogi National Gymnasium, one of the sites of the 1964 Olympics.

WorldView-4 is the latest advanced satellite in a fleet of five DigitalGlobe spacecraft designed to beam high-resolution images of various places on Earth back to people on the ground.

The details in the new photo are impressive, especially considering that the image was taken from 617 kilometers, or about 383 miles, above the planet. Cars and trucks can be seen on roads and in parking lots, and stretching shadows of soccer players fan out on pitches on the upper-left portion of the photo.

The difference between WorldView-4's first photo and some of the early images taken by DigitalGlobe's Ikonos satellite, which launched in 1999 and took its last photo in 2014, are like night and day.

Black and white Ikonos images clearly show large-scale features of different areas, but the detail is lost, limiting the number of applications available to users of the data.

All in all, WorldView-4 will provide 680,000 square kilometers (a bit less than the size of Texas) of imagery to DigitalGlobe's database every day.

Clients like Google use those images to create maps, provide help to aid organizations after disasters, and other applications.

(Source: Mashable)

## "13<sup>th</sup> Intl. Drainage Conference Poster" of KWPA Unveiled

The unveiling ceremony for the poster of 13<sup>th</sup> International Drainage Conference

was held at the venue of Boostan Hotel of Khuzestan Water and Power Authority (KWPA).

Executive Secretary of 13<sup>th</sup> Intl. Drainage Conference Narges Zahraabi announced the above statement among local and nationwide correspondents and said: "As the most prestigious scientific drainage and



Achievements of domestic and foreign experts in the field of drainage and irrigation will be outlined in 13<sup>th</sup> Intl. Drainage Conference, he noted.

Currently, abstracts of 154 articles have been sent to the Secretariat of 13<sup>th</sup> Intl. Drainage Conference, based in Ahvaz.

She pointed to the main topics of

total land area across the country equipped with underground drainage at approx. 250,000 ha, half of which is located in Khuzestan Province.

With the effective planning made for the development of drainage-irrigation networks in the country, it is predicted that approx. 300,000 ha land area will be equipped with the underground drainage system across the country in the very near future, the official maintained.

With due observance to the said issue, it is expected that drainage land areas in the country will hit approx. 500,000 ha in coming years, 400,000 ha of which will be in Khuzestan Province which comprises totally over 80 percent of drainage network system.

Turning to the main reason behind organizing such prestigious international conference in Khuzestan Province, she said: "Khuzestan Province has been dubbed the cradle of drainage network system in the country due to its historical

vastness, fertile and vast agricultural land areas, existence of historical hydro- and water structures and also drainage land areas."

With due observance to the said issue, Khuzestan Province has been selected by the International Commission on Irrigation & Drainage (ICID) as the main hub for organizing this prestigious Conference, she opined.



remarks, the official in charge said:

"The issue of wastewaters and drainage network systems will be one of the major problems in Khuzestan Province in future, so that approx. 100 foreign experts along with 250 domestic specialists will convene in this prestigious drainage event."

Drainage and sustainability of environment will be taken into seri-



irrigation event in world, the 13<sup>th</sup> International Drainage Conference will be held for the first time in Ahvaz, Iran in 2017."

This Conference will focus on drainage and sustainability of environment within the framework of International Drainage and Irrigation Commission and will be held in cooperation with Khuzestan Water and Power Authority (KWPA) on March 4-7, 2017 in Ahvaz for a period of four days, the executive secretary of the Conference main-

the Conference as follows: taking necessary measures for reducing volume of water drainage, adopting effective steps for improving quality of water drainage, designing environment-friendly criteria and applying substituted drainage methods, etc. Zahraabi put the



Since Khuzestan Province is currently considered as one of the largest executive and tutorial workshops in the field of drainages, responsible officials at ICID have decided to organize the 13<sup>th</sup> International Drainage Conference in this southern province. Elsewhere in her

ous consideration in this Conference, she highlighted.

The 13<sup>th</sup> International Drainage Conference was held at the venue of Boostan Hotel of Khuzestan Water and Power Authority (KWPA).

It should be noted that Hamid-Reza Khoda-Bakhshi Deputy for Planning and Developing Irrigation and Drainage Networks and Reza Alijani Manager of Public Relations Department of the Authority also attended the Conference.



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# Russia, China block UNSC resolution on Aleppo truce

Syrian forces free two more eastern Aleppo areas

➔ This is while some reports said the Syrian army has taken full control of Sha'ar, but they have not been officially confirmed yet.

In addition, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said after Sha'ar's liberation, the terrorists' campaign would be reduced to a "war of attrition" with the Syrian military.

Sha'ar "is the most important neighborhood in the heart of east Aleppo, and is on the brink of falling," the head of the SOHR, Rami Abdel Rahman, said, stressing that government forces already controlled about a third of the district.

The Syrian army is estimated to be in control of 70 percent of east Aleppo following the recapture of Sha'ar.

Backed by Russia's air cover, Syrian army forces and their allies have dealt heavy blows to the militants over the past few weeks.

■ **Syria dismisses Aleppo truce, urges terrorists' withdrawal**

Additionally on Tuesday, Syria announced that it would not agree to a truce in Aleppo unless it received adequate guarantees for the full withdrawal of militants from the flashpoint city.

In a statement carried by Syria's official news agency, SANA, the Syrian Foreign and Expatriates Ministry said that Damascus would "exert every effort to liberate"



the citizens held hostage by terrorists in eastern Aleppo, adding, "It therefore rejects any attempt by any side to reach a cease-fire in east Aleppo that would not include the exit of all terrorists."

The statement was released one day after Russia and China vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for a seven-day ceasefire in Aleppo, with Moscow emphasizing that the pause would only permit the militants to regroup.

Elsewhere in its statement, the Syrian Foreign Ministry "appreciated" the double veto of the motion and noted that it

would have only granted the terrorists "the opportunity to regroup and commit their crimes again."

■ **U.S. buying time for militants to re-arm**

Separately on Tuesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov referred to the planned negotiations between Moscow and Washington on the cessation of hostilities in militant-held eastern Aleppo, saying that the U.S. "retracted the initial document and now they have a new document, which ... brings back all of our previous concerns."

Lavrov made the remarks in a joint

press conference with Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland following a meeting in Moscow.

He further denounced the U.S. effort to secure a pause in Aleppo fighting as "an attempt to buy time for militants to give them breathing space and be able to replenish their ammunition."

The top Russian diplomat also warned that Aleppo terrorists would be wiped out unless they quit the city, saying, "There is no other way."

On Monday, a militant attack on a Russian mobile hospital in Aleppo left two medical staff dead and several others injured.

Touching on the assault, Lavrov argued that "it was an orchestrated action planned by those who attempt to preserve their positions in Aleppo under the patronage of some Western countries."

■ **Aleppo situation 'disgrace' for international community**

In another development on Tuesday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the international community had failed to alleviate the suffering of Aleppo residents.

"It is a disgrace that we have been unable to establish humanitarian corridors, but we must continue to fight for it," she said.

(Source: agencies)

## UN names 41 peacekeepers accused in 'abhorrent' CAR refugee sex assaults

The United Nations has named and referred for punishment 41 of its peacekeepers accused of a slew of "abhorrent" sexual abuse of refugees in the Central African Republic (CAR).

The announcement came after a four-month probe into disturbing reports of sexual assaults and exploitation of women and children by the UN peacekeeping mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) in the Kemo prefecture during 2014 and 2015.

According to UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric, the joint probe by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and investigators from Burundi and Gabon found 25 of the suspects were from Burundi and 16 others from Gabon.

The world body had shared the report with both member states, including the "names of the identified alleged perpetrators and has requested for appropriate judicial actions to ensure criminal accountability."

The investigation was primarily based on the testimony of victims and witnesses given the lack of medical, forensic or any other physical evidence of alleged incidents that happened at least a year ago.

In total, the OIOS interviewed nearly 150 complaints, including those of 25 minors, all of which reported sexu-

al abuse in the town of Dekoa of the prefecture. Some of the female victims acknowledged their abusers through photos and other evidence.

"The alleged perpetrators, if allegations against them are substantiated, and, if warranted, their commanding officers will not be accepted again for deployment in peacekeeping operations," Dujarric said.

All of the alleged perpetrators had been rotated out of the crisis-hit country before the allegations surfaced, he added.

"The United Nations condemns, in the strongest terms, all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers or any other UN personnel and will maintain follow up so that perpetrators of these abhorrent acts are brought to justice," he said.

Last year, UN chief Ban Ki-moon fired the head of MINUSCA mission because of the increasing number of sexual abuse cases. He warned that the UN would throw out the entire peacekeeping unit if the soldiers accused of assaults were not prosecuted.

Under peacekeeping arrangements, the countries providing the troops have jurisdiction over prosecuting such crimes.

The CAR plunged into crisis in December 2013, when



anti-balaka militia began coordinated attacks against Muslims after the ouster of the government in March that year.

The UN peacekeepers have been patrolling in the crisis-hit country since April 2014 to protect citizens and refugees from violence between warring factions there.

In his latest annual report, Ban announced that 69 cases of sexual abuse had been committed by UN peacekeepers last year, half of them in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(Source: agencies)

## Post-reality America: Trump's (s)election and the irrelevant recount

➔ That Hillary Clinton won the popular vote comes as no surprise, for 23 out of 25 public opinion polls taken in the two months prior to the election predicted that she would edge Trump by an average margin of four percent. Two of the polls, both conducted by NBC News, had sample sizes over 23,000, and both predicted a five percent or greater margin for Clinton in the popular vote. And polls are reasonably accurate predictors as can be seen by the fact that Gallup polls have predicted the winner of the popular vote in 17 out of the last 20 U.S. elections.

There have been notable exceptions, such as 1948 when Harry Truman trounced Thomas Dewey or 2012 when Mitt Romney was predicted by some polls to win over Barack Obama. Yet this time, something seems amiss since only two polls, Bloomberg and Rassmussen Reports, predicted a Trump victory. And with so many polls proven wrong—polls with substantial sample sizes and margins of error plus or minus one percent—it is not unreasonable to suspect foul play.

■ **The recount effort**

Some have suggested that there may have been voting fraud, like investigative journalist Greg Palast, who reported that "there were a massive number of votes that were simply rejected, invalidated and spoiled; they were simply not counted." Other individuals have alleged the presence of anomalies in voting patterns in three states: Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. Leading them is J. Alex Halderman, the director of the University of Michigan Center for Computer Security and Society, who presented evidence that Clinton may have been shorted seven percent of the vote in precincts using electronic voting machines with no paper trail as opposed to those using optical scanners.

If Dr. Halderman is correct, the winner in Wisconsin may actually have been Clinton, but with only 232 electoral votes, she would need to win in all three states mentioned above to bump Trump, who currently has 306. And who pulled off this electronic subterfuge? "Russia has sophisticated cyber-offensive capabilities, and has shown a willingness to use them to hack elections," wrote Halderman, but as far as Russia being the culprit, "Probably not." Still, the only way to know for sure, according to Halderman, is for the candidates to demand a recount.

Due to the scant margins favoring Trump in Michigan (0.3%), Wisconsin (0.7%) and Pennsylvania (1.2%), Halderman urged the Clinton staff to petition for a recount, while warning, "The candidate needs to pay the cost,

which can run into millions of dollars." But instead of Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein is spearheading the recount effort, a candidate who only gained a fraction over one percent of the popular vote and does not have the proverbial snowball's chance in hell of winning.

■ **Why Jill Stein?**

Based on Federal Election Commission data, Stein took in a little over \$3 million in contributions during her lackluster 2016 campaign, but has so far amassed over \$7 million for a recount effort that could only benefit Hillary Clinton. Why? According to Stein's lead attorney, Jonathan Abady, "We are committed to this fight to protect the civil and voting rights of all Americans." Such dedication and altruism is commendable, but hardly believable. A more plausible explanation for Stein's suspiciously stellar fundraising performance would be that she has the backing of wealthy Clinton supporters.

Assuming the money is raised, how, within the allotted time, could this recount be accomplished, particularly in Pennsylvania, whose electronic voting machines lack any paper trail? Furthermore, if by some chance Stein is successful, Trump, no doubt, has deeper pockets to fund litigation; or does he? The answer is, maybe not. Marc Elias, the general counsel for the Clinton team, will be participating in the recount proceedings initiated by Stein, and Elias is backed by none other than staunch Clinton backer, billionaire George Soros.

While it appears that Stein is simply a not-so-subtly-disguised front for a Clinton recount drive, other benefits may be accruing to her. Harvard constitutional law professor Laurence Tribe suggested that one of Stein's goals may be "trying to gain attention and establish herself as a national player." Also, she is building a large donor list, which adds to her potential to influence policy by urging contributors to call their representatives in congress and voice their opinions.

■ **Who selected Trump?**

The media have long intimated that Trump is Russian president Putin's choice. If we were to ask James Clapper, the U.S. director of national intelligence, he would most likely agree that Russia was backing Trump. "The emails released on sites like WikiLeaks are consistent with methods and motivations of Russian-directed efforts," stated Clapper referring to the DNC hack, adding, "Going after U.S. political organizations is a new aggressive spin on the political cycle." Adding additional credibility to this new reality construct, representative Michael McCaul, chair of the homeland security committee, told

Trump himself that Russia was trying to influence the election, something which then candidate Trump rejected. One former western intelligence operative claimed the "Russian regime has been cultivating, supporting and assisting Trump for at least [five] years."

However, Michael Collins Piper, in his study on the Zionist elites, claims that Trump got his start in 1987 when CIA front man and head of Resorts International James Crosby died. Trump bought Crosby's interests in the gambling enterprise after lobbyists from the Mossad-linked Meyer Lansky syndicate had successfully lobbied to legalize gambling in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Trump "definitely owes much to the patronage of the Zionist elite," according to Piper.

■ **Why is America "post-reality?"**

Firstly, it is doubtful that recounts underway could be finished in time for the December 19 deadline and therefore, a situation would arise similar to what happened in the 2000 election where the U.S. supreme court stepped in to halt the process.

Secondly, even if Clinton gains a plurality in the popular vote in the three states in question, she probably would not be accepted as president by a majority of Americans, who, unable to face reality, would view this as a coup by the Clinton cabal.

Thirdly, if the recounts were to give Clinton the needed electoral votes, some electors have declared their intention to vote for candidates other than as required by protocol and the popular vote. This would make recount efforts irrelevant.

Fourthly, if we ignore reality and suppose that the electors vote for Clinton on December 19, is it reasonable to assume Trump, whose supporters have already filed lawsuits on his behalf to stop the recount, would accept the result? Probably not. Calls for "patriots" to "stand up and resist" Clinton's "coup" are already on the internet.

Lastly, that either candidate could halt the downward imperial spiral to "make America great again" is unlikely. Yet, in a society as polarized as in America, violent demonstrations or even civil war might result should the election results suddenly be changed. Such extreme polarization has happened before, from 1862 to 1865 with nearly a million casualties as a result.

Irrelevant recounts notwithstanding, the Zionist elite have selected Trump in post-reality America, where government of the polarized, by the polarized, and for the polarized, shall likely remain polarized until it perishes from the earth.

## As Trump vows to stop flow of jobs overseas, U.S. plans to make fighter jets in India

As a new American president bent on retaining American jobs prepares to take office, the Obama administration and the United States defense industry are working on a deal with the Indian government to build iconic U.S. combat aircraft in India.

In recent months, Lockheed Martin and Boeing have made proposals to the Indian government to manufacture fighter jets — the F-16 Fighting Falcon and the F/A-18 Super Hornet — in India as the country seeks to modernize its rapidly aging fleet of largely Russian-built airplanes.

In both cases, the aviation companies would be building production facilities in India; Lockheed Martin proposes to move its entire F-16 assembly line from Texas to India, making India the sole producer of the single-engine combat aircraft.

The U.S. military is phasing out the F-16 for its own use, but other countries remain as likely customers.

The proposals have the strong backing of the Obama administration, which has sought a closer connection with the Indian military in recent years. Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said she was "optimistic" about the prospect of a deal after a visit to New Delhi in August, and Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter is set to return to India next week, with procurement high atop the list of discussion topics.

But the election of a billionaire businessman focused on keeping jobs at home, rather than creating them overseas, has brought a measure of uncertainty to the talks.

On Thursday, President-elect Donald Trump appeared at a Carrier plant in Indiana where his team had brokered a deal to save about 1,000 jobs, and on Sunday he let fire a series of tweets that implied a new tax penalty on goods produced by companies that leave the United States.

"Please be forewarned prior to making a very expensive mistake! THE UNITED STATES IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS," he tweeted.

On the campaign trail he had railed against job losses to Asia and Mexico.

"We are living through the greatest jobs theft in the world," Trump said last month, citing American companies that have laid off workers and moved jobs to India, Singapore and Mexico. "It's getting worse and worse and worse."

Officials at Lockheed Martin and Boeing said that any partnership to manufacture jets in India would not result in a net loss of American jobs but would create Indian employment — about 1,000 positions in the case of Lockheed Martin.

About 300 mechanics on the Fort Worth assembly line would be moved to the F-35 assembly line at the same plant. Others would be given an opportunity to apply for other jobs on the newer F-35, Lockheed officials said, although they concede that some positions would be lost in the move because of attrition or retirements.

Nevertheless, workers in Fort Worth say they are worried about the future.

In October, the Indian government sent a letter to foreign missions and aerospace manufacturers inquiring about single-engine fighter aircraft that could be manufactured locally.

India wants to co-produce the fighter jets as part of its Make in India program, which has the lofty goal of expanding the manufacturing base to 25 percent of the gross domestic product in the next six years.

India's costly earlier effort to partner with the French company Dassault Aviation for 126 jets unraveled, and the government ended up buying only 36 ready-made Rafale planes this year.

Analysts say Lockheed's main rival in the single-engine sphere is Sweden's Saab Group and its Gripen fighter. Chicago-based Boeing has also proposed to make its twin-engine F/A-18 in India. Boeing recently took a group of Indian defense journalists on a whirlwind tour of Australia and the United States to show off its program.

The U.S. Air Force is phasing out the F-16 in favor of the F-35 aircraft in coming years and the company has no orders for the F-16 beyond October 2017, but it is seeking other customers and does not plan to dismantle the assembly line just yet.

(Source: The Washington Post)

## Israeli parliament moves bill forward to legalize unlawful outposts

Israel's parliament (Knesset) has given its initial approval to a controversial bill that would authorize the presence of illegal settlement units built on privately-owned Palestinian territories in the occupied West Bank amid outcry that the measure would amount to land grab.

The legislation advanced the so-called Regulation Bill by 60 votes to 49 during a late Monday session. It will be put to a second vote on Tuesday, with three readings needed at unspecified future dates before it becomes law.

The bill is a revised version of legislation that, in its original form, defied the Israeli supreme court's decision on the evacuation of the illegal Amona settlement outpost, which is located northeast of Ramallah in the central West Bank and constructed on private Palestinian land.

The Supreme Court decision stipulated that the evacuation of Amona "must occur before December 25."

The new bill has scrapped the so-called Amona clause. The 330 residents of the unlawful settlement outpost are then to be moved to a nearby hill for eight months, after which they would be forced to move a second time.

Hard-line Israeli politician Naftali Bennett has praised the parliamentary approval of the bill to retroactively authorize illegal outposts as a step away from establishing a Palestinian state.

Opposition leader Isaac Herzog has, however, lamented the legislation and warned that the Israeli regime is committing "suicide" with the measure.

The United States Secretary of State John Kerry has also called the bill "really concerning."

"There will be no advance and separate peace with the Arab world without the Palestinian process and Palestinian peace," he said.

(Source: Press TV)



## Cristiano Ronaldo court date likely over tax arrangement - Gestha chief

The president of the union at Spain's tax authority says he expects Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo to face charges in court over his financial arrangements, just as Lionel Messi had in the summer.

A group of European media outlets have reported that Portugal captain Ronaldo has directed at least €150 million in income through the British Virgin Islands tax haven since 2009, and that the Spanish tax authorities have been investigating his affairs for 12 months already.



The reports have also accused Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho and a number of other high-profile football figures of having used similar frameworks of overseas companies to avoid paying tax on income from image rights.

Both Ronaldo and Mourinho are represented by Jorge Mendes' agency Gestifute, which has strongly denied any wrongdoing and said all of its clients are fully compliant with their tax obligations. Mourinho has also said he has nothing to hide.

In July, Messi was found guilty of tax fraud and sentenced to 21 months in prison -- which he did not have to serve under Spanish law -- after it was found that he and his father had broken Spanish laws by using tax havens to hide image rights income.

On Monday, the Gestha union, which represents lower-level workers at the tax authority, released a statement saying the ongoing investigation into Ronaldo had showed evidence of serious tax offences that could merit a prison sentence.

Its president Carlos Cruzado was later asked on Cadena Ser's "El Languero" radio show if Ronaldo would follow Messi in ending up in front of a judge to face tax fraud charges.

"That is what you would expect," Cruzado replied. "We feel that the tax authority should pass the case to the public prosecutor, so that they take the reins on this. It is very easy to see this ending up in front of a judge, for sure. We are all part of the tax authority, although sometimes people doubt this, especially when the papers are full of stories like this."

In May 2016, Mourinho agreed a settlement of €2.1 million with the Spanish tax authorities to cover image rights income earned between 2010 and 2013, when he was Real Madrid manager, that had not been declared at the time. However, Messi and Barcelona teammate Javier Mascherano were both found guilty of a crime after prosecutors decided their cases should be heard by a judge.

Cruzado said that even those working within the tax authority were not sure of the exact criteria used to decide which cases are settled and which brought to court but that in his view he felt Ronaldo would be charged with an offence.

"It would be good to clear up the exact criteria," he said. "There can be cases which are very similar, dealing with tax havens, that are dealt with differently, but the end objective should be the same. In [Ronaldo's] case it seems there is evidence of an offence and we would think that soon the prosecutor will receive a notification from the tax office."

During an interview with La Voz de Galicia, Spain's Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, declined to comment on Ronaldo's tax.

"That is an issue for the Agencia Tributaria [Tax Authority] to get into," Rajoy, a Real Madrid fan, said. "I make sure not to comment about things I do not know."

Spain's Secretary of State for Tax Affairs, Jose Enrique Fernandez de Moya, has also said that the tax authority should be allowed to do its job without government interference or media pressure. The Spanish newspaper ABC reported that legal sources it consulted predict a case could drag on for 10 years if charges are brought against Ronaldo.

El Mundo, meanwhile, has reported that Madrid's Pepe and Fabio Coentrao, both also Gestifute clients, are being investigated for not having paid taxes on a combined €7m in image rights income.

The newspaper also said Madrid playmaker Luka Modric is being investigated over allegations his image rights income was moved to a Luxembourg-based company owned by his wife and established a few months after he signed for Madrid in 2012.

(Source: ESPN)

## Lee leaves role as England assistant manager

Sammy Lee has left his role as England's assistant manager, the FA said on Tuesday.

Lee, who first worked with the England national team during Sven-Goran Eriksson's reign as manager, began his second stint in July as Sam Allardyce's assistant.

He also served as assistant to new England manager Gareth Southgate, when he was put in interim charge of the team following Allardyce's departure.

"I have great respect for Sammy," Southgate told the FA website. "He is somebody who I worked with as a player and his personality and professionalism were excellent throughout my period as interim manager."

"I felt it was important for me to bring in my own support team and Sammy fully respected that."

Lee thanked the FA for giving him the chance to work with England. "In particular I wish Gareth and his new coaching team every success in the future," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

# Dortmund eye Uefa Champions League goal record against Real Madrid

Borussia Dortmund can set a new Champions League goal record at Real Madrid on Wednesday if the likes of Marco Reus, Ousmane Dembele or Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang score at the Bernabeu.

Dortmund arrive in Madrid just one shy of the 20-goal record three teams -- Manchester United, Real Madrid and Barcelona -- have previously tallied in the Champions League group stages.

Two of those, United, in 1998/99, and Real, who achieved 'La Decima' -- a tenth European crown -- in 2013/14, went on to win that season's European title.

Thomas Tuchel's leaders Dortmund hold a two-point advantage over Real in Group F and the winner of Wednesday's clash in Madrid will qualify top of the table.

Star-studded Real, spearheaded by Cristiano Ronaldo, present a formidable challenge at home, but Dortmund are in buoyant mood.

It finished 2-2 when the teams met in Dortmund last September as Andre Schuerle's late goal rescued the hosts after Ronaldo and Raphael Varane scored for Real and Aubameyang had netted for Borussia.

But Dortmund were boosted a fortnight ago by the return of Germany winger Marco Reus after six months out with the adductor injury that saw him miss Euro 2016.

The 27-year-old grabbed two goals, with a third later credited as an own goal, and set up two more when Dortmund trounced Legia Warsaw 8-4 at home a fortnight ago in a record score for a Champions League match.

Reus also weighed in with three assists, and had a goal disallowed, in Dortmund's 4-1 thrashing of Borussia Moenchengladbach on Saturday.

"The injury, which meant a six-month break, has made him more mature," said Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel.

"Now Marco is back and it's fantastic the way he has returned."

Against Gladbach, Aubameyang



also netted twice -- to make him the Bundesliga's top scorer with 15 goals -- and Dembele also got on the scoresheet in what Tuchel described as "a complete performance from us".

"In my opinion Ousmane Dembele had one of his best matches in a Dortmund shirt," added Tuchel.

Reus is currently a joy to watch, from the way he casually robbed Gladbach defender Nico Elvedi of possession to his audacious backheel which set up Aubameyang for his second goal as Dortmund warmed up for Madrid.

"The pass was crazy, but that's just Marco Reus. You know what he's like," said Aubameyang.

"I am very happy that he is back. He is one of the best players we have."

Dortmund's current tally of 19 Champions League goals is boosted by their results against Legia.

They romped to a 6-0 away win in Warsaw when six different players scored before the record 8-4 win at home.

Dembele has been a revelation in his first season with Dortmund since joining from French side Rennes.

The precociously talented winger announced his arrival with a superb goal in Dortmund's 4-1 drubbing of Manchester United on a pre-season tour of China and has produced ten assists and four goals in all competitions.

Aubameyang has taken the 19-year-old Dembele under his wing, helping the teenager with his finishing, but also his defending, which had been an issue.

Dembele has been guilty of giving away possession too easily, especially in Dortmund's 2-1 defeat at Eintracht Frankfurt a week ago, but Tuchel says the young Frenchman was "the difference" in the win over Gladbach.

"He played one of his best games, because he carefully passed in situations when it was not appropriate to dribble," noted Tuchel.

"He defended very attentively and made the difference in certain situations."

(Source: AFP)

## Chelsea's Eden Hazard happy for Diego Costa to finish as leading scorer

Eden Hazard is happy for Diego Costa to be the Premier League's top scorer -- as long as he can reclaim the Player of the Year crown he won in Chelsea's title-winning 2014-15 campaign.

Costa and Hazard scored as the Blues secured their eighth consecutive Premier League victory with a 3-1 win over Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium on Saturday.

The result moved the Blues three points clear of Arsenal at the top of the table.

Hazard and Costa account for 19 of the team's 32 Premier League goals this season, with Costa top of the scoring charts with 11 goals alongside Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez while Hazard has eight.

"It's not bad, is it?" Hazard said when asked about his goal tally after the City win.

"But I always say to Diego that he can become the top scorer. If I get the chance to score a goal, I will take it. But he can become the top scorer if I can win the trophy of the best player."

"We can laugh about it now, but we'll see. Diego is performing on a high level and we are scoring a lot of goals."

"We are strong as a team, we are together, and that's very good. We are going to try to keep playing on this level. We are full of confidence."

Despite his personal targets, Hazard stressed that his primary aim is to bring the Premier League trophy back to Stamford Bridge in May.

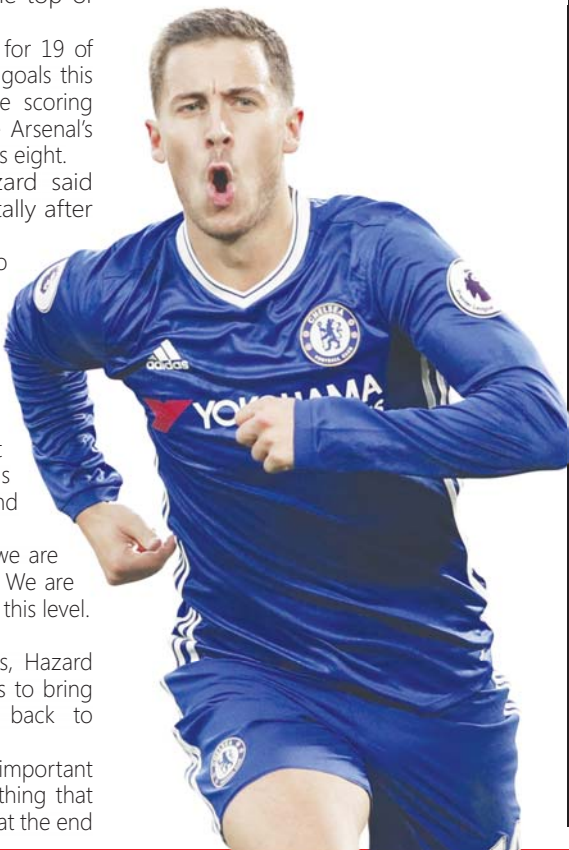
"Records have never been important for me," he added. "The only thing that interests me is winning the title at the end

of the season.

"Man City are title contenders and we won. We are satisfied. City had chances to go 2-0, 3-0 up. They could have won if they'd finished their opportunities, but that's football. We took our chances."

"Chelsea are always competing for the title. We are in a good position right now, but let's see. We are trying."

(Source: Soccernet)



## Deschamps: Pogba will never win Ballon d'Or

France manager Didier Deschamps has ruled Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba out of the running for the Ballon d'Or - this year and every year!

The 23-year-old was named on the shortlist for this year's trophy having impressed with Juventus before sealing a world-record transfer to Manchester United, but is not the right type of player to lift the award, according to his international manager.

Lionel Messi has won four times and Cristiano Ronaldo twice in the six years since the current version of the trophy was created to honour the world's best player, and Deschamps feels that Pogba's position and lack of goals mean he will never triumph.

"He's a midfielder. The Ballon d'Or is for forwards or No 10s, apart from rare exceptions in certain competitions. They're players who score goals," Deschamps told RMC.

"Paul has scored some, he's going to score some, but he won't score three goals per match. That's not his game."

Deschamps' opinion reflects that of Pogba's club manager Jose Mourinho, who also claimed that only a goalscorer can ever win the coveted trophy.

"First of all, when you speak about the best players in the world you go immediately to the ones that score a lot of goals," Mourinho said.

"You don't give a gold ball to a goalkeeper. They gave a gold ball to [Fabio] Cannavaro once but because in that season he was captain of Italy, they were world champions, and there were not too many top players." [Paolo] Maldini never got a gold ball, [Javier] Zanetti never got a gold ball, top goalkeepers over history

don't get a gold ball. You look immediately to the ones that score a lot of goals.

"Can Paul score Ronaldo and Messi goals? Not even 25 per cent. I believe in a season he cannot score 20 goals. If to be the best player in the world means to score a lot of goals, that's not the point."

"He is one of the best midfield players, maybe I could say the best midfield player in the world."

(Source: Goal)



## Mertesacker eyes new year return for Arsenal

Arsenal centre back Per Mertesacker is nearing match fitness and is eyeing a return to action in the new year after spending the first half of the Premier League season on the sidelines due to a knee problem.

The German, who was appointed club captain following Mikel Arteta's departure this year, was injured in a pre-season friendly in July and underwent surgery.

"I'm hopeful that I can join the team properly and be available to the team next year," Mertesacker told

reporters.

"That's my resolution. I want to be back on the pitch and with the ball. I'm able to run now, painless, and it's what it's all about. When you are able to run again after such a long time it makes you feel happy."

In the 32-year-old's absence, Laurent Koscielny and Shkodran Mustafi have played in central defence and Arsenal have conceded 14 goals, the third fewest in the league.

(Source: Reuters)





# Rio Olympics is a nightmare for me: Behdad Salimi

**T T S P O R T S** Iranian super heavyweight d e s k weightlifter Behdad Salimi says that he will never forget the memories of the 2016 Olympic Games and it's like a nightmare.

The gold medalist at London 2012 broke the world record in the snatch in Rio (216kg) but was disqualified after a questionable decision by the jury in the clean and jerk.

He cleared 245 kg twice, even getting three straight white lights from judges in his second attempt but somehow the jury didn't accept the lifts and disqualified him.

"Usually when people see me in the public places, they sympathize with me and remind me of what happened at the 2016 Olympic Games. I, consequently, remember the bitter memories of the event. I will never forget the memories," Salimi said.

"I've started my training for a while to keep my form. I participated in the weightlifting training camp recently. My goal is to participate at the 2017 Asian Weightlifting Championship. Afterward, I will have to participate at the 2017 World Weightlifting Championships in Anaheim, California," he added.

"It is a difficult task ahead of me in the world championship because the event will bring a several of best weightlifters from Armenia, Georgia and Russia together," Salimi stated.



## Iran, Ivory Coast friendly called off

**T T S P O R T S** Iran national football team was d e s k scheduled to play a friendly match against 2015 Africa Cup of Nations champion Ivory Coast in Dubai in late January but the game has been called off.

However according to Moroccan website 'Alyaum24', Team Melli will take on Morocco national football team on January 6 in Dubai's Al Ain stadium.

A couple of African teams will hold training camps

in Dubai in order to prepare for the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations which will take place in Gabon from January 14 to February 5.

Morocco has been drawn in the Group C of the tournament alongside defending champion Ivory Coast, DR Congo and Togo.

Iran, who is currently top of Group A in the Asia's 2018 World Cup qualifying with 11 points, will take on Qatar on March 3 before facing China five days later.

## Iranian greco-roman wrestling clubs to travels to Hungary

Iranian teams Bimeh Razi and Sina Sanat Izeh have travelled to Hungary on Tuesday to take part in the third annual Greco-Roman World Wrestling Club Cup.

The competition will be held in Budapest on December 8-9.

The last two editions were held in the Iranian cities of Abadan and Khoramshahr. Pastor Andimeshk and Bimeh Razi won the previous competitions, respectively.

### ■ Bimeh Razi:

**59kg:** Saman Abdevali, Mohammad Faghiri

**66kg:** Mahdi Zeidvand, Davor Stefanek

**71kg:** Farshad Belfakeh

**75kg:** Saeid Abdevali

**80kg:** Ramin Taheri

**66kg:** Hossein Noori, Zhan Vensanovych Beleniuk

**98kg:** Mahdi Aliyari, Seyed Mostafa Salehizadeh

**130kg:** Amirhasem Monjazi

**Head coach:** Hassan Rangraz

### ■ Sina Sanat Izeh:

**59kg:** Mehرداد Mardani, Abdolmohammad Papi

**66kg:** Ali Arsalan, Mohammad Ali Geraei

**71kg:** Azim Garmsiri

**75kg:** Pejman Shetam

**80kg:** Maxim Manukyan

**85kg:** Davoud Abedinzadeh

**98kg:** Aliakbar Heidari

**130kg:** Zviadi Pataridze

**Head coach:** Malek Mohammadbayeri.

World Wrestling Clubs Cup is an international wrestling competition among teams representing



member nations of the United World Wrestling (UWW), the sport's global governing body.

The tournament was founded in 2014 at the suggestion of the Islamic Republic of Iran Wrestling Federation, with the first edition held in Iran.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Man United have ability to finish in top four, says Guardiola

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has expressed doubts over whether Manchester United can challenge for the Premier League title but believes they have a realistic chance of finishing in the top four.

Sixth-placed United have been held to draws in six of their last eight league games, including consecutive 1-1 results against Arsenal, West Ham United and Everton.

Jose Mourinho's men are 13 points behind league leaders Chelsea, who are on 34 points, three more than Arsenal and four ahead of Liverpool and Manchester City.

"Of course, 13 points is a long distance, especially when one team is winning games with the quality of Chelsea," Guardiola told reporters.

"So it is not easy. But to be in the first four? Of course."

"I saw the games against Stoke and Burnley, and other ones at Old Trafford. They deserved by far to win the games



but football is like this.

"United have the quality, the history, the manager and the players to be there."

While no one in Premier League history has gone on to win the league with a 13-point deficit, United did overturn a 12-point gap to Newcastle in 1996.

(Source: Reuters)

## Federer and Serena Williams drop out of International Premier Tennis League

Roger Federer and Serena Williams have both pulled out of India's International Premier Tennis League due to financial uncertainty.

The 2016 IPTL is the third edition of the tournament and Federer and Williams both featured in the previous two.

But India's financial crisis after demonetisation means that many of the game's best players will be absent when the IPTL gets underway on December 9.

"We have had challenges this year, and we were hoping to get past them," IPTL founder Mahesh Bhupathi said.

"With the current economic climate in India and the uncertainty of spending money, I reached out to both Roger and Serena to explain the situation.

"They have been both been very supportive of the IPTL the first two



seasons and we look forward to bring them in future years."

The event in Hyderabad was due to be Federer's first competitive appearance since July. The former world No. 1 will now wait until 2017 before making his comeback.

(Source: Eurosport)



## I have not received offer from Iran: Mauro Berruto

Former Italy volleyball coach Mauro Berruto said he has not received any offer from the Iranian volleyball federation.

General Secretary of Iran's Volleyball Federation Mahmoud Afshardoost had announced that Berruto is short-listed for the job of Iranian volleyball team's coach.

Asked whether he is interested in coaching Iran, Berruto said, "Iran is a great National Team and, of course, it could be interesting. It's an honor, but at the moment nothing has happened," Berruto told Tasnim

News Agency.

"I had talks with Poland, not yet with Iran. I respect both teams a lot; I really can't say any more," the Italian coach added.

The Iranian volleyball federation has also negotiated with Marcelo Mendez, the Argentinean coach of Brazilian volleyball team Sada Cruzeiro, with Italian coach Andrea Anastasi and Bulgarian Radostin Stoychev in the last few days.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Harry Redknapp criticises FA over coach claims

Former Premier League manager Harry Redknapp has said the Football Association could have done more to monitor an ex-Southampton coach accused of historical sexual abuse.

He told the BBC "rumours" that Bob Higgins may have abused young players in the 1980s had been "rife" for years.

The FA has appointed Clive Sheldon QC to lead its review into abuse.

Mr Higgins has denied all allegations and was acquitted of sexual abuse charges in 1992.

The BBC understands Mr Higgins left Southampton after concerns were raised about his behaviour, and a TV documentary then broadcast the testimony of eight alleged victims.

Mr Redknapp, who was manager of Southampton from 2004 to 2005 and who has also managed Portsmouth and Bournemouth on the south coast, said: "I've known him for a long time, he was probably the leading youth development guy in the country."

"But then the rumours were going around at that time and there was a programme I watched where this young guy spoke about Bob Higgins and the type of stuff he was doing with kids at Southampton and I thought that would be the end of him."

"I'm just amazed that he's been involved in football since that day."

Mr Redknapp said there "must have been people" at Southampton that had heard the rumours that Mr Higgins had sexually abused children.

"Southampton's a great football club, and it's run by fantastic people there now."

"They had a great manager, Lawrie McMenemy. If Lawrie had suspected anything I'm sure Lawrie would have well and truly booted him out."

"But until you can actually prove something or there's a bit of evidence, it's very difficult."

But "I certainly think the FA could have done a bit more to monitor him and make sure he wasn't allowed back into football," he said.

He said he had not sent his son Jamie to Southampton as a young player - but not because of rumors about Mr Higgins.

### ■ 'Nowhere near'

In 1997, police and social services sent a joint letter to schools and youth groups warning them that "Mr Higgins poses a risk to children".

Mr Redknapp said if he had received such a letter he would have had him "nowhere near" a football club he managed.

After Southampton, Mr Higgins was hired by Winchester City FC but was only there a few months.

At a meeting with Hampshire County Council and the local FA, Winchester representatives were shown the TV documentary that had aired a few years earlier and it was made clear it was inappropriate for Mr Higgins to stay at the club.

Ray Barnes, Hampshire FA chief for 25 years who was at the meeting, would later be convicted of indecently assaulting three boys in an unrelated incident.

After this Mr Higgins went on to work for two other clubs, most recently Fleet Town until three weeks ago, the BBC understands.

The Football League warned its clubs about Mr Higgins as far back as 1989.

A letter advised them not to work with his youth football academy but did not provide any reasons.

The letter said the Football League, Football Association and English Schools Football Association were "opposed to the activities of this organisation".

### ■ 'Risk to children'

He was not police checked for the later football coaching job at Fleet Town FC in 2012 as his role did not involve him working with children.

Six former Southampton youth players have come forward with allegations about Mr Higgins. Hampshire police has confirmed it is investigating.

Mr Redknapp has urged other players to come forward with what they know.

The FA has yet to respond to the comments but has launched an internal review into historical abuse allegations.

In a statement, it said: "The FA has today published the full terms of reference for the review into issues arising from the recent press reports relating to allegations of non-recent child sexual abuse in football."

The review covers what was known and what actions were taken by the FA from the 1970s. The FA said the precise number of players, alleged abusers and clubs it would investigate was as yet unknown.

It has appointed Clive Sheldon QC to lead the review, replacing Kate Gallafent QC, who was originally appointed.

Southampton FC has said it is working with police and investigating how it has handled these issues in the past.

The BBC has made several attempts to speak to Mr Higgins without success.

### ■ Gaggling orders

Separately, a lawyer representing a new body supporting victims said "calls and emails are coming in all the time" from players claiming to have been forced to sign non-disclosure agreements with clubs in return for compensation.

"Certainly, the allegations have been made by victims that confidentiality clauses have been used in relation to other clubs but I'm not in a position to independently verify this," said Edward Smethurst, who also chairs the Madeleine McCann Fund.

"It's unfolding as we speak. It's a number. It's several (but) less than five."

The claims come after Chelsea FC apologised to former player Gary Johnson for the abuse he suffered as a trainee in the 1970s, having waived the confidentiality clause in a £50,000 agreement they made with him last year.

(Source: BBC)



