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S. Arabia in war with itself and region

West to blame for chaos, terror attacks in Mideast & N. Africa: Russian FM

During a visit to Egypt, the Russian foreign minister has said that Western states, which pursued regime change policies and funded militants, are to blame for the chaos and terrorist attacks in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in Libya.

Sergei Lavrov made the remarks during a joint press conference with his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukry, which followed a joint meeting of the Russian and Egyptian foreign and defense ministers in Cairo on Monday.

Combating terrorism topped the

meeting's agenda, with the two sides stressing the importance of joint efforts in effectively countering the global threat.

"The recent attack on the Coptic Christians once again highlights the need for vigilance. We stand united in our attempt to boost anti-terrorist efforts around the globe," Lavrov said, referring to the May 26 terrorist attack by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit on a bus carrying Coptic Christians in Egypt's southern Minya Province that killed 28 people, including children. **→3**

Exclusive Interview
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Tehran Times / Marviam Kamvab

Annual non-oil GDP growth at 6.3%

ECONOMY DESK TEHRAN — Iran's non-oil gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 6.3 percent during the past Iranian calendar year (March 2016-March 2017), according to the newest report of the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

According to the same report, GDP growth, including the oil sector, touched 8.3 percent in the said period.

Non-oil GDP in the past Iranian year stood at 641.37 trillion rials (about \$17.19 billion), and including oil the figure reached 673.09 trillion rials (about \$18.04 billion).

As reported, the said figures respectively stood at 603.49 trillion rials (about \$16.17 billion) and 621.23 trillion rials (about

\$16.6 billion) in the preceding year.

The International Monetary Fund has forecasted that Iran's real GDP growth is expected to rebound to 6.6 percent in 2016/17.

According to an IMF executive board report released on February 27, Iran's economic growth rebounded over the course of 2016/17 on the back of higher oil production. Real GDP grew by 7.4 percent in the first half 2016/17, rebounding from recession in 2015/16.

Meanwhile, higher foreign direct investment and a gradual improvement in domestic financial conditions drive investment and stronger non-oil sector growth.

ARTICLE
By Mahnaz Abdi
Head of the Economy Desk of the TehranTimes

High-cost Sardar-e Jangal could bring Iran high-tech

Caspian Sea, the world's largest inland body of water, was mainly a center of fishing activities and also a marine transportation hub by the middle of the past century. But discovery of the first oil and gas reserves in the world's largest lake in the late 1940s added to its strategic and geopolitical significance.

Such discoveries encouraged Iran, a major producer of oil and gas in the world, to put the spotlight on conducting exploration activities in the southern Caspian region along the northern borders of the country.

While extraction of oil and gas from the Caspian deposits requires high technology and huge investment as it needs deepwater drilling, it seems to create an opportunity for Iran to achieve such know-how.

In 2002, Iran discovered a gas field in 700 meters water depth off the shore of the northern province of Gilan in the Caspian Sea and named it Sardar-e Jangal. The field contains total proven reserve of around 50 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Some 10 years later, exploration operation of Amir Kabir semi-submersible drilling rig (the largest offshore structure of the country with a weight of 14,700 tons) in the field led to discovery of an oil layer in 728 meters water depth in Sardar-e Jangal. The field is estimated to hold two billion barrels of quality crude that is toxic hydrogen sulfide free. Some 25% of the deposit is thought to be recoverable.

Iran completed the drilling of the first exploration well of the field in 2012. In November 2014 the production tests were carried out successfully in the second well which was 3,500 meters deep. The tests, including pressure and temperature data, oil and gas recovery rate and other production parameters, were performed to make sure about recovery from the field. **→4**

Turkey declares curfew in 43 villages in Diyarbakir

Curfews were imposed in more than 40 villages in southeastern province of Diyarbakir early on Tuesday as part of a security operation against the Kurdish Workers' Party, or PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê), Turkish officials said.

The curfews in 43 villages in Lice, Hani, Kocakoy and Dicle districts started at 7:00am local time (04:00 GMT), and will remain in place until further notice, according to a statement by the government office.

Security forces will conduct an operation in the rural areas in order to "neutralize" PKK fighters in-

cluding "senior members and their collaborators operating in the region", the statement said.

The operation also aims to destroy PKK bunkers, arms depots, and anti-aircraft gun emplacements, as well as seize weapons and ammunition.

More than 1,200 people, including security forces and civilians, have been killed since the PKK resumed its decades-old armed campaign in July 2015, a when ceasefire between the PKK and the state broke down. The PKK has been designated a "terrorist" group by Turkey, the

European Union and the United States.

In February this year, Turkish police detained more than 800 people over alleged links to Kurdish fighters in nationwide operations, according to state media.

The PKK which was formed in the late 1970s has been calling for an independent Kurdish state within Turkey. It launched an armed struggle against the Turkish state in 1984 and more than 40,000 people have since been killed in the conflict.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

World No Tobacco Day: tobacco a threat to development

Every year, on May 31, WHO and partners mark World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), highlighting the health and additional risks associated with tobacco use, and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption.

The theme for World No Tobacco Day 2017 is "Tobacco – a threat to development."

About the campaign

It will demonstrate the threats that the tobacco industry poses to the sustainable development of all countries, including the health and economic well-being of their citizens. It will propose measures that governments and the public should take to promote health and development by confronting the global tobacco crisis.

Goals of the World No Tobacco Day 2017 campaign

--Highlight the links between the use of tobacco products, tobacco control and sustainable development.

--Encourage countries to include tobacco

control in their national responses to 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

--Support Member States and civil society to combat tobacco industry interference in political processes, in turn leading to stronger national tobacco control action.

--Encourage broader public and partner participation in national, regional and global efforts to develop and implement development strategies and plans and achieve goals that prioritize action on tobacco control.

--Demonstrate how individuals can contribute to making a sustainable, tobacco-free world, either by committing to never taking up tobacco products, or by quitting the habit.

Tobacco control supports health and development

WHO is calling on countries to prioritize and accelerate tobacco control efforts as part of their responses to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ARTICLE
By M.A.Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

Trump trading lives for Saudi money

Just two days after Donald Trump struck a nearly \$110 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia a suicide bomber, whose ideology was surely driven by Saudi-inspired religious teachings, took the lives of 23 people, including children, in Manchester, Britain. Also, a few days later, on May 26, ISIS targeted buses carrying Coptic Christians in Egypt, killing 29.

However, the United States has been and is continuing to trade human lives with lucrative business deals with Saudi Arabia, a country which according to numerous evidences is ideologically and financially the main engine of extremism and terrorism.

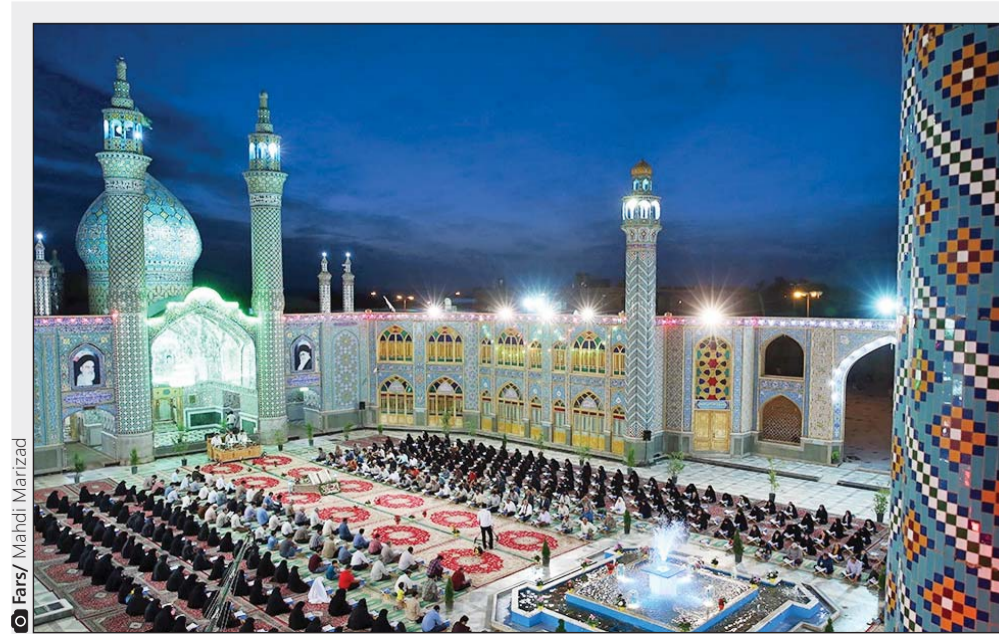
The establishment in Saudi Arabia is being structured in a way that it intrinsically generates violent extremism. Even the "sword dance", which Trump also took part in Riyadh on May 21, connotes violence by itself.

The fact that sword is a Saudi symbol speaks volumes. Public beheadings of convicts with sword in the Saudi kingdom is the same method practiced by ISIS.

In an article in the Washington Post, published on May 25, foreign-policy specialist Fareed Zakaria said, "Saudi nationals make up the second-largest group of foreign fighters in the Islamic State (the other name for ISIS) and, by some accounts, the largest in the terrorist group's Iraqi operations." He also wrote, "The kingdom is in a tacit alliance with al-Qaeda in Yemen."

In a report posted on the New York Times website on December 6, 2016, former Taliban finance minister Agha Jan Motasim also revealed how he traveled to Saudi Arabia between 2002 and 2007 to raise cash while ostensibly on pilgrimage.

The Saudi inspired extremism, which draws its principles from a Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, inflicted its heaviest terrorist toll on the U.S. on September 11, 2001. Enough to say that 15 of the plotter were citizens of Saudi Arabia. **→13**



Fars / Mahdi Mirzazad

Quran recitation during Ramadan

Recitation of the Holy Quran is a national ritual practiced particularly during the fasting month of Ramadan.

The picture depicts Muslim observers in the shrine of Mohammad Helal Ibn-e Ali (AS), in Aran va Bidgol, a small town in Isfahan Province, central Iran. People recite the Holy Quran right after their morning prayer.

In recent years, Aran va Bidgol is well-known as "an exemplary Quranic city" for having had prominent activities in Islamic teachings.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Leader donates money to help release of needy prisoners

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Leader of the d e s k Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has donated nearly \$85,000 to help set free scores of prisoners who were in jail for unintentional crimes, Fars news agency reported.

Iranians participate in a charity event every year during the holy fasting month of Ramadan to help free their fellow-countrymen jailed due to their incapability to pay their debts.

People from across the country as well as some officials take part in the event to help their compatriots.



Reelected Rouhani to be sworn in on August 6

POLITICS TEHRAN — A member of the presiding d e s k board of Iran's parliament has announced that the swearing-in ceremony of President Hassan Rouhani, who was reelected president on May 19, will be held on August 6.

Rouhani will receive his presidential precept from the Leader of the revolution a few days before the swearing-in ceremony, Ahmad Amir-Abadi said on Tuesday.

He also said that after the swearing-in ceremony, the president will have two weeks to introduce his cabinet to the parliament.



Parliament's independents back Larijani speakership

POLITICS TEHRAN — A spokesman for the bloc d e s k of independents at Iran's parliament has said it supports Ali Larijani, who has been the speaker of the parliament for nine years, to remain at his position.

Mehrdad Lahouti said Tuesday that the members of the faction support the parliament's leadership, including Speaker Ali Larijani, First Deputy Speaker Masoud Pezeshkian and Second Deputy Speaker Ali Motahari.

Mohammad Reza Aref, the leader of the pro-reform Hope faction, challenged Larijani for the position of speaker last year but was defeated.



Six Iranian sailors returned to home

POLITICS TEHRAN — After three months of d e s k wandering in the Indian Ocean, the six Iranian soldiers were finally returned home, ISNA news agency reported.

The sailors were on water for three months after their fishing boat had sunk. They were rescued by the Kenyan Coast Guard.

They entered Iran on Tuesday morning thanks to efforts made by the Iranian embassy to Nairobi. The sailors were not fined for entering the Kenyan territorial waters and were handed to Iran's embassy in the African country.



House arrests should not be discussed in public: Nobakht

POLITICS TEHRAN — Government spokesman d e s k Mohammad Baqer Nobakht has said that the issue of house arrests should not be openly discussed in public, noting it should be debated at the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

Nobakht's remarks came as a response to recent comments by Judiciary Ayatollah Sadegh Amoli Larijani who ruled out the possibility of ending the house arrests against two presidential contenders who claimed vote rigging in the 2009 elections.

"Who are you to try to end the house arrests?" Amoli Larijani said Monday, pointing to President Rouhani's campaign promise to resolve the issue.



Iran warns against humanitarian crisis in Yemen

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry d e s k has warned of widespread famine and risk of starvation in Yemen, blaming Riyadh for the catastrophe in the war-torn country.

"Yemeni people are living in very difficult conditions as the continuation of war as well as air and sea blockade on the country has caused a large portion of the people to face risk of famine and starvation," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Tuesday.

Qassemi also urged the international community to provide humanitarian aid for the Arab country.

S. Arabia in war with itself and region: Jaber Ansari

By M.A. Saki, Ali Kushki, Negar Asadi

Exclusive — Resisting any policy change, Saudi Arabia is in war with itself and the region, Iran's deputy foreign minister for Arab and North African affairs says.

"Riyadh is in war with itself and the whole region," Hossein Jaber Ansari tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview. He also underscores the necessity for neighbors to "join hands and work together in line with their national interests."

In what follows, a full transcript of the interview has been given.

■ **Sometimes, support for terrorist groups in today's Middle East is compared to that of for the Taliban and its outgrowth al-Qaeda years ago. Do you agree?**

A: Indeed, that's the point. History offers numerous lessons to learn from. Take Saudi Arabia, for instance. Had the Saudis been familiar enough with the history of Yemen and the fate of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, they wouldn't have invaded the country.

Similarly, had the international community taken lessons from the evolution of the Taliban and its acts of violence as well as from 9/11, then they would have stopped looking at the Islamic State as a leverage in Iraq and Syria. History tells us that Saudi Arabia won't come off the Yemeni war victorious just as the Soviet Union failed to win in Afghanistan. Historical lessons show how impervious the Yemeni people have been to external meddling over the past centuries. Riyadh should have known that beforehand.

Some Arab and non-Arab countries backed the Taliban, thinking the group's sway would be restricted to Afghanistan. Also, these countries thought of Taliban insurgents as a tool to pursue their own agenda in the region and considered themselves to be the ultimate victor. And any possible threat from the terrorist circle would be directed toward Iran.

In fact, their calculations were premised upon two prepositions. Emergence of the Taliban as a religious, radical, Sunni current would be a response to the increasing impact of the Shiite Islamic republic in the region; as it could be utilized to tilt



© Tehran Times/Maryam Kamyab

the playing field in Afghanistan that was growingly out of control and beset by heavy fighting led by mujahideen groups. However, in their calculations they were unmindful of two points. First, the Taliban was itself part of the social fabric of Afghanistan.

Second, a temporary overlap of interests with the Taliban leadership didn't mean that the Taliban wouldn't pursue an independent agenda to fulfill its ambitions once it could extend its influence and geography.

Although the two groups had some interests to begin with, once the Taliban extended its influence and gained ground, it sought an independent agenda from mujahideen. And in practice this took place. Afghanistan was catapulted into a war and what Taliban militants did in the battlefield was quite the opposite of what its regional supporters would have expected.

■ **Some analysts believe that Turkey seems to have plans to reiterate the Northern Cyprus experience in the northern city of al-Bab. What's your assessment?**

A: Well, one possible scenario could be that. And Turkey may have such intention to repeat its Cyprus experience in the Syrian city of al-Bab. However, the question arises as to whether it would be possible for Turkey to succeed. To come up with a tentative answer to that possibility, one has to act comparatively, taking into consideration situational differences and various actors. Syria and Cyprus are incomparable in terms of situation, status, and of course, geography.

■ **What do you say when Saudi Arabia keeps claiming that it's one of the leading countries in fighting ISIS?**

A: This is one of those cases when what you see is not what you get. Saudi Arabia has to prove it in practice. Saudi Arabia has been the ideological fountainhead of terrorist groups over the past decades and been providing them with financial and arms backing. We shouldn't forget that ISIS is the outgrowth of the Salafi takfiri ideology of al-Qaeda and the radical, violent Baathi current in Iraq. The post-Saddam era along with the changes in the country was a nightmare for Arab countries in the region that have been in a state of stagnancy for decades now. So, these countries, led by Saudi Arabia, did their best to destabilize Iraq after Saddam. The international community can trust Saudi Arabia only when the Saudis shift policy and their view of terrorist groups in the region.

■ **Saudi Arabia, coupled with Turkey and Israel, is creating a new wave of Iranophobia. The Trump administration has also emboldened Riyadh in its efforts to present a wrong image of Iran. People familiar with the issue say Iran has no countermeasure to prevent the Saudi-led efforts since it's isolated in the region. They argue that Tehran has no ties with the U.S. and doesn't have high-level relations with Egypt as an important Arab actor. What can we do to thwart the formation of such anti-Iran coalition?**

A: To come up with a nuanced understanding of regional developments over the past years, we should take few issues into account.

I don't think Iran is an isolated country in the Middle East. And even now some Arab countries are reluctant to cut ties with Iran and interested in having normal relations with it. The letter delivered to

Iran by the Kuwaiti foreign minister and the later visits to Oman and Kuwait by President Hassan Rouhani are strong hints that this is wrong to claim that Iran is alone in the region.

■ **Interjection: But during the eight-year Iraqi invasion of Iran, these Arab countries took side with Iraq and we were practically isolated.**

A: That's a different thing at least in that context. Four decades back after the revolution, we could stabilize the movement in spite of being isolated. Even at that time, we didn't choose to be an isolated country. Foreign countries were against the revolutionary movement as Iran, which was until then obedient to world powers, had a U-turn and became a strong voice in the region for independence as manifested in its motto "Neither East nor West."

The big headline, so to speak, was a distinction of the fledgling revolution. But we left behind all the hardships of eight years of war due to our intrinsic and historical capacities. Over the past nearly 15 years, Iran's influence in the region has soared in the eye of the world, turning Iran into a key actor in the region. →13

It should be borne in mind that terrorist movements have independent projects for themselves which are not restricted to just one region and carry out their operations at various levels.

Rouhani says prospect of Tehran-Baku ties are promising



POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k President Hassan Rouhani renewed on Monday Tehran's call for expansion of ties with neighboring Azerbaijan in various areas, calling the prospect of ties promising.

In a phone conversation with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev, Rouhani said there are many opportunities for the two countries to expand relations in the areas of energy, transportation, business and tourism.

"The two countries' firm determination along with the two nations' deep commonalities have provided a strong foundation for expansion of ties," he explained, adding there is no impediments to expansion of political, economic and cultural cooperation.

He described prospect of Tehran-Ba-

ku ties as "bright" and expressed hope that agreements between the two countries would be implemented soon which will help expansion of cooperation especially in areas of transit and energy.

Elsewhere, Rouhani highlighted the necessity of fighting terrorism and extremism and more unity among Islamic countries.

"We all should make efforts in the Islamic countries to eradicate ideology of extremism," he said.

For his part, Aliyev said that Azerbaijan seeks to boost cooperation with Iran in the fight against terrorism, violence and extremism.

He also said that Azerbaijan is determined to expand relations with Iran in various areas.

Iran: Bomb blasts during Ramadan prove terrorists are in animosity with Islam



POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi condemned on Tuesday two blasts in Baghdad which left at least 27 people killed and many more wounded.

Qassemi said the "criminal act" during the holy month of Ramadan — the fasting months for Muslims — proves the fact that the Takfiri terrorist groups have animosity towards the nature of Islam.

He described the terrorist explosions as the "last desperate efforts by the terrorists to find a way out of their defeat in Iraq".

Qassemi also said the fight against terrorists in Iraq is near to

final victory.

Two car bombs went off in Baghdad. The first bomb took place outside a popular ice cream shop in the predominantly Shia district of Karrada in Baghdad early on Tuesday, killing 16 people.

ISIS claimed responsibility for the first blast.

The second explosion occurred a few hours later, during rush hour near the state-run Public Pension Office near the al-Shahada (Martyrs) Bridge in the busy Shawaka district, killing at least 12 and wounding 23 more.

There has been no claim of responsibility for the second blast; however, the ISIS bears it most probably.

Cholera death toll rises to 471 in Yemen: WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) says the death toll of a cholera epidemic in Yemen has passed 470, as the impoverished state continues to be targeted by military aggression launched by its northern neighbor, Saudi Arabia.

According to the latest figures released by the United Nations health agency, at least 471 people have lost their lives after contracting the acute intestinal infection.

WHO's latest bulletin, which has covered the period from April 27, however, added that there was a "significant decrease" in the average number of positive cases recorded on a daily basis in the week up to May 27 compared to the previous seven-day period.

"The average daily number of cases recorded between May 21-27 was 2,529 - down from 3,025 in the previous seven days," it said.

Caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholera*, cholera infection first became epidemic last October and spread until December, when it dwindled, but only to worryingly resurface again at the end of April.

The WHO's Yemen coordinator, Omar Saleh, added in the bulletin that toward the end of the current month, some 38,000 cases had been recorded, saying "the epidemic is very serious and spreading in an unprecedented manner."

He further noted that the total number of suspected cholera-hit cases stood at 51,832.

The country's Health Ministry has already announced that 19 of 22 of Yemen's provinces are threatened by the



disease. On May 14, it also declared a state of emergency in the capital Sana'a in connection with the epidemic.

Since March 2015, Yemen has been heavily bombed by the House of Saud regime warplanes as part of a brutal campaign against the impoverished country in an attempt to reinstall the former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, and crush the popular Ansarullah (Houthi) movement.

The relentless airstrikes have put more than half of all health facilities in

Yemen in a state of complete or partial shutdown. Furthermore, there are critical shortages in medical staff in over 40 percent of all districts, according to the Health Ministry.

Nearly 3.3 million Yemeni people, including 2.1 million children, are currently suffering from acute malnutrition. Latest tallies show that the war has so far killed over 12,000 Yemenis and wounded thousands more.

Some 19 million out of the country's 28 million population are in dire need of

humanitarian aid and many of whom are reported to be on the brink of famine.

International organizations, including the United Nations and the Red Cross, say the Saudi regime-led war on Yemen and an embargo against the country may be responsible for the cholera epidemic. The House of Saud regime aggression has taken a heavy toll on the poor country's facilities and infrastructure, destroying many hospitals, schools, and factories.

(Source: al Alam)

Massive bombings strike heart of Baghdad

Two bomb explosions have hit the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, killing a total of at least 27 people and injuring 100 others.

The first blast took place outside a popular ice cream shop in the predominantly Shia district of Karrada in Baghdad early on Tuesday, killing 16 people.

"A car bomb exploded in the busy al-Hurriya Square in central Baghdad," said Iraqi police Major Ali Mohammed.

It came just days after the start of the holy month of Ramadan, when Iraqi families often stay out late after breaking their daily fast.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group claimed responsibility for the bombing, with its affiliated Amaq outlet saying a bomber had targeted a "gathering of Shias."

Iraqi officials said the attack apparently involved explosives remotely detonated inside a parked car.

Videos posted on social media showed blood stains and body parts scattered on the ground and the wounded propping themselves up on benches in a nearby park.

"ISIL [Daesh] terrorists tonight in Bag-

dad target children & families enjoying time together at an ice cream shop," Brett McGurk, the United States Special envoy to the US-led coalition that is allegedly fighting ISIL, said on Twitter.

Karrada was rocked by a similar ISIL bomb attack last July, when 292 people were killed. That deadly explosion happened when Iraqi families were shopping for the Eid al-Fitr festival at the end of Ramadan.

The second blast struck near Iraq's retirement agency also on Tuesday, al-Sumaria news website reported. That blast left 11 people dead. Two Iraqi policemen were among those killed.

Over the past months, Iraq has been hit by a wave of bomb attacks, mostly claimed by ISIL terrorist outfit. The Takfiri outfit has recently increased its terrorist activities in revenge for the blows it has been suffering at the hands of Iraqi forces, particularly in the northern city of Mosul.

Iraqi forces took control of eastern Mosul in January and launched the battle in its west in February.

(Source: Press TV)

'Shocked' South Korea leader Moon orders probe into U.S. THAAD additions

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has ordered a probe after the Defense Ministry failed to inform him that four more launchers for the controversial United States THAAD anti-missile system had been brought into the country, his spokesman said on Tuesday.

The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system battery was initially deployed in March in the southeastern region of Seongju with just two of its maximum load of six launchers to counter a growing North Korean missile threat.

During his successful campaign for the May 9 presidential election, Moon called for a parliamentary review of the system, whose deployment has also infuriated China, North Korea's lone major ally.

"President Moon said it was very shocking" to hear the four additional launchers had been installed without being reported to the new government or to the public, presidential spokesman Yoon Young-chan told a media briefing.

Moon had campaigned on a more moderate approach to Pyongyang, calling for engagement even as the reclusive state pursues nuclear weapons and ballis-

tic missile programs in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions and threats of more sanctions.

The U.S. military in South Korea did not have immediate comment on Moon's comments. The South Korean military also did not immediately comment.

China tensions easing

Moon's order of a probe into the THAAD launchers came amid signs of easing tensions between major trading partners, South Korea and China.

South Korea's Jeju Air said on Tuesday China has approved a plan to double its flights to the Chinese city of Weihai from June 2.

China has been incensed over the THAAD deployment, fearing it could give the U.S. military the capability of seeing into its own missile systems, and could open the door to a wider deployment of the system, possibly in Japan and elsewhere, military analysts say.

China has denied it had discriminated against South Korean companies, which have faced product boycotts and bans on Chinese tourists visiting South Korea.

(Source: Reuters)

Manuel Noriega, ex-military ruler of Panama, dies at 83

Manuel Noriega, Panama's former ruler, has died aged 83, Panama's President Juan Carlos Varela announced on Twitter.

Noriega was the country's military ruler from 1983 to 1989, when he was removed from power by the United States during the invasion of Panama.

"The death of Manuel Antonio Noriega closes a chapter in our history; his daughters and their families deserve a burial in peace," Varela said.

Noriega was held in a medically induced coma after suffering brain hemorrhaging in March. The hemorrhage occurred after Noriega underwent surgery to have a tumor removed from his brain.

During his rule, Noriega initially positioned Panama as a United States asset in a region that was becoming increasingly hostile to Washington's interests.

He was commissioned into the Panama National Guard in 1967, and in 1968 promoted to lieutenant.

Noriega rose swiftly in the armed forces, becoming a key ally of General Omar Torrijos during a military coup in 1968. As the de-facto leader from 1968 to 1981, Torrijos relied heavily on Noriega's network of loyal soldiers.

CIA informant

Noriega was soon promoted to head of the Panama's secret police, a role which brought him into close contact with the U.S. CIA (Central Intelligence Agency).

The U.S. intelligence agency had a vested interest in protecting the strategic trade



route of the Panama Canal, which was under U.S. administration until 1977.

Noriega soon became a regular informant for the Americans and was rewarded with an estimated \$320,000, although he claimed at his trial in 1990 he was a prize asset that cost the CIA millions.

Throughout the 1970s, he shook off accusations that he was orchestrating the disappearances of Panamanian opposition figures.

After Torrijos's mysterious death in a plane crash in 1981, the new military ruler, Ruben Dario Paredes del Rio, consolidated Noriega's power-base by promoting him as the head of the security services.

Within a short time, power had effec-

tively concentrated in Noriega's hands. In 1983, he succeeded Paredes as the de-facto military ruler.

During the Reagan presidency in the 1980s, the U.S. began relying heavily on Noriega as an ally against Fidel Castro's Cuba.

1989 surrender

In 1987, a former chief-of-staff who had worked under Noriega, accused his former boss of corruption and electoral fraud, as well as being behind the plane crash in which Torrijos died.

The accusations triggered huge demonstrations in Panama.

Noriega defiantly stayed in power, with critics maintaining that the country had be-

come a hub for Latin America's drug trade, particularly in helping Colombia's powerful Medellin cartel in laundering drug money.

In December 1989, U.S. President George Bush ordered a U.S. marine invasion to topple Noriega, who had become a liability and an embarrassment to U.S. interests.

Noriega sought refuge in the Vatican's diplomatic mission in Panama City.

One U.S. tactic to flush him out was to play deafening music non-stop outside the building. Noriega finally surrendered on January 3, 1990.

Prison terms

Noriega was flown to the U.S., with prisoner-of-war status, to face charges of drug trafficking, money laundering and racketeering.

In 2007, Noriega completed his 17 years of confinement in a Miami federal jail, but he was not a free man.

After completing his 17-year sentence, Noriega was extradited to France and received a seven-year sentence for money laundering.

But Panama wanted Noriega to return to face in-absentia convictions and two prison terms of 20 years for embezzlement, corruption and murder of opponents, including military commander Moises Girol-di, who led a failed rebellion on October 3, 1989, and Hugo Spadafora, whose decapitated body was found in a mailbag on the border with Costa Rica in 1985.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Israel starts building mock Lebanese village to train forces against Hezbollah

The Israeli army has begun constructing a facility that resembles a Lebanese village, where Israeli soldiers would get training for a possible future war with Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement.

Israeli media quoted a military statement as saying on Monday that the "Snir" training facility is being built in the occupied Golan Heights.

The center will have multiple entry points, a mock Hezbollah command and control headquarters, residential buildings, mosques, and public buildings.

It will be large enough to accommodate tanks and allow the use of live ammunition.

Israeli Brigadier General Einav Shalev said the facility is meant to prepare Israeli soldiers for urban warfare, including subterranean combat.

Meanwhile, a senior Israeli army official, who was speaking on condition of anonymity, said the army plans to have the center ready for use by the end of next year and construct three similar facilities in the coming years.

"[Snir] is a Lebanese village, showing the Lebanese challenge, which is growing greater... In the village, there are people acting as enemy fighters, who are very close to the types of threats that we expect from Hezbollah in the next round," the official said.

Israel has previously built a similar facility called "Mali" at an army base in Tze'elim to simulate urban combat against Gaza-based Hamas resistance movement.

The Snir center will be built by the German construction engineering company M+W Group, which had also built the Mali facility.

Back in February, Israeli Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz warned that all of Lebanon would be a target if Hezbollah fired on the occupied territories.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun said in response that any Israeli attempt to violate Lebanon's sovereignty would be met with the "appropriate response."

Naim Qassem, Hezbollah's deputy leader, stressed last month that the resistance movement's high level of defense readiness has so far deterred Israel from launching a new act of aggression against the country, warning that any such war would end in a "guaranteed loss" for the regime.

Israel launched two wars on Lebanon in 2000 and 2006, in both of which the resistance movement inflicted heavy losses on the regime's military. About 1,200 Lebanese, most of them civilians, lost their lives in one of the wars, namely the 33-day war in the summer of 2006.

(Source: agencies)

2 Saudi policemen injured in Awamiyah bombing

A bomb has exploded in Saudi Arabia's Shia-dominated Eastern Province, wounding two Saudi police officers.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted an Interior Ministry spokesman as saying that an improvised explosive device had gone off outside the old quarter of Awamiyah Village, known as al-Mosara.

The injured Saudi policemen were taken to the hospital, the official was further cited as saying, adding that an investigation had been launched into the incident.

The Monday attack was the second of its kind in two weeks, targeting Saudi forces as the Riyadh regime is engaged in demolition work to controversially raze Mosara.

Saudi regime authorities claim that Mosara's narrow streets, built during Ottoman rule over 200 years ago, have become a hideout for militants believed to be behind attacks on security forces in the region.

United Nations experts have criticized the ongoing attempts to demolish Mosara and accused the Saudi kingdom of erasing cultural heritage, violating human rights, and forcing residents to flee their homes.

On May 16, a Saudi soldier was killed and five others were wounded when gunmen fired a rocket-propelled grenade at their patrol car in Awamiyah.

(Source: Press TV)

West to blame for chaos, terror attacks in Mideast & N. Africa: Russian FM

The terror assault prompted the Egyptian military to carry out several airstrikes against purported terrorist training camps in neighboring Libya, which is grappling with violence since a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) military intervention in the country following its 2011 uprising.

On May 27, the Egyptian foreign minister defended the airstrikes, noting that the terrorists' facilities were completely destroyed.

Lavrov touched upon the ongoing Libyan conflict and its threat to the security in neighboring countries, including Egypt, saying the Western involvement in the chaos there eventually turned the country into "a backyard for terrorists."

"Libya was bombed and its government was violently overthrown. It was turned into a backyard for terrorists and criminals. The regime was changed with the help of those [militants], who came from Europe. They were free to leave their countries because everybody knew where they were going and what they were going to do there. And then they were welcomed back," Russia's top diplomat said.

He urged the Western countries to bear responsibility for the chaos that is the result of their "irresponsible policies."

Meanwhile, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also discussed issues related to fighting terrorism and extremism with his Egyptian counterpart.

The two parties agreed to continue sharing intelligence and discussed joint exercises and military training.

On Monday, the Russian ministers held talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in a meeting also attended by the Egyptian foreign and defense ministers to discuss the ongoing crises in the Middle East and North Africa.

(Source: RT)

Australian government delays first payment of \$4.6b bank tax

The Australian government has delayed the date of the first payment of its \$4.6 billion (\$4.6 billion) bank tax by three months and excluded some liabilities from the levy, according to proposed legislation released on Tuesday.

The legislation did not include any sunset clause, which had been sought by the banks given the government had justified the tax as being necessary to help bring the federal budget back into a surplus by the financial year ending June 30, 2021.

The six basis points levy on bank liabilities is designed to raise about \$1.5 billion a year from the five biggest banks - Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Westpac Banking Corp, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, National Australia Bank and Macquarie Group - over the next four years.

"This represents a fair contribution by the banking sector to the Australian community and contributes to a long-term balanced budget," Treasurer Scott Morrison said in a speech to parliament on Tuesday.

The first payment covering the half-year ending Dec. 31 will now be due in March to give the banks a transitional period. The banks have said the cost of the tax will be borne by their customers and their shareholders. (Source: Reuters)

Bank of Ireland fined €3.15m for breaches of laundering law

Bank of Ireland has been fined €3.15 million by the Central Bank for breaches to laws aimed at countering money laundering and terrorist financing, including the failure to report six suspicious transactions to the Garda and Revenue Commissioners promptly.



According to Derville Rowland, director of enforcement at the Central Bank: "The high volume and range of breaches uncovered as part of the Central Bank's investigation into Bank of Ireland point to significant weaknesses in the strength of Bank of Ireland's implementation of anti-money laundering and counterterrorist financing legislation."

"Such behaviour is unacceptable and falls far short of the standard expected of one of Ireland's largest retail banks."

It marks the second-largest penalty issued by the Central Bank in relation to the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering & Terrorist Financing) Act, 2010. Ulster Bank was fined €3.325 million last November and AIB was ordered last month to pay €2.275 million for similar violations. Bank of Ireland's admitted to breaches between July 2010 and December 2015.

These include not carrying out adequate assessments of risks of accounts being used for money laundering or terrorist financing and putting in proper mitigating systems and controls, according to the regulator. (Source: Irish Times)

JPMorgan upgrades UK stocks, cuts view on European autos

JPMorgan global equity strategists said on Tuesday they expect UK stocks to claw back some of their underperformance against euro zone and global peers and recommended investors buy into bluechip, dividend-paying exporters that stand to benefit the most from a weak sterling.

A broad UK index, the FTSE 350 is up about 6 percent this year compared to the 10 percent rise for euro zone stocks.

"We think UK is becoming interesting in the regional allocation again," JPMorgan's strategists, led by Mislav Matejka, said in a note to clients, adding that signs that investors have turned less risk-averse since early May also bodes well for London-listed stocks.

"(The) UK is a defensive market with high dividend yield. It should perform better in the backdrop of potential softening in activity indicators, lower inflation prints and continued range-bound bond yields," JPMorgan said.

The U.S. broker expects sterling's appreciation against the dollar to halt. British voters go to the polls next week. While the Conservative Party, led by Prime Minister Theresa May, is expected to win comfortably on June 8, her party's lead in opinion polls has narrowed sharply in the last week, calling into question her decision to call the unscheduled election seeking a strong endorsement of her Brexit strategy. (Source: Reuters)

LSE to buy Citi's bonds analysis and indexes business for \$685m

London Stock Exchange (LSE) has agreed to buy The Yield Book, Citigroup's fixed-income analytics service and also its related indexing business, for \$685 million (\$346 million pounds) in cash, the companies said on Tuesday.

LSE, which had said it would be looking out for investments after the collapse of its proposed merger with Deutsche Boerse, said the deal would boost the data and analytics capabilities of its information and FTSE Russell indexes business and take assets under management using its indexes to about \$15 trillion.

The deal, which is subject to regulatory clearances and is expected to close in the second half of this year, is expected to add \$30 million in synergy benefits to LSE's revenues over the first three years after completion and bring \$18 million in cost savings over the same period, the company said.

Last year it estimated the business being acquired would have generated earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization of \$46 million on revenue of \$107 million. (Source: Reuters)

Domestically manufactured Tricone drill bit unveiled

ENERGY TEHRAN — In a ceremony on Monday, Iran unveiled a domestically manufactured Tricone drill bit, Shana reported.

In the ceremony, expressing satisfaction with this great achievement, Bijan Alipour, the managing director of National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), said the company has signed a deal worth 440 billion rials (about \$11.8 million) with Khouzestan province's Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (ACECR) for the manufacturing of 874 bits.

"NISOC is going to need 1500 drill bits of which 700 will be polycrystalline diamond compact (PDC) and the rest are going to be grit hot-pressed inserts (GHI)," he said.

According to the official, near 80 percent of the oil industry's equipment are being manufactured inside the country. He expressed hope that in the near future Iran will be completely self-sufficient in this area.

In the unveiling ceremony Hamidreza Tayebi the head of ACECR, noted that there is a close cooperation between oil industry and ACECR in the country, saying "we hope for our cooperation to get more accelerated in the future."

Ramin Qalambar Dezfooli, NIOC's director for manufacturing and supplying logistics, also mentioned some of the strategic oil equipment including drill bits, wellhead equipment and sucker rod pumps (SRP) which Iran plans to manufacture inside the country.



Bijan Alipour (L), the managing director of National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), and Hamidreza Tayebi, the head of Iran's Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (ACECR), unveiling a domestically manufactured drill bit on Monday

Iran sends formal invitations for Azadegan oilfield bidders

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran has sent formal invitation letters to major oil companies to finalize the list of bidders for its upcoming IPC-based tender for the development of Azadegan oilfield, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

According to sources close to the matter, France's Total and Anglo-Dutch Shell, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Sinopec are major companies among other invited candidates.

Azadegan is an oilfield Iran shares with Iraq at the western part of Iran's southwestern region of Karoun.

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Managing Director Ali Kardor had said earlier that the 29 companies which were pre-qualified to bid for oil and gas pro-



jects under the country's new model of oil contracts known as IPC (integrated petroleum contract) will be invited for the final tender.

Back in March, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh announced that the process for holding a tender for the development of Azadegan oilfield has been started and "the qualified companies have been determined and the tender will be held very soon."

Azadegan oilfield has been the priority for the Iranian oil ministry to go on tender based on the country's new oil and gas contract model.

Anglo-Dutch Shell, France's Total, Italy's Eni, Malaysia's Petronas, Russia's Gazprom and Lukoil, Austria's OMV, Germany's Wintershall, as well as companies from Spain, Poland, China, Japan, India and some other countries were initially announced by Iran's Oil Ministry as the companies prequalified for the country's first IPC tender.

Singapore fines Credit Suisse, UOB over 1MDB-linked dealings, wraps up review

Singapore's central bank has fined Credit Suisse and United Overseas Bank a total of S\$1.6 million (\$1.2 million) for breaching anti-money laundering rules in transactions related to Malaysia's scandal-ridden state fund 1MDB.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore said on Tuesday it had fined UOB S\$900,000 and Credit Suisse S\$700,000 as it wrapped up its two-year probe into banks involved in 1MDB-related transactions, which revealed several breaches of anti-money laundering requirements and control lapses.

"These include weaknesses in conducting due diligence on customers and inadequate scrutiny of customers' transactions and activities," it said in a statement, adding it did not, however, detect pervasive control weaknesses at UOB and Credit Suisse.

The fines are smaller than those



the authority has already imposed on other banks as part of its biggest money-laundering investigation. It has now imposed penalties of S\$29.1 million on eight banks.

Once a pet project of Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, who chaired its advisory board, 1MDB is the subject of money-laundering investigations in at least six countries including Switzerland, Singapore and the United States.

(Source: Reuters)

EU May economic sentiment falls after near 10-year high in April

Euro zone economic sentiment fell in May from a near 10-year-high in April against expectations of a rise, as confidence mostly dropped in services, European Union data showed on Tuesday.

The European Commission's monthly survey said the overall index for the 19-country currency bloc fell to 109.2 from an upwardly revised 109.7 in April. Economists polled by Reuters had expected an increase to 110.0 points.

A separate business confidence indicator, which indicates the phase of the business cycle, fell to 0.90 in May from an upwardly revised 1.10 in April, against market expectations of a rise to 1.11.

The drop in sentiment was mostly driven by less optimism in the services sector, the largest in the euro zone,

which dropped to 13.0 in May from 14.2 in April.

Confidence in the retail sector also dropped to 2.0 from 3.1.

But in a sign that the euro zone economy is still in a phase of healthy recovery, the manufacturing sector recorded a boost in confidence to 2.8 points from 2.6.

Inflation expectations among consumers went down to 12.8 from 13.9, in a sign of appetite for future purchases. Expectations of selling prices among manufacturers were stable.

Lower inflation would reduce pressure on the European Central Bank to quickly end its monetary stimulus.

The indicator for overall consumer confidence rose to -3.3 points in May from a downwardly revised -3.6 in April.

(Source: Reuters)

High-cost Sardar-e Jangal could bring Iran high-tech

With some deposits discovered and some exploration activities conducted, the country is now seeking technical assistance from the outside to expand its deepwater operations in the Caspian Sea.

'IPC to put Sardar-e Jangal on tender'

Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said last June that oil recovery from the Caspian Sea is on the agenda but it needs special equipment and experience to extract oil from deep waters.

Production of oil in the Caspian Sea is not a priority for Iran but Sardar-e Jangal field has been introduced to investors within the framework of IPC (Iran's new model of oil contracts, known as integrated petroleum contract).

Mahmoud Khaqani, an international energy expert, told the Tehran Times in a telephone interview on Tuesday: "The Caspian Sea is among the regions where the cost of oil and gas production is very high. Major multinational companies are enjoying and also developing the technology for reducing production costs in such areas. It is what Iran lacks; therefore, the oil minister's approach that production in the Caspi-



Amir Kabir semi-submersible drilling rig in the Caspian Sea, north of Iran

an Sea, which requires such high cost, is not a necessity for the country at the moment seems right."

But at the same time, the Caspian Sea is an opportunity for the Iranian technology, the analyst also under-

scored.

'New chapter in oil industry'

The former OPEC governor Mohammad-Ali Khatibi, who has also served as the National Iranian Oil Company's director for international affairs, be-

lieves that the development of Sardar-e Jangal could be very important for the country.

"Development of this field could open a new chapter in our oil activities in the Caspian Sea, because we have not had any serious and important activity over there so far, as our main job has been mainly exploration, and if we go on developing this field it could be a start for our serious work in that region," he told the Tehran Times in a telephone interview on Monday.

"Anyway, we have been waiting many years for something important to occur there," he added.

Last May, Farhang Khatibi, who at the time was the acting managing director of Khazar Exploration and Production Company, which is in charge of exploration, development and production operations in the Caspian region, said that the groundwork has been laid for the development of Sardar-e Jangal oilfield based on IPC.

He said the post-sanctions era paved the way for boosting relations with foreign companies and several foreign corporations have declared interest to invest in the Sardar-e Jangal project.

Iran discovers new oil field

Seismological surveys of parts of the Central Kavir desert in Iran have revealed a new oil deposit, local media reported, citing an unnamed source. The source did not reveal any details about the find, including estimated reserves, but instead spoke about agreements struck with Petrovietnam and Italy's Edison, which would see the two foreign companies resume their exploration at two other oil blocks, Danan and Dayyer.

The Danan oil field, with reserves estimated at 3.738 billion barrels and daily output at 8,000 barrels, was tendered along with eight other oil fields by the Iranian Central Oil Fields Company.

The Dayyer offshore oil field was auctioned back in 2007, and Edison struck a deal with the National Iranian Oil Company to explore the deposit in the following year. The \$107-million contract, however, was suspended by NIOC in 2012, with the state company accusing Edison of repeated delays and failure to stick to its contractual obligations.

Iran is currently producing 3.8 million barrels of crude daily and its output will remain at this level in spite of OPEC's agreement to extend a production cut until March 2018. In the initial OPEC deal, Iran was allowed to slightly raise output and keep it capped at 3.797 million bpd. Four months into the deal in which all others – except for exempt Libya and Nigeria – had to cut, the Islamic Republic has been sticking to that production ceiling, OPEC secondary-sources data show.

Now, Iran wants to raise its output to 5 million bpd over the next four years, to which end it will need major assistance from foreign oil companies. Tehran is optimistic, however, despite lingering U.S. sanctions that are making a lot of energy industry players wary of enter-



ing Iran. At the end of last week, a senior government official said that oil contacts worth around \$50 billion would pass into their operational phase in 2018.

Iran is finalizing talks and expects to soon sign deals

with major international companies, including France's Total, Denmark's Maersk, Malaysia's Petronas, Indonesia's Pertamina, and Russia's Lukoil, the official said.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Oil slips on oversupply worries despite OPEC deal

Oil prices fell on Tuesday, pressured by concerns that production cuts by the world's big exporters may not be enough to drain a global glut that has depressed the market for almost three years.

Benchmark Brent crude was down 40 cents a barrel at \$51.89 by 0840 GMT, having gained 14 cents on Monday. U.S. light crude fell by 20 cents to \$49.60.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other oil producers, including Russia, agreed last week to keep a tight rein on supply until the end of the first quarter of 2018, nine months longer than originally planned.

Collective output by OPEC and other producers will be held around 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) below its level at the end of last year.

But the cutbacks have yet to make drain inventories by a significant degree and prices fell after the OPEC deal was

announced.

"Investors haven't made up their minds if OPEC has done enough to balance supply and demand," said Carsten Fritsch, senior commodities analyst at Commerzbank in Frankfurt.

"Today's losses follow gains yesterday, so overall oil prices have been rather flat this week."

Part of the problem for OPEC is oil supply in the United States, where shale production is booming.

U.S. drillers have added rigs for 19 straight weeks to reach 722, the highest since April 2015, according to services firm Baker Hughes.

Goldman Sachs analysts have reduced their forecasts for oil prices, saying that falling U.S. production costs will keep supply rising for years to come.

The bank said that once OPEC's production growth resumes after its self-imposed cuts, U.S. and OPEC output

would rise by 1 million to 1.3 million bpd between 2018 and 2020.

"While we are bullish on near-term prices as inventories normalize ... 2018-19 futures need to be in the \$45-\$50 range," Goldman said.

The American summer driving season, which by tradition started on the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, may offer some support for prices, analysts said.

Demand in the United States for transport fuels tends to rise as families visit friends and relatives or go on vacation during the Northern Hemisphere summer.

The American Automobile Association said ahead of Memorial Day that it expects 39.3 million Americans to travel 50 miles (80 km) or more over the Memorial Day weekend, the highest Memorial Day mileage since 2005.

(Source: Reuters)

S. Korean oil imports from Iran rise 104.5% in Q1

South Korean oil imports from Iran rose by 104.5 percent in first quarter of 2017, to 18.54 million barrels. This made Iran the second-largest exporter of crude to Korea, behind Saudi Arabia.

Crude oil imports to South Korea went up by 4.9 percent on the year in the first quarter of 2017, to 278.18 million barrels.

One of the biggest oil consumers in Asia benefited from stable oil prices in the \$50-55 range in the three-month period, exporting 8.7 percent more refined oil products in the quarter, or 126.9 million barrels. The main markets for the products were Asia and the United States, with oil product exports to China up 2.6 percent to 22.5 million barrels in January through March 2017.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Renewable energy employs 9.8m people worldwide: report

Recent report from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has revealed that the renewable energy sector employed about 9.8 million in 2016, adding that global energy system is creating more jobs in renewables than in fossil-fuel technologies.

The Renewable Energy and Jobs Annual Review 2017, released at IRENA's 13th Council meeting, provided the latest employment figures of the renewable energy sector and insight into the factors affecting the renewable labor market.

Speaking on the report, Director-General, IRENA, Adnan Z. Amin, said, "Falling costs and enabling policies have steadily driven up investment and employment in renewable energy worldwide since IRENA's first annual assessment in 2012, when just over seven million people were working in the sector."

"In the last four years, for instance, the number of jobs in the solar and wind sectors combined has more than doubled. Renewables are directly supporting broader socio-economic objectives, with employment creation increasingly recognized as a central component of the global energy transition. As the scales continue to tip in favor of renewables, we expect that the number of people working in the renewables sector could reach 24 million by 2030, more than offsetting fossil-fuel job losses and becoming a major economic driver around the world."

"The Annual review shows that global renewable-energy employment, excluding large hydropower, reached 8.3 million in 2016. When accounting for direct employment in large hydropower, the total number of renewable-energy jobs globally climbs to 9.8 million."

The report shows that China, Brazil, the United States, India, Japan and Germany accounted for most of the renewable-energy jobs, and in China for example, 3.64 million people worked in renewables in 2016, a rise of 3.4 per cent. Also, in Africa, utility-scale renewable energy developments have made great strides, with South Africa and North Africa accounting for three-quarters of the continent's 62,000 renewable jobs.

(Source: Vanguard)



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The perennial dilemmas of British counterterrorism policy

By Mahan Abedin

Last week's terrorist atrocity in Manchester has intensified the seemingly endless debates about British counterterrorism. The two most contentious features of this debate are centered on the roles of ideology and foreign policy as both causes and drivers of terrorist threats.

The course and eventual resolution of these policy dilemmas are critically important because they touch on sensitive issues whose remits transcend counterterrorism policy. For example, by targeting ideology, the British state risks alienating important segments of the Muslim community who are fearful of an assault on their faith and culture — and very existence — under the guise of national security. In this case, national security is viewed and perhaps misrepresented as a vehicle to reshape and remold deep-seated cultural values, identity and, ultimately, loyalties.

On foreign policy, there is a similar debate as to what extent (if any) British policy positions cause or exacerbate terrorist threats. As with ideology, the divisions are deep, with one side steadfastly refusing to draw a connection between foreign policy and terrorism whilst the other argument identifies the inherent complexity of British foreign policy and its interaction with domestic policy as a potential radicalizing force.

Instead of reflexively taking sides in this debate, it is more useful to examine the complexity underpinning deep-seated beliefs and resultant political positions with a view to illuminating ways out of the impasse. More than any other section of British society, the Muslim community has a vested — some would say existential — interest in fully understanding these processes.

■ Is prevent a divisive tool?

As with all other aspects of British national life, counterterrorism policy is sophisticated, nuanced and complex. At an operational level, the lead agencies draw on rich historical experiences to detect, disrupt and manage terrorism threats. For example, the domestic security service MI5 continues to use the skills and experiences it accumulated during its decades-long struggle with Irish nationalists to counter both terrorism and espionage threats.

Following the 11 September, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, the British government reacted initially by strengthening anti-terror powers at the judicial level, with a view to empowering MI5 and aligned units within Britain's regionalized police forces. Whilst these measures — in particular the augmentation of the Terrorism Act 2000 — inevitably raised eyebrows, generally they were well-received by the British public.

The controversies emerged after the 7 July, 2005 terrorist attacks on the London transport network which killed 52 people. Following these atrocities, the then Labour government attempted to overly-politicize counterterrorism strategy, notably by focusing on ideology as a key driver of terrorism.

This process impacted significantly on Britain's overarching counterterror strategy known as CONTEST (first conceived in 2003), with PREVENT proving to be uniquely controversial. PREVENT is one of four strands making up CONTEST; its remit is to intervene before individuals judged to be potential terror risks breach national security red lines. PREVENT is necessarily engaged at the ideological and intellectual levels, seeking out persons of interest proactively with a view to ideological interrogation and resultant reformation.

This concept is not necessarily controversial nor is it particularly original. Many countries employ or have employed counter-ideological programs as part of their counterterrorism strategies. The real trouble with PREVENT is not that it identifies ideology as an important factor of the radicalization process, but that it causes deep divisions within the British Muslim community, upon which it is, primarily, focused.

PREVENT's divisive effects manifest at multiple levels. First, there is the issue of funding, which inevitably sparks inter-group rivalry and even conflict. More importantly, though, at a deep foundational level PREVENT has been the primary instrument behind the creation of either false or exaggerated dichotomies.

At a social level, the PREVENT logic risks deepening an essentially false dichotomy of "modern" and "conservative" Muslims, with authentic Islamic values labeled and demonized as gateways into radicalization. At a political level, PREVENT promotes an "Islamist" versus "secularist" divide, which inevitably shrinks political and even academic spaces.

■ It's foreign policy, stupid!

The debate on foreign policy and terrorism is more complex and potentially insoluble. Proponents of the status quo argue — with some merit — that British foreign interventions per se do not produce terrorism threats. They often cite Syria, where Britain and the U.S. have failed to intervene decisively, and which has nonetheless become one of the main sources of terrorist threats.

However, it is undeniable that certain British policy positions exacerbate existing threats. Even the British government's Joint Intelligence Committee makes this connection, notably in its assessment of the potential consequences flowing from the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

These conflicting perspectives come into sharp relief in respect of the Manchester attack. The bomber Salman Abedi was essentially a product of the conflict in Libya, which has produced widespread socio-political fragmentation and a resultant surge in terrorist activity.

A closer scrutiny of Britain's role in the collapse of Libya does not resolve the central dilemma. For example, to what extent did British intervention back in 2011 produce the resulting chaos? Conversely, should Britain have intervened more thoroughly to contain the fallout from the conflict? From this inquisitive viewpoint, Britain is damned either way.

Ultimately it is unrealistic to expect a British government to alter its foreign policy fundamentally by, for example, embracing a less interventionist approach. Moreover, in view of their deep communal divisions, British Muslims cannot speak with one voice on this issue. Taking Syria as an example, whilst many British Muslims have clamored for greater intervention, many are equally loath to see any decisive action taken against the Syrian government.

The debates will rage on. A less emotional approach is the best way to lay the foundations for future British Muslim institutions which can actually influence government policy. (Source: middleeastmonitor.com)

Europe, France plan active Middle East policy



Emmanuel Macron meets the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the EU Commission headquarters in Brussels.

Macron emphasized France's leading role in Europe and the world. He is a fervent supporter of globalization and therefore in favor of collective diplomacy.

There was a sigh of relief across European Union member states when Emmanuel Macron was declared the next president of France on May 7. The wave of right-wing anti-globalization and anti-EU that began with the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom and continued with the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president was stopped by the French electorate. The 39-year-old French centrist politician, a former member of the socialist government and who was the most pro-EU candidate, marched to his victory speech at the Louvre Museum to the tune of the EU anthem.

For the first time since the election of Francois Hollande in 2012, France was hailed in liberal circles across the world and by all governments interested in EU continued stability. Yet there were two noteworthy exceptions. Trump was probably not overjoyed on Macron's victory, only two weeks before the French election he tweeted that extreme right National Front Marine Le Pen was the strongest candidate on immigration and French border topics. In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu preferred a Macron victory over Le Pen, a candidate whose party has anti-Semitic roots, but according to a senior Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Jerusalem is concerned with a strong French president espousing foreign policy ambitions who may want to set in motion a new French initiative on a two-state solution.

Following the May 20-23 Trump visit to the region, it is clear to Israel that the quartet framework of the EU, United States, United Nations and Russia will not be renewed. In fact, EU leadership in Brussels considers itself as part of the victorious side in these French elections and is planning to fortify a more independent European foreign policy in the weeks to come. A senior official close to Federica Mogherini, the EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, told Al-Monitor that Mogherini is in contact with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian to advance a strong common European foreign policy on several files. The new man at the Quai d'Orsay is an old hand on French security and foreign affairs. He served as Hollande's minister of defense, and he was

very much in favor of a forceful and ambitious French intervention with the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State (ISIL). In this context, he enjoys good relations with the leaders of the pragmatic Arab countries — Egypt, Jordan and the Persian Gulf states. He particularly enjoys a close relationship with King Abdullah II of Jordan.

■ France's leading role

As Cabinet minister, Macron backed the two Paris conferences for a two-state solution and the French policy on the illegality of Israeli settlements. According to the EU official, Mogherini discussed with Macron the revival of these EU policies, especially now that the United States is proceeding on the Israeli-Palestinian issue with very little coordination with Europe. In his first speech as president, Macron emphasized France's leading role in Europe and the

world. He is a fervent supporter of globalization and therefore in favor of collective diplomacy.

A senior adviser to the French president on economic affairs told Al-Monitor that Macron, who to him is a brilliant operational conceptualist, will with time surprise the world with French initiatives on the Middle East. On foreign policy, Macron will want to be the world leader on climate change. These ambitions were reflected at the May 27 G-7 meeting in Italy, where he attempted to convince Trump not to abandon the Paris COP21 climate agreement.

According to Macron's adviser, the president's first priority in the Middle East is the fight against ISIL and to strengthen civil society in Iraq and Syria. Another Macron priority is the unity of Lebanon. The French

president will also focus on upholding the Iran nuclear deal. On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Macron aspires to engage with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as well as with the leaders of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, on a two-state solution based on the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and opposing the expansion of settlements.

Macron emphasized these views on the Israeli-Palestinian issue in a meeting he had in September 2015 with late Israeli President Shimon Peres. According to a former Peres adviser who was present at the meeting, Macron emphasized to Peres that he perceives himself as a staunch friend of Israel, he strongly opposes the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, and for Israel's sake, favors a two-state solution based on the 1967 lines. (Source: Al-Monitor)

Libya remains at the heart of regional issues

Since the 2011 uprising that sent the country into a spiral of chaos, Libya has been, to all intents and purposes, a broken state. Extremist groups such as ISIL have filled the power vacuum as the country's vital infrastructure has fallen into ruin and its ample oil resources have been looted. This dysfunction has ramifications far beyond Libya's borders. Just look at the horrific terror attack in Manchester last week for evidence of that.

There have, of course, been regional attempts to restore stability in Libya. In Abu Dhabi this month, Fayez Al Sarraj the prime minister of Libya's UN-backed government based in Tripoli, and Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, the leader of the Libya National Army, met to discuss a potential political solution to the country's instability. In the course of the talks, the two leaders agreed on the need to hold presidential and parliamentary elections next year.

Haftar is one of the key figures in eastern Libya and his forces have proved extremely capable of rooting out militants and stemming the flow of migrants from



the country. However, a major rift exists between Haftar and the UN-backed Government of National Accord led by Al Sarraj. Indeed, the spark of hope from the Abu Dhabi talks was short-lived as intense fighting quickly returned to the streets of Tripoli, perpetuating

the years-long cycle of violence.

On the battlefield, there have, at least, been a few encouraging signs. This week, Al Qaeda offshoot Ansar Al Sharia announced it was going to disband after suffering major losses in its stronghold of Benghazi.

The Libya National Army under the direction of Haftar has been fighting the group in the eastern Libya city since May 2014. While Ansar Al Sharia's defeat is worth marking, there is still significant work to be done on the ground to combat extremism. For one thing, many members of the group defected to ISIL after it rose to prominence in 2014.

Libya is a stark example of how conflicts can bleed across border and how dysfunctional states become hives of terrorist activity. Extremist groups are a symptom of a broken state and not the cause. Libya will not return to stability without the help of the international community and especially regional partners. The world ignores Libya at its own peril. (Source: The National)

The world cannot walk away from South Sudan

The region's leaders have a particular responsibility to take action.

The world's newest country, South Sudan, is vying for the status of its most broken. Created in 2011 after decades of civil war and a referendum vote to leave Sudan, the new country quickly sank into a cesspit of infighting and destruction. Long-simmering resentments, which had been kept in check while the mainly Christian south fought the mainly Muslim north, sprang into unholy war as a corrupt cadre of leaders manipulated ethnic allegiances for their pecuniary ends. That was just the start. In the past year or so, the situation has become decisively worse. Following the breakdown of successive peace accords, Riek Machar, the former vice-president once accused of plotting a coup, has fled the country leaving President Salva Kiir in control. What has often been portrayed as a conflict between Kiir's Dinka ethnic group and Machar's Nuer has shattered into a plethora of deadly squabbles between an alphabet soup of rebel groups. As usual, it is the people who suffer. Of South Sudan's population of 12m, nearly 1.5m have fled the country and a further 2m are internally displaced. Nearly 5m face hunger. The UN has declared the first famine in six



years. It is Africa's worst humanitarian crisis since the Rwandan genocide of 1994. It would be tempting to leave South Sudan to it, particularly since the government in Juba has so blatantly used food aid for its own ends: both as a source of revenue and as a weapon of war. Nor is engagement without risk: in March, seven aid workers were ambushed and killed in just the latest attack on those trying to bring help. Yet abandoning South Sudan would be wrong — for humanitarian, moral and practical reasons. If assistance stops — indeed if it is not increased — tens of thousands or more could starve.

Like victims everywhere, ordinary South Sudanese are caught in a swirl of events they have no power to control.

The moral imperative is linked to the role of the west, particularly the U.S., in helping to create the country. Its cause became one close to the heart of U.S. evangelicals. Washington pushed Khartoum to allow South Sudan to secede. For mainstream America, the country has fallen off the map. But there is at least an element here of "you break it, you keep it". The west cannot simply walk away. Still, the biggest responsibility falls on regional powers, principally Kenya, Ethio-

pia, Uganda and Sudan. None is keen to act. If anything, they appear to be giving a green light to the government in Juba to carry out what looks suspiciously like ethnic cleansing. Arms are pouring into the country and the South Sudanese elite is laundering its looted money into real estate in neighboring capitals. East Africa has done noticeably worse than west Africa in establishing acceptable norms. The Economic Community of West African States has taken on a creative political role, pressuring each other's leaders to observe term limits and to hold fair elections. That worked as recently as January when the threat of an Ecowas invasion forced Gambia's dictator Yahya Jammeh to accept electoral defeat.

If east Africa's leaders cannot summon the moral resolve to act, they should do so on practical grounds. If not, they risk being swamped by refugees. Conflict could spill over the borders into their territories. Bringing stability, let alone lasting peace, to South Sudan will be the work of Solomon. Yet if the phrase "African solutions to African problems" is to mean anything, east African leaders need to start following the lead set by their west African peers. (Source: FT)

Iran-Pakistan cooperation increased after sanctions lift

INTERVIEW
By Banafsheh Esmaili

Pakistani Ambassador to Iran Asif Ali Khan Durrani in an interview with Tehran Times expressed hope over the increase in cooperation after the lifting of sanctions on Iran. Durrani underlined that the volume of trade between Iran and Pakistan has increased up to 35% in the last one year. Following is the full text of the interview:

■ **Following the Mirjaveh incident and martyrdom of Iranian border guards at the hands of terrorists on Iran-Pakistan border, Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, during a telephone conversation with his Pakistani counterpart Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, discussed Iran's preparedness to form a special security committee and a border committee of the two countries during the meeting of experts. Is the Pakistani side also prepared for the establishment of such a committee?**

I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to our Iranian brethren on this tragic incident. Pursuant to this incident, the two sides agreed to form such a committee. It may be noted that a special security committee already exists between our two countries. Since this incident is being jointly investigated by Pakistan and Iran, it would not be appropriate to raise or discuss this issue in the media before the investigation concludes.

Following this tragic incident, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif visited Pakistan and held meetings with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, as well as the Speaker of National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali, National Security Advisor Gen. Nasser Khan Janjua and the Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Islamabad announced in clear terms that "we will never allow our soil to be used against neighboring countries and full investigation would be conducted about the incident and if anyone from the Pakistani side was found involved, the Government of Pakistan would take legal action". There is absolutely no doubt that Pakistan greatly values its close relations with Iran and that the two countries have always stood with each other.

■ **Advisor to the Prime Minister Sartaj Aziz, during an interview with Dunya Network said, "if Tehran gives us information about terrorists who acted against Iranian border guards, Pakistan will take action". Does it indicate that Islamabad lacks intelligence about these terrorist groups?**

Since this incident happened on the Iranian soil, it is only natural that Iran should share all information with Pakistan. We can move forward in the case only when all the evidence has been gathered. It is noteworthy that we have conducted full investigations on all previous incidents that took place on the Iran-Pakistan border and took the culprits to task.



Pakistan has joined this Islamic Alliance in good faith, to work for the unity of all Islamic countries.

The point is that terrorists entered from the Pakistani soil and again escaped inside Pakistan.

The side of the Mirjaveh incident was inside the Iranian territory. We are still awaiting complete information from the time of occurrence of this incident to the escape of these terrorists from the Iranian territory. It is advisable to wait for the completion of the investigations so that all facts come true.

■ **Which groups and countries support the terrorist groups acting against Iran's interests and are present on the Pakistani soil? How much control does Pakistan's intelligence have over these groups?**

As a representative of the Pakistani government, I can say that Government of Pakistan would never allow anyone to carry out such activities using its soil.

■ **Does Islamabad recognize Jaish ul Adl as a terrorist group?**

Yes, undoubtedly.

■ **What is your opinion on acceptance of Saudi Military Alliance command by General Raheel Sharif, former Commander of Pakistan Army? What is Islamabad's goal in joining the alliance at this level?**

It is an Islamic Alliance and its objectives are very clear i.e. fight against extremism and terrorism.

■ **What kind of Islamic Alliance is it, which does not include Iran, Iraq and Syria?**

Pakistan has joined this Islamic Alliance in good faith, to work for the unity of all Islamic countries. Pakistan's participation in the Alliance is not against any particular country.

■ **The Alliance is against Iran, however, Islamabad made efforts not to consider it as an Anti-Iran Alliance by inviting Iran to join it. Do you think such an invitation is a kind of diplomatic incident?**

As I said we are for the unity of Muslim Ummah and would like to strengthen its unity. Pakistan has close relations both with Iran and Saudi Arabia and would make all efforts to bridge the gaps between our two great Muslim brothers.

■ **Regarding Iran-Saudi Arabia tensions and in view of the good**

ties that Islamabad enjoys with both side, the question is can Pakistan strike balance in relation with the two sides and if not will it be compelled to opt for one of them?

Our good ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia can help bring these two brotherly countries closer. You may recall the efforts of our Prime Minister last year to narrow down the differences between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

■ **We saw that the meeting "One-Belt, One Road" was held in China. As you may know, the goal of this meeting is to revive the Silk Road, and with regard to the objection of India with this meeting and bringing up the issue of Kashmir, do you think that this Alliance will make new blocs in the region, for example creating new blocs with focus on India and America?**

Pakistan has taken part in the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative as we understand that, this initiative will boost economic integration in the region. Therefore, we cannot comment on what other countries decide or do as it is not our business.

■ **India by boycotting this meeting announced that the territorial sovereignty of India is ignored since this plan will strengthen the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and will pass through Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, a region where India and Kashmir dispute rests.**

We reject India's contention on CPEC and Kashmir.

■ **What is the position of Iran and Pakistan in revival of Silk Road?**

So far, Pakistan and almost 60 other countries have participated in this project, which is a good sign as the plan of New Silk Road is in fact a coalition leading to the development and progress of people in the wider region on a massive scale.

■ **What are the main fields of Iran and Pakistan's cooperation at the moment?**

Iran and Pakistan cooperate in a number of diverse fields. Our cooperation has increased after the lifting of sanctions on Iran after which the volume of trade has increased up to 35%

during the last one year. The trade volume is expected to rise again after signing the Banking and Payment Arrangement Agreement happened last month, between the Central Bank of Iran and State Bank of Pakistan. Due to this agreement, the commercial Banks of the two countries will be able to conduct normal business.

■ **One of the reasons the contract for export of gas from Iran to Pakistan was not implemented due to Iran's sanctions, but why Pakistan is not willing to implement this project after the lifting of sanctions?**

All measures to complete this project are ongoing. The reason for delay is that during sanctions on Iran, no company was ready to invest in this project. Our efforts in this direction are underway because we need Iran's gas.

■ **Pakistan signed an agreement with Qatar to buy its condensed gas. Is Pakistan looking for a replacement for the Peace Pipeline?**

We have contracts with other countries in the world because our country needs gas. Despite import of gas from Iran, our need is still not fully catered to. Therefore, we have signed TAPI (Turkmenistan - Afghanistan - Pakistan - India) gas pipeline agreement as also with Qatar.

■ **How much of the recent tensions and issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan on joint borders are resolved?**

There is no problem on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. We sincerely want peace and security in Afghanistan. We will do our utmost, in this regard, because instability and insecurity in Afghanistan has been problematic for our country as well as the whole region.

■ **Recently there have been some issues on border and they still exist?**

In this case, experts from both sides have met a few times. Hopefully, an amicable solution will be found out as has been the practice between the two countries in the past.

■ **Is this border still closed?**

Yes, Chaman border is closed. Some meetings have been held between officials and experts and we hope that this issue will be resolved soon. [Closed at the time the interview was conducted; Chaman border is now open.]

■ **Regarding the issue of Kashmir and the tensions existing between India and Pakistan, what is the position of Pakistan and India on Kashmir?**

Pakistan's position on Kashmir is very clear. According to the resolutions of UN Security Council, a plebiscite must be held in Kashmir for its accession to India or Pakistan. We support a solution pursuant to the UN Security Council resolutions through holding a plebiscite in Kashmir. India has been wavering in its commitments to the UN Security Council.

Since July last year, more than one thousand innocent children lost their eyesight and many civilians have been martyred in Indian-held Kashmir. What can be more heart rendering than that? For a country that claims to be the largest democracy in the world, such brutal human rights violations should be a source of contemplation for India and a challenge to the world community how to save the hapless Kashmiris from the scourge of state terrorism.

The Kashmir dispute has existed for over 70 years now. It is the political, moral and legal duty of India to fulfill the promises it made to the people of Kashmir and the international community for holding of a plebiscite according to the resolutions of the UN.

■ **Can you describe the situation on Kashmir's borderlines and LOC?**

The situation on the Line of Control that separates Azad Kashmir from Indian Occupied Kashmir continues to witness flagrant border violations by India, which have resulted in deaths of scores of innocent civilians. India is responsible for stoking tensions along the Line of Control.

■ **Is a cease-fire enforced in this region?**

The cease-fire was held successfully for 10 years since 2003, but after renewed Intifada in the Indian Occupied Kashmir, India has put the pressure on the Line of Control to divert attention of the international community on its brutalities and worst kind of human rights in the Kashmir Valley.

The renewal of the British left?

By Milos Kovic

Nowadays, the common sense can hardly believe in the tangible fact that NATO is endangering the safety of the two nuclear powers, Russia and China. Judging by the antirussian campaign in the Western media, as well as the deployment of NATO troops in Eastern Europe and the Far East, it is as if the war has already started.

The territories on which NATO entered a series of attacks against sovereign States, launched by bombing Republika Srpska and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, remained in ruins and in chronic ethnic conflicts. The Balkans are now one of the world's crisis hot spots, along with Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Our Balkan concerns are, however, a trifle compared to what is threatening the entire humanity.

What could stop this course of events? The observers who allude to the theory of realism in international relationships, argue that NATO can no longer be stopped. They say that it is not reason, nor kindness, who take decisions in the relationships between the countries, but power and might. Benjamin Disraeli, one of the founders of this ideology, but also of the modern British imperialism, argued that "power can be stopped only by power", regarding the conflict between Britain and Russia in the Balkans.

The second-best option for humanity would, however, change the foreign policy of the leading NATO member countries. The awareness has grown in Western societies about the fact that small, privileged business, clerical, military and academic circles, located mainly in the US and the UK, led their own countries and the world to the brink of downfall. This idea maturation cannot be seen in the big Western media, but at the elections, the voice of the people is each time louder. Citizens of the United States, Britain, France and Germany are, in



fear, frightened and horrified. They are dying in terrorist attacks on their own streets and workplaces, in their homes. Thanks to the mass immigration of refugees from countries that are being destroyed by NATO, the identity of Western countries is changing at a tremendous speed. Along with xenophobia, the ongoing Americanization is gradually shutting down a centuries-old European tradition of unity, solidarity and concern for fellow human beings.

This popular revolt can nowhere be seen so well as in the Anglo-Saxon world, the epicenter of the most important global trends. From the beginning, however, it was clear that Boris Johnson and Donald Trump are not the true alternatives. According to their social relationships and beliefs, they belong to the privileged, neoliberal, belligerent elite. This is confirmed by a series of russophobic statements of Boris Johnson when he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, including those about Russia's responsibility for causing trouble in Montenegro and in the Balkans. The most powerful man in the world, the US President Donald Trump, under the pressure of the "deep state", accused of conspiring with the Russians, retreating and staggering, has dragged Montenegro into NATO and escalated the war in Syria.

Should we expect changes from the Left? Bernie Sanders called his astonished followers to vote for the candidate of the military-industrial complex, Hillary Clinton. In the UK elections that will take place on June 9th, the Labour party will however, as the most powerful opposition party, be led by Jeremy Corbyn. Judging by the polls, although less and less reliable, the Tories will win, because they took the monopoly on the key issues of immigration, identity and the European Union thanks to Brexit. Therefore, is Serbia, the country of poverty, unemployment, corruption, a failed health and education system, bombed and occupied by NATO troops, so indifferent to what is happening in the British left?

The fact that Jeremy Corbyn is asking for the containment of privatization, the renovation of education, health and social care and that he is warning about the differences between the ever-poorer majority and the ever-richer minority, is not the most important thing for the topic of this article. He was, in fact, along with Tony Ben, Harold Pinter, Tariq Ali, George Galloway and others, one of the founders of the "Stop the War Coalition," which, on the eve of the invasion of Iraq in February 2003, gathered in the London protests, according to some reports, over a million people. Corbyn was very strongly opposed to the invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Moreover, he said that the crisis in Ukraine was triggered by NATO while encircling Russia and entering the territories that are vital for the Russian security.

Lastly, Jeremy Corbyn was with Tony Ben, the only parliamentary deputy who took part in the protests against the bombing of the FR Yugoslavia in 1999. Together with other 15 deputies, in March 1999, he signed a protest and condemnation of NATO attacks on Yugoslavia. He argued in the Parliament that no sovereign State would ever sign the agreement offered in Rambouillet. He condemned NATO for killing civilians, bombing the Radio Television building (RTS), the use of depleted uranium. With 18 MPs, he demanded in December 1999 to stop the persecution of Serbs and Roma in Orshovac (Kosovo). In December 2004, he was one of 25 MPs who welcomed the article by John Pilger which counter-proved the war propaganda about genocide against the Albanians in Kosovo.

Because of this attitude, Corbyn has not been accused or insulted just once. His social program has further contributed to the fact that, along with Putin and Trump, he is the most attacked public figure in the British media.

Does all this mean that the left has finally become more alive? Does the cake in the face of Bernard Henri Lévy mean that the Serbian leftists are coming out from a macabre embrace of the NATO rhetoric, scholarships and stiftung foundations? With a little patience, we will find out that as well.

(Source: Stanjestvari)



Iran-Pakistan cooperation has increased after the lifting of sanctions on Iran after which the volume of trade has increased up to 35% during the last one year.

John F. Kennedy: An idealist without illusions

By Jeff Shesol

One evening this month, the Smithsonian American Art Museum hosted a birthday celebration. But the guest of honor was absent. President John F. Kennedy, had he lived, would have turned 100 on Monday, May 29.

The courtyard was filled with friends of the Kennedy family, alumni of Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 campaign for presi-

dent and of Edward M. Kennedy's Senate staff, Kennedy biographers and, not least, some actual Kennedys — including Caroline Kennedy, the president's daughter.

The audience greeted her warmly but appeared, on the whole, subdued. Speakers referred, here and there, to President Trump, who now sits at the desk where Kennedy once worked. It was hard to escape the feeling that the Kennedy legacy — the America he envisioned and helped build — is in eclipse.

It is hard to imagine a president less like Kennedy, in public anyway, than Mr. Trump. But it's more than that. Kennedy's belief in what his speechwriter, Ted Sorensen, called the "politics of persuasion," as opposed to the "politics of violent confrontation or chaos," is under challenge even in his own party. This is a danger that Kennedy foresaw, and warned against.

Kennedy's legacy has always been hard to pin down. It has been inflated, exalted, disputed and debunked almost

from the moment Kennedy was assassinated. Much of it resides in the realm of feeling — more a Kennedy gestalt than a Kennedy record. His domestic agenda, the New Frontier, had essentially stalled by the last of his thousand days in office. His vice president, Lyndon B. Johnson, rightly receives credit for realizing many of those ambitions — a civil-rights bill, Medicare, education reform, tax reform, a comprehensive antipoverty program — after Kennedy's death. **→13**

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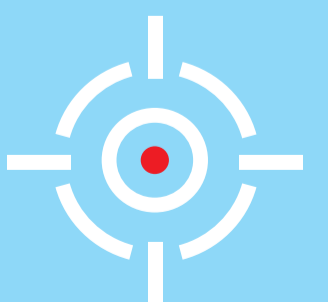
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The healthiest way to improve your sleep: exercise

By Sandee LaMotte

If you're one of the third of all Americans who suffer from insomnia -- roughly 108 million of us -- put away your sleeping pills. Science has a much safer solution.

"There has been more and more research in the last decade showing exercise can reduce insomnia," Rush University clinical psychologist Kelly Glazer Baron said. "In one study I did, for example, older women suffering from insomnia said their sleep improved from poor to good when they exercised. They had more energy and were less depressed."

"There are more solid studies recently that looked at people clinically diagnosed with insomnia disorder, rather than self-described poor sleepers," agreed the University of Pittsburgh's Christopher Kline, who studies sleep through the lens of sports medicine. "The results show exercise improves both self-reported and objective measures of sleep quality, such as what's measured in a clinical sleep lab."

Exercise is not quite as effective as sleeping pills, admits Arizona State University sleep researcher Shawn Youngstedt, but if you consider the potential downsides of pharmaceutically induced shuteye, the equation shifts.

"Sleeping pills are extremely hazardous," Youngstedt said. "They are as bad as smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. Not to mention they cause infections, falling and dementia in the elderly, and they lose their effectiveness after a few weeks."

"It's less expensive, healthier and just as easy to exercise," he said, "and there's an added bonus: Research suggests those who are physically active have a lower risk of developing insomnia in the first place."

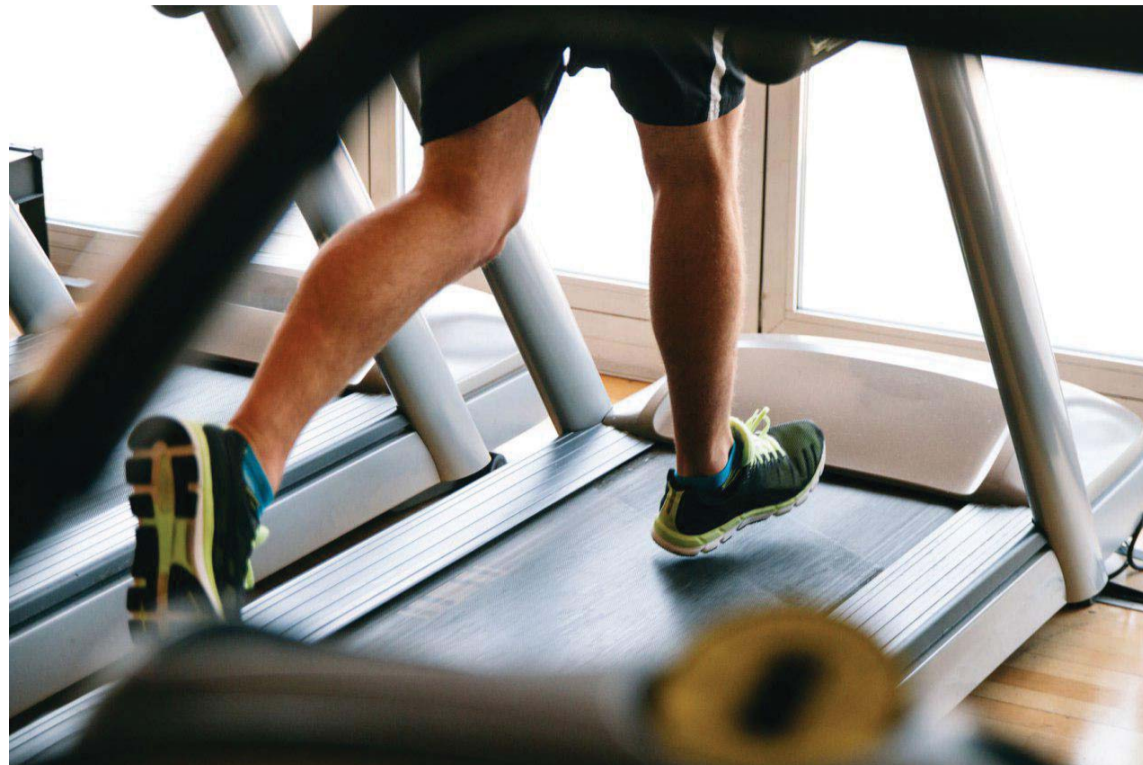
There's more good news for the 18 million Americans who struggle with sleep apnea, a dangerous disorder in which you temporarily stop breathing for up to a minute during the night. Exercise can help with that, too.

"For sleep apnea, exercise has always been recommended," Kline said, "mostly to jump-start weight loss from dieting, because those with sleep apnea are normally overweight or obese. But we did a study where the participants didn't diet, and exercise alone led to a 25% reduction of sleep apnea symptoms over a 12-week period."

"Exercise has also been shown to help with restless-leg symptoms across all age groups," Youngstedt said. Restless leg syndrome, a disorder of the nervous system, occurs when the legs -- or other parts of the body like the arms or face -- itch, burn or move involuntarily. The irresistible urge to move often happens at night, which disrupts sleep.

Finding a safe, healthy avenue of treatment for sleep disorders like insomnia, sleep apnea and restless legs is critical, these experts say, because disturbed sleep is a key risk factor for diseases and unhealthy conditions such as stroke, heart attack, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity.

"There is large amount of literature showing that people who exercise have better sleep," Baron said. "People who exercise reported an increase in deep sleep and a decrease in the number of awakenings. Plus, people felt less depressed, and their mood was



In one study, older women suffering from insomnia said their sleep improved from poor to good when they exercised. They had more energy and were less depressed.

better."

■ Your exercise prescription How much exercise is needed to get a good night's rest?

Most sleep studies have focused on the recommended amount: 2½ hours a week of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise, along with strength or resistance training that targets every muscle group two days a week.

Kline says "brisk walking, light biking, elliptical machine, anything that increases your heart rate so that you can still talk while exercising but have to catch your breath every few sentences or so, is considered moderate exercise."

"I think trying to do it outside is also helpful, because bright light can help promote sleep," Youngstedt added. "Light exposure helps regulate the body clock."

Other studies show that people who exercise less than the recommended amount, and those who go way beyond in time and intensity, see moderate benefits. It's only when you are training to the level of an elite athlete that exercise can actually interfere with sleep quality.

"High-level athletes, who may overtrain for a certain event, do have issues with sleep when traveling and under stress," Youngstedt said. "But for the vast majority of us, that's not a factor."

■ What's the best time of day to do this sleep-enhancing movement?

Experts used to say morning was best; in fact, any exercise within six hours of bedtime was strongly

discouraged. On that topic, the science has changed.

"One common myth is that exercise should be avoided at night," Youngstedt said. "There are about 10% of us for whom exercise at night does disturb sleep, but I personally think that's because they aren't accustomed to it. For most of us, exercise at night, even if it ends just a couple of hours before bedtime, will help with sleep."

Busting that myth is especially helpful for those who tend to stay up later.

"Night owls have problems getting up in the morning; they just can't do it," Baron said. "Their mood and ability to apply effort just isn't there. If you're sacrificing sleep for exercise, is that a good tradeoff?"

However, one of the benefits of staying with a morning workout, she adds, is that you are less likely to cancel.

"Morning exercisers are more consistent," she explained. "So many of us have competing demands in our day, so if we leave it to the evening, we might not follow through."

Staying the course is important to keep sleep benefits in place.

"They have to keep it up," Youngstedt said. "I think it helps to have a consistent schedule, so figure out what works best for you and then stick to it."

"If you have insomnia or sleep apnea, it's even more important to exercise," Baron said. "You will likely feel even less inclined to exercise when you're fatigued, but keep with it, because it can really help."

(Source: CNN)

10 ways to be focused and sharp, naturally

There are many natural ways to stay focused and sharp. From alternative therapies to herbal remedies, these natural approaches can help boost your productivity, protect your brain health as you age, and improve your overall wellbeing.

■ Nutrition to stay focused

Getting your fill of certain types of foods may help you stay focused and sharp. These foods include:

1) Fish and flaxseed

Flaxseed and oily fish like salmon and sardines are high in omega-3 fatty acids, a type of essential fatty acid that plays a key role in preserving brain health.

A report published in *Advances in Nutrition* in 2013, for example, indicates that omega-3 fatty acids may help fight aging-related impairment in brain function.

What's more, some research shows that omega-3 fatty acids may help improve attention. In a study published in *Neuropsychopharmacology* in 2015, for instance, omega-3 supplementation was found to reduce symptoms of inattention in children.

2) Antioxidant-rich foods

Antioxidant nutrients may offer some protection against aging-related decline in cognition (i.e., the set of mental abilities associated with processes like attention, memory, and problem-solving), according to a research review published in the *European Journal of Nutrition* in 2013.

Looking at 10 previously published studies, the review's authors found some evidence that antioxidant nutrients such as vitamin C and vitamin E may help slow the rate of cognitive decline.



3) Green tea

A rat-based study published in *Brain and Cognition* in 2008 suggests that green tea consumption may enhance learning and memory. Furthermore, a pilot study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* in 2014 found that daily green tea intake helped improve cognitive function in a small group of older adults.

Number of herbal remedies show promise as a natural approach to staying focused and sharp. Here's a look at the science behind two of those remedies:

1) Curcumin

Sourced from the herb turmeric, curcumin has been found to enhance

cognitive function in some preliminary research. Additionally, a preliminary study published in the *International Journal of Biochemistry and Biophysics* in 2015 determined that curcumin may increase brain levels of docosahexaenoic acid (an omega-3 fatty acid found to have beneficial effects on cognitive function).

2) Rosemary

Daily intake of the herb rosemary may boost cognitive performance and sharpen memory in older adults, according to a small study published in the *Journal of Medicinal Food* in 2012.

1) Getting sufficient sleep

A great deal of research has shown that sleep deprivation can have

a profoundly negative impact on cognitive function, including damaging effects on focus and memory. For help in improving your sleep quality, go here to learn about natural ways to sleep more soundly.

2) Exercising

A study published in *Neurology* in 2010 suggests that walking at least six miles per week may preserve memory in older adults. The study also found that regular exercise helped fight aging-related shrinkage in brain size.

3) Managing your stress

Like skimming on sleep, letting your everyday stress go unchecked can greatly impair cognitive function. To stay focused and sharp, it's crucial to take everyday steps to lower your stress levels. Try these stress-management techniques to start.

■ Mind-body techniques for greater focus

Not only helpful in relieving stress, the following mind-body techniques may help you stay focused and sharp:

1) Meditation

In a study of 40 undergraduate students (published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* in 2007), researchers observed that five days of 20-minute meditation training helped improve attention, as well as lower anxiety, fatigue, anger, and depression.

2) Tai chi

Published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* in 2015, a review of nine previously published studies shows that taking up tai chi may help improve attention, memory, and other measures of cognitive ability in healthy adults.

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

The science behind why we binge (and what to do about it)

By Nick English

At some point, we've all awoken from some kind of binge, perhaps surrounded by beer bottles, candy wrappers, or shopping bags, and asked ourselves: What the hell happened? How can rational, functioning adults totally lose control of their impulses?

■ What's the deal?

As it turns out, whether it's drinking, eating, or shopping, different binge behaviors actually have similar causes. Greatist Expert and clinical psychologist Dr. Michael Mantell explains that all types of bingeing are "ways of dealing with negative emotions that are not rational or healthy." But when does the occasional overindulgence become a real problem? According to Mantell, fully-fledged binge disorders are characterized by feelings of powerlessness, secrecy, shame, and social isolation. Once someone feels a need to binge in private, or schedule binges around (or instead of) work and social obligations, it's time to ask why.

Binge eating is currently the most common eating disorder in adults, compulsive buying disorder (aka "shopaholism") is increasing, and binge drinking is widespread, especially among women. Whether it's pizza, booze, or clearance sales, the causes of any type of binge behavior can fall into three categories: psychological, chemical, and sociocultural. (Stick with us here, we won't get too dense.)

■ Psychological

The most common causes of bingeing are anxiety, stress, and depression—a lot of the time, it's simply a way to numb unhappy feelings. But bingeing can also be a symptom of an undiagnosed mental disorder. Depression, for example, can lead to low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, poor impulse control, and difficulty managing feelings—all of which can trigger a binge. Naturally the pain and guilt that comes in the aftermath of a binge can trigger depression, which can trigger another binge... not exactly a fun cycle to get caught in.



■ Chemical

Of course people also overindulge because it can feel great—before regret sets in, anyway. The brain releases the feel-awesome chemical dopamine when we eat fat and sugar, or even when we see new things to buy. Once the brain secretes dopamine during binges, they can become like a physical addiction—we binge more and more because we crave the rush of chemicals. Similarly, low levels of dopamine and serotonin (another happy chemical) can lead to compulsive behavior (like bingeing) and depression.

Stress and anxiety can also make people binge by making them more prone to "reward seeking behavior"—basically stress can make us lose perspective and prioritize the nice feelings ("reward") we get during a binge over the regret that inevitably comes later.

■ Sociocultural

Without a strong sense of self-confidence, the pressures of a culture that emphasizes coolness through consumption can also drive people to binges.

"We're always being told that you're not worth anything if you're not thin, if you don't drink, if you don't own certain things," Mantell says. "That pressure to be perfect can definitely lead to anxiety and binge-like behavior."

■ Mind over matter

Many experts link bingeing to a lack of mindfulness, especially relating to emotions. People who are prone to compulsive behavior tend, in general, to have more difficulty understanding their feelings and handling stress. There are many ways to help remedy the issue, such as mindfulness meditation and writing down emotions throughout the day. When a binge feels imminent, Mantell suggests the THINK model: ask whether these feelings are True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, or Kind. For example, an impulse like, "I must buy that now," doesn't exactly fit the THINK bill. Being aware of one's emotional states can help reduce stress, anxiety, and consequent bingeing, so working on improving mindfulness is never a bad idea.

■ What can I do?

No matter why (or how) someone binges, there are plenty of treatment options available for those who seek help. Dr. Mantell recommends first visiting a cognitive behavioral therapist to figure out if the binges are a standalone problem or if they're caused by more serious mental issues, like depression or a mood disorder.

After talking with a mental health professional, the recommended next step is to work on controlling binges through continued therapy. Finding a support group like Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, or Debtors Anonymous can also be useful in many cases.

Remember, self-treatment is only OK for less serious cases of binge behavior. If bingeing is continuously, negatively impacting your life—to the point where it causes distress or financial, social, or physical harm—therapy should be the first step.

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

Researchers have observed that five days of 20-minute meditation training helped improve attention, as well as lower anxiety, fatigue, anger, and depression.

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 According to a recent report by market intelligence company Sensor Tower, more app publishers are likely to make their first \$1 million in annual revenue on Apple's App Store, rather than Google Play. Sensor Tower's data shows that 66 iOS app publishers reached this milestone in 2016, while only 39 managed to achieve the same on Google's online storefront.
- 2 Uber's London licence renewed for only four months. Transport for London continues to consider five-year licence as unions express concerns over working practices.
- 3 US may expand laptop ban to all international flights. Homeland Security Secretary says terrorists are 'obsessed' with bringing down planes, but he hasn't decided whether to expand the electronics ban
- 4 Google DeepMind's AlphaGo AI has retired from competitive Go after defeating the world number one 3-0. DeepMind now plans to apply its algorithms to more scientific matters.
- 5 LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman and Bill Gates teamed up for a \$30 million investment in petition site Change.org. The "social change platform" is best known as a site for activists to post petitions to the public.
- 6 Google said it would be too expensive and too logistically difficult to give its gender pay data to the government. The job would apparently require 500 hours of work and cost \$100,000.
- 7 Snap spent less than \$1 million to acquire a tiny drone startup in Venice called Ctrl Me Robotics, according to a new report from BuzzFeed. As part of the deal, Snap reportedly brought on Ctrl Me Robotics founder, Simon Saito Nielsen, and acquired some of its assets and equipment.
- 8 Sprig, a food-delivery startup that has raised over \$56 million, is shutting down. Its 200 employees will receive two months' pay, and the company will be having a career fair to help them find a new job.
- 9 A new feature on Google Photos lets you hide the pictures you don't want people to see. The feature is called 'Archive'.
- 10 Following the problem with the red tint that marred the screen on the Samsung Galaxy S8 and Samsung Galaxy S8+ (which the manufacturer later cleared up with a software update), another problem has surfaced. The latest issue to affect the Samsung Galaxy S8 and is a problem that prevents owners of Sammy's latest flagship models from enjoying a stable and smooth Bluetooth connection with speakers, headsets and other accessories that are driven by Bluetooth.

Intel's tiny Compute Card launches with Dell and LG aboard

Intel's Compute Card seemed like a logical step forward for the chipmaker when it was announced back at CES. It's basically a small, credit-card sized device that packs in everything you'd need to make a device "smart" -- an Intel system-on-a-chip, memory, storage and networking capabilities. The idea is that you can just slip it into a host device, like a refrigerator or TV, to give them computing capabilities. Today during its Computex keynote, Intel officially launched the Compute Card and announced a slew of partners, including Dell, LG, and Lenovo.



Intel also gave us a taste of the types of devices the Compute Card could power. There were the sorts of things we expected, like small desktop replacement docks, and a few surprises. LG, for example, already has an all-in-one machine in the works that's powered entirely by the Compute Card. It's a smart idea, since the Compute Card offers a way to quickly upgrade host devices down the line, something that's notoriously difficult with most all-in-one PCs. Now that it's officially launched, expect to hear more about Compute Card-powered devices soon.

(Source: intel)

Intel's Core i9 Extreme Edition CPU is an 18-core beast

By Devindra Hardawar

Last year at Computex, Intel unveiled its first 10-core consumer CPU, the company's move into the world of a "mega-tasking." It was a pricey chip, launching at around \$1,700, but it satisfied the needs for users who needed to juggle several intensive tasks at once. Now, Intel is upping the ante with a whole new family of processors for enthusiasts, the Core X-series, and it's spearheaded by its first 18-core CPU, the i9-7980XE.

Priced at \$1,999, the 7980XE is clearly not a chip you'd see in an average desktop. Instead, it's more of a statement from Intel. It beats out AMD's 16-core Threadripper CPU, which was slated to be that company's most powerful consumer processor for 2017. And it gives Intel yet another way to satisfy the demands of power-hungry users who might want to do things like play games in 4K while broadcasting them in HD over Twitch. And as if its massive core count wasn't enough, the i9-7980XE is also the first Intel consumer chip that packs in over a teraflop worth of computing power.

If 18 cores is a bit too rich for you, Intel also has other Core i9 Extreme Edition chips in 10, 12, 14 and 16-core variants. Perhaps the best news for hardware geeks: the 10 core i9-7900X will retail for \$999, a significant discount from last year's version.



All of the i9 chips feature base clock speeds of 3.3GHz, reaching up to 4.3GHz dual-core speeds with Turbo Boost 2.0 and 4.5GHz with Turbo Boost 3.0. And speaking of Turbo Boost 3.0, its performance has also been improved in the new Extreme Edition chips to increase

both single and dual-core speeds. Rounding out the X-Series family are the quad-core i5-7640X and i7 models in 4, 6 and 8-core models.

While it might all seem like overkill, Intel says its Core i9 lineup was driven by the surprising demand for last year's 10-

core chip. "Broadwell-E was kind of an experiment," an Intel rep said. "It sold... Proving that our enthusiast community will go after the best of the best... Yes we're adding higher core count, but we're also introducing lower core counts. Scalability on both ends are what we went after."

As you can imagine, stuffing more cores into a processor leads to some significant heat issues. For that reason, Intel developed its own liquid cooling solution, which will work across these new chips, as well as some previous generations. All of the new Core i9 processors, along with the 6 and 8-core i7 chips, feature scorching hot 140W thermal design points (TDPs), the maximum amount of power that they'll draw. That's the same as last year's 10-core CPU, but it's still well above the 91W TDP from Intel's more affordable i7-7700K.

Over the past few years, Intel's laptop chips have been far more interesting than its desktop CPUs. Partially, that's because the rise of ultraportables and convertible laptops have shifted its focus away from delivering as much computing power as possible, to offering a reasonable amount of processing power efficiently. The new Core i9 X-series processors might not be feasible for most consumers, but for the hardware geeks who treat their rigs like hot rods, they're a dream come true.

(Source: engadget)

NVIDIA 'Max-Q' gaming laptops: ultrabooks with GTX 1080 power

Based on NVIDIA's 2017 Computex announcements, PC gamers won't have to choose between bulky gaming laptops and desktop-level processing power for much longer. A new design called "Max-Q" is arriving in new laptops that it claims are both 3x thinner and 3x more powerful than their predecessors -- think 18mm thick, 5 pounds and with the power of NVIDIA's GTX 1080 inside. Plus, there's "WhisperMode," which can pace the game's framerate to keep the laptop cool and quiet during a plugged-in gaming session.

When the new laptops roll out beginning June 27th, the top of the line options well outpace current thin gaming laptops like Razer's GTX 1060-powered 4K Blade, with power that's similar to the bigger, heavier Blade Pro. There aren't specific benchmarks listed, but a graph on



the official website claims an average 1.8x performance increase over GTX1060 when running "AAA" titles at 4K.

During the demo, CEO Jen-Hsun Huang showed off a 5-lb laptop running Project Cars 2, saying it was 60 percent faster than the PS4 Pro.

NVIDIA says that they're not only engineered to be thin and light across the "chip, drivers, thermal and electrical components," but that its software optimizes settings and the workload across CPU/GPU to regulate power and heat. They aren't all super powerful however, with models on the way from "Acer, Aftershock, Alienware, ASUS, Clevo, Dream Machine, ECT, Gigabyte, Ha-see, HP, LDLC, Lenovo, Machenike, Maingear, Mechrevo, MSI, Multicom, Origin PC, PC Specialist, Sager, Scan, Terrans Force, Tronic'5, and XoticPC," they will include GTX 1060, 1070 and 1080 level GPUs inside.

(Source: NVIDIA)

Asus' new Wi-Fi router looks like a Dyson bladeless fan

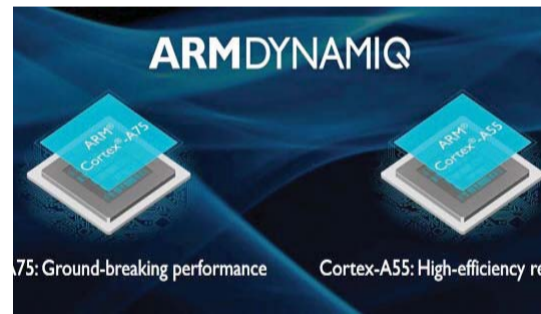


Asus, purveyor of the world's finest arachnid overlord wireless router designs, has gone back to the drawing board and come up with a new look that's much friendlier to humans. The antenna-less Asus Blue Cave offers "smooth Wi-Fi [and] smart protection," which in geekier terms means support for AC2600-class dual-band operation, powered by Intel's latest Wi-Fi chipset, and Trend Micro protection for "every connected smart device on the network, including IoT devices." But really and truly, we're all here for that "unique and attractive central aperture that is bathed in gentle blue light."

While most other home Wi-Fi routers have started supporting mesh networking, this new Asus model is content to only offer a mobile app with granular user controls to pad out its "smart functionality" credentials. IFTTT support is a nice extra, though.

(Source: theverge)

ARM announces Cortex-A75, Cortex-A55 and Mali-G72



ARM has taken the wraps off the next generation of its mobile CPU and GPU design. This includes the flagship Cortex-A75 CPU, which will replace the A73 and the Cortex-A55, which will replace the A53. There will also be a new GPU, the Mali-G72.

The Cortex-A75 brings 22% additional performance over the A73 when compared at the same frequencies. It also has 33% higher FP and NEON performance and 16% higher memory throughput. In benchmarks, the A75 performs 48% better in Octane and 34% better in Geekbench. A75 is also more efficient than A73, which allows it to run at a higher clock speed while consuming the same amount of power. A75 has also been designed with notebooks in mind, such as Chromebooks and upcoming ARM based Windows machines, and can run at 2W power for even more performance.

(Source: ARM)

Asus ZenFone AR is scheduled to arrive in the U.S. this July



Earlier this month, we told you that the Tango enabled Asus ZenFone AR will be exclusively coming to Verizon this summer. Now, we can narrow that down to July thanks to Asus CEO Jerry Shen, who revealed that the phone would be coming to the U.S. that month.

The executive also revealed that by next year, over 1,000 Tango apps will be available up from the more than 100 that currently exist. Handsets that support Tango use a combination of cameras and sensors to produce 3D mapping.

As an example of what this technology can do, earlier this year retail clothing chain GAP said that it would offer an app allowing those with a Tango enabled phone to try on clothes using a virtual mannequin with a matching body type.

(Source: phonearena)

Why Instagram would rather posts disappear than be deleted by users

Once, Instagram was little more than a feed of pretty much every photo taken by your friends. These days, people's expectations have changed. It's not enough to post a well-composed picture of your life: to keep up with the Joneses you have to have a well-composed life, too.

In the early days of Instagram, you could post your breakfast. Then, standards slowly raised, and you could only post your breakfast if you put some effort into it. Not just bacon and eggs, but refried beans and chorizo, or a porridge bowl with an edible flower on top of the perfectly drizzled confiture. Now, it's reached the stage where if you're not eating breakfast at a Michelin-starred hotel in the Caribbean, your picture may as well not be on the site at all.

How did this happen? It's partially Instagram's structure: a visually focused social network is always going to encourage nice pictures, in the same way Twitter encourages short quips and Facebook does hateful rants about immigration. The follower/following



model means that unlike Facebook, you're never quite certain who you're posting to.

The divide between posts and comments similarly serves to ensure that your feed is only of the highest-quality images. Then there's the site's algorithmic curation, first through the explore tab and then through

the curated timeline itself -- rolled out a year ago -- similarly serves to boost the best while burying the rest.

Beyond the design of the app, there's the unique culture that's grown up around it. Nobody wants a sad profile of pictures that no one has liked, and from there, it's not too much of a leap to the teen trend of getting rid of unpopular posts that the Washington Post reported last year: it's painfully uncool to have a feed too full of pics.

"The ones that don't get enough likes, don't have good enough lighting or don't show the coolest moments in her life must be deleted."

This is why copying Snapchat's Stories wasn't just a small moment of aggressive competition between two social networks, but an existential need for Instagram.

A post to a Story -- be that Snapchat or Instagram -- disappears after 24 hours. It can't get likes, it can't be re-shared, and whether all your friends watch it or none of them do, you get the same basic feedback.

(Source: Guardian)

Amazon rainforest may be more resilient to deforestation than previously thought

The Amazon forest stores about half of the global tropical forest carbon and accounts for about a quarter of carbon absorption from the atmosphere by global forests each year. As a result, large losses of Amazonian forest cover could make global climate change worse.

In the past, researchers have found that a large part of the Amazon forest is susceptible to a tipping point. The tell-tale sign is satellite data showing areas of savannah and rainforest coexisting under the same environmental conditions. Theories from nonlinear dynamics would then suggest that both states are alternative stable outcomes.

This so-called bistability means that shocks such as forest clearance or drought could lead to a dramatic increase of fire occurrence and tip an area of rainforest into savannah.

Fresh look at data

Bert Wuyts, a fourth year Ph.D. student in the Bristol Center for Complexity Sciences and lead author on the paper, said: "I decided to take a fresh look at the data and a very different picture emerged when I controlled for seasonality and took out all the data points from satellite images that represented locations that had been subjected to human influence. Suddenly the property of bistability disappeared almost completely."

Bert, who made this discovery in the



first year of his Ph.D., thought it seemed most puzzling, so he teamed up with Professor Alan Champneys, a theorist in the Department of Engineering Mathematics, and Dr. Jo House, an expert on land use change from the School of Geo-

graphical Sciences. For the past two years they have been examining these findings rigorously.

Alan Champneys, Professor of Applied Non-linear Mathematics, added: "When I first agreed to co-supervise Bert's Ph.D.,

This so-called bistability means that shocks such as forest clearance or drought could lead to a dramatic increase of fire occurrence and tip an area of rainforest into savannah.

I was worried that I had no expertise in the mathematics required to study the observed effects in the satellite data. Fortunately Bert is a superbly independent student and Jo was on hand as a field expert.

Pattern formation theory

"Little did I realize though that the key to understanding Bert's observations was the same pattern formation theory I have used extensively before. To me this shows the power of interdisciplinary collaboration and also the ubiquity of mathematics and data science in explaining seemingly unrelated phenomena."

Previous research appears to have failed to take into account spatial interaction and edge effects between neighboring zones, typically through naturally occurring forest fires. Taking such terms into account leads to reaction-diffusion theory, used widely in predicting the formation of spatial patterns within physics and chemistry. According to the theory, there should be a distinct boundary between forest and savannah predictable from climate and soils.

The key was to recognize that proximity to human cultivations acts as a third determining factor. Forests closer to human cultivations are subject to logging and erosion by fires originating from the open cultivated areas.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Challenging mainstream thought about beauty's big hand in evolution

Not long ago, a physicist at Stanford posed a rhetorical question that took me by surprise.

"Why is there so much beauty?" he asked.

Beauty was not what I was thinking the world was full of when he brought it up. The physicist, Manu Prakash, was captivated by the patterns in seawater made as starfish larvae swam about. But he did put his finger on quite a puzzle: Why is there beauty? Why is there any beauty at all?

Richard O. Prum, a Yale ornithologist and evolutionary biologist, offers a partial answer in a new book, "The Evolution of Beauty: How Darwin's Forgotten Theory of Mate Choice Shapes the Animal World — and Us." He writes about one kind of beauty — the oh-is-he/she-hot variety — and mostly as it concerns birds, not people. And his answer is, in short: That's what female birds like.

This won't help with understanding the appeal of fluid dynamics or the night sky, but Dr. Prum is attempting to revive and expand on a view that Charles Darwin held, one that sounds revolutionary even now.

The idea is that when they are choosing mates — and in birds it's mostly the females who choose — animals make choices that can only be called aesthetic.

They perceive a kind of beauty. Dr. Prum defines it as "co-evolved attraction." They desire that beauty, often in the form of fancy feathers, and their desires change the course of evolution.

Birds choose mates

All biologists recognize that birds choose mates, but the mainstream view now is that the mate chosen is the fittest in terms of health and good genes. Any ornaments or patterns simply reflect signs of fitness. Such utility is objective. Dr. Prum's — and Darwin's — notion of beauty is something more subjective, with no other meaning than its aesthetic appeal.

Dr. Prum wants to push evolutionary biologists to re-examine their assumptions about utility and beauty, objectivity and subjectivity. But he also wants to reach the public with a message that is clear whether or not you dip into the technical aspects of evolution. The yearning to pick your own mate is not something that began with humans, he says. It can be found in ducks, pheasants and other creatures.

"Freedom of choice matters to animals," he said recently on a birding trip to a beach near his office in New Haven. "We've been explaining away desire rather than



actually trying to understand or explain it. That's one of the biggest shifts that the book is about."

The book ranges from hard science to speculation, and he does not expect his colleagues to agree with him on all of his ideas. In fact, he gets a twinkle in his eye when he anticipates intellectual conflict.

(Source: The NYT)

Could power plant turbines slash emissions by running on CO2 instead of steam?

All conventional power sources — from coal and gas plants to high-tech nuclear fission and potential future nuclear fusion reactors — boil down to the same basic thing: heating water into steam to spin a turbine. The varying efficiency of these different types depends on how much water they can heat up and how much fuel it costs to do so.

Steam turbines are simple but far from the most efficient way to generate electricity. It just takes a lot of energy to turn room-temperature water into steam.

That's energy that isn't being used to spin a turbine which means it's basically wasted. There's no way to fix this problem short of swapping out steam for something else.

So that's exactly what some groups are trying to do. Their best replacement candidate? Carbon dioxide, according to a new study in Science.

CO2 is most commonly depicted as a greenhouse gas and the primary driver of climate change, but in this case it might actually reduce the amount of carbon

pollution in the atmosphere. Researchers are looking at using CO2 in a "supercritical" state, which has many ideal properties.

Supercritical CO2 is produced when normal CO2 gas is raised to very high temperatures and pressures. At that level, it has the same density of a liquid but expands to fill its container like a gas. The increased density means that CO2 turbines can be built much smaller than steam turbines, and the lack of boiling means that less energy is wasted.

A working CO2 turbine

But building a working CO2 turbine is far from easy. Pressurizing supercritical CO2 is much harder than liquid water and takes far more energy. The temperature and pressure of the supercritical CO2 have to be maintained exactly or else the CO2 will condense into a liquid, which can cause problems for the machinery. The turbine also has to work at the high pressures and temperatures required for supercritical CO2.

(Source: Popular mechanics)

Deputy Industry Minister: BIM Improves Iran's Rank in World Financial and Monetary Market

Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM) ameliorated Iran's ranking in world's financial and monetary market.

Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Chief Executive of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian announced the above statement and expressed his special thanks to the CEO of the bank for taking effective steps in the field of paying off some

part of the deferred debts of the country to German's Hermes and Italy's Sachs insurance companies.

Given the above issue, Iran's ranking was ameliorated in the world monetary and financial markets, he maintained.

For this purpose, IMIDRO Chief Executive sent a letter of appreciation to the senior official of the bank and extended his thanks to the industrious staff, personnel and managers of the bank.

It should be noted that Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM) has financed repayment of debt of Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and also debts of IMIDRO to German "Hermes" and Italy's "Sachs" insurance companies, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Chief Executive of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian ended.

KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA TEHRAN Celebrates Annual Day

Kendriya Vidyalaya Tehran (Embassy of India School) celebrated its Annual Day on 18 May 2017. His Excellency Mr. Saurabh Kumar Ambassador of India and Chairman VMC presided over the function as the Chief Guest. Mrs. Smriti Srivastav the First Lady of Embassy of India and President IWA

was the Guest of Honour. The Chief Guest inaugurated the function by lighting the wisdom lamp. Mr. P.C. Sharma, Principal of Kendriya Vidyalaya Tehran welcomed the Chief Guest, the Guest of Honour, distinguished guests and the parents. He also presented the Annual Report

of the Vidyalaya. It was followed by a Cultural programme which enthralled the audience. The "African Cultural Event" presented by the students thrilled all present. His Excellency Mrs. Smriti Srivastav and H.E Saurabh Kumar Ambassador of India and Chairman VMC gave away the prizes

and Merit certificates to the students who excelled in Co-curricular Activities. The Chairman VMC also congratulated and honoured Six India Based Post Graduate Teachers and the Principal with Certificate of Excellence issued by KVS, New Delhi for excellent Board result in classes X and XII.

NDFI Earmarks \$1b Credit to BMI: Official

National Development Fund of Iran (NDFI) allocated \$1 billion worth of credit to Bank Mellī Iran (BMI), the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For his part, Member of Board of Directors of the bank Mahmoud Shayan said: "Bank Mellī Iran was given a go ahead to pay loans and facilities up to one billion dollars out of foreign exchange resources of the Fund.

He went on to say that contracts have been con-

cluded with the Fund in order to pave suitable way for taking advantage of currency and rials resources as complementary resources of the bank.

He, who is the Credits and Monitoring Affairs Deputy of Bank Mellī Iran, said: "\$329,717,772 was approved out of financial resources of the Fund in the first two months of the current year and was notified to the bank branches."

On the other hand, 1,500 billion rials has been ear-

marked from the Fund to BMI for spending in rials sector, he opined.

In the end, Member of Board of Directors of the bank Mahmoud Shayan said: "Attraction of financial resources of the Fund and its appropriation to productive and job-generative projects has always been emphasized by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance (MEAF) and also Board of Directors of the bank."

How a total solar eclipse helped prove Einstein right about relativity

On August 21, the continental U.S. will be treated to a total solar eclipse that will dazzle the nation as it progresses from coast to coast, starting in Oregon and ending in South Carolina.

The event will be a great opportunity to revisit a groundbreaking experiment that occurred during a total solar eclipse, and helped confirm Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity. The European Space Agency has referred to this celestial event as "probably the most important eclipse in the history of science."

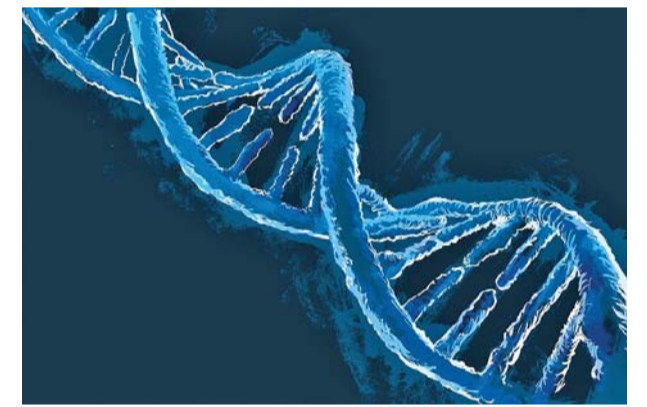
In 1915, Einstein published four groundbreaking papers that introduced his theory of general relativity. But at the time, the German-born theoretical physicist was hardly known to the public, and members of the science community were fighting his new theory head-on, according to reports in the New York Times. Around this time, Sir Isaac Newton's model of classical mechanics — formulated in his 1687 book "Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica" — ruled, and Einstein's work was met with utmost skepticism.

One of the key tenets of general relativity is that space is not static. The motions of objects can change the structure of space. By contrast, in Newton's view of the universe, space is "inert."

(Source: space.com)

CRISPR gene editing causes hundreds of unintended, off-target mutations

A new study finds that the revolutionary CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technique can cause large numbers of unwanted insertions and deletions of genetic material, writes Jana Howden.



Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR) are segments of prokaryotic DNA containing short, repetitive base sequences.

New research to be published in Nature Methods shows that the technology may cause unwanted side effects, capable of introducing hundreds of unintended mutations into the genetic material of treated organisms.

A team of U.S. based researchers from Stanford University, Columbia University and the University of Iowa sequenced the whole genome of mice that had previously undergone CRISPR gene editing. The CRISPR-Cas9 technique works by locking onto a string of DNA where it makes a calculated cut at a precisely determined location. This allows scientists to then insert new bits of DNA into the newly formed gap, or to delete or replace flawed genetic material.

Later, by looking at the full genomes of the mice, they also found that two of the mice treated with CRISPR technology had undergone 1500 unintended single nucleotide mutations, as well as more than 100 large deletions and insertions of genetic material.

How could such significant side effects of this promising technology have so far flown under the radar?

(Source: Cosmos Magazine)

Graphene/quantum dot hybrid system creates camera that sees visible and invisible light

For the first time, scientists at the Institute of Photonic Sciences (ICFO) have managed to create a digital imaging sensor that can capture ultraviolet, infrared and visible light at the same time.

Both of these materials have long individual lists of potential applications, and when you pair them up, that list grows even longer. But in this case, we're not talking about quantum dots made of graphene — the ICFO team used metallic, PbS colloidal quantum dots deposited onto a sheet of graphene.

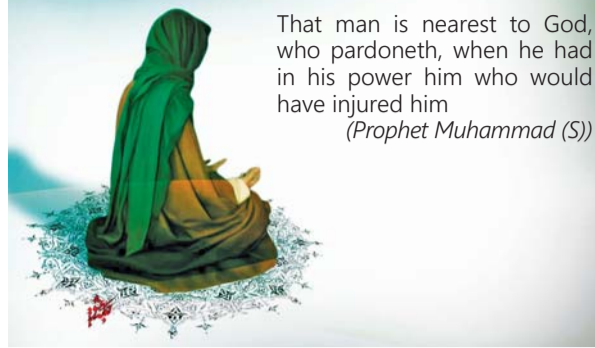
This hybrid system was then deposited onto a complementary metal-oxide semiconductor (CMOS) wafer, and hooked up to image sensor dies and a read-out circuit.

The end result is a high resolution image sensor that's sensitive to a huge range of wavelengths, from UV rays of about 300 nm, through the visible spectrum in the middle, and up to infrared light with a wavelength of 2,000 nm. The researchers say this is the first time that a single image sensor has been capable of detecting light across such a wide spectrum at once.

"We engineered the quantum dots to extend to the short infrared range of the spectrum (1100-1900 nm), to a point where we were able to demonstrate and detect the night glow of the atmosphere on a dark and clear sky enabling passive night vision," says Gerasimos Konstantatos, co-author of the study. "This work shows that this class of phototransistors may be the way to go for high sensitivity, low-cost, infrared image sensors operating at room temperature addressing the huge infrared market that is currently thirsty for cheap technologies."

(Source: New Atlas)

WORD OF WISDOM



That man is nearest to God, who pardoneth, when he had in his power him who would have injured him
(Prophet Muhammad (S))

Health tips for Ramadan



ARTICLE

By Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, PhD

Part 2

Ramadan, the month of mercy for Muslims, began on Saturday in Iran. Despite the long and hot summer days and accordingly long fasting days it might give people a chance to improve upon their physical and mental health.

Though in Islam there are reasons (considering each person's state of health) that might excuse one from fasting. Those who are suffering medical conditions, such as diabetes, hypotension, or hypertension, may or may not be able to fast depending on their doctor's opinion.



Ramadan is a brief spell of abstinence as God- who had created us all- has seen fit for human beings to limit their food intake for some days throughout the year. Fasting is also being observed in some other religions or other philosophies as well to some extent by cutting down on foods and drinks.

Fasting, the way it is recommended in Islam by abstaining from eating and drinking from dawn to sunset, is the best method to ensure a healthy body. Likewise, when someone comes down with an illness due to mal-temperament, or as used in Persian 'Sou-e-mizaj', the doctor should advise them to abstain from using food stuff that makes them sick in the first place and then start consuming food and drinks which help them to restore health.

■ Eat lightly

Those who start eating since the sunset right before going to bed might lose appetite for Suhur -the meal consumed early in the morning by Muslims before fasting- which is an important meal and skipping it might cause problems.

Generally one should eat lightly and try eat less before sleeping.

■ Wake up early for Suhur

It's better to wake up early for Suhur (an hour or an hour and a half before the call for prayer) so that one would get hungrier and staying up until the true dawn would be great, therefore one would not feel full.

■ Let the body decide



If you do not feel eating right after the sunset (such as people with sanguine temperament) it's fine. Let your body decide the right time to eat.

The digestive tract has been empty for about two-thirds of the day and need to be dealt with cautiously. Besides don't forget to consume adequate amounts of fruits, milk, wheat and its derivatives, rice, and meat.

(Dear readers, on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan the Iranian traditional medicine series of articles have been brought to a temporary halt and replaced by health tips for Ramadan. The articles will be published soon after Ramadan.)

Have an idea?
Be in touch!
lifestyle.tehrantimes@gmail.com

How Iranians celebrate the holy month of Ramadan

By Setareh Behroozi

People in Iran is mesmerized by the spirit of Ramadan every year. Different tribes and ethnic groups in the country have special rituals to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan has been a great event for Iranians since the advent of Islam and some customs are still alive in different parts of the country to celebrate the fasting month.

Ramadan is one of five pillars of Islam, alongside the declaration of faith; prayer five times a day; alms-giving; and the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is the ninth month of the lunar Islamic calendar during which, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, which is an exercise in self-restraint, aimed at making the rich experience the suffering of the less unfortunate.

Here are some of these rituals, which are done by Iranians in different parts of the country to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan:

■ Welcoming Ramadan in Mazandaran

People in the northern province of Mazandaran welcome the holy month of Ramadan by fasting three days before the beginning of the month. They begin to fast from the last days of Sha'ban – the month before Ramadan - which is one of the meritorious months in Islam.

They also hold Khatm-e An'am, a kind of ceremony during which the attendees read the Surah Al-An'am from the Holy Quran before the Iftar meal - when people end their fast at sunset.

The attendees break their fast with some bread, pinch of salt and some water, which the host put in a large tray



Welcoming Ramadan in Mazandaran



Ya Ramadan ritual by Turkmen



Jomeh-Alwedaii in Shiraz



A bag of blessing in East Azarbaijan

by the host.

■ A bag of blessing in East Azarbaijan

On the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, women and girls of each family in the northwestern province of East Azarbaijan gather together and sew a bag for their family.

They put some money in the bag and keep the bags in a box until the next Ramadan. They called it 'Barkat Kisasi' in Azeri dialect, which literally means 'bag of blessing', which they believe that protect them from being poor.

■ Jomeh-Alwedaii in Shiraz

On the last Friday of Ramadan, people in the southern city of Shiraz go

to mosques to pray for their wishes to come true.

Known as 'Jomeh-Alwedaii', the ceremony is attended by young girls who wish for getting married and infertile couples wish for having a child.

Pregnant women also sew the first cloth of their future child in the mosque on this day believing that it brings happiness and luck for him or her.

■ Ya Ramadan ritual by Turkmen

Turkmen who live in northeastern parts of the country hold several rituals during the holy month of Ramadan. One of them is called 'Ya Ramadan', originally 'Yari Ramadan', which literally means 'half of Ramadan'.

On the 14th and 15th nights of Ramadan, a clergyman or an elderly man accompanied by a group of men walk along alleys and streets of the city or the village and sing a song about the resistance of those who fast during the first two weeks of the month and encourage them to fast for the two coming weeks.

They go door to door and one of them carries a bag in which they collect what the families give them and other people answer Allah Hood.

They share the collected items for poor people.

This year Ramadan began on May 27 in Iran.

Colorful Iran: Varf Chal ritual



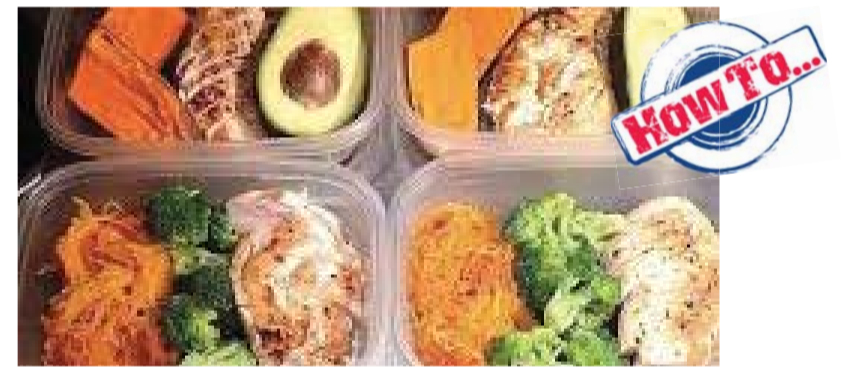
Every spring, people in Ab Ask, a village near the northern city of Amol, mark a 600-year-old ceremony called "Varf Chal", which literally means "snow storing".

During the event, no man is allowed to stay in the village. They leave the place to go to Varf Chal to carry pieces of frozen snow left from winter, and put

them in a ten-meter-deep pit as they believe the snow could provide fresh water for animals and thirsty passersby after being melted in summer.

Various tribes and ethnic groups who live in different parts of Iran are just like colors, which make a great painting. Iran is home to about 20 ethnic groups who live in different regions of the country.

How to prepare healthy meals on the go?



Preparing healthy meals on the go can be easy. You can set yourself up for success by making a meal plan, shopping ahead of time for ingredients, and utilizing your weekend to get some of the prep work out of the way.

■ Make a meal plan. Having a game plan for what you and your family will be eating each week can be a game changer.

With a meal plan, you will be more likely to eat healthy foods, even if you are on the go.

■ Create a shopping list. Once you have your healthy meal plan put together, you will need to make a shopping list. Go through all the recipes you will be making and list all of the ingredients you will need to make your meals.

(Source:wikihow.com)



LEFT TO SAY

TO: Fans of social networks

SUBJECT: It is not enough for judging!

Dear follower,
It is just like a miracle to sit and explore the world by your fingers on the touchscreen of your cellphone or tablet! It is amazing but is dangerous as well!

It is a selected part of life and people prefer to select the most colorful and happiest part to share with others!

When you are angry or sad you don't have the motivation to share your mood by a photo or even a sentence online and others are the same as well!

So be a wise follower and enjoy your online exploration but do not compare it with a boring day of your life!
Be good

A fan of social networks



#IRANIANLIFESTYLE



Instagram/ Erfan Kouchaki

The file photo shows a woman in white chador walking in the carpeted courtyard of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in the city of Mashhad

Second Announcement

N.I.O.C
1396.969

National Iranian Drilling Company

PUBLIC CALL FOR PRE- QUALIFICATION OF TENDERERS

TWO PHASES TENDER NO : 4984-33/6-SS/95

SUBJECT: LEASE PURCHASE OF BRAND NEW VERTICAL SIEMENS PROFILE (VSP) PACKAGE INCLUDING PROVISION OF SPARE PARTS, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) a wholly subsidiary of national Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) intends to grant the provision of the above - mentioned services to a well - know and qualified contractor through the public call for Tenderers pre- qualification & signing the related contract.

A: Brief of the Scope of required Services .
PROVISION OF BRAND NEW VERTICAL SIEMENS PROFILE (VSP) PACKAGE INCLUDING SPARE PARTS, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT ON LEASE PURCHASE BASIS FOR UTILIZATION IN ALL OFFSHORE&ONSHORE OIL & GAS OILFIELDS OF IRAN

B: Quality evaluation criteria of Tenderers

- 1- The Natural/ Legal entities
- 2-Financial ability for the above- mentioned services and Bank Tender Guarantee in the amount of Iranian Rials five Billion nine hundred forty three million (5,943,000,000) for Iranian Companies and Euro one hundred seventy two thousand nine hundred twenty three (172,923) for foreign companies
- 3-Technical and Planning ability.
- 4-Ability for providing the Equipment and Machinery
- 5-Necessary experience and knowledge in the respective field.
- 6-Company good reputation
- 7-Appropriate standby capacity for work

C: The minimum acceptable quality score is 60.

D: Tenderers may visit this Pre-qualification advertisement by referring to national Information Center of the Iranian Tenders (<http://iets.mporg.ir>) with Call code number 1,481,266

E: Tenderers may obtain the pre-qualification documents and Tender Draft documents by sending their formal application to the NIDC's Contracts Department
FAX: +98-61-34148320-1 or Email: ahkarimi@nidec.ir

F: All competent tenderers may complete and deliver the prequalification documents to NIDC by Handing over them to room 107- Tender committee - First Floor- Operational building - Koyee Mellat- Ahvaz- Iran within 14 days from the date of the second issuance of this advertisement

G: Final Tender documents will be sent to the Emails of the competent and qualified contractors
Approved by NIDC.

National Iranian Drilling Company
Contracts Department

S. Arabia in war with itself and region: Jaber Ansari

2 → But back to your question. The efforts now being made in the region by certain countries is a compulsive move to limit Iran's growing influence in the region. Although at first look it may be comparable to the conditions we faced in the beginning years of the revolution, there are significant thematic differences. Today, Iran is no longer a country shaken up by domestic issues. It's not in a flux of change as it was the case in the revolution era. It's now a leading and influential country and that's why it's in the spotlight. A second point is that the present anti-Iran coalition is not as strong as it was in the years after the revolution. It's now a hollowed-out one held together forcefully by Saudi Arabia. A historical lesson. While Kuwait was one of those countries who backed Saddam Hussein in the 1980s-war, Iran was the very first country sympathizing with Kuwait after Iraq invaded the country in 1990. This is deeply manifested in Kuwait's policies now. Due to some limitations and excuses, the country on the one hand sides partially with Saudi Arabia, but on the other hand is looking for ways to play a positive role in finding solutions to the current impasse as it knows how trustable Iran is.

Fears over the increasing influence of Iran in the region has been a unifying force between opponents. But we should remember that each of these players have their own interests and the anti-Iran front lacks a unanimous, consistent fabric. Turkey, for instance, is different from Saudi Arabia as the two states have their own priorities, far from a one-to-one correspondence. Hence, components of the game we are talking about are quite different.

Of course, the Zionist regime has been the only actor in the region that has kept creating new challenges over the past decades and after the occupation of Palestine. The only nation who has failed to form a government in modern history is Palestine. To defocus the issue, Israel has done its best to create and fan crises in the region. Even the so-called Israeli-Arab coalition is not a genuine one simply because an Arab can't identify with an Israeli who has violated his rights and rejected his.

The current situation is propaganda and part of a psychological warfare, as well. However, relative success has been achieved. Saudi Arabia and other countries under its sway look at Israel as a tool to disguise their internal, structural discrepancies with regional and international norms in such a way that benefits them.

We should not forget that Saudi Arabia has been, since its establishment, reliant on the U.S. as a Western power. However, over the past decade, those connections and channels have quietly, yet continuously, undergone deep conceptual and meaningful shifts, reaching a climax as Washington okayed the Justice against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA). Passing such a law,



© Tehran Times/Maryam Kamvab

which was by no means possible previously, indicates a shift in the West and the U.S. toward Saudi Arabia.

In seeking an alliance with Israel, Saudi Arabia tries to revive and keep its historical relation with the West and the U.S. Also, Riyadh tries to align with regional actors as a leverage against progressive Iran.

How do you see the prospect of relations between Iran and Arab countries in the region, particularly Saudi Arabia? Do you expect any change in Saudi Arabia's behavior in the future?

A: Geographical proximity means neighbors have no choice but to co-exist on the basis of friendship and bilateral relations. Over the past fifteen years, Saudi Arabia has failed to adjust itself to changes happening in its surrounding. The country's traditional establishment is ruled by a family. It lacks even a constitution as such. **Riyadh's foreign policy is mainly built upon a policy of initially preventing any change to take place and secondly, confronting change once it's made. The ultimate outcome of Saudis' performance in Yemen, Bahrain, and Iraq is to clamp down on the nations' will. Saudi Arabia sees itself a defender of the previous situation and tries to preserve it as it used to be.**

I think in the future Saudi Arabia has to unavoidably recognize immediate realities. Saudi Arabia will stop resisting contextual realities only when costs are not affordable. It's not possible to fight realities.

On the opposite, Iran doesn't pursue such policy and has adjusted itself to the changing situation in the region. Take Iran's reaction to the U.S. attack on Iraq back in 2003. Actually, it could have had quite immense consequences for Iran as the invader, the U.S., has been in a state of confrontation and conflict with Iran for nearly four decades. However, after the attack and the collapse of the Iraqi government, Iran reconsidered its strategies vis-à-vis the changes to defend its national interests and those of the Iraqi nation.

Resisting current regional realities, incurring attrition costs, and delaying regional developments all have resulted from Saudi Arabia's reluctance to be

open to regional dynamics. Meanwhile, the country has failed to stop the flow of events in regional states such as Yemen, Iraq, and Bahrain.

There are signs that Saudi Arabia is changing, including the recent visit to Iraq of the Saudi foreign minister, acceptance of the new political scene in Lebanon, and the OPEC oil freeze deal.

In the case of Iraq, the visit, made for whatsoever reasons and intentions, had at least one message. That is, it questioned all policies followed by Saudi Arabia toward Iraq since the U.S. attack in 2003 and showed that Riyadh has begun to recognize the new Iraq and that relations with the new Iraq was unavoidable.

In the case of Iran, the Saudi has no other choice but to accept Iran as it's in the region. The sooner Saudi Arabia chooses to befriend with Iran again, the better. Never have we had strained relations with Saudi Arabia. Riyadh is in war with itself and the whole region. Neighbors have to join hands and work together in line with their national interests.

In politics, it's the practical implications of actions and decisions, rather than intentions, which matter. Saudi Arabia has so far signaled degrees of flexibility and change. Saudis used to be against any sort of change in the Arab world. But Syria was an exception. Damascus was the only capital in the Arab world disobeying Saudi Arabia while pursuing independent policies that benefited its national interests.

So, Saudi Arabia had decided to topple the Syrian government over the past years. But now Saudi Arabia altered its perception of the Syrian crisis due to the recognition that it won't be viable to overthrow the Syrian government because a large number of the people back the Syrian government.

But the question we face here is whether Saudi Arabia continues to accept regional realities or get back on the previous track. I hope the changes we have seen over the past year are not just a short-term tactic or strategy and are a starting point for more changes on the part of Riyadh. If that latter is the case, it reduces costs for both Saudi Arabia and

the region.

Can we imagine an end to the Syrian crisis and what is the envisioned end for Iran? What will be Iran's role in a post-Syria war?

A: It's obvious that there will be an end to the crisis in Syria despite all complexities. There will be an end to all crises as no crisis lasts forever. However, there are some examples like the occupation of Palestine whose consequences have lasted over six decades.

The complicated and multi-layered Syrian crisis has occurred at three levels: inter-Syria, regional and international and that is why the conflict has lasted over six years.

There are numerous dimensions to the Syrian crisis. And the actors involved don't share that same objectives and approaches. The geopolitics of the region further complicates the conflict.

The crisis in Syria will come to a halt when the actors, not necessarily all of them, reach an agreement on most of the issues cited above. This could be a starting point to stop the conflict. That's why we attach importance to the process of the Astana talks.

The Astana talks are a platform for key players in the Syrian crisis to sit around the same table to negotiate despite having various approaches. If the process of the Astana talks leads to a result, an end to the crisis can be envisioned.

Are Iran and Russia cooperating with Turkey to fight terrorism in Syria to avoid attritional war?

A: This is kind of selective view on the issue. No one favors being trapped in an erosive war. The same holds true for the Syrian conflict. All sides in the crisis tend to help end the crisis within the framework of their objectives.

Some players in the Syrian battleground may have no worry about getting bogged down in an erosive war simply because they may exert more sway over the Syrian situation without being influenced by the crisis themselves. Only those actors will be worried which influence and are influenced by it.

All countries, be it in the region or outside, are influenced by crisis in one country and no state survives the impact of a war regardless of geographical considerations.

In practice, all nations are influenced by extremism and terrorism.

One of the complexities of the Syrian crisis is that all the actors who used terrorism instrumentally to fulfill their own objectives now are facing the consequences of terrorism. Perhaps, that's why Turkey join the Astana talks and cooperated with Iran and Russia in fighting terrorism.

It should be borne in mind that terrorist movements have independent projects for themselves which are not restricted to just one region and carry out their operations at various levels.

New Ecuador leader: Assange can stay at embassy

Ecuador's new President, Lenin Moreno, has criticized Julian Assange as a "hacker", but stressed his government will allow the WikiLeaks founder to remain at the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

Moreno, who took office this month, has broken with his predecessor Rafael Correa, who had said Ecuador had "done its duty" by granting the Australian asylum in 2012.

"Mr. Assange is a hacker," Moreno told journalists on Monday. "That's something we reject, and I personally reject."

He added: "But I respect the situation he is in, which calls for respect of his human rights, but we also ask that he respects the situation he is in."

Moreno also called on Assange not to interfere in the internal politics of Ecuador or other countries.

Assange responded on Twitter that he is a journalist and an editor, and accused Moreno of slander.

Earlier this month, Swedish prosecutors dropped a seven-year rape allegation against Assange and withdrew the European arrest warrant that had prompted his flight to the embassy and an appeal for asylum.

Assange, who denied the accusations, feared Sweden would hand him over to the United States to face prosecution over WikiLeaks' publication of thousands of classified military and diplomatic documents in one of the largest information leaks in U.S. history.

Moreno said Assange could continue living in the Ecuadorian embassy because "it seems the British government is not going to grant safe passage".

Despite Sweden dropping the rape charges, British police have said they still intend to arrest Assange if he leaves the London embassy, because he had broken his conditions for bail by taking refuge there.

Assange dodged an eviction order in Ecuador's April

election after the right-wing candidate who had vowed to kick him out of the embassy lost to Moreno.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Trump trading lives for Saudi money

1 → Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, preached for long years, has been taking hundreds of thousands of lives in Afghanistan and Pakistan long before its flames reached Iraq and Syria and some other countries.

In his speech in Riyadh Trump spoke about the need to "practice tolerance" despite the fact that Saudi Arabia does not allow religious practice by non-Muslims on its land and women are treated like slaves.

In the same speech, Trump accused Tehran of fueling "terror" without acknowledging that Iran did the greatest service in the war against terrorism by preventing the rapid advances of ISIS in Iraq in 2014.

Trump also accused Iran of fuelling the "fires of sectarian conflict". However Iran, as an ancient country with rich civilization, has historically been home to different religious groups. Even now it is home to the second largest Jewish community in West Asia. The rights of religious minorities are stipulated in the constitution and they are represented in parliament. Even the country's president has appointed an advisor for religious and ethnic minorities.

Both Trump and Saudi royals cheated each other but the U.S. was the main loser.



(Source: Al Jazeera)

John F. Kennedy: An idealist without illusions

8 → It is no wonder that so much of the focus, in the decades since, has been on Kennedy's style: his crisp, mid-century-modern look, his wit, his will to power.

Acceptance speech

Yet this sells him short. "I believe the times demand new invention, innovation, imagination, decision," Kennedy said in 1960, in his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, and this is what he offered and inspired. While he did not depart dramatically from the liberalism of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman, he infused it with a new urgency and clarity.

Former President Barack Obama, in a speech on May 7 at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, observed that, "to those of us of a certain age, the Kennedys" — he was including Robert and Ted — "symbolized a set of values and attitudes about civic life that made it such an attractive calling. The idea that politics in fact could be a noble and worthwhile pursuit. The notion that our problems, while significant, are never insurmountable. The belief that America's promise might embrace those who had once been locked out or left behind. The responsibility that each of us have to play a part in our nation's destiny, and, by virtue of being Americans, play a part in the destiny of the world." That is as good a definition of the Kennedy legacy as any.

But is that also its epitaph? Every ideal on Mr. Obama's list is under assault. The nobility of public service, for one. When the family patriarch, Joseph P. Kennedy, made his fortune, it was partly to further his political ambitions, for himself and his sons. "My father always told me that all businessmen were sons of bitches," John Kennedy once said, without irony. The Trumps have turned that on its head, using the White House as a marketing tool, a profit-making luxury brand.

Kennedy's pledge to act as "faithful friends" to America's allies has given way to the self-defeating smugness of "America First." Mr. Trump embodies what Kennedy intended to warn against that day in Dallas, in a speech he had prepared but never got to deliver: demagogues making arguments "wholly unrelated to reality," deluding themselves that "strength is but a matter of slogans."

Democrats, for their part, are proving uncertain — and in some cases, unwilling — stewards of the Kennedy legacy. It's certainly true that, across the party, there is broad attachment to the values and attitudes that Mr. Obama described. Nearly all Democrats share Kennedy's belief that without an effective, ethical and active government, the "fabric of law and progress" will unravel. And many still feel a pull toward the family itself: The party is developing a collective crush on Rep. Joseph Kennedy III of Massachusetts, a grandson of Bobby Kennedy, who has attacked Republican plans to undo the Affordable Care Act — and has called the nation to its higher ideals — with such moral force that some progressives are hoping he will run for president.

But the fact remains that the most popular politician in the country, according to a recent Harvard/Harris Poll, is someone who once said that a Kennedy speech, in 1960, left him "physically nauseated" and led him to abandon "conventional" politics in favor of "revolution." That was Bernie Sanders, who appears to reject Kennedy's belief that politics is a means of practical achievement, not mainly a form of exhortation.

Talks unrelated to reality

Kennedy once told the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. that the problem with Theodore Roosevelt was that "he talked a lot but didn't do very much." Kennedy gave grand speeches, but had no real patience for talk — least of all talk "unrelated to reality." When he set goals, he announced plans and asked to be judged by their results.

There is little question where he would have come down in last year's debate between Mr. Sanders and Hillary Clinton over what counts as leadership: the sweep of one's ambition, as Mr. Sanders saw it, or as Mrs. Clinton argued, a record of accomplishment. There can be no doubt what he would think about Mr. Sanders's calls for "socialism" or "revolution." Even as a young man, as one of Kennedy's biographers, Robert Dallek, writes, he was "put off by strict ideological advocates" and pat answers to difficult questions; he "prided himself on his realism and pragmatism."

Kennedy's elevated tone would be a tough sell today. (Bobby or Ted Kennedy's more impassioned rhetoric might be closer to the mark.) Indeed, a growing cadre of Democrats — including the new party chairman, Tom Perez — are straining to sound like Mr. Sanders, to match his moral fervor. It's not hard to see why. Not only does Mr. Sanders have the loudest, most insistent voice in a party that, six months after the election, remains bereft and leaderless, but also his stridency echoes the mood on the left. Rarely in American history have our politics appeared so Manichean, a battle between darkness and light.

Mr. Sanders and his supporters are making a forceful — and essential — case against greed, inequality and the corrosive influence of money in politics; they are highlighting the ways in which institutions, both political and financial, are failing many Americans. But they are short on, or even indifferent to, solutions. Ideas like a single-payer health plan or free college for all offer psychic satisfaction but not a substantive way forward — so, too, populist attacks on the "system," the "establishment" and the "billionaire class." This is the politics of catharsis, and necessary in its way. But as Kennedy said in 1960, the "American people expect more from us than cries of indignation and attack. The times are too grave, the challenge too urgent, and the stakes too high."

Lines must be drawn; Donald Trump must be resisted. But he will not likely be defeated until there is room again, in politics, for idealists "without illusions," as Kennedy once described himself. The Democratic Party will regain power when it recommits itself, as it did under Kennedy, to action and achievement and the redemptive power of politics. What is needed is not revolution; what is needed is repair. Kennedy made clear that change is difficult; it demands sacrifice and, above all, a commitment to, not a contempt for, the slow, often maddening, machinery of self-government.

(Source: The NYT)

Wenger agrees new two-year deal - but Arsenal boss will have to deal with change

Arsenal will announce the outcome of talks with Arsene Wenger on Wednesday afternoon amid reports he will sign a new two-year contract.

But there will be some degree of change after amicable talks between Wenger and chief executive Ivan Gazidis.

Majority shareholder Stan Kroenke has always been a huge admirer of Wenger and has been fully supportive of Wenger.



Frenchman Wenger, who joined the club in 1996, has always wanted to stay.

And while this contract was on the table long before Wembley, the FA Cup has helped change the mood among many fans.

Wenger has held discussions since Saturday and it is understood now that everything is in place for him to stay until at least 2019.

Arsenal are also making one last push today to keep contract rebels Alexis Sanchez and Mesut Ozil - by offering them a combined £30million per season in salary.

The Gunners are set to offer Sanchez a new contract with a two year extension in excess of £275,000-a-week to keep him at the club until 2020.

They have already offered Ozil £280,000-a-week to stay even though the German midfielder's representatives have been pushing for around £350,000-a-week.

Sanchez likes London and Arsenal hope that plus a mega offer will help persuade him to stay as both have got contracts which expire in 2018.

Bayern Munich have sounded out Sanchez's representatives while Manchester City are also confident of landing the Chile forward.

But there has not been the same level of interest in signing Ozil and Arsenal are anxious to avoid allowing them to run down their contracts and let them leave for free.

(Source: Mirror)

Del Potro sails through on French Open

Juan Martin del Potro made a successful return to Roland Garros after a five-year absence on Tuesday, setting aside injury concerns to sail through 6-2 6-1 6-4 against fellow Argentine Guido Pella.

The 29th seed, whose career has been plagued by injury, only confirmed his participation in this year's French Open on Friday after suffering shoulder and back problems.

Del Potro, who reached the French Open semi-finals in 2009, moved across court six with no apparent signs of discomfort, sending down 13 aces in outclassing qualifier Pella in just under two hours.

Tuesday's match was Del Potro's first on the Paris clay since 2012, when he lost in the quarter-finals to Roger Federer.

(Source: Reuters)

Lahm, first Bayern star to be inducted into club's Hall of Fame since 2008

Philipp Lahm has celebrated his retirement by joining an elite club at Bayern Munich.

Lahm has played his entire career with the German giants, with the exception of a brief loan spell at Stuttgart, winning eight Bundesliga titles and the Champions League.

And now, unsurprisingly, he has become the 17th player to be inducted into Bayern's Hall of Fame.



The full-back, who also won 113 caps for Germany, is the first player to be inducted since goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, who retired in 2008.

Lahm was presented with a Hall of Fame blazer as his star was unveiled at the club's museum on Monday, nine days after the last of his 517 appearances.

And the German legend was quick to mention how much that final outing - a 4-1 win over Freiburg to cap a fifth straight Bundesliga title - had meant to him.

"Last Saturday was incredibly emotional for me and my last day will remain etched in my memory forever," Lahm said.

Bayern president Uli Hoeness, another member of the Hall of Fame, also paid tribute to Lahm.

"Philipp is a wonderful example for the tradition and down-to-earth nature of the club," he said.

Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, Bayern CEO and another of those already on the list, added: "Philipp Lahm is one of the most deserving players in the recent history of Bayern."

"Both on the pitch and off in his role as captain, he has been a truly important person for the club."

"He deserves this accolade, which puts him up there with the greats of Bayern. The club would like to thank Philipp Lahm for the exceptional performances he has shown for Bayern."

(Source: Daily Mail)

Gabriel Jesus was painting the streets of Brazil in 2014



Gabriel Jesus may be living the high-life after emerging as one of the most exciting young strikers in world football, but the Manchester City star's humble beginnings are still fresh in the memory.

Standing barefoot on a cobbled street in Sao Paulo, a 17-year-old Jesus was just another youngster dreaming of playing in the yellow shirt of Brazil. He was, like many, preparing for the World Cup to come to his homeland.

In a series of photos posted on his social media account, the diminutive forward revealed he was helping to paint the streets of his neighbourhood in patriotic

colours in preparation for the tournament just three years ago.

He would have watched the World Cup play out on television with Brazil making their way to the semi-final before a crushing 7-1 defeat to Germany in Belo Horizonte.

Little would he have guessed that he would be favourite to lead the line when the Selecao have another crack at winning their sixth World Cup in Russia just four years later.

Indeed, so much has changed for Jesus in the time between these photos and the present day. Then, he was just a youth

player for local professional side Palmeiras and earning the modest sum of just £3,500 a year.

Soon after, his talents would be recognised and he would be thrust into the senior squad only for Manchester City's South American scouting network to take notice and alert a certain Pep Guardiola.

A £27million move to the Etihad was agreed in August 2016 with his move going through the following January. He signed a five-year deal with the Citizens worth £75,000 a week, although his mother recently revealed she still controls his wage and hands him pocket

money each month.

It was clear Manchester City had a major star on their hands when Jesus inspired Brazil to the first Olympic gold medal in their history, scoring three goals in six games to help to heal the damage caused by that devastating World Cup defeat.

Now a fully-fledged Brazil international, Jesus has four goals in six caps for Dunga's Brazil side and will go to the World Cup next summer if he stays fit.

He is also set to push seasoned star Sergio Aguero all the way for a starting spot in Manchester City's line-up next season.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Woods apologizes for DUI arrest, blames medication

Former world number one golfer Tiger Woods said an unexpected reaction to prescribed medications was to blame for his early-morning DUI arrest near his Jupiter Island home in Florida on Monday.

Woods, who underwent surgery last week to relieve lingering back pain, was booked at 7:18 a.m. (11:18 GMT) and released several hours later on his own recognizance, Palm Beach County Police said in an online report.

Woods said in a statement released by his spokesman that alcohol was not a factor in his arrest but apologized and added that he took full responsibility.

"I want the public to know that alcohol was not involved," he said.

"What happened was an unexpected reaction to prescribed medications. I didn't realize the mix of medications had affected me so strongly.

"I would like to apologize with all my heart to my family, friends and the fans. I expect more from myself, too."

Woods, who is second on the all-time list with 14 major titles, said he cooperated with police and wanted to thank the Jupiter Police Department and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's office for their professionalism.

"I will do everything in my power to ensure this never happens again," he added.

The incident occurred less than a week after Woods expressed optimism about his future following back surgery, saying on his website that he experienced "instant relief" and had not "felt this good in years."

Woods has previously made headlines away from the golf course. His private life unraveled in late 2009 over allegations about affairs with several women and



ultimately led to the end of his marriage.

Those allegations followed a bizarre early morning car accident outside his Florida home that rapidly ballooned into a fully-fledged sex scandal which turned his previously unblemished life and career upside down.

The scandal ultimately cost Woods a number of lucrative endorsement deals, while other sponsors shifted away from using him in marketing but did not end their contracts with him.

Woods, whose current sponsors include Nike, Bridgestone, Hero, Kowa, Upper Deck, and Monster Energy was ranked 12th on Forbes' list of the highest-paid athletes in 2016, with total earnings of \$45.3 million, despite missing much of the year recovering from back surgery.

A 79-time winner on the PGA Tour who was world number one for a record 683 weeks, Woods lost form in recent years due to injuries and the mastering of a new swing while his ranking has plummeted to 876 after his long spell on the sidelines.

(Source: Reuters)

Tuchel leaves Borussia Dortmund after public spat with chief executive

Thomas Tuchel will leave Borussia Dortmund after two years in charge, with the club thanking him for his work as they confirmed his departure.

On Tuesday, Tuchel announced the news on Twitter, using an account set up just over an hour before his departure.

"I am thankful for two nice, eventful and exciting years. It's a shame it won't go on," the 43-year-old wrote.

"Thanks to all the fans, the squad, the staff and to everyone who supported us. I wish BVB all the best."

In a statement, Dortmund said: "Eight-time German champions Borussia Dortmund and coach Thomas Tuchel are parting company with immediate effect."

"This is the result of a conversation between CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke, sporting director Michael Zorc, Thomas Tuchel and his advisor Olaf Meinking, which took place on Tuesday.

"We would like to thank Thomas Tuchel and his coaching staff for the sporting success they have brought to BVB with the win over Eintracht Frankfurt in the DFB Pokal final in Berlin.

"We wish Thomas Tuchel nothing but the best for his future professional endeavours."

The statement said the departure of Tuchel was "the result of a longer process" and had been "supported by all the club committees."

It added: "The well-being of the club, which is much more than just sporting success, will always be more important [than individual people]."

Tuchel joined Dortmund ahead of the 2015-16 season, and in his first year guided them to the highest points tally ever achieved by the runners-up in the Bundesliga.



On Saturday, he led BVB to their first trophy in five years when they beat Eintracht Frankfurt 2-1 in the DFB Pokal final.

But on-field success was overshadowed by a rift between Tuchel and the Dortmund leadership dating back to the 2015-16 season and the summer transfer window that followed.

A row between Tuchel and Watzke, as well as parts of the squad and the club's fans, dominated headlines this month, and talks between the two lasted only 21 minutes, the German paper Bild reported.

According to the paper, the talks took place at the Hotel L'Arrivee in Dortmund's south, close to where the BVB team bus was attacked prior to a Champions League match on April 11.

Local outlet Der Westen said Tuchel is set to receive €2 million in compensation, with his contract due to run until 2019.

Although Meinking told ESPN FC last week that there was nothing to rumours linking his client with Bayer Leverkusen, they are reported to be the front-runners for his signature.

(Source: ESPN)

Barcelona name Ernesto Valverde as coach

Barcelona named former Athletic Bilbao coach Ernesto Valverde on Monday as the successor to Luis Enrique and he will take charge of the La Liga runners-up on a two-year contract.

Valverde, who will be officially unveiled on Thursday, played for Barcelona as a forward between 1988 and 1990 under Johan Cruyff and is one of many of the Dutchman's former pupils to have turned to coaching upon retiring from playing.

"He's very happy very excited, he has the ability, experience and knowledge for the job," Barcelona President Josep Maria Bartomeu told a news conference.

"He loves youth football and he has the right style to coach this club and knows how the club works. He has a high work rate, he is passionate about football and interested in working with the latest technology."

Valverde, 53, began his coaching career with Athletic Bilbao's youth set-up and is the Basque club's longest serving coach, overseeing 308 games over six years in



two different spells.

As well as qualifying Athletic for Europe in five of his six years with the club, who only pick players from the Basque country, he ended a 31-year wait for a trophy by leading them to the 2015 Spanish Super Cup, beating Barcelona 5-1 on aggregate.

He also coached and played for Barca's city rivals

Espanyol, reaching the 2007 UEFA Cup final while in charge although losing to Sevilla on penalties, and won three Greek league titles and two domestic Cups with Olympiakos Piraeus.

Valverde brings two members of his coaching staff at Athletic to Barcelona, his assistant of 15 years Jon Aspiazu and fitness coach Jose Antonio Pozanco.

Luis Enrique rounded off his three-year tenure at Barcelona on Saturday by beating Alaves 3-1 to win the King's Cup for a third year in a row, the ninth trophy he led the club to.

Valverde will be thrown in at the deep end with his first competitive game in charge being against Barca's arch-rivals and La Liga champions Real Madrid in the first leg of the Spanish Super Cup at the Nou Camp in August.

Before then the team will go on a pre-season tour of the United States with friendlies against Real, Manchester United and Juventus.

(Source: Eurosport)

Iran know FIBA Asia Cup opponents

S P O R T S Iran have been drawn with Jordan, Syria and India in Group A of the FIBA Asia Cup 2017.

The Official Draw Ceremony of the FIBA Asia Cup 2017 took place at Le Royal Hotel Dbayeh, Lebanon on Tuesday.

The groups are as follows:

Group A: Iran, Jordan, Syria, India

Group B: Iraq, China, the Philippines, Qatar

Group C: Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Korea, New Zealand

Group D: Japan, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, Australia

The FIBA Asia Cup 2017 will take place in Lebanon from 8-20 August, and it will be the first ever Asia-Oceania joint continental Championship.

The Group Stage of the tournament will be played in a round robin format, with the sixteen teams divided into four groups of four teams. Every team will take on three opponents in the respective group.

The top three teams from each group will then advance to the Second Phase where they will be divided into two groups (E & F).

The tournament will be played in a knockout format from the Quarter-Finals onwards (Quarter-Final, Semi-Final, Final).

FIBA ASIA CUP 2017			
LEBANON			
Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
1. IRI	1. IRQ	1. KAZ	1. JPN
2. JOR	2. CHN	2. LBN	2. HKG
3. SYR	3. PHI	3. KOR	3. TPE
4. IND	4. QAT	4. NZL	4. AUS

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Sarmayeh Bank defeat Rebisco- PSL at Asian Women's Club Volleyball



Iran's Sarmayeh Bank bested the Philippines' Rebisco- PSL 3-0 (25-23, 25-17, 29-27) at the 5th-8th playoff match in the SMM 2017 Asian Women's Club Samruk Kazyna Volleyball Championship on Tuesday.

Sarmayeh Bank's captain Shabnam Alikhani shared her comments after Tuesday's match at the Boris Alexandrov Sports Palace.

"This is a very important match as we want to complete the competition with fifth place. It was a difficult match as the Philippines played well but we are just happy to win today and to have another chance to win fifth place tomorrow," Alikhani said.

Sarmayeh Bank slid to an 11-7 lead in the first set with Mahdien Khaje Kolaei working from the wing, and Farnoosh Sheikhi operating at the middle. Rebisco-PSL took three straight points with the help of Alyja Santiago, who fired up front and from the back. The Iranian club strengthened their spikes to find unmanned spots on the opponent's receiving formation. Upon side-outs, the Philippines' suffered from attack miscues.

Teams traded points as the score read 19-19. Sarmayeh Bank reinforced their net defence and brought in back-to-back blocks to secure the first set, 25-23.

Maedeh Borhani proved to be a force from the right flank, to help Sar-

mayeh Bank take a 14-9 advantage in the second set. The Iranian side were also using more blocks to deflect the attacks of the opponents. By this time, Rebisco-PSL needed to vary their angles, but suffered from several misfires.

Abigail Marañón tried to spark the energy for Rebisco-PSL as she played good defence and scored on quick attacks, but Sarmayeh Bank's strong frontline continued to impose. The Iranian side surged to a 25-17 win in the second set.

Sarmayeh Bank continued to stay close to the net to enforce this very same advantage in the third set. They knew that they could unleash their attacks from the wing, and guard the net with much vigilance. Rebisco-PSL executed successful plays, with Santiago and captain Rachel Anne Daquis, but consistency was an issue they needed to battle. They needed to be more careful in passing the ball, and ensure their attacks would not falter.

By doing this, the Philippines overtook at 18-17. An exchange of side-outs ensued to extend the set. Sarmayeh Bank unleashed an unanswered attack to settle the final set at 29-27.

Borhani charted a total of 17 points, with Khaje Kolaei contributing another 13 points for Sarmayeh Bank. Santiago was the top scorer for Rebisco-PSL with 14 points.

(Source: Asianvolleyball)

Gitipasand learn AFC Futsal Club Championship fate



Asia's top fourteen futsal club teams discovered their opponents for the AFC Futsal Club Championship Vietnam 2017 on Tuesday after the tournament's official draw in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam.

With the eighth edition of the tournament set to take place in Ho Chi Minh from July 20 to 29, Vietnam's Thai Son Nam FC, who finished third in 2015, will be able to rely on vociferous home support when they mount their title challenge, although they will have Al Dhafra FC (UAE), Vic Vipers FC (AUS) and FC EREM (KGZ) to contend with in what promises to be an entertaining in Group A.

Meanwhile in Group C, Shriker Osaka, who as Japan's current domestic champions have ensured that Nagoya Oceans will not be retaining the title they won last year, and will look to secure their country's fourth AFC Futsal Club Championship crown but are guaranteed to encounter stiff opposition from Sanaye Giti Pasand (IRN) and Shenzhen Nanling Tielang (CHN).

Elsewhere, 2016 runners-up Naft Al-Wasat from Iraq have been drawn alongside Al Rayyan SC (QAT), Vamos FC (IDN) and Disi Invest (TJK) in Group B, while Thailand's Chonburi Bluewave - who were crowned champions four years ago - will look to improve on last year's third-place finish starting with a strong Group D display against FC Almalyk (UZB) and Bank of Beirut FC (LIB).

The group winners and runners-up from each group - eight (8) teams in total - will qualify for the quarter-finals. The

four (4) winners of the quarter-finals will then qualify for the semi-finals, with the winners of those advancing to the final. The two losing teams will face each other in the third and fourth placing match.

Vietnam Football Federation President Le Hung Dung, who gave the opening remarks, said: "Futsal continues to make great strides in Asia. In Vietnam, the game holds a special place with our passionate fans, players and teams.

"The rise of futsal in Asia can be seen and felt right here in Vietnam. Through the hosting of premier futsal competitions, we want to strengthen the development of the game not only in Vietnam, but throughout the continent."

Group A

Thai Son Nam FC (VIE)
AL DHAFRA FC (UAE)
VIC VIPERS FC (AUS)
FC EREM (KGZ)

Group B

NAFIT AL-WASAT (IRQ)
AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)
VAMOS FC (IDN)
DISI INVEST (TJK)

Group C

SHRIKER OSAKA (JPN)
SANAYE GITI PASAND (IRN)
SHENZHEN NANLING TIELANG (CHN)

Group D

BLUE WAVE CHONBURI (THA)
FC ALMALYK (UZB)
BANK OF BEIRUT FC (LIB)

(Source: AFC)

Disappointing but positive - Mubarak sums up Guardiola's first campaign

Manchester City chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak insists there are plenty of positives to take from Pep Guardiola's first season in charge, despite failing to win a trophy.

Much was expected from former Barcelona boss Guardiola upon his arrival in the Premier League from Bayern Munich after he claimed 21 trophies in his two previous roles.

City have not challenged for titles in 2016-17, however, their league campaign stuttering at crucial times, while they suffered cup exits at the hands of Arsenal and Manchester United.

Guardiola was eliminated before the semi-finals of the Champions League for the first time after Monaco edged a thrilling tie on away goals after a 6-6 draw.

"In a normal circumstance ending the season without a trophy would be a very disappointing season but it's not, it really isn't," Mubarak told the club's official website.

"While I would say not winning the league and not being within close range of winning the title is no doubt a disappointment, not winning either the FA Cup or the League cup is also I think a disappointment.

"This is not the ambition, not at all. There's nothing



to celebrate. I think it's something which is important, it's critical, and I know it requires a lot of hard work, particularly in this league, to be in the top four, but our ambition is to win the league. And if not winning it, to go as close as physically possible to winning the league.

"We are team now that expects to win every year at least one trophy, and then to go further every year in

the Champions League. So from that perspective the season has been a disappointment but if you look at it from a different lens we are truly going in a direction that is positive."

He added: "I am very excited about how we are developing as a team, how Pep has taken the squad and really started a process of going through that natural cycle of development.

"We've gone through several cycles over the last nine years and we're in the middle of one now but you can see where we're going. I have high confidence that we are going in the right direction.

"You've seen many glimpses of us playing a type of football that is very exciting and very entertaining that I think the fans will grow to love and the results will come, I have no doubts the results will come.

"Pep has introduced a new way of playing for us, an exciting way but a way that requires work and which requires a set of players that I think function within that system and probably if I look back at this season that puzzle wasn't complete and I hope this [close season] we support Pep in competing that puzzle."

(Source: Soccerway)

President Rouhani congratulates Gheychisaz on climbing all 14 of the world's highest peaks

S P O R T S Iran President Hassan Rouhani has congratulated Azim Gheychisaz after he became the first Iranian who has climbed all 14 of the world's highest peaks.

Gheychisaz climbed the peak of Mount Lhotse on May 18 and joined the eight-thousanders club.

"To climb all 14 of the world's highest peaks is a great honor," Rouhani wrote on his Twitter account.

The eight-thousanders are the 14 independent mountains on Earth that are more than 8,000 meters (26,247 ft) high above sea level. All eight-thousanders are located in the Himalayan and Karakoram mountain ranges in Asia. Their summits are in the death zone.

Gheychisaz, 37, has done all of those ascents without supplementary oxygen, without Hi-porters.

Only 36 other climbers in the world have documented their climbs to all 14 of the world's highest peaks. The first mountaineer to make such an achievement was Reinhold Messner, in 1986.



Alireza Mansourian apologizes to Esteghlal fans

S P O R T S Esteghlal coach Alireza Mansourian feels the fans deserve an apology after suffering a heavy defeat against Al Ain of the UAE.

The Iranian team were knocked out of the AFC Champions League after suffering a 6-1 defeat against Al Ain.

Mansourian has offered his apologies in the wake of Esteghlal's humiliating AFC Champions League defeat at the hands of the Emirati team.

"Unfortunately, it was a disastrous loss. We did our best to return to the match but Al Ain were the better team. I congratulate them due to the win," Mansourian said.

"We have to strengthen our team for the coming season. We have so many young player. In the match against Al Ain, so many players were suffering from lack of experience," he added.

"Life goes on and we have to think about the future. I apologize to the Esteghlal fans because of the defeat," Mansourian concluded.

Iran's Esteghlal suffer heavy defeat against UAE's Al Ain in ACL

Last year's beaten finalists Al Ain cruised into the quarter-finals of the 2017 AFC Champions League on Monday with a comprehensive 6-1 thrashing allowing Zoran Mamic's side to brush aside the Islamic Republic of Iran's Esteghlal and advance to the next round.

Caio and Omar Abdulrahman both scored twice as Al Ain bounced back from their 1-0 first leg defeat in Iran to notch up a 6-2 aggregate win and signal their intent as the competition breaks for the summer.

Caio's first half double put Al Ain in command, the Brazilian netting in the 27th and 33rd minutes, before the floodgates opened in the second half as Esteghlal sought a way back into the tie.

Abdulrahman scored from the tightest of angles four minutes after the restart, while Lee Myung-joo added the fourth seven minutes later before a long range attempt from Abdulrahman made it into the bottom corner on the hour mark.

Nassir Al Shamrani slammed home the sixth in the 76th minute and Kevah Rezaei claimed a consolation for Esteghlal seven minutes from time when his free-kick sneaked in at Khalid Eisa's near post.

Source: AFC

Montella extends AC Milan contract until 2019

AC Milan have announced that they have extended the contract of their head coach Vincenzo Montella by a year until 2019.

The former Catania, Roma and Fiorentina coach joined the Rossoneri at the start of the season and succeeded in guiding them into the qualifying rounds of next season's Europa League, ending a three-year absence from European football.

"I'm delighted to continue as Milan coach," Montella said on the club's official website. "I reaffirm my enthusiasm for this adventure and thank you for the faith shown in me."

Milan's sporting director Marco Fassone added: "It's a very important moment for us and I think also our fans. We've reached an agreement which we, the club, are happy with, after the splendid results from this year, a complicated transitional year."

In addition to finishing sixth in Serie A, Milan beat Juventus to win the Italian Supercoppa in December.

In a statement, Milan highlighted Montella's impressive first half of the season, when they recorded 39 points, and added: "After a positive season managing a great group, the Club and Vincenzo Montella are ready to continue working together, renewing the contract of the Red and Black manager."

(Source: Soccermet)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

Managing Director: Ali Asgari
Editor-in-Chief: Hassan Lasjerdi

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
Printed at: Kayhan - ISSN: 1017-94

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



NEWS IN BRIEF



“Don Quixote” on stage at Tehran theater

A R T TEHRAN — An Iranian troupe led by director Sahra Ramezani is performing a play based on Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes' novel "Don Quixote" at Tehran's Baran Theater.

The 1605 novel tells the story of a middle-aged Spanish man, Don Quixote. Obsessed with the chivalrous ideals touted in books he has read, he decides to take up his lance and sword to defend the helpless, undo wrongs and bring justice to the world.

Amir Oraei, Mahdokht Molai and Iman Esfahani are the main members of the cast for the play, which will be on stage until July 2.



Tehran museum to screen Woody Allen's "Manhattan"

A R T TEHRAN — American filmmaker, actor and writer Woody Allen's 1979 romantic comedy film "Manhattan" will go on screen at the Cinematheque of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art today.

The screening will be followed by a review session by Iranian critic Amir Puria.

"Manhattan" tells the story of a divorced television writer who is dating a teenage girl. His life becomes more complicated when he falls in love with his best friend's mistress.

Standing Rock Film Festival centers around pipeline protest

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A film festival on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation aims to bolster the anti-pipeline movement that blossomed there last year while also fostering connections between the Native American community and the film industry.

The inaugural Standing Rock Nation Film and Music Festival, which runs this coming Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the tribal casino near Fort Yates, will showcase the talent of Native American filmmakers and musicians. It also features films about American Indians and provides a venue for those who opposed the \$3.8 billion Dakota Access oil pipeline to reminisce.

"It was the most amazing coming together of people from all over the country, all over the world," said festival producer Tricia van Klaveren, an independent filmmaker in San Francisco who spent time in a protest camp in southern North Dakota that held hundreds and sometimes thousands of people between August and February. "Standing Rock represents, people really came together and united. History was created."

People in the camp dubbed themselves "water protectors," a reference to the fear that oil and gas pipelines threaten water sources. They couldn't stop Dakota Access - the line to move North Dakota oil to a distribution point in Illinois is set to go into commercial service on Thursday - but the movement has spread to other pipeline projects around the country.

Organizers hope some people will make a return trip for the festival, though the casino has a capacity of only 1,000 people. Many events and panels will be live-streamed online.

"It is our goal that this weekend festival will empower, enlighten, and entertain the Native community and all global citizens," said Mitchell Zepher, a member of the Lower Brule tribe in South Dakota and the festival's founder and executive director.

Among the films being screened are "AWAKE, A Dream from Standing Rock," which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York in April, and "Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World," a documentary about Native musicians. That film, which won an award at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah, is an example of another purpose of the event.

"Part of the festival is creating a bridge between the Native community and film industry," van Klaveren said. "Telling more of the stories that haven't been told, and telling them through the Native American lens, the Native American perspective."

The festival is free, though donations are encouraged so there's money to continue the event in future years, van Klaveren said. This year's festival is being funded by the tribe and volunteer labor, she said.

Tehran orchestra premieres "Ruhollah Symphony"

A R T TEHRAN — "Ruhollah Symphony" a piece composed by prolific Iranian composer Shahin Farhat in memory of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, was premiered by the Tehran Symphony Orchestra on Monday.

Conducted by Sohrab Kashaf at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, the performance was attended by members of Imam Khomeini's family and a number of officials.

Department of Environment director Masumeh Ebtekar, Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Ali Moradkhani and Rudaki Foundation Managing Director Ali-Akbar Safipur were among the participating guests.

The deputy director of the Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, Hojjatoleslan Ali Kamsari, delivered a short speech expressing thanks to the composer and the High Council of the Music House.

He also expressed his hope that the symphony would help introduce Imam Khomeini to the world through the language of music.

Kashaf, Moradkhani, Safipur and narrator of the symphony Behruz Razavi were honored on the sidelines of the performance.

Farhat is outside of Iran for his annual health checkup so he could not attend the premiere of the symphony, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The symphony is comprised of four movements focusing on Imam Khomeini's birth, his adulthood and studies in Islamic seminaries, his struggles against



The Tehran Symphony Orchestra performs "Ruhollah Symphony" at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on May 29, 2017. (IRNA/Abdollah Heidari)

Iran's last monarch, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, that led to the victory of the 1979 Islamic revolution and his death.

Farhat is the composer of over eighty symphonies, including "Iranian Lady," "Damavand," "Persian Gulf," "Muhammad (S)," "Martyrs" and "Iran."

Tehran gallery to display pages from rare lithographed books

A R T TEHRAN — Pages from some rare Persian lithographed books bearing religious illustrations will be showcased in an exhibition at Tehran's Laleh Gallery today.

The illustrations of the books, which mostly date back to the Qajar period (1794-1925), have been selected by the prominent Iranian illustrator Ali Buzari, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

Among the books are "Heidari Attack" by Mulla Bemanali Raji Kermani, "Tufan-ul-Buka" by Mohammad Ebrahim ibn Mohammad-Baqer Johari and "Asrar ash-Shahada" by Mulla Fazel Darbandi, all of which were repeatedly published during the period.

Numerous Islamic books were written and illustrated



A Persian lithographed book in a file photo

during the Safavid period (1501-1736) when Shiism was selected to be the official religion of Iran.

There was an increasing tendency toward Islamic books during the Qajar period, during which Iran witnessed the advent of its early printing industry.

The exhibition will run until the end of the holy month of Ramadan at Laleh Gallery located on Fatemi St.

Earlier last October, the gallery placed on exhibit a collection of 20 illustrations about the events of Ashura, the day when Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred on the 10th of Muharram in 680.

The collection was created by 20 Iranian artists, including Buzari, based on illustrations from rare Persian lithographed books.

Indonesia's hijab-wearing Muslim metal group challenges stereotypes

GARUT, INDONESIA (Reuters) — With their heads covered with Islamic headscarves, the three members of the Indonesian band VoB ("Voice of Baceprot" or "Noisy Voice") do not look like your typical heavy metal group.

Formed in 2014, the band of teenagers met at school in Indonesia's most populous province of West Java, and use their music to combat the stereotype of Muslim women as submissive or voiceless.

Wearing a hijab, or Islamic head scarf, should not be a barrier to the group's pursuit of its dream of being heavy metal stars, said Firda Kurnia, 16, who plays guitar and sings.

"I think gender equality should be supported, because I feel I am still exploring my creativity, while at the same time, not diminishing my obligations as a Muslim woman," she added.

Invited to perform at a recent graduation ceremony at another school, the trio quickly had fans dancing and head-banging at the front of the stage.

"I don't see anything wrong with it," said one fan who attended, Teti Putriwandari Sari. "There's no law that bars hijab-wearing women from playing hardcore music."

"This also relates to human rights. If a Muslim girl has a talent to play the drums or a guitar, should she not be allowed?"

Besides covering classics by groups such as Metallica and Slipknot, the band perform their own songs on issues such as the state of education in Indonesia.

Muslims make up nearly 90 percent of a population of 250 million, the vast majority practicing a moderate form



Widi Rahmawati (L) and Firda Kurnia, members of the metal hijab band Voice of Baceprot, perform during a school's farewell event in Garut, Indonesia, May 15, 2017.

(Reuters/Yuddy Cahya)

of Islam, although there are some conservatives.

Not everyone in the town of Garut, where the band was formed, and which is home to several Islamic schools, feels the community is ready for them, or that their music is appropriate for performance by young Muslim women.

"It is unusual to see a group of hijab-wearing girls playing metal music or even women shouting," said Muhammad Sholeh, a teacher at the town's Cipari Islamic boarding school, adding that religious pop music was popular with many young Muslims.

Maudya Mulyawati, a student at the school, felt the band should focus on singing "Salawat", an invocation to the religion's founder, Prophet Mohammad (S).

An official of a top clerical body said although the group might trigger a culture clash in a conservative area, he did not feel it broke with Islamic values.

"I see this as part of the creativity of teenagers," added Nur Khamim Djuremi, secretary general of the Islamic Art and Culture Division of Indonesia's Ulema Council.

Opera House undergoes \$18m renovation in its 150th year

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP) — In its heyday, the stage at Newport's Opera House hosted everything from performances of vaudeville and Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show to appearances by abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Now, one of the nation's oldest opera houses is undergoing an \$18 million renovation after spending decades as a movie theater. The nonprofit group that owns it hopes to make it into a centerpiece of live performance and a gathering place for the seaside resort town already known around the world for its jazz and folk festivals.

The Newport Opera House Theater and Performing Arts Center is due to open in December, in celebration of its 150th anniversary. The people behind it hope the 700-seat venue will become a new destination for audiences and artists, and provide a place to keep the music alive in Newport year-round.

"There really isn't anything like this. It's totally unique," Alison Vareika, chair of the center's board, said during a tour of the building.

While thousands of music lovers flock to the city every summer for the Newport Folk Festival and Newport Jazz Festival, there are limited venues for live music, said Jay Sweet, the festivals' executive producer. Because of those limitations, they are always on the hunt for more places that can host musicians during a festival weekend, he said.

"We could definitely use more capacity to explore other unique events," Sweet said, adding that a venue with the history of the Opera House behind it is an added attraction. "Having it set up specifically for music is a real positive for the city."

Opera Houses were built across the country in the mid- to late 1800s as a



In this Tuesday, May 23, 2017 photo, laborer Fred Marrero, of Cranston, R.I., carries a ladder through a door frame in the Newport Opera House, in Newport, R.I. Vacant for years.

(AP Photo/Steven Senne)

dedicated performance space used by the town for all kinds of public gatherings, according to Ken Stein, president and CEO of the League of Historic American Theatres. They later gave way to vaudeville houses, then movie palaces, he said.

The Newport Opera House opened in 1867, two years after the Civil War ended. In the decades after, actors such as John Barrymore and Mary Pickford, known for her silent films, were among those to take the stage. In 1929, it was fully renovated and began showing movies. Fifty years later, it was renovated again into a three-screen theater.

The current project got going in 1999, when a committee of local civic leaders determined that the city needed a performing arts center, Vareika said. They later purchased the theater, and in 2010, it was closed down.

The space has been gutted and is slowly being rebuilt. Being added are modern bathrooms, up-to-date accessibility, concessions and even a room that will allow parents to bring crying babies and still watch the show. A roof deck will look out over Newport Harbor and will be accessible year-round.

Modern-day revolution celebrated in Philadelphia street art

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Seeking to appeal to visitors more familiar with the words of "Game of Thrones" heroine Daenerys Targaryen than the writings of James Wilson, Philadelphia museums and historic sites are thinking differently, using creative art exhibitions and adding online components to their offerings.

"Revolutionary: A Pop-Up Street Art Exhibition," on display until July 4, features 13 artists who created 13 works that challenge the status quo. On display throughout downtown, the exhibition includes paintings, weavings, photographs - and a knit and crochet installation featuring Targaryen quotes like "I will answer injustice with justice."

Meanwhile, "American Treasures" at the National

Constitution Center showcases drafts of the U.S. Constitution written by lesser-known founding father James Wilson. After seeing an online version of the Constitution garner more than 10 million hits in 18 months, museum leaders decided to also feature the rare drafts online, where visitors will learn how one draft called for the U.S. president to be addressed as "His Excellency."

"Letting them see the words themselves has been a way to engage young people," said the organization's president and CEO Jeffrey Rosen. "It's a way to bring history and ideas alive."

Colonial history is enjoying a resurgence thanks to the success of Broadway's "Hamilton." A group of fourth

graders last week ran through the newly unveiled Museum of the American Revolution singing the show's songs and looking for historic highlights they'd learned through music.

The "Revolutionary" exhibition - funded by Visit Philadelphia, the city's tourism arm - was curated by Conrad Benner, founder and editor of streetsdeput.com, a website that promotes urban art and exploration.

Benner said he looked for artists whose work challenged the status quo.

"All revolutions start with people looking at the world around them and asking, 'What can we do better for ourselves and our neighbors?'" Benner said. "It's very powerful to have those ideas in public spaces."