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## Leader: Expediency Council must accurately study national issues

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who on Wednesday received the new chairman and members of the Expediency Council said accurate study of the country's conditions is a must for the council.

The council should think and act revolutionary and remain committed to the principles of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei told members of the council.

He noted that the body is one of the legacies of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Leader said the council should recognize what is beneficial to the country, give advice on macro policies, and provide solutions for the country's problems.

The Supreme Leader appointed new chairman and members of the Council in mid-August after the death of Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on January 8, 2017. Expediency Council was originally set up to resolve differences between the Majlis (Parliament) and the Guardian Council, but its true power lies more in its advisory role to the Supreme Leader.

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the importance of the council's role in giving advice to the Leader, saying accurate study of the country's conditions is a must for Expediency Council.

He also urged the council to review Iran's macro policies.

"It's possible that some of the country's macro policies need to be reviewed and updated and some of them might be completely out of date," he said.

# ‘U.S. policy on Arbil referendum incongruent’



See page 7

## Mogherini sees no parallels between Iran, North Korea

By staff and agency

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said on Tuesday that she does not see parallels between the situation in Iran and North Korea, officially referred to as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"I do not particularly like the parallels between the situation in Iran and in the DPRK: the political systems are very different; the histories are very different; the two countries are completely different. I do not think it is a good service to the reality of history and of the current situation to make a parallel between the two," she said during her speech at the European Parliament plenary session on the situ-

ation in North Korea.

She also said that the EU has supported and will continue supporting the Iran nuclear deal.

"We have been running the Iran negotiations [leading to the JCPOA] for quite some years with a successful result. There, the unity of the international community was key," she explained.

Some politicians have suggested the nuclear deal with Iran as an example to resolve the nuclear dispute with North Korea. Despite North Korea which has conducted nuclear tests, Iran is a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) and has never been seeking to develop nuclear weapons. ➔2

## More than 80 nuclear experts reaffirm support for nuclear deal

More than 80 of the world's leading nuclear nonproliferation specialists issued a joint statement on Wednesday reaffirming support for the Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

According to Arms Control Association, the statement is endorsed by former U.S. nuclear negotiators, former senior U.S. nonproliferation and intelligence officials, a former director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a former member of the UN Panel of Experts on Iran, and leading nuclear specialists from the United States and around the globe.

"We firmly support vigorous efforts to monitor and enforce compliance with the JCPOA," the experts say, "but we are concerned by statements from the Trump administration that it may be seeking to create a false pretext for accusing Iran of noncooperation or noncompliance with the agreement in order to trigger the re-imposition of nuclear-related sanctions against Iran."

"Abandoning the deal without clear evidence of an unresolved material breach by Iran that is corroborated by the other EU3+3 partners runs the risk that Tehran would resume some of its nuclear activities," they warn. ➔2



## ARTICLE

By **Hanif Ghafari**  
Political analyst

## Mogherini's responsibility for JCPOA

In the past days, some news has been spread about European troika aligning with the U.S. in the way of dealing with the nuclear agreement of July 2015 between Iran and Sextet.

The German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel explicitly stated that Germany is ready to cooperate with US, UK, and France to more exert pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran to force Iranians to comply with their nuclear commitments.

Even beyond that, some media have relayed that Trump administration officials have been extensively negotiating with the heads of the three European countries for returning Iran to the table of talks. Bloomberg news outlet has reported that Trump is determined to take advantage of the UN General Assembly to lobby and negotiate with European officials to finalize the idea of renegotiating the nuclear deal.

According to what has been announced by Western news outlets, the UN General Assembly will be held in New York next week and Trump will meet with leaders of France and Britain to supposedly ask them to talk Germany into calling for renegotiation of the nuclear deal. Previously, France and Britain have already stated their readiness for re-doing the nuclear talks.

Two American diplomats have already said that their French and British counterparts have voiced readiness to ratchet up pressure on Iran for the flaws in the nuclear agreement.

Meanwhile, Mogherini has just very recently re-expressed support for the JCPOA. Addressing the European Parliament plenary session, she said on Tuesday that the JCPOA "has shown to the world that with patience, perseverance, diplomacy and political will, nuclear non-proliferation is indeed achievable." ➔13

## Zarif meets Putin in Sochi

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met Russian President Vladimir Putin late on Wednesday in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi.

The latest developments in Syria as well as the nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers featured high in the talks.

Upon arrival in Sochi earlier the day, Zarif had pointed to coordination between Tehran and Moscow on regional developments, particularly the Syria crisis as the main purpose of his visit to Russia.

Zarif said cooperation between Iran, Russia and Turkey resulted in the improvement of the situation in Syria and prevented tension to a great extent.

He also stressed the need for closer coordination between Iran and Russia given the recent U.S. stance on the JCPOA, the nuclear agreement between Iran and the 5+1 group (Russia, China, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany).



## Syria has liberated 85% of its territory from terrorists

The Russian military says the Syrian government has managed to liberate 85 percent of the country from the grips of terrorist groups, some two years after Moscow began a counterterrorism campaign in Syria at the official request of Damascus.

Lieutenant General Aleksandr Lapin, the Russian chief of staff in Syria, announced the news in a press conference held at Hmeymim Air Base in Syria's western province of Latakia on Tuesday. He added that Syrian forces must now clear the remaining 15 percent of the country, which amounts to 27,000 square kilometers, of terrorists.

Lapin said Syrian troops continued the operation to free the eastern city of Dayr al-Zawr from Daesh Takfiri terrorist group, after they managed to break an almost three-year

siege on the embattled city earlier this month.

"Currently the operation to free the city is ongoing. The Syrian military will soon finish off" Daesh terrorists, who "used to occupy the city's neighborhoods," he added.

Lapin stated that Kalibr cruise missiles, launched from the Black Sea escort vessel, Admiral Essen, had destroyed Daesh's command posts and communication networks; an effective move that disrupted control of the terror group's units in Dayr al-Zawr province.

"Over 450 terrorists, five tanks and 42 pickups, with heavy machine guns, were liquidated during the operation," he said.

In a bid to aid the war-torn Arab nation in its war against foreign-sponsored terrorism, in September 2015, Russia started a cam-

paign in Syria at an official request made by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Russian warplanes, based in Hmeymim, have so far significantly aided the government troops in ridding Syria of the widespread militancy. One of the biggest breakthroughs in anti-terror offensives was made in December last year, when Syrian troops, backed by Russian air force, managed to gain full control of the city of Aleppo.

Moscow has also played a major role in co-sponsoring peace negotiations between the so-called armed opposition groups and Damascus to pave the way for implementing local ceasefires in the country and setting up de-escalation zones across Syria in an attempt to reduce fighting across the country. ➔13



## PERSPECTIVE

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

## Nikki Haley's lies in face of hard evidence

The United States is unbelievably politicizing its approach toward the July 215 international nuclear deal which has been crafted purely based on verification.

After Donald Trump ordered a number of close aides to resort to bogus intelligence to find Iran non-compliant with the nuclear deal, his ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, in a recent speech at the American Enterprise Institute, even made the case for U.S. withdrawal from the multilateral agreement.

Haley was speaking at the same conservative think tank that helped make the case for the disastrous war in Iraq. She also visited Vienna in mid-August to press the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect Iran's military sites.

Haley's speech at the AEI included big lies such as: "Iran has been caught in multiple violations over the past year and a half" and that "there are hundreds of undeclared sites that have suspicious activity that they (the IAEA) haven't looked at."

All these lies come in the face of hard evidence. Since the nuclear deal - officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - went into effect in early 2016 the IAEA has released eight reports each time confirming that Iran is living up to its obligations which include cap on its nuclear activities and intensive verification among others. The last report was released on August 31.

Moreover, just on Monday, Sept. 12, Yukiya Amano, the UN nuclear watchdog chief, told a quarterly meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors that "the nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented."

Amano also told reporters on Monday that "the verification regime in Iran is the most robust". Amano left no doubt about the intensive inspection in Iran under the Additional Protocol by saying ➔2



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## Armenian Olympics kicks off in Tehran

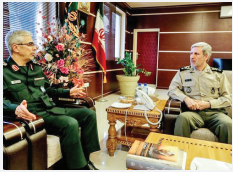
The 49th edition of the Armenian Olympics was inaugurated in Tehran on Tuesday night.

The opening ceremony was held in Tehran's Ararat Sports Complex, and was attended by Sports Minister Massoud Soltanifar, the governor-general of Tehran province, and senior Armenian clergymen.

The event brings together 750 Armenian athletes from across the country and they will be competing in 9 different categories.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



### Top commanders meet to discuss defense industry

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Major General d e s k Mohammad Bagheri, the armed forces chief of staff, on Wednesday met with new Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami to discuss defensive capabilities.

Bagheri praised the new defense minister as a pious, hardworking man, and expressed hope that his work in the post would lead to further progress.

Hatami, for his turn, said the Defense Ministry would spare no efforts in increasing deterrence capabilities.



### Rouhani urges all governmental bodies to observe citizens' rights

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — During a cabinet session d e s k on Wednesday President Hassan Rouhani highlighted the importance of implementing "Charter on Citizens' Rights", urging all governmental bodies to observe the charter.

"The foundation of our domestic policy... and our social security is based on respect for citizens' rights," Rouhani said.

Observing the rights will lead to progress all over the country, he added.

Rouhani unveiled the Charter on Citizens' Rights on December 19 last year.



### Interior Ministry appoints 7 new governors

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Interior Minister d e s k Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli says the cabinet of minister appointed seven new governors on Wednesday, ISNA reported.

In the new administration some governors would be replaced, Rahmani Fazli said, adding that the Interior Ministry wishes to make a smooth transition by the end of Shahrivar (September 22).

Some of the governors wanted to serve in other state bodies and some wanted to retire, he said.

He also said the government is seeking to appoint women as governors.



### Iran to send parliamentary team to Myanmar

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, head d e s k of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Wednesday that a delegation of Iranian parliamentarians will be dispatched to Myanmar to investigate the situation of the Rohingya Muslims.

On the same day also 100 tons of humanitarian aid was accumulated at Mehrabad Airport in Tehran to be sent to Rohingya people.

# Independence referendum will worsen division among Kurds: Shamkhani

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Secretary d e s k of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said on Tuesday that independence referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan will worsen division among the Kurdish groups.

"Increase in unnecessary tension in the region will impose extra pressure and suffering on the brave and oppressed people of the Kurdistan region," he told reporters.

The security chief noted, "Now that the end of Takfiri elements is close, some inconsiderate actions can cause new conflicts and undermine security."

President of Iraqi Kurdistan Massoud Barzani tweeted on June 7 that an independence referendum is scheduled to be held on September 25, 2017.

The Iraqi parliament voted on Tuesday



against the Kurdistan region's independence referendum.

The Iraqi government issued a statement on June 9 rejecting any unilateral move by Kurdish regional authorities to press for independence.

Prime Minister of Iraqi Kurdistan Nechirvan Barzani told Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi in a meeting on July 16 that Iran can "play a positive role" in resolving disputes between the Iraqi government and the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

While all countries are insisting on territorial integrity in Iraq, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed interest in partitioning Iraq and establishing an independent Kurdish state during a meeting with a delegation of 33 U.S. Republican congressmen.

## 'Rearrangement will be definite if U.S. quit nuclear deal: Iran

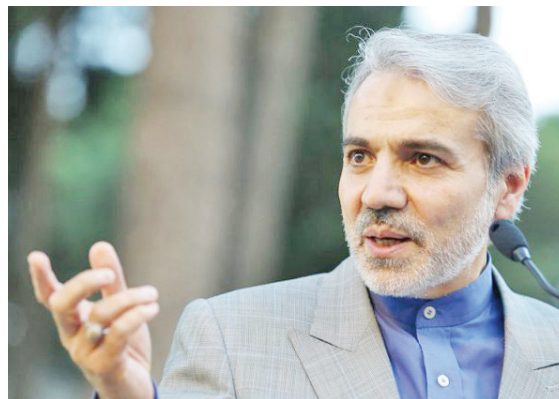
**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran's government d e s k spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said on Wednesday that the nuclear deal was signed between Iran and six countries, not just the U.S., and definitely a "rearrangement" will be on the way if the Trump administration quit the multilateral agreement.

"Iran will definitely protect national interests in the (new) rearrangement," Nobakht told reporters.

"If the country (Iran) is supposed to continue [to implement the nuclear deal] with the other five countries [Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany], it will be in a way that our interests is protected," he noted.

He added that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the formal name for the nuclear deal, is not just a deal between Iran and the U.S. and Iran has interaction with the other five signatories.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five



permanent members of the UN Security Council including the United States signed the nuclear deal in

July 2015. It went into effect in January 2016.

Yukiya Amano, chief of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency, reconfirmed on Monday that Iran is honoring its commitments under the nuclear deal.

On September 5 U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley laid out a case for President Donald Trump to step back from the nuclear deal, arguing that Iran's technical compliance alone isn't enough for the U.S. to stick with the pact.

In a carefully read 20-minute address at the American Enterprise Institute, Haley argued that the nuclear deal can't be considered in isolation.

Trump has called the agreement between Iran and six major powers reducing its nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief "the worst deal ever negotiated".

## Mogherini sees no parallels between Iran, North Korea

**1 →** Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has declared the production, stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear arms as haram (religiously forbidden).

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in an interview with Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung published on Sunday, the nuclear talks between Iran and the 5+1 group (the U.S., Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany) as "a long but important

time of diplomacy" that ultimately had a good end, according to the Guardian.

She offered her country's participation in any future nuclear talks with North Korea and suggested that the 2015 agreement with Iran could

serve as a model.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including the United States signed the nuclear deal in July 2015. It went into effect in January 2016.

## Nikki Haley's lies in face of hard evidence

**1 →** "I cannot tell you how many complementary accesses we have had, but I can tell you ... that we have had access to locations more frequently than many other countries with extensive nuclear programs."

In view of these statements by Amano, whose organization is the only international body authorized to make expert comments on a country's nuclear program, any efforts to raise questions about Iran's loyalty to the nuclear accord is purely politically motivated with possible hidden agenda.

Trump and his diehard loyalists who intend to violate the JCPOA do not need to make distorted remarks, fabricate stories, or politicize intelligence. They can just say we want to roll back whatever the Obama

administration did or that we want to withdraw from the agreement because we hate Iran.

Writing an article in the National Interest on Sept. 5, former CIA chief analyst Paul R. Pillar said Haley's speech "used more twisted versions of familiar rhetorical twists that have been heard before from diehard opponents of the JCPOA."

Though the JCPOA is solely related to issues such as the degree of nuclear enrichment, the sides' commitments, verifications, removal of sanctions, etc., Haley tried to confuse the public opinion by linking the JCPOA with unrelated issues. For example, she argued Iran is terrorizing its neighbors.

However, contrary to her arguments it is Saudi

Arabia, Washington's best friend in the region, which is terrorizing neighbors. The most concrete examples are attack on Yemen and full blockade of Qatar.

These distortions and lies remind one of the neo-conservatives' approach toward Iraq prior to the 2003 invasion of the country in March 2003. At the time, neocons, whom Trump and Haley are trying to imitate, insisted on their lies that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) despite denials by the UN bodies. They even claimed that Saddam Hussein, a secular dictator, had links to al-Qaeda.

Let's see what will happen now that the current U.S. administration is working hard to replace facts with fiction about the JCPOA.

## Iran's IRGC arrests Daesh member, foils attacks

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The d e s k Islamic Revolution Guards Corps announced on Wednesday it has arrested a member of Daesh and foiled a plan for suicide attacks.

Col. Amin Yamini, the commander for the western Tehran suburb of Shahriar, said the attacks were being planned for the 10-day Ashura rituals that begins on September 22.

The Daesh member had planned to organize about 300 people to car-

ry out suicide attacks, Yamini said, according to Basij Press.

Yamini said valuable information has been gleaned from the member's cell phone.

The commander said the member was from the Syrian branch of Daesh.

On June 7, Daesh militants attacked the Iranian parliament in Tehran and the shrine of Imam Khomeini, killing 17 people and injuring many more.

## More than 80 nuclear experts reaffirm support for nuclear deal

**1 →** Thus far, reporting from the U.S. intelligence community, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the other parties to the agreement make it clear that Iran is meeting its many JCPOA commitments. These include long-term, verifiable restrictions on Iran's sensitive nuclear fuel cycle activities, many of which will last for 10 years, some for 15 years, some for 25 years, with enhanced IAEA monitoring under Iran's additional protocol agreement with the IAEA and modified code 3.1 safeguards provisions lasting indefinitely.

"[U]nilateral action by the United States, especially on the basis of unsupported contentions of Iranian cheating, would isolate the United States. In doing so, the United States would discourage Iran and others—including Washington's EU3+3

partners—from supporting any U.S. proposal for negotiations on a new agreement while simultaneously damaging the agreement in place," the experts say.

The statement concludes: "We urge the Trump administration and the U.S. Congress to continue to fulfill Washington's commitments under the accord and to refrain from actions that undermine U.S. obligations in the agreement."

"Given that we are already struggling to contain the North Korean nuclear and missile crisis, it would be extremely unwise for the president to initiate steps that could unravel the highly successful 2015 Iran nuclear deal," said Kelsey Davenport, nonproliferation policy director for the Arms Control Association, which organized the statement.

A new Call for Tenders has been published from Contracting Authority

**Heyat Omana Arzi (HOA)**

**Tender No: HOA-2017-09-01**

The **Ministry of Health and Medical Education of I.R Iran** invites sealed tenders for the:

**Procurement, Shipment, Installation, Commissioning, Training & After Sale Services of 200 Stationary General Colour Doppler Ultrasound Imaging Systems**

Interested eligible candidates may obtain the tender documents at the Iranian Embassy, Nicosia, Cyprus, (Tender Secretariat): NO. 42, Armenias St., Acropolis 2003, P.O. Box 28908, 2084 Nicosia, Cyprus. Tel: +357- 22 31 5896 between 10:00 to 18:00, on 25-26th September 2017, upon showing the original receipt of payment into the Euro Bank account introduced by HOA for the amount of Five Thousands (5,000) Euro.

In addition, an introduction letter must be issued by authorized signatory of the original manufacturers and/or their regional companies to officially confirm the Representative to receive Tender Documents.

The opening date for the submission of the Tender Bids starts from 10:00 to 18:00, between 23rd-26th October, 2017. The Tender Bids shall be sent to the above address in the Tender Secretariat.

The Q&A session of the captioned tender will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Friday October the 6th, 2017 in Nicosia, Cyprus

The opening session of envelope A & B shall be held at 11:00, on 27th October, 2017 and the opening date of Envelope C shall be announced in the above session.

Tender Deposit, should be issued in favour of the HOA which is unconditional, irrecoverable and extendable equal to the amount of One Hundred and Seventy-Six Thousand (176,000) Euro.

For further information, please get connected to

[intl.tender@hoa-ir.com](mailto:intl.tender@hoa-ir.com) or visit us at: <http://hoa-ir.com/en/index.html>

or call in **+98-912 961 1962**

A new Call for Tenders has been published from Contracting Authority

**Heyat Omana Arzi (HOA)**

**Tender No: HOA-2017-09-02**

The **Ministry of Health and Medical Education of I.R Iran** invites sealed tenders for the:

**Procurement, Shipment, Installation, Commissioning, Training & After Sale Services of 150 Stationary Cardiac Colour Doppler Ultrasound Imaging Systems.**

Interested eligible candidates may obtain the tender documents at the Iranian Embassy, Nicosia, Cyprus, (Tender Secretariat): NO. 42, Armenias St., Acropolis 2003, P.O. Box 28908, 2084 Nicosia, Cyprus. Tel: +357- 22 31 5896 between 10:00 to 18:00, on 25-26th September 2017, upon showing the original receipt of payment into the Euro Bank account introduced by HOA for the amount of Five Thousands (5,000) Euro.

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The opening date for the submission of the Tender Bids starts from 10:00 to 18:00, between 23rd-26th October, 2017. The Tender Bids shall be sent to the above address in the Tender Secretariat.

The Q&A session of the captioned tender will be held at 12:00 p.m. on Friday October the 6th, 2017 in Nicosia, Cyprus

The opening session of envelope A & B shall be held at 15:00, on 27th October, 2017 and the opening date of Envelope C shall be announced in the above session.

Tender Deposit, should be issued in favour of the HOA which is unconditional, irrecoverable and extendable equal to the amount of One Hundred and Thirty Thousand (130,000) Euro.

For further information, please get connected to

[intl.tender@hoa-ir.com](mailto:intl.tender@hoa-ir.com) or visit us at: <http://hoa-ir.com/en/index.html>

or call in **+98-912 961 1962**



# Qatar-Persian Gulf crisis boils over at Cairo meeting

Diplomats from Qatar and the four states blockading the Persian Gulf nation have exchanged heated words at an Arab League meeting in Cairo.

Tuesday's row, which erupted on live television, is the latest chapter in the three-month-old Persian Gulf crisis in which Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt and Bahrain are blockading Qatar.

The coalition cut diplomatic and trade links with Qatar on June 5, suspending air and shipping routes to their Persian Gulf neighbor.

The four Arab states have accused Doha of financing "terrorism". Qatar has rejected the allegation as "baseless".

The blockading states also have accused Doha of supporting regional rival, Iran.

Kuwait has been trying to mediate the dispute.

## Heated exchange

During his opening speech, Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Soltan bin Saad al-Muraikhi referred to Iran as an "honorable country" and said ties had warmed with its neighbor since the blockade.

In response, Ahmed al-Kattan, Saudi Arabia's envoy to the Arab League, said: "Congratulations to Iran and soon, God willing, you will regret it."

"If the brethren in Qatar think they may have a benefit in their rapprochement with Iran, I'd like to say that they have this evaluation wrong in every way. The Qataris will be held responsible for such a decision."

He added that in "the coming days will prove them wrong because we know that the Qatari people will never accept the Iranians to play a role in Qatar".

UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash said the Persian Gulf crisis continued "due to Qatar's unwillingness for peace".

"Their direction needs to change, and we will continue our policies until Qatar changes its policies of aggression against the four boycotting countries, as long as Doha supports and funds terrorism and intervenes in the Middle East countries' internal affairs," Gargash said.

Muraikhi responded by saying that the crisis started when Qatar News Agency (QNA) was hacked by UAE-backed perpetrators who attributed false statement to the emir of Qatar.

"Then we saw this vicious media campaign against



Qatar, waged by rabid dogs backed by some regimes," Muraikhi said, adding, "Mr. Anwar [Gargash] forgot to mention that the four blockading countries tried a military action against my country in 1996."

## All threats

The Qatari diplomat lamented Kattan's tone in the exchange, saying: "[It] is all threats and I don't think he has the authority to threaten and speak like this."

The exchange then descended into a row between Kattan and Muraikhi, with each telling the other to be quiet.

Muraikhi said Saudi Arabia was looking to depose the emir of Qatar and replace him with Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Thani, a little-known Qatari sheikh who has been thrust into the limelight by the Saudi-led bloc.

"This is an improper thing to say because the kingdom of Saudi Arabia will never resort to such cheap

methods and we don't want to change the regime, but you must also know that the kingdom can do anything it wants, God willing," Kattan said.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said Muraikhi's comments were unacceptable.

"We know very well Qatar's long history in supporting terrorism and that they have provided weapons and funds in Syria, Libya, Yemen even inside Egypt that killed so many," Shoukry said.

Qatar backed a democratically-elected Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt before it was overthrown by the military in 2013.

The Arab states have demanded that Qatar sever any links with the Brotherhood and other groups they deem to be "terrorists".

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Al-Abadi says Kurdish referendum on independence 'unconstitutional'

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi says the planned Kurdish referendum on independence from the Arab country is "unconstitutional," warning that the Kurds are "illegally" exporting Iraq's oil.

"I call upon the Kurdish leadership to come to Baghdad and conclude a dialogue," Abadi said in a press conference in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, on Tuesday, a few hours after the country's parliament overwhelmingly voted against the plebiscite, which has been planned by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri said the vote made it incumbent on the government to "take all steps to protect the unity of Iraq and open a serious dialog" with Kurdish officials. The vote prompted Kurdish lawmakers to quit the parliament floor.

Abadi also stated that Kurdish authorities were illegally extracting crude oil from the oil-rich territories in the northern province of Kirkuk and continued exporting the invaluable national resource. He did not give further details.

The Kurdish referendum is scheduled for September 25, but the central government in Baghdad is strongly opposed to the vote. Iran, Turkey and Syria also oppose the idea of an independent Kurdistan. In June, Tehran expressed opposition to the "unilateral" scheme for independence of the Iraqi Kurdistan, underlining the importance of maintaining the integrity and stability of Iraq and insisting that the Kurdistan region was part of the majority Arab country.

Turkey has also censured efforts to establish an independent Kurdistan as "a grave mistake." Ankara says potential creation of an independent Kurdistan state in its backyard would further embolden Turkey's homegrown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants toward an even stiffer confrontation with the government.

Several other countries in the region are concerned that such a referendum could ignite a fresh conflict with Baghdad and possibly neighboring countries, diverting attention from the ongoing war against Daesh Takfiri terrorists in Iraq and Syria.

(Source: Press TV)

## Singapore gets 1st female president without election



Singapore has named a former parliament speaker from the Muslim Malay minority as the country's first female president, drawing criticism for her selection without a vote.

Halimah Yacob was named president on Wednesday without having to face an election for the mostly ceremonial position after government authorities concluded her rivals did not meet the presidency's eligibility criteria.

The 63-year-old Yacob, who was a lawmaker for the ruling People's Action Party for nearly two decades before resigning to run for presidency, challenged the doubts about the selection process in an address before a cheering crowd after she was formally named president.

"I'm a president for everyone. Although there's no election, my commitment to serve you remains the same," she said, adding that she would "start working immediately" to bring the country together.

She said her status as Singapore's first female president was "not just tokenism," pointing out that "every woman can aspire to the highest office in the land when you have the courage, determination and will to work hard."

(Source: AFP)

## Congress challenges Trump to address white supremacy

The United States Congress has unanimously passed a resolution condemning neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and other white supremacists, and urging President Donald Trump to address hate groups after last month's deadly racially-charged violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Tuesday's joint resolution, which describes the killing of a 32-year-old woman as a "domestic terrorist attack", calls on the Trump administration to improve data collection on hate crimes and speak out against increasingly prevalent hate groups.

Last month, hundreds of white supremacists gathered in Charlottesville under the banner "Unite the Right" over the city's planned removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E Lee.

They clashed with the city's residents, anti-racist protesters and anti-fascists.

During the rally, a man with links to a white supremacist group rammed his car into a crowd of anti-racist protesters, killing Heather Heyer and injuring more than a dozen others.

Trump was criticized for his response to the violence and the rally, in which he asserted there were good people on "both sides" and bemoaned efforts to remove Confederate monuments as an attack on American "history and culture".

He also said that there were "very fine people" among the white supremacists attending the rally.

## No place for hate

The House of Representatives unanimously approved the measure on Tuesday, after the Senate did so a day earlier. It now goes to Trump for his signature.

Legislators from Virginia said Congress spoke with "a



unified voice" to unequivocally condemn the unrest in which Heyer was killed.

The measure recognizes and offers condolences for the deaths of Heyer and two emergency responders killed in a helicopter crash while monitoring the rally, as well as 19 people injured in the violence.

"I hope this bipartisan action will help heal the wounds left in the aftermath of this tragedy and send a clear message to those that seek to divide our country that there is no place for hate and violence," House Democrat Gerry Connolly said.

The resolution expresses support for the Charlottesville community, while "rejecting white nationalists, white supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis and other hate groups, and urging the president and the president's cabinet to use all available resources to address the threats posed by those groups".

It also calls on Attorney General Jeff Sessions to "investigate thoroughly all acts of violence, intimidation

and domestic terrorism by white supremacists, white nationalists, neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, and associated groups".

Usually, such resolutions are passed as a statement of intent or a declaration that affects Congress' operations, but are not sent to the president.

The authors of the resolution, however, purposefully submitted it as a "joint resolution", which is required to be signed by Trump. The White House has yet to comment on the resolution.

## Alarming racism

Since Trump's election, rights groups and monitors have documented a dramatic increase in the number of hate crimes in the U.S.

Between the November 8 election of Trump and April, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) watchdog recorded 1,863 bias incidents. In the 10 days following Trump's election, the SPLC documented an average of 87 hate incidents a day, which was five times the daily average recorded by the FBI in 2015.

Last month, the UN issued a rare warning over what it called "alarming" racism in the U.S.

"We are alarmed by the racist demonstration, with overtly racist slogans, chants and salutes by white nationalists, neo-Nazis, and the Ku Klux Klan, promoting white supremacy and inciting racial discrimination and hatred," the chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) said.

The human rights experts called on the U.S. and its leadership to "unequivocally and unconditionally" condemn racist speech and crimes, warning that a failure to do so could fuel further violent incidents.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Aung San Suu Kyi cancels trip to UN General Assembly

Myanmar's national leader Aung San Suu Kyi will not attend the upcoming UN General Assembly session in New York.

A spokesperson for her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), told Reuters news agency late that the Nobel Peace Prize winner had withdrawn from the meeting in New York on September 20.

No reason was provided for her withdrawal.

Aung San Suu Kyi, whose official title is state counsellor, faces mounting criticism over the systematic killings and displacements of Rohingya Muslims in the western Rakhine state.

Since August 25, 370,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh. But a spokesperson for the NLD said she was not aware of the reason for the Aung San Suu Kyi's withdrawal from this year's General Assembly.

"She's never afraid of facing criticism or confronting problems. Perhaps she's got more pressing matters here to deal with," Aung Shin, the spokesman, told Reuters.

U Henry Van Thio, Myanmar's vice president, is expected to attend the assembly



instead, and speak on behalf of Myanmar, China's official Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday.

The crisis over the security forces' fierce response to Rohingya is the biggest problem Aung San Suu Kyi has faced since becoming Myanmar's leader last year.

Critics have called for her to be stripped of her Nobel peace prize for failing to do more to address the crisis.

## Growing pressure

In her first address to the General Assembly as national leader in September last year, Aung San Suu Kyi defended her government's efforts to resolve the crisis over treatment of the Muslim minority.

International pressure has been grow-

ing on Myanmar to end the violence in the western state of Rakhine that began on August 25 when a ragtag Rohingya militia attacked about 30 police posts and an army camp.

The attacks prompted a sweeping military counteroffensive that refugees say is aimed at pushing Rohingya out of Myanmar.

Reports from refugees and rights groups paint a picture of widespread attacks on Rohingya villages in the north of Rakhine by the security forces and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists, who have put numerous Muslim villages to the torch.

But Myanmar authorities have denied that the security forces, or Buddhist civilians, have been setting the fires, instead

blaming the Rohingya militia. Nearly 30,000 Buddhist villagers have also been displaced, they say.

The Trump administration has called for protection of civilians, and Bangladesh says all of the refugees will have to go home and it has called for safe zones to be created in Myanmar to enable them to do so.

But China, which competes with the US for influence in the region, said on Tuesday it backed Myanmar's efforts to safeguard "development and stability".

## Full control

The military, which ruled for almost 50 years until it began a transition to democracy in 2011, retains important political powers and is in full control of security.

The UN Security Council met on Wednesday behind closed doors for the second time since the latest crisis erupted.

Matthew Rycroft, Britain's ambassador to the UN, said he hoped there would be a public statement agreed by the council.

However, rights groups criticized the 15-member council for not holding a public meeting.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Israeli banks contributing to expansion of West Bank settlements: HRW

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has criticized Israeli banks for financing the construction of settlements in the occupied West Bank, saying that the practice violates human rights.

In a report published on Wednesday, the rights groups said all five of Israel's largest banks are involved in the regime's settlements activities through providing loans and mortgages for their construction in the West Bank.

"By providing services to and in settlements, which are illegal under international humanitarian law (IHL), and partnering with developers in new construction projects, Israeli banks are making existing settlements more sustainable, enabling the expansion of their built-up area and the take-over of Palestinian land, and furthering the de facto annexation of the territory," the report said, adding, "All of this contributes to serious human rights and IHL abuses."

Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds during the Six Day War in 1967. It later annexed East Jerusalem al-Quds in a move not recognized by the international community.

Sari Bashi, Israel/Palestine advocacy director at the HRW, said Israeli banks should respect the United Nations guiding principles on business and human rights or else face action by shareholders.

(Source: agencies)



NEWS IN BRIEF



**Over 37,000 passenger cars imported in 5 months**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran imported 37,623 passenger cars during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

IRICA put the worth of imported cars at \$1.033 billion in the five-month period with 49.5 percent rise from the figure of the same time span in the past year, IRIB news reported on Wednesday.

Iran had imported 26,376 passenger cars worth \$690.703 million during the first five months of the previous calendar year.



**Iran exports 280,000 tons of fuel oil to Singapore**

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iran has exported 280,000 tons of fuel oil in September to Singapore, Reuters reported citing ship tracking data in Eikon.

According to the report, the National Iranian Tanker Company-managed crude carrier, Destiny, left Iran's Kharg Island on September 6 with up to 280,000 tons of fuel oil and is expected to arrive in Singapore for discharge on September 21.

Singapore was also said to ship in 38,251 tons of gasoline from Iran in July.



**Kiev hosting exclusive exhibition of Iranian products**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Ukraine's capital is hosting the second exclusive exhibition of Iranian products called Iran Export Fair 2017 from September 12 to 15, IRNA reported.

The four-day exhibition is showcasing products and services in three main areas namely industry, construction materials and consumer goods.

Introducing Iran's economic and industrial capabilities to Ukraine, holding meetings and advisory seminars for Ukrainian businessmen interested in Iran's market as well as exploring joint venture and investment opportunities are among the main activities planned for the event's participants.

## Shell says to focus on Basra gas in Iraq after Majnoon exit

Oil major Royal Dutch/Shell said on Wednesday it would focus its efforts on the development and growth of the Basra Gas Company in Iraq after handing over operations of the Majnoon oil venture back to the Iraqi government.

On Tuesday, Reuters reported that Shell Iraq has started preparations to finalize the exit of Shell from Majnoon, one of the largest fields in the country.

"In May 2017, the ministry of oil in Iraq applied the performance penalty and remuneration factor on the Shell operated venture, the Majnoon oil field, which had a significant impact on its commerciality," a Shell spokesman said.

Shell then decided that it was in the best interest of all parties to hand over operations of the Majnoon venture to the Iraqi government.

"Shell remains firmly committed to Iraq. By handing over Majnoon operation to the ministry of Oil, Shell will be in a stronger position to maximize value to the government of Iraq and its people as well as our shareholders by focusing its efforts on the development and growth of Basra Gas Company," the spokesman said.

Basra Gas Company is a joint venture between Shell, South Gas Company and Mitsubishi and the Petrochemical Project NEBRAS. (Source: Reuters)

## Qatar says it's fulfilling oil and gas deals despite Persian Gulf crisis

Qatar, the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas, is fulfilling all of its contracted shipments of oil and gas despite a regional political crisis that led to the severing of ties with some of its neighbors, the Persian Gulf country's energy minister said.

The diplomatic feud with fellow OPEC members Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates isn't hindering Qatar's energy production or expansion plans, Mohammed Bin Saleh Al Sada, minister of energy and industry, said at a meeting with foreign diplomats in Doha.

"During this blockade we have never missed a single shipment of oil or gas to any of our consumer partners," Al Sada said Tuesday. "That shows how committed Qatar is, not only to our economy and reliability but also to consuming countries."

Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., Egypt and Bahrain cut off diplomatic, trade and transport ties with Qatar three months ago. Efforts to negotiate a solution have languished. Qatar has announced plans to boost production at the North Field, its share of the world's biggest offshore gas deposit, since the spat began.

"We made a lot of efforts not to miss a shipment and continue that reputation of utmost reliability," Al Sada said. For example, Qatar didn't declare force majeure, a legal status protecting a party from liability if it can't fulfill a contract for reasons beyond its control, he said. (Source: Bloomberg)

# Iran's August oil output at 3.828m bpd: OPEC

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — According to OPEC's latest monthly report published on September 12, oil production in Iran stood at 3.828 million barrels per day (bpd) in August, falling 5,000 bpd from 3.833 million bpd in July, based on secondary sources.

The OPEC's report also announced Iran's oil output based on direct communication. It said the country's oil production in August stood at 3.845 million bpd, a 55,000 bpd decline from 3.9 million bpd in July.

Meanwhile, the report put the country's heavy oil price at \$48.7 in August, an increase of \$2.69 or 5.8 percent from \$46.01 in June.

According to the report, the value of Iranian heavy crude was further lifted buoyed again by an uplift in OSP offsets and supported by healthy global sour markets.

The number of oil rigs in the country hasn't changed in August and the figure was reported to stand at 61, the same number as in July.

Although the OPEC monthly report did not mention oil exports, earlier in August oilprice.com put Iran's crude oil exports at 2.135 million bpd in August, a 9.3 rise from its previous month citing energy data provider Kpler.



## Foreign trade delegations flock to Iran Plast 2017 expo

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — At least nine foreign trade delegations from different countries will be visiting Iran Plast 2017 exhibition in Tehran, Shana reported on Wednesday quoting the event's organizer.

According to Kourosh Hassanpour, so far delegations from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Kurdistan, India, Oman, Armenia, Ukraine and Georgia have registered for visiting the exhibition.

"Alongside the mentioned delegations, we are expecting visitors from various countries including Sri Lanka, Germany, Romania, Serbia, France, Kenya, Greece, United Arab Emirates, Canada,



Syria, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Turkey and Slovakia which have expressed interest in paying visit to the event," Hassanpour noted.

The 11th International Exhibition of

Plastics, Rubber, Machinery and Equipment of Iran (Iran Plast 2017) is scheduled to be held on September 24-27 at Tehran International Permanent Fairgrounds.

## China plans nationwide use of ethanol gasoline by 2020

China plans to roll out the use of ethanol in gasoline nationally by 2020, state media reported on Wednesday citing a government document, as Beijing intensifies its push to boost industrial demand for corn and clean up choking smog.

It's the first time the government has set a targeted timeline for pushing the biofuel, known as E10 and containing 10 percent corn, across the world's largest car market, although it has yet to announce a formal policy.

Mandates requiring that a minimum amount of biofuel must be blended into fuel for the nation's cars, similar to the United States and Brazil, are currently set at a provincial level.

"This news has greatly boosted confidence inside the industry," said Michael Mao, analyst with Sublime China Information, adding that without government support ethanol would likely be too expensive to survive in the market.

Shares in biofuel producers rallied on

the news, with Shandong Longlive Bio-Technology Co surging 10 percent, on track for its biggest one-day gain since December 2015. Major producer COFCO Biochemical Anhui Co, a listed unit of state-owned grains trader COFCO, was up almost 6 percent.

A renewed effort to promote the nation's fledgling biofuels industry will be a further blow to major oil producers. On Saturday, the government said it has begun studying when to ban the production and sale of cars using

traditional fuels.

The news comes after the government said late last year it would aim to double ethanol output by 2020 amid growing pressure to whittle down mountains of ageing corn in state warehouses.

China built up state corn reserves estimated at about 200 million tonnes, equivalent to a year of demand, following a now discontinued government stockpiling scheme that was aimed at supporting farmers. (Source: cnbc)

## OPEC discusses extending oil cuts by more than three months

OPEC and its allies are discussing extending by more than three months the oil production cuts that expire in March 2018, potentially prolonging them well into the second half of next year in an effort to boost prices, according to people familiar with the matter.

An extension of that duration would be needed under the worst-case scenario for the oil market that OPEC ministers are now contemplating, the people said, asking not to be named because the talks were private. One option under discussion is a six-month extension, one person said.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers including Russia, Mexico and Kazakhstan pledged to reduce output by about 1.8 million barrels a day to eliminate a global surplus that was depressing prices. The deal, reached in late 2016, initially called for a six-month period, which later was extended with another nine months until

the end of March 2018.

Despite the cuts, oil prices have struggled to break above \$50 a barrel after being weighed down by the resurgence of U.S. shale production.

OPEC and its allies are now discussing a further rollover ahead of a ministerial meeting scheduled for late November in Vienna, with a three-month extension seen as the minimum, the people said. The duration will depend on multiple variables, including the level of compliance with agreed cuts by OPEC and its allies, the pace of the oil-output recovery in Libya and Nigeria, U.S. shale supply and the strength of global demand.

"We think there will be plenty of oil in 2018 with the need for OPEC to hold cuts through all of next year," said Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst at SEB AB in Oslo.

OPEC's own estimates, released Tuesday, show that even with demand for its oil likely to increase next year, the group

won't be able to reverse curbs on output if it wants to balance the market. The organization boosted its forecast for the amount of crude it needs to supply by 400,000 barrels a day to 32.8 million barrels in 2018, which remains in line with production last month.

The group's total output dropped 79,100 barrels a day to 32.755 million a day in August amid a retreat in Libyan production, according to the report.

The cartel, which pumps four of every 10 oil barrels the world consumes, said that demand for its crude in the first and second quarters of 2018 will be lower than its current production, suggesting oil inventories will increase once again in the first half of next year. OPEC pegged demand for its crude at 31.8 million barrels a day in the first quarter, and at 32.4 million in the second quarter. That compares with current output of nearly 32.8 million barrels.

West Texas Intermediate, the U.S.

marker, was little changed at \$48.21 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange at 12:47 p.m. Singapore time. It's down about 10 percent this year. Brent crude, the benchmark for more than half the world's oil, traded at \$54.14 in London on Wednesday and is almost 5 percent lower in 2017.

Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih last weekend discussed the potential extension of the deal with his counterparts from Venezuela, Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates. Al-Falih said longer-lasting curbs "would be considered in due course as market fundamentals may dictate."

While the current agreement sets a good basis to go forward, "the need to develop a plan beyond March is there and it's appropriate to look at possible scenarios," Qatar's Energy Minister Mohammed Al Sada said at a briefing in Doha on Tuesday. (Source: Bloomberg)

## Boeing a prime target in the event of U.S.-China trade war

At the second and last meeting of Donald Trump's much-hyped business advisory council in the spring, the US president asked more than a dozen US chief executives if the Treasury department should formally declare China a "currency manipulator" and impose punitive tariffs on Chinese imports.

"None of them thought it was a good idea," said one person who attended the meeting on April 11. Within 24 hours, Mr Trump had publicly backed away from his threat to start a trade war between the world's two largest economies.

No US company breathed a bigger sigh of relief after Mr Trump's currency manipulator bluff than Boeing, which was represented on the president's council by its former chairman and chief executive James McNerney.

Last week, the US aeroplane maker released its latest market forecast for China. The forecast reveals just how big a bullet Boeing dodged in April — and also just how hollow Mr Trump's China trade-war threats are likely to prove if he considers America's broader economic interests.

Four of the world's nine biggest narrow-body aeroplane fleets are operated by Chinese carriers. Boeing predicts that over the next 20 years China-based airlines will spend \$1.1tn on more than 7,200 new aeroplanes, accounting for one-fifth of global demand.



For Boeing, the China market looms even larger. Since 2013, one out of every four Boeing deliveries has gone to a Chinese carrier, a bigger share than any other country or region.

"When you think of growth you think of China," Randy Tinseth, the Boeing vice-president who oversees its global sales strategies, said at a briefing last week in Beijing.

"We haven't seen anything like the rate of expansion [of China's aviation industry] before. The growth here over such a long period of time is unprecedented."

Many of the statistics underpinning Boeing's bullish China forecast are remarkable.

For all the warranted concern about the country's rising debt levels and ever slower annual economic growth rates, it is easy to forget just how big the pay-off will be for a range of industries if the ruling Chinese Communist party can navigate some admittedly daunting financial and economic challenges.

The real prize is not China's economy overtaking that of the US economy in size, but ultimately becoming four times larger assuming that 1.4bn Chinese eventually enjoy individual wealth levels equal to 325m people in the US. That is the ultimate goal of President Xi Jinping's "Chinese dream".

In the aviation sector there are just 250 commercial airports in China and 750 in the US. Only 10 per cent of all Chinese people have a passport, compared to roughly 40 per cent in the US. And Boeing predicts that by 2020 there will be more middle-class consumers in China than there are people in the US.

For many observers, Boeing's booming China business makes it a likely casualty in any Sino-US trade war just as bilateral tensions are on the rise.

In July, Mr Trump rejected an offer by Beijing to reduce the capacity of its steel industry, telling his advisers that he preferred to impose punitive tariffs on Chinese steel exports. (Source: cnbc)



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## Time is running out for a Catalan compromise

By David Gardner

Polls suggest most would accept a middle way with greater fiscal autonomy.

In 1977, about a million people marched in Barcelona demanding the restoration of Catalonia's home rule, which the recently ended dictatorship of Francisco Franco crushed after Spain's 1936-39 civil war. It was a festive display of cross-party unity, showcasing the lead role Catalonia was to play in forging the consensus that drove the Spanish transition to democracy. How different things look four decades



Catalan separatists demanding independence from Spain fill Barcelona at Diada.

on. At this year's Diada, the Catalan national day on September 11, it was separatists seeking Catalonia's independence from Spain that filled Barcelona, as they have every year since 2012. These choreographed rallies have not broken a pane of glass. But they threaten Spain's post-Franco democratic order. The now-ended terrorist campaign by the Basque separatists of ETA was long thought a greater threat to the Spanish state. But Catalonia — vaunted as a model by scholars of minority nationalism — has slipped from Spain's once plurinational embrace. Secessionist radicals have supplanted Catalan home-rulers, reigniting Castilian Spanish nationalism, and splitting the left in Catalonia and across the country. The narrow separatist majority in the Catalan parliament, that controls the autonomous government, is pledged to press ahead with a referendum on independence on October 1. A Yes result will be binding, it says, whatever the turnout. Spain's Constitutional Tribunal, at the request of the Centre-right government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, says the plebiscite is illegal under the 1978 constitution. It has banned the referendum and threatens to prosecute all who collude in it. This has divided Catalonia, as well as Spain. With their distinct language and culture, Catalans feel themselves a nation.

### Supporters of independence

Yet even if polls show most believe they have the right to vote on their future as, for example, Scotland did in 2014, the best result for supporters of independence was 47.7 per cent in local elections two years ago — hardly the sort of majority needed to legitimize a rupture with Spain, not least to the many Spanish immigrants who live in Catalonia. Still, compared to the pageantry of civic protest this week, the spectacle of Spanish security forces trying to hunt down illicit ballot boxes and voting slips is unedifying. That is less inflammatory than, say, forcibly dissolving the regional government or rounding up separatist leaders would be. Leaders who, conscious they may have reached a ceiling of support, would surely welcome a heavy-handed response in Madrid to lift them higher. The hitherto inflexible Mr Rajoy has hinted at a new dialogue with Catalonia, but it is far from clear he sees this as a political problem to resolve rather than sedition to be crushed. Mr Rajoy and his Partido Popular helped make Catalan separatism mainstream by, in opposition, inciting the Constitutional Tribunal in 2010 to eviscerate an upgrade to Catalonia's statute of autonomy, although it had been voted into law by the Spanish and Catalan parliaments and endorsed by referendum. (The legal reasoning looked even more specious when articles deemed unconstitutional in Catalonia's statute survived unchallenged in PP-ruled regions such as Valencia). Once in power, Mr Rajoy refused to discuss a middle way between the status quo and separation that polls suggest a majority of Catalans would accept: with greater fiscal autonomy — more like the Basques, who collect their own taxes and pay an agreed portion into the Spanish treasury — and more devolved power. Now, a showdown over a vote is just over two weeks away. Professed separatist optimism may be misplaced. The leftwing anti-establishment movement Podemos, whose allies run Barcelona and which defends "the right to decide", has split, like the avowedly federalist Socialist opposition before it. Barcelona's town hall says it will not involve its staff in the vote because of the legal risks. In any case, the Catalan capital still has a majority against secession. A sterile debate about legitimacy and legal niceties will not resolve this. One place to start would be to address the Catalan belief that Madrid takes an abusive amount of their taxes — much more than the Basques put into the state kitty. Jordi Alberich, director-general of the Cercle d'Economia, a non-partisan Catalan think-tank, suggests a new institution with "shared responsibility for collecting and apportioning taxes which is, above all, transparent and fair". But if Madrid continues to treat Spain's constitution as a tablet of stone, rather than a living document to serve an evolving, dynamic modern state, albeit a fractious one, the time for such common sense will soon pass.

(Source: FT)

# U.S. gov't, Saudi regime hiding truth about 9/11: U.S. analyst

An American political analyst said both the U.S. government and its ally Saudi Arabia are "hiding information" about the financing of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

"The claims made in the NY Post article are consistent with a considerable body of facts associating the Saudi government with Osama bin Laden in particular and al-Qaeda in general. The available circumstantial evidence that members of the Saudi government funded bin Laden and the 9/11 attacks in the U.S. is sufficient such that reasonable doubt has been erased. Both the U.S. and Saudi governments are hiding information about the financing of the terrorist attacks," Dr. Mark Mason from California told the Tasnim News Agency on the 16th anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks.

Dr. Mason offers analyses of United States domestic and foreign policies for the international news media. He was trained as a biological anthropologist educated at the University of California, Berkeley. Mason has appeared on Al-Etejah TV, Russia Today, Voice of Russia radio, as well as on Life News Russia, Act-Vism Munich News, Nuestra Tele Noticias NTN24 Colombia, The Real News Network, and Radio 786 Capetown, South Africa, and KQED Forum in San Francisco, California.

Following is the full text of the interview:

**■ As you know, the New York Post recently published a report saying that "fresh evidence submitted in a major 9/11 lawsuit moving forward against the Saudi Arabian government reveals its embassy in Washington may have funded a "dry run" for the hijackings carried out by two Saudi employees, further reinforcing the claim employees and agents of the kingdom directed and aided the 9/11 hijackers and plotters." Now, the report proves that the Saudi government itself was directly involved in funding the attacks. What is your take on the role of the Saudi regime in the terror attacks?**

A: The claims made in the NY Post article are consistent with a considerable body of facts associating the Saudi government with Osama bin Laden



in particular and al-Qaeda in general. The available circumstantial evidence that members of the Saudi government funded bin Laden and the 9-11 attacks in the U.S. is sufficient such that reasonable doubt has been erased. Both the U.S. and Saudi governments are hiding information about the financing of the terrorist attacks. In addition to 28 pages from the U.S. Congressional report on 9/11 that were withheld from the public, the U.S. government possesses additional documentation that has also been withheld. Furthermore, CIA requests for copies of the bank records of bin Laden were refused by the Saudi government. The funding for these attacks did not come from Mars, and thus the current evidence points to funding from within the Saudi family, although other, additional sources outside Saudi Arabia, should not be ruled out. It is reasonable to expect that the Saudis associated with these attacks would conduct field tests on actual U.S. airline flights as claimed in the NY Post.

**■ U.S. authorities are fully aware of the role of the kingdom in the attack, but nobody in the U.S. government or Senate dares to speak out and tell the truth to the public, the victims of the**

### 9/11 and the world. Why is that so?

A: Although Senator Bob Graham and others publicly called upon the Obama administration to release the 28 pages redacted from the U.S. 9/11 report, no such action has been taken. For the U.S. government to acknowledge whatever role the Saudi government had in the funding of the 9/11 attacks would create global and domestic discomfort for the U.S. government. U.S. administrations talk endlessly about terrorism but do not care much about terrorists, or its victims, domestic or foreign. The U.S. is more concerned about maintaining comfortable relations with the Saudi government than it is concerned about the victims of the 9-11 attacks, notwithstanding that most were U.S. citizens. The U.S. simply does not care about the fate of American citizens. This attitude of indifference to human suffering has a long history. The U.S. is the only major industrialized country on Earth that does not have a free national healthcare program. This neglect results in the early deaths of tens of thousands of people each year. If the U.S. government does not care if citizens die of easily-preventable medical conditions, it surely does not care what

happens to them as victims of terrorism. Thus, the U.S. government would rather avoid the embarrassment of revealing Saudi responsibility, than to take action in accordance with bringing justice to the victims of Saudi-funded terrorism. Keep in mind that the U.S. is the biggest terrorist organization on the planet. As long as the Saudi government aids Washington in its quest to control Middle Eastern oil, the U.S. will remain silent about Saudi crimes. It's a bargain between empire and client state; big criminal and little criminal.

**■ There still exists an almost complete blackout in mainstream media of the voluminous forensic evidence that demands an immediate and independent new investigation of that determining day. Why?**

A: The U.S. corporate media function as crude propaganda outlets for U.S. imperial adventures. The U.S. media rarely criticize or investigate anything related to the U.S. government. That's not an exaggeration. The U.S. engages in global mischief, committing war crimes, political assassinations, and funding Central American death squads, among many other nefarious activities. In response, U.S. corporate media do little more than retyping press releases from the White House. This is standard practice and thus we should not be surprised that the media ignores 9/11. I suspect a new investigation is not necessary. The U.S. government possesses extensive documentation on this matter that it has not released. In the interest of brevity, allow me to state that journalists hired by the U.S. corporate mass media are selected for their ability to write elegant prose without saying anything that might disturb the powerful corporations that purchase the advertisements that pay the salaries of these journalists. The paychecks come from Wall Street banks, oil companies, and other powerful interests which do not want to read news articles or view TV segments, that disrupt their breakfast coffee. The investors and managers of Exxon-Mobil, Chevron, and JPMorgan Chase bank would be greatly annoyed by news reporting that consisted of straight answers to thoughtful questions relevant to 9/11 terrorist attack funding.

## Trump could be removed for political incompetence

By Eric Posner

President Trump's tenure has exposed a defect in our constitutional system: A president can be impeached and removed from office if convicted of high crimes and misdemeanors. He can be removed, under the conventional understanding of the 25th Amendment, if he is incapacitated by mental or physical illness. But there is no obvious solution for a president who has not committed a crime or been disabled by illness, but has lost the confidence of the public because of a failure of temperament, ideology or ability.

The current understanding of the 25th Amendment should be enlarged so as to provide authority to address this problem, through creation of a Presidential Oversight Council empowered to recommend removal of the president on political rather than medical grounds. When both the president's party and the opposing party lose confidence in the president's ability to govern, the council would stand ready to evaluate him and make a recommendation to Congress. Congress would be required to vote on its recommendation.

Certainly, the authors of the 25th Amendment had in mind presidents who suffered from illness while in office, such as Woodrow Wilson after his stroke. But they deliberately used broad language that goes beyond psychological or physical disability. The amendment refers to a president who is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." This language does not specifically refer to mental or physical factors as the source of the inability, and thus allows removal of a president whose incompetence results from other reasons — including a failure of temperament, ideology or ability.

The amendment explicitly authorizes Congress to create a "body" that, together with the vice president, is responsible for informing Congress that the president is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. There is no requirement that medical professionals serve in that body. It may consist of whomever Congress chooses.

Congress should create such a council and staff it not with medical professionals (as proposed in a bill this spring by some Democrats in Congress), but with senior elected officials of both parties — the top Republican and Democratic elected officials in Congress, plus a few governors as well. The body would be required to meet periodically and verify that the president is able to discharge his powers and duties. Of course, it would be permitted to consult with medical and mental health experts, but they would not have any power to make decisions.

### ■ The president's unfitness

The council would consist of an equal number of



**The amendment explicitly authorizes Congress to create a "body" that, together with the vice president, is responsible for informing Congress that the president is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office.**

Democrats and Republicans, and it would be able to declare the president's unfitness based on a two-thirds majority vote. Such an arrangement means that the president would remain in office unless he lost significant support from his own party, including his own vice president. This would never happen — unless the president was truly incompetent.

But I mean incompetent in a political sense, not a mental sense. By politically incompetent, I mean incompetent to exercise the powers of the presidency in a way that meets the approval of the president's party as well as the opposing party. This could be because the president's values fall outside the mainstream (either they have changed while in office or he concealed them while running for office); he lacks the interest or attention span to inform himself about issues; or he lacks management abilities and is unable to govern effectively.

What would be the advantages of this council over impeachment? The problem we currently face is that Trump may be incompetent to hold office even if he has not committed crimes of sufficient weight to justify impeachment. Impeachments are oriented toward spe-

cific acts, akin to criminal trials, while the problem we currently face — and may face in the future — concerns the president's character.

The Presidential Oversight Council, in contrast, would be able to evaluate the president's overall ability based on all of his behavior in office. Because the council would be a standing body, oversight of the president would be normalized and wouldn't require the sort of crisis that motivates impeachment proceedings.

Creating such a council would also produce some immediate practical effects. It would allow Republicans to demonstrate the gravity of their concerns about Trump's behavior without forcing them to take a stand on impeachment, which would surely fail. It would be ready to spring into action if Trump, or any future president, showed signs of incapacity to govern. It would reinforce the notion that the president does not govern alone but must maintain the support of Congress and other institutions in the much-maligned but essential "political establishment." And it would give notice to Trump and his aides that outrageous behavior will no longer be tolerated and is not shielded by the Constitution.

(Source: The Washington Post)



# U.S. stated and actual policy on Arbil independence referendum incongruent: Entessar

By: Payman Yazdani

Commenting on the U.S. incongruent policies toward Iraqi Kurdistan independence referendum, Nader Entessar says those in favour of creating an Independent Kurdish state count on U.S. support via Israel.

Sep.25 referendum on Iraqi Kurdish independence brought up by the Iraqi Kurdistan region's head (KRG), Masood Barzani not only violates Iraq's constitution but also will further destabilize the region.

While Iraqi central government, Iraq's neighbours, the U.S. and many other players has asked Masood Barzanis to withdraw from his destabilizing decision on holding independence referendum, he insists on his decision and says they will go ahead with the referendum on independence on Sept. 25 despite all these concerns.

The U.S. State Department has stated that it is concerned that the referendum in northern Iraq will distract from "more urgent priorities" such as the defeat of Islamic State militants.

For insistence of Arbil on independence referendum despite of all oppositions, only one reason could be imagined and it is "difference between stated and actual policy of the U.S."

Such a notion is not farfetched due to its destructive impact on the U.S. relation with Baghdad and its NATO ally, Turkey.

To shed further light on the ongoing



ing developments about the issue, Tehran Times reached out to Professor and Chair of Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice, University of South Alabama, Nader Entessar.

Here is the full text of his interview:

■ Can we imagine that there is a difference between the U.S. stated policy and its actual policy on the ground?

Yes, I think we should not be surprised if the stated U.S. policy and the actual policy on this issue prove to be incongruent with each other. The U.S. does not have a carefully calibrated policy in the Middle East. Today, Washington has

moods and not well-articulated policies in the Middle East or many other parts of the world.

■ Despite of regional opposition, how far the U.S. will be able to support Arbil? How will the U.S. be able to manage its differences with its regional ally, Turkey on the issue?

The U.S. will not be able to sustain its support for an independent Kurdish state without the support of some of its regional allies, especially Turkey. However, based on stated Turkish policies, Ankara will oppose the creation of an independent Kurdistan.

Besides, such a move by Washington will require a major redefinition of its relationship with Baghdad. However, those in favour of creating an Independent Kurdish state count on U.S. support via Israel, the only regional country that has supported the creation of an independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq.

■ Are there any legal ways to stop Arbil from its destabilizing decision on holding the independence referendum?

There are two major legal problems with holding the referendum as proposed by the KRG. First, the opponents of the referendum, including Barzani's Kurdish rivals, have stated that since Masoud Barzani's term as the president of Iraqi Kurdistan expired two years ago, he does not have the legal authority to decide on holding a referendum on the future of Kurdistan.

Second, constitutionally speaking, the decision to hold a referendum in Iraq's Kurdish autonomous region must be approved by the Kurdistan Regional Parliament. However, this body has not fully convened since October 2015, and no Kurdish parliament is functioning today.

Therefore, the Kurdistan Regional Parliament cannot legally approve the holding of a referendum as proposed by Mr. Barzani. However, these two legal obstacles have not prevented Barzani and the Kurdistan Regional Government from going forward with the scheduled referendum on Kurdish independence.

## Amano's behavioral paradox

By: Saeed Sobhani

Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, the adviser to the Supreme Leader in International Affairs, has recently made spectacular remarks about Amano's approach regarding the inspection of Iranian military sites. Amano has recently emphasized that, in accordance with the Additional Protocol, the Agency will have access to all sites and places in Iran (military and civilian)! In a reaction to Amano's claim, Dr. Velayati has stated:

"In the past, the IAEA had no access to military sites at all, and if so, we would not have agreed." The claim Mr. Amano has made up himself. If he was independent and his decision was based on independence, then he would have to visit the nuclear centers of the Zionist regime.

Because the presence of a nuclear weapon in the occupied territories is the greatest threat to the Middle East, and Amano is pretending not to know anything about it, and accordingly there is no response. Neither Mr. Amano, his agents and nor any other stranger have the right to visit our military sites since these centers are among the forbidden areas. This security area is closed on all strangers and those who are working for them.

These explicit stances point out that the United States Representative Nicky Haley in the United Nations has pushed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to visit military centers in our country. On the other hand, Amano's passive stance in this regard showed that he still looks at a political approach to current legal issues in the international system. Obviously, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not tolerate this approach by the IAEA.

In recent days, there have been other issues between Iran and the Agency that should be taken into consideration. In its most recent report, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has once again reaffirmed the commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran to JCPOA. The report was released just after the visit of United States Missionary Nicky Haley to the United Nations to Vienna and her visit to Yukio Amano. Prior to the release of the report, a senior IAEA official (not named) said in

a conversation with Reuters:

"There is currently no need to visit Iran's military sites such as Parchin, and the Agency will not do this solely for the purpose of sending a political message. We are not supposed to visit a military site like Parchin for the sake of sending a political message."

However, immediately after the release of the Agency's latest report, Yukio Amano, in an interview with the Associated Press, announced that, according to the regulations accepted by Iran, the Agency has access to all places without distinction between military and civilian sites!

How can the recent positions of the IAEA officials be combined? Amano claims that he can access "any place" in Iran at any time and inspect the site! This is despite the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly described its readiness to cooperate with the IAEA officials and members of the 1 + 5. Obviously, the IAEA's inspection of Iran's military sites was contrary to rational, military and security requirements and Iran would never allow the IAEA inspectors to do so. However, Amano's statements indicate that he was after a way to declare Iran's commitment to JCPOA on the one hand, and seek the American authorities approval on the other hand (especially after Nicky Haley trip to Vienna). This dual approach of the Director General of the IAEA reflects his being under the influence of powerful lobbies and his lack of independence in the face of the United States. Why did not Amano ever (especially over the past two years) have spoken about visiting military sites in Iran and inspecting them?

The fact is that the IAEA has never had an independent approach to inspect countries such as the United States. Not only during the time of Amano's presence in the IAEA, but during the presence of Mohamed ElBaradei, we could see the Agency's dual policy in dealing with legal phenomena.

So far, it has been repeatedly stressed that "mistrust towards IAEA" is one of the components that should be considered by the diplomatic and foreign policy system of our country during the post-JCPOA period. Amano played a significant role in the nuclear talks in Vienna in July 2015, especially in solving the P.M.D problem.



However, we can't simply ignore the impact of IAEA's managing authority on lobbying power.

What is certain is that our country's foreign diplomacy and foreign policy should not be silent against Amano's statements about the possibility of inspecting the military sites in Iran. It should be noted that one of the reasons for this is to pave the way for Donald Trump government to break the nuclear deal and get out of JCPOA.

As the U.S. sources have announced, Trump doesn't intend to endorse the Islamic Republic of Iran's commitment to the October Congressional report. The recent visit of Nicky Haley to Vienna and her visit to Amano also took place in the same direction. Obviously, in this equation, Amano must play a role as a "legal personality", and not as a "real and political personality"!

This is the rule that the IAEA Director General has not fulfilled so far! However, Amano's dual-paradoxical reports before signing of the nuclear deal is not forgotten yet. On the one hand, Amano is attempting to reduce the severity of his sensitivities to our country by declaring Iran's commitment to the treaties, and on the other hand, with continued emphasis on the issue of inspecting military sites in Iran, the satisfaction of Donald Trump's government in the United States. However, Amano must admit that the time of dual-policy approaches is over.

## Ending Erdogan's dreams in Europe

By: Hossein Yari

He struggle between Turkey and the European Union is becoming more and more serious every day. Turkey's membership in the European Union is next to impossible. Turkish President Erdogan and other officials of the country are completely disappointed with what is happening between Ankara and the European Union.

On the other hand, in the run up to the national elections in Germany, the two main parties of the country, the Christian Democrat and the Social Democrat, have both emphasized opposition to Ankara. Both German Chancellor Angela Merkel and his rival, Martin Schulz, believe Turkey's membership of the European Union should be stopped. This is the worst possible news for Erdogan.

The reality is that Turkey must now think seriously about other options, including membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The cold relations between Turkey and the European Union have also affected NATO's internal relations.

Many members of the European Union are also members of NATO. There-



fore, the conflict between Turkey and Europe directly affects the current ties in NATO. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg is deeply concerned about what is happening between Ankara and the European Union.

Turkey and Germany are two NATO members whose conflicts have intensified. Recent remarks by the German Chancellor on Turkey's membership in the European Union show that a good future is not waiting for the Ankara-European relations.

Angela Merkel said she would seek an end to Turkey's membership talks with the European Union in an apparent shift of her position during a televised debate

weeks before a German election.

"The fact is clear that Turkey should not become a member of the EU," Merkel said in the debate with her Social Democrat (SPD) challenger Martin Schulz. I'll speak to my (EU) colleagues to see if we can reach a joint position on this so that we can end these accession talks."

An overview of Reuters's analysis of this issue is plausible:

"The comments are likely to worsen already strained ties between the two NATO allies that have deepened since Turkish President Erdogan's crackdown on opponents in the aftermath of a failed coup attempt in July of last year."

Merkel's comments came after Schulz appeared to surprise her by vowing to push for an end to the negotiations if he was elected chancellor in the Sept. 24 federal election.

"If I become German chancellor, if the people of this country give me a mandate, then I will propose to the European Council that we end the membership talks with Turkey," Schulz said. "Whether we can win over all the countries for this I don't know. But I will fight for this."

Merkel's conservative party, the Chris-

tian Democratic Union (CDU), has long opposed Turkish membership in the European Union. But the green light for membership talks was given months before Merkel became chancellor in 2005 and she has always said that she will respect that decision, referring to the negotiations as "open ended". The accession talks have ground to a virtual halt and EU leaders have stepped up their criticism of Erdogan.

What is embedded in the analysis of Reuters, is that the victory of each Social Democratic Party and Christian Democrats in the national elections in Germany will have an adverse effect on the relations between Turkey and the European Union. The opposition of both major German parties to Turkey's membership in the European Union has caused Erdogan to be disappointed with the results of the country's general election.

The main question is, will Turkey's membership of the European Union be concluded in the near future? Will Merkel's reoccupation with power, or even the presence of Martine Schulz in power, mean the official announcement of the end of Turkey's accession negotiations in the European Union?

## Reflection on the Remarks Made by the Former U.S. Secretary of State

By: Ana Sadat Hosseini Fard

Although nearly one year has passed since the 2016 US presidential election, public opinion has not forgotten Hillary Clinton's poor performance against Donald Trump. Clinton, on the other hand, is still trying to blame her weakness in the election and the failure of this political summit on FBI and the US security agencies.



In the meantime Hillary Clinton's drastic fall in polls is more likely to be due to her apparent lack of marginalization with Republicans. Many American citizens have rightly concluded that there is essentially no distinction between Clinton and the Republicans.

The Secretary-General's recent remarks on last year's electoral competitions should be taken into consideration. Democrat nominee for the 2016 presidential election in the United States believes that using her personal emails was her biggest mistake. She believes that this mistake has changed the presidential election equations for the last year to Donald Trump.

Hillary Clinton, of course, has said she will continue to survive despite a failure in the 2016 election. As for the remarks made by the former US Secretary of State, there are some points that need to be addressed:

First, unlike what she said, Hillary Clinton's main mistake was not to use her personal email during Obama's presidency! The main mistake of Hillary Clinton and other Democrat leaders was the illegal lobbying to strike Bernie Sanders of the Democratic electoral campaign. At that time, the Democratic super-delegates played an important role in climbing Hillary Clinton in the final round of the electoral campaign.

After Hillary Clinton's defeat in New Hampshire and Sanders' spectacular showdown in this state, Democrat leaders did nothing to stop the Sanders smash. Preventing three million Democrats in New York to vote, the majority of which belonged to Sanders, led to Clinton's victory in this important state. Subsequently, Sanders did not actually act against Clinton.

While according to polls conducted in the United States, Sanders could have defeated Trump by 15 percent, Democrat Squad and the Clintons family planned the scene in a way that eventually Hillary Clinton reaches the end of the race. She eventually could not resist Donald Trump and accepted the defeat of the controversial Republican candidate.

Therefore, the main mistake of Hillary Clinton and the Democrat leaders was to prevent a healthy competition from the Democratic Party. A competition that naturally resulted in Sanders winning and his progress in the final round.

Of course, neither Hillary Clinton nor Democrat leaders admit to this big mistake. This mistake has been the subject of betrayal of Democratic supporters. In other words, Democrat leaders, by supporting Hillary Clinton, have been willing to lead Democratic supporters of the party in her favor. Hillary Clinton spoke of her political career in the United States. It's a common mistake to leave no room for maneuver in the American political space after Clinton's defeat in the 2008 presidential race (vs. Obama) and 2016 (v. Trump). Many American voters, and especially Democrat supporters, believe that there is practically no difference between Clinton and the Republicans over stubbornly fighting stances.

It should not be forgotten that during the presidency of George W. Bush, when Clinton was present at the Senate of the United States and as Senator of New York, she supported the Iraq war. Meanwhile, many Democrat supporters expected her to stand up against Bush and his entourage. Later, Hillary Clinton made another mistake defending the Iraq war after Republicans failure in Iraq! The mistake that ended in costing the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent people in Iraq and Middle East.

Of course, here's another point that can't be easily overtaken. Along with the blunders of Hillary Clinton and Democrat leaders, the FBI's actions affected Clinton's defeat. Hillary Clinton's secret disclosure of secretive and secret emails (on the eve of the election) is a well-calculated plan by US security agencies.

However, Hillary Clinton's poor performance in televised and electoral debates was the main reason for her defeat in the election. On the other hand, if the Democratic leaders would compete in a healthy election and send Sanders to compete with Trump, then the Democratic supporters would vote for sanders.

Sanders also had no security mistakes in his work, (like the disclosure of Hillary Clinton's secret emails). The same thing could increase Sanders's maneuverability against Trump. It was not unreasonable that many Republican leaders were afraid of Bernie Sanders' participation in the final round of the presidential election last year.

However, choosing Hillary Clinton as the Democratic Republican nominee put the Republican Party leaders mind at ease. Obviously, in such a situation, Hillary Clinton's talk of a return to the American political atmosphere is more like a political satire!

Hillary Clinton is trying to distract the public opinion of the United States and its fellow members of the Democratic Party from her most important mistake. An attempt that ultimately won't be to her advantage. Undoubtedly, Hillary Clinton and Democrat leaders will have to make more general comment on the secret dimensions of their rivalry with Bernie Sanders in the near future.



# Surprising solution to illegal immigration

By Daniel Pipes

As Western states prove incapable of deporting their millions of illegal migrants — the current crisis features Italy — authorities in Greece have found a surprising and simple way to convince them to take the long route back home.

The migration crisis simmered in Greece at about 10,000 illegals arriving a year. Then, thanks to a combination of violence in Syria and welcoming words from Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2015, that number surged to 10,000 illegals a day pouring into Greece. Coming mostly from Turkey, they made their way unimpeded to such favored destinations as Germany and Sweden.

Eventually, as the borders to northern Europe clanged shut, more than 62,000 migrants found themselves "stranded" (in the nomenclature of the United Nations' International Organization for Migration, or IOM) in Greece. Unable to reach their destinations of choice, they could not find work or sympathy in a Greece going through economic crisis, and they refused to return to Turkey.

At this point, the IOM director in Athens, Daniel Esdras, devised a creative solution to encourage stranded migrants to take the difficult step to give up their European dreams,

dreams for which they sacrificed time, money, self-respect, and perhaps endangered their lives, and instead to return to their homelands.

The solution, it turns out, is counterintuitive: treat them very, very nicely, with generosity and respect, then spread the word widely.

That is the experience since the opening in December 2015 of a hostel for impoverished returnees, 80 percent male, as they went through the one-to-three-month process (including in-depth interviews by embassy personnel) to arrange their departure.

Burdened with the arch-bureaucratic name of the Open Center for Migrants Registered for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (OCAVRR for short), the hostel offers free residence to illegals (or, in its delicate parlance, "irregulars") who of their own will have agreed to be returned to their countries of origin (other than war zones, namely Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, and parts of Afghanistan).

"Open center" means the residents (whom staff politely refer to as "beneficiaries") may enter and leave the building at will. Located in a posh part of Athens with excellent vistas and co-funded by the European Return Fund and the Greek

Ministry of Interior, OCAVRR provides up to 120 residents at a time with air-conditioned rooms, three catered meals a day, linens, toiletries, and basic clothing, health care and medicines, psychological counseling and social workers. It also offers Wi-Fi, large Blu-ray televisions, telephone cards to call home, one toilet per four residents, and one shower per nine residents.

Bathrooms and floors are scrubbed through the day by a cleaning service; residents need only make their beds and wash their clothing in the free laundry machines with free soap. Families get private rooms. Interpretation is offered in nine languages. A Greek staffer joked that OCAVRR may be the only building in all of Athens completely up to the fire code. He also noted that an ambulance would get to a returnee faster than to his house.

Residents must sign an "accommodation agreement." Smoking, alcohol, guests and pets are prohibited. A criminal record, drug addiction, or a communicative disease disqualify one; armed guards and an airport-style metal detector at the entrance of OCAVRR assure security.

Of the 80 OCAVRR current residents when I visited, 79

were Muslim (the other a Georgian Christian). Every meal is halal. All toilets are outfitted with water sprays. The prayer room is exclusively for use by Muslims and a refrigerator by the front door holds food for residents keeping the Ramadan fast, though a surprisingly small number of residents pray or fast.

Of the 2,200 returnees who have passed through OCAVRR, 94 percent eventually left Greece for home. On leaving, they receive \$570 in pocket money and a promise of \$1,800 for in-kind support to get them economically on their feet (livestock, a taxi, and a sewing machine are common purchases). The total spent per person is about \$4,800, less than 1 percent of the welfare, unemployment, health, and other spending on the typical long-term illegal migrant.

Subsidizing the inherently difficult process of returning home to make it more pleasant and dignified is a winning formula; indeed, every Western country suffering from the problem of illegal migrants can learn from, adapt and scale up this model to its specific circumstances. Done right, large numbers of former illegal migrants will be in business in their homelands.

(Source: The Washington Times)

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# Restless legs syndrome

Restless legs syndrome (RLS) is a disorder of the part of the nervous system that causes an urge to move the legs. Because it usually interferes with sleep, it also is considered a sleep disorder.

### Symptoms of restless legs syndrome

People with restless legs syndrome have uncomfortable sensations in their legs (and sometimes arms or other parts of the body) and an irresistible urge to move their legs to relieve the sensations. The condition causes an uncomfortable, «itchy,» «pins and needles,» or «creepy crawly» feeling in the legs. The sensations are usually worse at rest, especially when lying or sitting.

The severity of RLS symptoms ranges from mild to intolerable. Symptoms can come and go and severity can also vary. The symptoms are generally worse in the evening and at night. For some people, symptoms may cause severe nightly sleep disruption that can significantly impair their quality of life.

### Who gets restless legs syndrome?

Restless legs syndrome may affect up to 10% of the U.S. population. It affects both sexes, but is more common in women and may begin at any age, even in young children. Most people who are affected severely are middle-aged or older.

RLS is often unrecognized or misdiagnosed. This is especially true if the symptoms are intermittent or mild. Once correctly diagnosed, RLS can often be treated successfully.

### Causes of restless legs syndrome

In most cases, doctors do not know the cause of restless legs syndrome; however, they suspect that genes play a role. Nearly half of people with RLS also have a family member with the condition.

Other factors associated with the development or worsening of restless legs syndrome include:

.. Chronic diseases. Certain chronic diseases and medical conditions,



**The severity of RLS symptoms ranges from mild to intolerable. Symptoms can come and go and severity can also vary and they are generally worse in the evening and at night.**

including iron deficiency, Parkinson's disease, kidney failure, diabetes, and peripheral neuropathy often include symptoms of RLS. Treating these conditions often gives some relief from RLS symptoms.

.. Medications. Some types of medications, including antinausea drugs, antipsychotic drugs, some antidepressants, and cold and allergy medications containing sedating antihistamines, may worsen symptoms.

.. Pregnancy. Some women experience RLS during pregnancy, especially in the last trimester. Symptoms usually go away within a month after

delivery.

Other factors, including alcohol use and sleep deprivation, may trigger symptoms or make them worse. Improving sleep or eliminating alcohol use in these cases may relieve symptoms.

### Diagnosis of restless legs syndrome

There is no medical test to diagnose RLS; however, doctors may use blood tests and other exams to rule out other conditions. The diagnosis of RLS is based on a patient's symptoms and answers to questions concerning family history of similar symptoms, medication use, the presence of other symptoms or medical

conditions, or problems with daytime sleepiness.

### Treatment for restless legs syndrome

Treatment for RLS is targeted at easing symptoms. In people with mild to moderate restless legs syndrome, lifestyle changes, such as beginning a regular exercise program, establishing regular sleep patterns, and eliminating or decreasing the use of caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco, may be helpful. Treatment of an RLS-associated condition also may provide relief of symptoms.

Other non-drug RLS treatments may include:

- Leg massages
- Hot baths or heating pads or ice packs applied to the legs
- Good sleep habits
- A vibrating pad called Relaxis

Medications may be helpful as RLS treatments, but the same drugs are not helpful for everyone. In fact, a drug that relieves symptoms in one person may worsen them in another. In other cases, a drug that works for a while may lose its effectiveness over time.

Drugs used to treat RLS include:

- Dopaminergic drugs, which act on the neurotransmitter dopamine in the brain. Mirapex, Neupro, and Requip are FDA-approved for treatment of moderate to severe RLS. Others, such as levodopa, may also be prescribed.
- Benzodiazepines, a class of sedative medications, may be used to help with sleep, but they can cause daytime drowsiness.
- Narcotic pain relievers may be used for severe pain.
- Anticonvulsants, or antiseizure drugs, such as Tegretol, Lyrica, Neurontin, and Horizant.

Although there is no cure for restless legs syndrome, current treatments can help control the condition, decrease symptoms, and improve sleep.

(Source: webmd.com)

## Conditions that cause dry eyes

By Troy Bedinghaus

Most of us have experienced the feeling of dry eyes at some point. A question many doctors hear often in the examination room is, "What causes my eyes to be so dry?" Dry eye can be caused by a breakdown or a de-stabilization in the tear film. Our tears are actually quite complicated and are composed of many things including minerals, proteins, natural antibiotics, and a host of other chemicals in addition to water, mucus, and oil. When any one of these components is lacking or if there is too much of one of them, the tear film becomes unstable and a dry eye condition may occur. But what causes this to occur in the first place? Interestingly, a dry eye condition can be caused by changes elsewhere in the body. Here are several systemic problems or diseases that can cause or contribute to dry eyes.

### 1. Diabetes

Diabetes is the third leading cause of blindness in the United States. Diabetes can cause changes in the nerve tissue. Tear secretion is controlled by conversations between the corneal nerves and the lacrimal gland nerves. This feedback loop becomes interrupted when peripheral neuropathy (diabetes-related nerve damage) occurs and our eyes become dry. Also, the longer a patient is diabetic with fluctuating blood sugar, the more likely they are to experience dry eyes.

### 2. Hormones and aging changes

Hormones such as androgens, glucagon, and

corticotrophin all affect tear production. Cells that secrete mucus to help build a healthy tear film do not have nerves connected to them. They rely on hormonal communication with the rest of the body. When hormonal changes occur in postmenopausal women, for example, these cells may not get turned on to secrete the right amount of mucus and a dry eye condition occurs. This can also occur in women who use hormone replacement therapy and hormone-based birth control. Proteins that help make up the tear film are also known to decline as we get older. In addition, the volume of tears produced grows smaller. Furthermore, certain natural antibiotics and oxidative damage control proteins decline, creating an imbalance in the tear structure and dry eyes.

### 3. High blood pressure

It is estimated that between 67 to 75 million adults in the United States have high blood pressure. As we know, high blood pressure puts one at risk for heart attack, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure and peripheral vascular disease. Many patients with high blood pressure also experience dry eyes. However, in this condition, what causes the dry eye condition to develop has more to do with the medications used to treat hypertension that it does with the actual disease process. The two biggest classes of drugs that can cause dry eyes are beta blockers and diuretics. In addition, many patients who suffer from high blood pressure suffer from other medical problems such as diabetes, thyroid disease or anxiety and depression,

all of which increase the risk for developing dry eye syndrome.

### 4. Lupus

Dry eye syndrome is the most common symptom in patients who develop Lupus. Dry eye disease develops in patients with Lupus because of autoimmune antibodies and immune system debris that build up in different eye tissues. This causes a dramatic reduction in the water component of the tears and instability problems with mucus production inside the tears.

### 5. Arthritis

Adult and juvenile arthritis are very complex diseases of which we don't completely understand. However, several inflammatory conditions, such as iritis and scleritis, often develop with the disease. These conditions can be painful and difficult to treat. This inflammatory component causes inflammatory cells and debris to build up in the lacrimal gland and change the eye's surface, causing significant dryness that can lead to corneal scarring and visual compromise.

### 6. Sjogren's Syndrome

Sjogren's syndrome is a complex and chronic inflammatory disease that cause dry eyes, dry mouth, joint pain, swelling, stiffness, swollen salivary glands, dry throat, coughing, vaginal dryness and fatigue. The condition affects many more females than males and typically onsets in the fourth and fifth decades of life. Most patients develop dry eye symptoms long before a real diagnosis of Sjogren's syndrome is made.

(Source: verywell.com)

## The effects of carbonated drinks on a person's body

By Lindsay Gulla

Soft drinks and carbonated beverages have become increasingly popular in American diets. In 2005 carbonated soft drinks were deemed the most popular beverage in the United States, about three times more popular than bottled water and milk, according to the FDA. Despite claims from the Food and Drug Administration reporting the safeness of carbonated drinks, researchers have found many ways in which these kinds of beverages negatively impact your health.

### Nasal cavity pain

Carbonated drinks may cause you to experience pain in your nasal cavity. As reported at Neuroscience News, one study conducted at the University of Southern California revealed that the carbon dioxide in carbonated beverages alerts pain sensors in your nasal cavity. Carbonation from beverages like soda causes two sensations, making your mouth taste sour and a tingling feeling in your nose and throat. The burning sensation that many people feel when drinking carbonated drinks stems from nerves that respond to pain sensations and temperature in your nose and mouth.

### Heartburn

Consuming one or more carbonated drinks per day may cause you to experience nighttime heartburn. One study revealed that heartburn at night, nocturnal gastroesophageal reflux, is fairly common. Approximately 44 percent of Americans suffer from heartburn at least



**One reason that bone fractures may occur in those who drink carbonated beverages is because they contain phosphoric acid, which has been shown to deplete calcium levels and bone mass.**

once a month. If you experience heartburn on a regular basis you may be putting yourself at risk for esophageal cancer. Researchers also report that frequent heartburn may lead to laryngitis, asthma and pneumonia. If you

often have heartburn try cutting back on carbonated drinks as this may be the culprit.

### Kidney damage

Carbonated beverages have been suggested to cause damage to your kidneys. More specifically, the sugars found in carbonated drinks can impact kidney function. Kidney specialists determined that excessive consumption of carbonated beverages is a risk factor for kidney disease and may lead to inflammation and damage to your kidneys, according to a 2010 issue of the Journal of the American Society of Nephrology. If you have kidney problems, scientists suggest that you should limit the fructose-containing drinks like carbonated beverages.

### Bone health

Physically active girls who consume carbonated cola drinks are five times more likely to have bone fractures than active girls who do not drink soda, reports Grace Wyshak, associate professor in the departments of biostatistics and population and international health at the Harvard School of Public Health. After conducting a study on 460 ninth and 10th grade girls she concluded that drinking any type of carbonated beverage is linked to an increased risk for bone fractures. One reason that bone fractures may occur in those who drink carbonated beverages is because they contain phosphoric acid, which has been shown to deplete calcium levels and bone mass.

(Source: livestrong.com)

## A simple way to balance your emotions and revitalize your body

By Sandra Pawula

According to the ancient art of Jin Shin Jyutsu, you can harmonize your emotions and nourish your body by holding each of your fingers in sequence. This is a subtle yet powerful self-help approach I've personally used to great effect for several years.

Each finger is associated with an attitude that can imbalance a corresponding function and organ system via the subtle energy channels that invisibly course through your body.

- Thumb: The thumb is associated with worry, the skin surface, and the spleen and stomach organs. When this system is in balance there is an ability to give and receive nourishment.

- Index finger: The index finger is associated with fear, the muscular system, the kidney and bladder organs. We find freedom from fear and discover joy when this system is in balance.

- Middle finger: The middle finger is associated with anger, the blood essence, and the liver and gall bladder organs. When this system is in balance, our capacity for compassion is enhanced.

- Ring finger: The ring finger is associated with sadness and grief, the deep skin, and the lungs and large intestine organs. When this system is in balance there is an ability to receive and let go.

- Little finger: The little finger is associated with "trying-to" (pretense), the skeletal system, and the heart and small intestine organs. Judging, comparing, labeling and asking "why" imbalances this system. When this system is in balance, we move beyond the "trying-to" attitude and feel trust and receptivity to the inspiration of the universe.

### Harmonize your emotions and balance your body by holding your fingers

Sit comfortably, relax, rest your hands in your lap, exhale and receive the inhalation.

Then wrap one hand around the thumb of your other hand.

Once you feel a pulse or two minutes has passed, reverse and enclose the opposite thumb with your other hand. Gradually, work your way through all five fingers.

During the exercise, keep your attention lightly placed on the finger you are holding while allowing thoughts and emotions to pass by like clouds in the sky. Or, you can enhance the effect of holding each finger by coordinating it with the breath. Exhale slowly and count each set of exhalations and inhalation up to 36 times per thumb.

The entire process will take 10-15 minutes.

If you are short on time or troubled by a particular emotion or imbalance, you can hold just that one finger until you feel a sense of balance returning.

A practice as simple as holding a finger can be one of the most powerful ways to pacifying your emotions and balance your organ functions. Try it out for two weeks and see if it makes a difference in your sense of well-being.

(Source: alwayswellwithin.com)

## Watching horror films burns nearly 200 calories a time

Watching a horror film could burn off a whole bar of chocolate, according to new research released today.

Viewers who put themselves through 90 minutes of adrenaline-pumping terror can use up as much as 113 calories, close to the amount burned during a half-hour walk and the equivalent to a chocolate bar.

The movie top of the list of calorie-burners was found to be the 1980 psychological thriller The Shining, with the average viewer using up a whopping 184 calories.

Jaws took the runner-up spot, with viewers burning on average 161 calories, and The Exorcist came third, with 158 calories.

The University of Westminster study measured the total energy expenditure of ten different people as they watched a selection of frightening movies.

Scientists recorded their heart rate, oxygen intake and carbon dioxide output - and discovered the number of calories used increased by on average a third during the films.

The research also revealed films featuring moments designed to make viewers jump in terror are the best calorie-burners, as they cause heart rates to soar.

Dr Richard Mackenzie, senior lecturer and specialist in cell metabolism and physiology at the University of Westminster, said: "Each of the ten films tested set pulses racing, sparking an increase in the heart rate of the case studies.

"As the pulse quickens and blood pumps around the body faster, the body experiences a surge in adrenaline.

"It is this release of fast acting adrenaline, produced during short bursts of intense stress (or in this case, brought on by fear), which is known to lower the appetite, increase the Basal Metabolic Rate and ultimately burn a higher level of calories."

Helen Cowley, editor of the movie rental company LOVEFILM - which commissioned the University of Westminster study - said: "We all know the feeling of wanting to hide behind the sofa or grab a pillow when watching scary or hair raising scenes, but this research suggests that maybe those seeking to burn some calories should keep their eyes on the screen."

(Source: The Telegraph)



## Masouleh dossier at final stage for UNESCO tag

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The process of compiling an all-inclusive dossier for possible inscription of Masouleh, a historical village in northern Iran, has entered its delicate final phase, a cultural heritage official says.



A view of Masouleh, a touristic village in northern Iran

"The dossier for UNESCO registration of Masouleh is almost ready to be submitted to the UN body," IRNA quoted Farhad Nazari as saying on Wednesday.

Nazari, who presides over the office for inscription of properties and revitalization of intangible and natural heritage, described Masouleh as a unique tourist attraction and its inclusion to UNESCO list a significant privilege for the country.

Roughly a millennium old, Masouleh is one of the most famous villages in Iran— and hence one of its most touristic ones.

Also known as the historical city of Masouleh, it features the earth-colored houses that are stacked photogenically on top of one another like giant Lego blocks, clinging to a mountainside so steep that the roof of one house forms the pathway for the next.

The existence of numerous graveyards inner and outside of the city proves its old texture. Storied and terracing plan of the city is in parallel to the mountain slope.

In summer, local and foreign tourists swarm like ants across the village's rooftops and through its narrow passageways, according to the Lonely Planet.

The combination of such architecture with natural landscapes can be a national and international touristy center and the only way of the inhabitants' living. As all people could directly see the main facade of houses, the local artists and artisans did their best in this part of building.

Having an opulent tourist circuit with 22 UNESCO World Heritage sites, Iran seeks to acquire greater share of the global tourism industry by 2025.

Masuleh is approximately 60 km southwest of Rasht and 32 km west of Fuman. The village is 1,050 meters above sea level in the Alborz (or Elburz) mountain range, near the southern coast of the Caspian Sea.



### ROUND THE GLOBE

## Archaeological site of Troy

Troy, with its 4,000 years of history, is one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world. Its extensive remains are the most significant and substantial evidence of the first contact between the civilizations of Anatolia and the burgeoning Mediterranean world.

Excavations started more than a century ago have established a chronology that is fundamental to the understanding of this seminal period of the Old World and its cultural development. Moreover, the siege of Troy by Mycenaean warriors from Greece in the 13th century BC, immortalized by Homer in The Iliad, has inspired great artists throughout the world ever since.



Hadrianic Odeon in Troy, Turkey

Troy is located on the mound of Hisarık, which overlooks the plain along the Turkish Aegean coast, 4.8 km from the southern entrance to the Dardanelles. The famous archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann undertook the first excavations at the site in 1870, and those excavations could be considered the starting point of modern archaeology and its public recognition.

Research and excavations conducted in the Troia and Troas region reveal that the region has been inhabited for 8,000 years. Throughout the centuries, Troy has acted as a cultural bridge between the Troas region and the Balkans, Anatolia, the Aegean and Black Sea regions through migration, occupation, trade and the transmission of knowledge.

A total of 24 excavation campaigns, spread over the past 140 years, have revealed many features from all the periods of occupation in the citadel and the lower town.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Iran offers ‘best use of communication technologies’ to spur tourism growth

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Iran's tourism chief on Wednesday urged global representatives at a UNWTO General Assembly to make the best use of digital technologies particularly in communication arena as a means for developing worldwide tourism and hospitality sectors.

"I believe that today information and communication technologies should be used more than ever for policy making and implementing tourism programs as well as empowering private and voluntary sectors," Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Director Asghar Mounesan said.

Mounesan who doubles as vice president made the remarks in an address to the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly meeting being held in Chengdu, China, from September 11 to 16.

Meanwhile, he reminded attendees of "Tourism and the Digital Transformation" as the dominant theme for the 2018 World Tourism Day.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official explained how tourism becomes an integral part of the government's structure for achieving sustainable development goals and how it is effectively used in national development programs.

He went on to say that tourism has long been accepted as an effective tool for development, but a challenge that has been recently raised is how to potentially impart this decentralized and heterogeneous industry to a driving potency for inclusive and sustainable growth with making a positive impact on local economies.

Mounesan added that a very important but basic step towards inclusive tourism management is to adopt an integrated approach by all government



Tourism ministers and high-profile representatives of various countries pose for a photo during the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly in Chengdu, China, September 13, 2017.

institutions for the formulation and implementation of tourism policies, which involves the development of a strong co-operation structure between institutions of public and private sectors.

"The development of tourism based on innovation and entrepreneurship along with initial investment in human capital is the next step that should be pursued with the goal of creating inclusive tourism institutions," the official explained.

"On behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I express my gratitude to the United Nations World Tourism Organization for its continued participa-

tion in the promotion of sustainable tourism development. I invite all of us to work together to create more inclusive tourism and accountability for future generations," he concluded.

The biannual UNWTO General Assembly discusses how to advance the contribution of tourism to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and define the actions of the Organization for the period 2018-2019.

"A unique opportunity to get the [tourism] sector united towards the common goal of making tourism a true driver of sustainable development," said UNWTO

Secretary-General Taleb Rifai prior to his arrival in China.

A high-level debate on tourism and the SDGs, a special session on smart tourism, the celebrations of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017, the conversion of the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics into an international Convention and current trends of the tourism sector are all integrated into the agenda of the 22nd session of the UNWTO General Assembly.

The assembly will also discuss the lines of action and key priorities of the Organization for the two coming years.

## World Heritage Volunteers help raise awareness of Persian qanats

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — A cluster of World Heritage Volunteers has spotlighted essentials to conserve and promote Persian qanats, a UNESCO registered heritage that provides exceptional testimony to cultural traditions in desert areas with an arid climate.

Within the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Education Program, the World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) Initiative was launched in 2008 in collaboration with the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) to mobilize and involve young people and youth organizations in World Heritage preservation and promotion.

Yazd, a central Iranian city famous for its aqueducts (qanats), played host to the World Heritage Volunteers campaign from August 23 to September 6.



The World Heritage Volunteers pose for a photo at a lush garden in Yazd, central Iran, on September 6, 2017.

"The event aimed at raising awareness about the vulnerable condition of the qanat and promoted its value and importance, while involving youth in the conservation and the improvement of the conditions of the aqueduct," UNESCO reported.

The program was organized in close collaboration with the Sarvsaan Cultural Heritage Group, the International Center on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Systems (ICQHS), Tamadon Karizi Consulting Eng., Karizban NGO, Public library of Mehriz, and Puppet Museum of Kashan.

Throughout the arid regions of Iran, many agricultural and permanent settlements are still supported by the ancient qanat system of tapping alluvial aquifers at the heads of valleys and conducting the water along underground tunnels by gravity.

## Supreme Court allows broad Trump refugee ban

**WASHINGTON/SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters)** — The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed President Donald Trump to broadly implement a ban on refugees entering the country from around the world.

The justices granted a request from the Trump administration to block a federal appeals court decision that, according to the Justice Department, would have allowed up to 24,000 additional refugees to enter the United States than would otherwise have been eligible.

The Supreme Court ruling gives Trump

a partial victory as the high court prepares for a key October hearing on the constitutionality of Trump's controversial executive order, which banned travelers from six Muslim-majority countries and limited refugee admissions.

The March 6 order suspended travel for people from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days and locked out most aspiring refugees for 120 days in a move the Republican president argued was needed to prevent terrorist attacks and allow the government to put in place more stringent vetting procedures.

The order took effect in late June, following a Supreme Court ruling that narrowed the scope of lower court rulings.

In a ruling last week, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins of legal U.S. residents would be exempt from the travel ban.

The Justice Department opted not to appeal that part of the 9th Circuit decision.

However, the 9th Circuit also ruled that Trump's refugee policy was too broad, and the court allowed entry to refugees from around the world if they had a formal offer from a resettlement agency.

The Justice Department appealed, and the full Supreme Court on Tuesday sided with the administration in a one-sentence order.

Naureen Shah, Amnesty International USA's senior director of campaigns, said the refugee ban is inherently cruel.

"The Supreme Court today has dealt yet another devastating blow to vulnerable people who were on the cusp of obtaining safety for themselves and their families," she said. "They continue to be subjected to unimaginable violence and fear while their lives are in limbo."

## How to explore a city like a local using your smartphone

It's now easier than ever to get travel advice from locals, and you don't even have to talk to them in person.

Sure, you can still ask a stranger where to find some good sushi, but there is no guarantee they will be interested in, or qualified to, help you.

Thankfully, there are several smartphone apps that cut out those potentially awkward moments but still provide valuable recommendations from those in the know.

Below are edited excerpts from a full article by Justin Sablich that the New York Times released on September 8, 2107, in which Sablich briefs three apps he has recently tested out while roaming the streets of New York:

### ■ Spotted by Locals

This app costs \$3.99 per city (67 major cities are available worldwide), while the others are, for the most part, free. But you get what you pay for: this was the most well-rounded of the three I tried. One of its many perks is that it runs en-

tirely offline, so you do not need to stress about data usage.

Like all of these apps, Spotted by Locals provides recommendations submitted by actual local residents on where to eat, shop, be entertained and more. The idea is to keep you away from tourist traps and steer you toward hidden gems.

I used it to explore a neighborhood where I used to be a local (Astoria, Queens) to see if it could deliver. The fact that it included a wide assortment of suggestions in a borough not named Manhattan was impressive enough, compared to the other apps I tested, but the recommendations themselves were also spot on.

### ■ Cool Cousin

This app scored points for originality as well as its practicality, and is perfect for travelers who don't have any cool cousins of their own.

Cool Cousin gives you access to contributors in 40 large cities around the world. Each "cousin" has a profile, with

name, age, photo, occupation and a lot more information. The idea is to add those to your network who seem to have similar tastes to your own. After each add, the cousin's recommendations are added to your map and broken down into eight different categories, such as food, coffee, night life and outdoors.

The app seems geared toward younger travelers — it feels like a cross between Facebook, Tinder and Foursquare — and most of the cousins themselves have an appropriately hipster look. For New York, this leads to a higher concentration of recommendations below 14th Street in Manhattan and several in Brooklyn (very few in Queens), and heavy in the food and night life areas.

### ■ Like a Local

Well-designed and easy to navigate, Like a Local has fewer contributors than the other apps (28, providing 197 tips for New York at the time of writing) but it is in more cities than the others (over 300) and best functions as a complementary

tool.

The recommendations are detailed yet concise, giving an excellent general overview and a "special tip" for each location. For example, at the Brazilian restaurant Beco in Brooklyn, Kelly advises: "Come early because the restaurant's seating space is limited. CA\$H ONLY."

You don't have to sign up to use the app, so you can dig right in and explore — though if you want to use the app offline, you have to pay \$1.99 per city.

There's also an option to "ask locals," which works like a message board. I asked for Upper East Side restaurant recommendations (it is a neighborhood not represented well on any of the apps) and after a week had yet to get a response.

The recommendations included mainstream spots like St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Central Park more often than the other apps did. These are not underappreciated landmarks, but not necessarily bad places to check out if you've never been.

(Source: The New York Times)



# Engineless Airbus Perlan rides mountain wave winds to 52,000 feet altitude

The Airbus Perlan Mission II, the world's first initiative to send an engineless aircraft to the edge of space, made history on September 11 in the Patagonia region of Argentina by soaring to over 52,000 feet and setting a new world altitude record for gliding.

"We are celebrating an amazing victory for aerospace innovation and scientific discovery today, and we're so thankful to all the volunteers and sponsors whose years of tireless dedication have made this achievement possible," said Ed Warnock, CEO of The Perlan Project.

"We will continue to strive for even higher altitudes, and to continue our scientific experiments to explore the mysteries of the stratosphere. We've made history, but the learning has just begun."

## ■ Mountain waves

The Airbus Perlan Mission II uses a phenomena called "mountain waves" to achieve such impressive results without an engine.

"Mountain waves form when winds of at least 15 knots (27.78 kilometers per hour) cross over a mountain range perpendicularly and the atmosphere is stable," the Perlan website explains. A "glider uses the upward moving part of this wave system to climb."

Mountain waves are rare and appear intermittently in only a few places on Earth. So, the Airbus Perlan II flew from



Comandante Armando Tola International Airport in El Calafate, Argentina. The mountain ranges of Patagonia is one of

few hotspots for mountain waves.

Airbus Perlan's ultimate goal is to get a glider "to the edge of space," which

Perlan is defining as 90,000 feet (27,4 kilometers) up — a stratospheric height much further up than the cruising altitude of your typical plane, but a far cry from the 100-kilometer Karman line that most consider to be the actual boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space.

## ■ Flying higher

"With every Airbus Perlan Mission II milestone, we continue to learn more about how we can fly higher, faster and cleaner. But we also learn that aviation still has the power to surprise us, thrill us, and motivate us to find new frontiers of endeavor," said Tom Enders, Airbus CEO.

Perlan's outstanding aviation success is the result of bold thinking. It's this kind of thinking that is the cornerstone of our vision for the future of Airbus, which we hope will inspire a new generation of aerospace explorers and innovators."

Chief pilot Jim Payne and co-pilot Morgan Sandercock completed this historic Perlan 2 flight from Comandante Armando Tola International Airport in El Calafate, Argentina, surpassing the previous 50,727-foot world record for glider altitude that was set in the unpressurized Perlan 1 by The Perlan Project founder Einar Enevoldson and lead project sponsor Steve Fossett in 2006.

(Source: nextbigfuture.com)

**The Airbus Perlan Mission II uses a phenomena called "mountain waves" to achieve such impressive results without an engine.**

## Researchers find 'internal clock' within live human cells

A team of scientists has revealed an internal clock within live human cells, a finding that creates new opportunities for understanding the building blocks of life and the onset of disease.

"Previously, a precise point of a cell in its life cycle could only be determined by studying dead cells," explains Alexandra Zidovska, an assistant professor of physics at New York University and the senior author of research, which appears in the latest issue of the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). "However, with this discovery, which shows that the nucleus exhibits rapid fluctuations that decrease during the life cycle of the cell, we can enhance our knowledge of

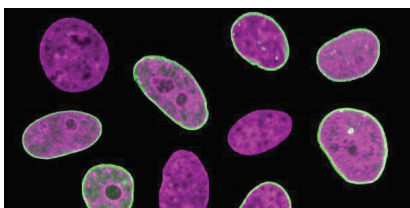
both healthy and diseased human cells."

The study, which also included Fang-Yi Chu, an NYU doctoral candidate, and Shannon Haley, an NYU undergraduate, sought to expand our understanding of the cell nucleus during the cell cycle.

It's long been established that the shape and size of the cell nucleus change dramatically during a cell's life. Unknown, however, was whether or not the nucleus changes its shape over short periods of time. This was largely due to technical limitations of carrying out such measurements in living cells.

## ■ Fluorescent microscope

To capture this dynamic, the scientists used a state-of-the-art fluorescent micro-



scope that enables them to see extremely small and very fast shape changes of the cell nucleus in living cells.

The researchers discovered that the human cell nucleus has a previously undetected type of motion: its nuclear envelope flickers, or fluctuates, over a period of a few seconds. Notably, the amplitude of these changes in shape decreases over

time during the cell cycle. Moreover, this motion marks the first physical feature that systematically changes with the cell cycle.

"Therefore, this process can serve as an internal clock of the cell, telling you at what stage in the cell cycle the cell is," explains Zidovska. "We know that structural and functional errors of the nuclear envelope lead to a large number of developmental and inherited disorders, such as cardiomyopathy, muscular dystrophy, and cancer. Illuminating the mechanics of nuclear shape fluctuations might contribute to efforts to understand the nuclear envelope in health and disease."

(Source: en.farsnews.com)

## Shahid Rajaei Port Operator to Be Selected Shortly

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be inked between Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) and IRGC, Army Navy Forces and Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) in order to offer relief and rescue services to the marine and sea corps, Public Relations Dept. of PMO reported.

For his part, Managing Director of Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad pointed to the signing and sealing the aforementioned MOU concurrent with the International Maritime Day and said: "As stated in above, the MOU was inked to ramp up cooperation of the

two organizations in the field of relief and rescue."

Accordingly, international conventions, ports and maritime organizations were obliged to offering quality relief and rescue services to the marine cadets of other countries, he maintained.

Considering the vastness of waters and seas in the country, an organization cannot solely carry out maritime relief and rescue services, rather, it requires the cooperation and interaction of all maritime organizations, the managing director stated.

He referred to about 21 relief and rescue vessels, six helicopters, one plane and

two hovercrafts owned by PMO and added: "Earlier, a MOU had been signed and sealed with IRGC Navy Force in the field of relief and rescue services. Meanwhile, it is agreed to ink another deal with CAO to broaden and enhance mutual cooperation."

He, who is deputy minister of Roads and Urban Development, added: "The issue of connecting the rail to ports has been strictly emphasized by the minister of Roads and Urban Development."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said: "Currently, ports of Khorramshahr, Imam Khomeini (RA) and Shahid Rajaei have

been connected to the rail network in the south while Amirabad Port is connected to the rail network in the north."

Given the above issue, Bandar Anzali has recently been connected to the rail network, he observed.

In the end, the senior official pointed to the other salient achievements of his organization as follows: promoting the sense of competitiveness in ports of country to get lion's share of transport in international level and added: "Also, we are trying to set up a network for transporting goods between the main and sub-main ports of the country."

## Productivity Accounts for 65% Economic Growth's Share in Post-Sanctions Era

Productivity accounted for 65 percent (65%) share of economic growth in post-sanctions era. In the same direction, productivity made up for 35% of growth rate in the 6th Five-Year Socioeconomic and Cultural Development Plan.

Roya Tabatabaei Yazdi Chief Executive of National Iranian Productivity Organization (NIPO) announced the above statement in a weekly press briefing held at the venue of Organization and put the economic growth rates from 2014 to 2016 at 4.55 percent (4.55%).

She put the current share of productivity in the country at between 15-20 percent, so that effective steps should be taken to increase productivity share at 35 percent (35%).

The senior official of the Organization revealed the organizing International Cost Accounting Con-

ference at the end of Iranian month of Shahrivar (to end Sept. 22) which will be held for three days and added: "This prestigious Conference will be held in the presence of intellectuals, thinkers, and luminaries from Germany, Thailand, India, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam."

Latest theoretical discussions and introducing top and successful experiences in implementation of MFCA (Material Flow Cost Accounting) will be discussed in this edition of Conference, she maintained.

Material flow cost accounting (MFCA) is a management tool that assists organizations in better understand the potential environmental and financial consequences of their material and energy practices and seeks to improve them via changes in those practices.[1] It does so by assessing the physical material flows in a company or



a supply chain and assign adequate associated costs to these flows, the head of NIPO ended.

## IRISL's Insurance Coverage at \$1b: CEO

The insurance coverage of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) stands at \$1 billion.

Managing Director of IRISL Mohammad Saedi announced the above statement in an interview with our correspondent and pointed to the widespread activity of his company in post-sanctions era and said: "Giant steps have been taken in line with boosting insurance coverage of shipping company both in national and international levels."

Speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony held on the occasion of World Maritime Day, he said: "International Maritime Or-

ganization (IMO) selects a day as Maritime Day every year."

Protecting and preserving environment is emphasized by the Organization, he said, adding: "In addition, this prestigious Organization has placed special emphasis on ports, vessels and establishing relationship with people in the current year's motto of the Organization."

Maritime commerce is considered as the world's first business because of inexpensiveness of this industry, he maintained.

Two-thirds of the world's population lives on the margin of shores, he said,

adding: "Approx. 80 percent of world's important commercial cities are located on near the seas."

Turning to acceptable development of ports in the country and vast transportation and fishery capacities in the southern seas and also existence of 4,700 km of coast in southern part of the country, he said: "Port cities in country's southern region enjoy high potential to supply drinking water from sea which resulted in the development of coastal cities as well."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the senior executive official of the company pointed to the safe, efficient and advanced ports

coupled with the skilled and competent manpower in the maritime industry as one of the main factors behind the growth of sea transport in the country and added: "For this purpose, the company has taken giant strides in line with materializing objectives of resistance economy in the country."

In the end, managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran pointed to the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and said: "After the implementation of JCOPA, rosy and bright future was opened for the Islamic Iran in international level especially in maritime industry."

## Iranian researchers find link between Alzheimer's, bipolar disorder

Iranian researchers at Royan Research Institute have proved that the agent responsible for Alzheimer's disease is similar to that in patients with bipolar disorder.

Dr. Kourosh Shahpasand discussed with MNA correspondent the latest findings of his team in regard to the Alzheimer's disease and bipolar disorder, saying "after years of conducting research and experiments on Alzheimer's and its links with other diseases, we reached the conclusion that the agent responsible for destroying brain cells in patients with diabetes due to stress of high blood sugar, forms in the



Dr. Kourosh Shahpasand

brain of the patients and kills brain cells."

He went on to add, "so far, it wasn't clear which agent caused the death of brain cells in diabetes, but in this project we managed to discover this agent."

One could say that patients with diabetes are more at risk of the Alzheimer's disease. In fact, Alzheimer's is called type 3 diabetes," he added.



## ■ Bipolar disorder

Dr. Shahpasand maintained, "our research on cells of patients with bipolar disorder revealed that the agent responsible for Alzheimer's disease is the same agent for the bipolar disorder."

Noting that the project aims at vaccinating people against Alzheimer's, he said "since the agent in both cases is the same, we can use the treatment for Alzheimer's disease for patients with bipolar disorder"

According to him, the project has proved results in a cellular environment and needs to be conducted on animal and human environments as well.

(Source: en.mehrnews.com)

## Could computer vaccines start a new approach to preventing cyber-attacks?

There were 638m attempted ransomware cyber-attacks in 2016, according to one report. And with several high-profile attacks already committed this year, the numbers for 2017 may be even higher. Perhaps it's time then for a new approach to tackling cyber-attacks, one that focuses not on defending against them but preventing them from happening in the first place.

Some cyber-security experts are already working on what they describe as "vaccines" to stop attacks reaching our computers or data. But this kind of prevention could just be the start. If we can avoid metaphors that imagine computers as things that need defending and instead use new words that don't suggest ways to attack them, then we might be able to develop far more effective preventative technologies.

In the case of the recent Petya ransomware attack, researchers developed a vaccine in the form of a single computer file that would instantly disable one type of virus as soon as it infected a computer, before it could cause any damage. This is different from traditional anti-virus software that tries to spot and remove any malware on a computer, but this could be after it has done its work.

This approach has been little used until now and could, at least in the short term, offer a slightly different approach to cyber-security. But vaccines are still a way of addressing viruses after they have been downloaded. Even defences such as firewalls try to stop attacks from reaching a computer but they don't prevent the attack in the first place.

(Source: The Conversation)

## Planet 9 is not a stolen exoplanet, say scientists

Scientists believe there may be a huge planet sitting at the far reaches of the Solar System. Since new evidence of Planet 9's existence emerged a few years ago, experts have been weighing in on how it might have ended up in its distant orbit. One of the most popular explanations is that it was stolen by the sun in an interstellar takeover 4.5 billion years ago.

Now a team of researchers from the UK and Switzerland have largely ruled out this hypothesis, with their calculations showing the probability that Planet 9 was captured by the sun in this way is "almost zero."

The idea of a ninth planet existing at the edge of the Solar System, far beyond Neptune, was put forward in 2014. Two years later, researchers from the California Institute of Technology discovered that several objects in the Kuiper Belt — a vast shell of icy bodies surrounding the Solar System — were traveling along orbital paths that could be explained by the presence of a massive planet.

Mike Brown, one of the scientists involved in the study, said at the time, "This would be a real ninth planet. There have only been two true planets discovered since ancient times, and this would be a third. It's a pretty substantial chunk of our solar system that's still out there to be found, which is pretty exciting."

(Source: Newsweek)



## Third of Earth's soil is acutely degraded due to agriculture

A third of the planet's land is severely degraded and fertile soil is being lost at the rate of 24bn tones a year, according to a new United Nations-backed study that calls for a shift away from destructively intensive agriculture.

The alarming decline, which is forecast to continue as demand for food and productive land increases, will add to the risks of conflicts such as those seen in Sudan and Chad unless



remedial actions are implemented, warns the institution behind the report.

"As the ready supply of healthy and productive land dries up and the population grows, competition is intensifying for land within countries and globally," said Monique Barbut, executive secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) at the launch of the Global Land Outlook.

"To minimize the losses, the outlook suggests it is in

all our interests to step back and rethink how we are managing the pressures and the competition."

The Global Land Outlook is billed as the most comprehensive study of its type, mapping the interlinked impacts of urbanization, climate change, erosion and forest loss. But the biggest factor is the expansion of industrial farming.

Heavy tilling, multiple harvests and abundant use of agrochemicals have increased yields at the expense of long-term sustainability. In the past 20 years, agricultural production has increased three-fold and the amount of irrigated land has doubled, notes a paper in the outlook by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European commission. Over time, however, this diminishes fertility and can lead to abandonment of land and ultimately desertification.

The JRC noted that decreasing productivity can be observed on 20% of the world's cropland, 16% of forest land, 19% of grassland, and 27% of rangeland.

"Industrial agriculture is good at feeding populations but it is not sustainable. It's like an extractive industry, said Louise Baker, external relations head of the UN body. She said the fact that a third of land is now degraded should prompt more urgent action to address the problem.

"It's quite a scary number when you consider rates of population growth, but this is not the end of the line. If governments make smart choices the situation can improve," Baker said, noting the positive progress made by countries like Ethiopia, which has rehabilitated 7m hectares (17m acres).

The impacts vary enormously from region to region. Worst affected is sub-Saharan Africa, but poor land management in Europe also accounts for an estimated 970m tones of soil loss from erosion each year with impacts not just on food production but biodiversity, carbon loss and disaster resilience. High levels of food consumption in wealthy countries such as the UK are also a major driver of soil degradation overseas.

The paper was launched at a meeting of the UNCCD in Ordos, China, where signatory nations are submitting voluntary targets to try to reduce degradation and rehabilitate more land. On Monday, Brazil and India were the latest countries to outline their plan to reach "land degradation neutrality".

However, the study notes that pressures will continue to grow. In a series of forecasts on land use for 2050, the authors note that sub-Saharan Africa, south Asia, the Middle East and North Africa will face the greatest challenges unless the world sees lower levels of meat consumption, better land regulation and improved farming efficiency.

(Source: The Guardian)

## LEARN ENGLISH At The Airport

A: Next please! Hello sir, may I see your **passport** please?  
B: Yes, here you go.  
A: Will you be **checking** any bags.  
B: Yes, I'd like to check three pieces.  
A: I'm sorry, sir. Airline policy allows only two pieces of checked luggage, at twenty kilograms each, plus one **piece** of **carry-on luggage**. I will have to charge you extra for the additional suitcase.  
B: What? Why! I am taking an **intercontinental** flight! I'm flying sixteen thousand kilometers! How am I supposed to only take two, twenty kilo bags? That's absurd!  
A: I am sorry, sir, there's nothing I can do. You cannot **board** the flight with that large bag either. Carry-on bags must fit in the overhead compartment or under your seat. That bag is clearly too big.  
B: Now I see. You charge **next to nothing** for an international ticket, but when it comes to charging for any other small thing, you charge **an arm and a leg**! So tell me, miss, how much I will have to pay for all of this.  
A: Let's see... six hundred and twenty-five US dollars.  
B: That's more than my **round-trip** ticket!

### ■ Key vocabulary

**passport**: a document showing the identity of someone when outside his country  
**check**: register bags with the airline and give them to be put on the plane  
**piece**: piece of luggage; one bag  
**carry-on luggage**: the bags that one can carry onto the plane  
**intercontinental**: between continents  
**board**: get on the plane  
**next to nothing**: very cheap, inexpensive  
**an arm and a leg**: phrase used to indicate that something is very expensive  
**round trip**: a trip from one place to another and back, usually over the same route  
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**  
**metal detector**: a device that senses the presence of metal  
**boarding pass**: a pass that authorizes a passenger to get on an airplane  
**scale**: an instrument or machine for weighing  
**layover**: a short stop or break in a journey, usually imposed by scheduling requirements

(Source: irlanguage.com)

# MP warns to seek answers from environment chief on GMOs, biodiversity

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A parliamentarian has threatened to seek answers from the new environment chief regarding his recent controversial comments on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and biodiversity.

Within only a month after the appointment of Issa Kalantari as Iran's environment chief, his comments on environmental issues and the Department of Environment policies and priorities, as well as his actions are arising serious questions among those who have genuine concerns about the environment.

"We should not sacrifice water for protecting cheetahs, or plant species..." "Issues such as genetically modified organisms are of secondary importance compared to water," are among comments Kalantari made during a press



Issa Kalantari

conference on September 4. The vice president for parliamentary

group of environment Jabbar Kouchakinejad has said that in case Kalantari fails

to comply with the country's general policies [outlined by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei] and other constitutional documents on environmental policies, Majlis will certainly take a hold.

"I advise Mr. Kalantari to read more about environmental issues," Tasnim news agency quoted Kouchakinejad as saying.

The sixth five-year development plan and other founding documents are clearing the way for environmental policies the Department of Environment is supposed to follow and Mr. Kalantari cannot decide to give priority to one particular issue and ignore other issues, he added.

Kouchakinejad went on to say that "the environment chief must move forward according to the constitutional laws and if he fails to do so, Majlis will get involved."

## Green campaigners passing on environmental messages

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Despite the scorching hot days of summer green campaigners didn't stop passing on environmental messages over the last but one week of the Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (August 23- September 22).

Environmentalists and the scouts in the north-central province of Qazvin cleaned up Bahram-Abad road from trashes. It was the fifth consecutive year that the group marked the national days of cleaning up roadside recreation areas and tourist attractions (falling on September 7-8).

Environmentalist and the scouts held a memorial service dedicated to the memory of three rangers from Astara, northern Gilan province, who have been died in the line of duty.

On the occasion of the national days of cleaning up roadside recreation areas and tourist attractions a group of environmental NGOs, rangers, the scouts, and environmentalist

collaboratively cleaned up a part of the Eynak wetland, in Rasht, Gilan province.

Flamingo chicks in Bakhtegan wetland, Fars province, were saved from certain death by the help of environmental departments of the province, NGOs, and the locals. Flamingo chicks which were stranded in the briny shallow waters of Bakhtegan Lake were saved by the water transferred to the lake from the farming lands wells.

Pol Murd, a village in Mamasani, Fars Province, was cleaned up from the garbage by the environmentalist.

As per a request made by environmental groups Affabad Street in Shiraz, Fars province, turned into a sidewalk for two days on September 8 and 9. As planned, two roads will turn into sidewalks every month in Shiraz.

A Tehran-based NGO promoted using cloth bags instead of plastic bags at the bakeries and among citizens.

## 'Shoebox' to cheer deprived schoolchildren

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The air of back-to-school season is in the air and fundraising campaigns across Iran are collecting money and stationery products for schoolchildren of low-income families.

Shoebox, a movement established by Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, calls Tehrani citizens to fill 15,000 shoeboxes with their donations for deprived schoolchildren all over the country.

"We provide 15,000 shoeboxes at Tehran cultural centers for 15,000 students, which are supported by the foundation," the head of Tehran Municipality Artistic Cultural Organization Mahmoud Salahi announced.

The scheme is co-organized by the Tehran Municipality and the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, said an official with the municipality.

The parents can ask their children to fill the boxes with everything they think their underprivileged friends need including stationary products or even money, he said.

The children can cover shoeboxes with a

gift-wrap and put a letter for their friend, he said.

The stations of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation will collect the shoeboxes on September 14 and 15, he said.

Last year, a total of 3 billion rials (about 75,000 dollars) was collected through shoeboxes, he said.

Salahi also explained about other programs initiated by the foundation to raise money for deprived schoolchildren.

"With the beginning of academic year, we will distribute one million pockets amongst school children to collect money for donation," Salahi said.

Named 'Kindness Pocket', they will be distributed in schools in deprived areas to help poor schoolchildren who are not under coverage of the foundation, he explained.

He said that another fundraising will be held on October 11 across the country to collect donations for children.

At the beginning of the school year in Iran it is customary for people to hold humanitarian events to donate essential items and money for the disadvantaged students.

## Babol Noshirvani University of Technology According to the Global Ranking System,

## Babol Noshirvani University of Technology Wins 1<sup>st</sup> Rank among 18 Iranian Universities

**Babol Noshirvani University of Technology** managed to win the first rank among other universities and academic centers of the country according to the World Ranking System (Times Higher Education 2018), Public Relations Dept. of **Babol Noshirvani University of Technology** reported.

According to the latest announcement of Global Ranking System (*Time Higher Education, THE*), which was published on Sept. 4, 2017, **Babol Noshirvani University of Technology** stood at 301<sup>st</sup> – 350<sup>th</sup> rank among 1,102 universities in the global ranking.

It is worth mentioning that this prestigious university of technology managed to receive 1<sup>st</sup> rank among 18 Iranian universities.

With due observance to the said issue, Amirkabir University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST), Isfahan University of Technology, Khomeini Shahid Beheshti University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology, Tabriz and Tehran Universities of Medical Sciences stood at the second rank (601<sup>st</sup> and 800<sup>th</sup>).

In addition, universities of Ferdowsi of Mashhad, Gilan, Isfahan, Shahid Beheshti and Shiraz managed to stand at the third rank (801<sup>st</sup> and 1000<sup>th</sup>) in this category.

Also, universities of Al-Zahra, Birjand, Yazd and Zanzan stood at more than 1000<sup>th</sup> rank. It should be noted that "**THE**" ranking system takes advantage of 13 indexes in five main groups for the total evaluation of higher education institutes and universities.

These indexes have been classified in the following five general groups, so that rank of **Babol Noshirvani University of Technology** has been envisioned from 100 scores in each of the following groups:

**Teaching**: Educational and training environment with 30% score from total score (24.8),



دانشگاه صنعتی نوشیروانی بابل



**Research**: Dimensions, income and credit of research with 30% score out of total score (12.2),

**Citations**: Scientific penetration through estimation in the number of referrals with 30% score from total score (99.1%),

**Industry Income**: Industrial incomes, transfer of science to technology with 2.5% score out of total score (56.1),

**International Outlook**: International outlook, faculty members, university students and type of research with 7.5% score from total score (15.5%),

For his part, **Dr. Mostafa Rahimnejad Head of Office of International Scientific Cooperation** expressed his special thanks to the great family of **Babol Noshirvani University of Technology** including university lecturers, industrious staff and employees of the university, etc. for achieving this prestigious academic rank and said: "It is an honor for the university in promoting academic level both in national and international arenas. This important effect is the result of unsparing and unflinching efforts of all functionaries of the university in promoting status of this university in international level.



# OIC urges Myanmar to allow in UN investigators

The world's largest Muslim organization has called on Myanmar to allow United Nations investigators into a violence-stricken state in the country where the military and Buddhist mobs are conducting "systematic brutality" against minority Muslims.

The 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) made the call after an emergency meeting on the sidelines of a technology conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Tuesday.

Myanmar's military stepped up a crackdown on Rohingya Muslims on August 25, after dozens of police and border outposts in the northern state of Rakhine allegedly came under attack by an armed group that is said to be defending the rights of the Rohingya.

The Rohingya, who had already been under a military siege in Rakhine since October 2016, are being brutally killed, raped, or forced to leave their homes as their villages are being set on fire.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday censured the Myanmar government for the violence, and said the OIC had to convene to discuss the crisis.

## Iran's Red Crescent to ship aid

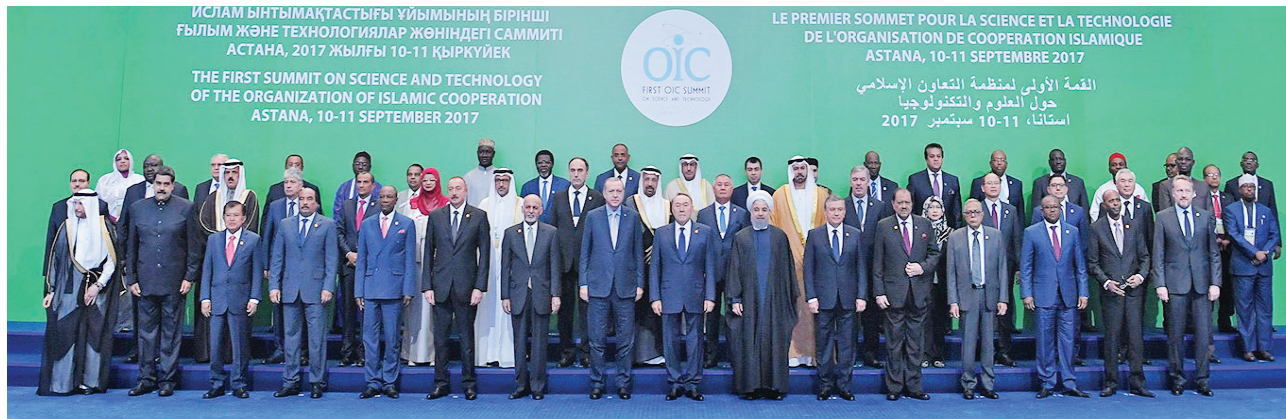
Meanwhile, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) says it has prepared a first batch of a total of 160 tons of humanitarian aid cargo for shipment to the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

IRCS Director Mostafa Mohammadiyoun said 40 tons of the cargo, including food, water, and medical supplies, would be delivered to the Rohingya on Wednesday.

The IRCS also voiced readiness to set up makeshift hospitals for the Muslim refugees in Bangladesh.

The UN estimates that at least 370,000 Rohingya have fled to neighboring Bangladesh since late last month. Many of those who have managed to take refuge in the country say Myanmar soldiers and Buddhist mobs have been attacking civilians and burning down their homes.

Rohingya Muslims are denied citizen-



ship in Myanmar and regarded as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

## U.N. accused of ignoring 'ethnic cleansing' of Rohingya

Meanwhile, two human rights groups have joined the chorus of international voices against the violence taking place against Rohingya Muslims.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International representatives said at a joint press conference at the UN headquarters on Tuesday that the Security Council had so far failed to speak out against the "ethnic cleansing" of the Rohingya and to immediately demand an end to the atrocities.

The UNSC is set to convene for discussions on the Rohingya crisis later today.

## 'Bangladesh prevents Rohingya entry'

Bangladesh has instructed the security forces on its border not to allow any more Rohingya refugees in, according to a Bangladeshi border guard officer, Monzurul Hassan Khan.

"Innocent women and children were rushing toward the border out of the fear of life, it's a life and death question for them," he said. "Firing was happening inside their country."

Khan said 8,000 to 10,000 Rohingya had camped in some hundreds of tarpaulin bamboo shacks on paddy fields and flooded land after crossing the bor-

der. He said officers with automatic rifles were keeping watch on them.

Myanmar has reportedly planted landmines across an area of its border amid the flow of refugees fleeing violence.

Reports from Bangladesh's side of the border say a number of people have been arriving with their legs blown off.

## Over 200,000 Rohingya children need urgent help: UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned that more than 200,000 Rohingya children need urgent support in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Chief of UNICEF's Child Protection Jean Lieb warned on Tuesday about "an unprecedented influx of Rohingya refugees" into Bangladesh, saying more than 330,000 people have now taken refuge in the country since August 25.

"I am particularly concerned for children separated from their parents or caregivers," Lieb said. "We have identified 1,128 separated children so far. However, we expect this number to increase a lot in the coming days."

Lieb said UNICEF was sending additional supplies to Cox Bazar from the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, and from Copenhagen, Denmark, where UNICEF's supply hub is located, explaining that more help was needed "as the refugee population continues

to grow."

## U.S. 'deeply troubled' by Rohingya killings

The United States also recently reacted to the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said on Tuesday that the U.S. "condemned the violence between Rohingya Muslims and Myanmar security forces."

She said the White House was "deeply troubled" by the crisis.

## McCain drops plan to expand ties with Myanmar

In another reaction from the U.S., Congressman John McCain, who is the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that he would no longer support plans to expand military ties with Myanmar.

McCain said he would remove language from a bill authorizing defense spending that would have expanded US military cooperation with Myanmar.

"I can no longer support expanding military-to-military cooperation given the worsening humanitarian crisis and human rights crackdown against the Rohingya people," he said.

McCain further said that Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi had so far ignored calls from the international community to stop the violence.

(Source: agencies)

## North Korea defiant over UN sanctions as Trump says tougher steps needed

North Korea showed trademark defiance on Wednesday over new UN sanctions imposed after its sixth and largest nuclear test, vowing to redouble efforts to fight off what it said was the threat of a U.S. invasion.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday's sanctions, unanimously agreed on Monday by the 15-member UN Security Council, were just a small step towards what is ultimately needed to rein in Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile programs.

The North's Foreign Ministry said the resolutions were an infringement on its legitimate right to self-defense and aimed at "completely suffocating its state and people through full-scale economic blockade".

"The DPRK will redouble the efforts to increase its strength to safeguard the country's sovereignty and right to existence and to preserve peace and security of the region by establishing the practical equilibrium with the U.S.," it said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.

DPRK stands for the Democratic Peo-

ple's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name.

The statement echoed comments on Tuesday by the North's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Han Tae Song, who said Pyongyang was "ready to use a form of ultimate means".

"The forthcoming measures ... will make the U.S. suffer the greatest pain it ever experienced in its history," Han said.

The North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper also accused South Korea of being Washington's "puppet", criticizing Seoul's agreement with the United States to amend an existing bilateral guideline that will now allow the South to use unlimited warhead payloads on its missiles.

The UN Security Council agreed to boost sanctions on North Korea, banning its textile exports and capping fuel supplies, and making it illegal for foreign firms to form commercial joint ventures with North Korean entities.

The UN resolution was triggered by North Korea's test of what it said was a hydrogen bomb.

Damage to mountainous terrain at the North's nuclear test site in Punggye-ri

seen in satellite imagery taken after the latest test was more extensive than anything seen after the five previous tests, the Washington-based 38 North project said.

There was also activity at another location in the Mount Mantap site involving large vehicles and mining equipment that suggests "onsite work could now be changing focus to further prepare those other portals for future underground nuclear testing", said 38 North, which monitors North Korea.

The North accuses the United States, which has 28,500 troops in South Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean war, of continual plans for invasion.

North Korea has also tested a missile capable of reaching the United States, but experts say it is likely to be at least a year before it can field an operational nuclear missile that could threaten the U.S. mainland.

## Another small step

Trump has vowed not to allow that to happen.

A tougher initial U.S. draft resolution was weakened to win the support of Chi-

na and Russia, both of which hold UN veto power. Significantly, it stopped short of imposing a full embargo on oil exports to North Korea, most of which come from China.

"We think it's just another very small step, not a big deal," Trump told reporters at the start of a meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak.

"I don't know if it has any impact, but certainly it was nice to get a 15-to-nothing vote, but those sanctions are nothing compared to what ultimately will have to happen."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin warned China, North Korea's main ally and trading partner, that Washington would "put additional sanctions on them and prevent them from accessing the U.S. and international dollar system" if it did not follow through on the new measures.

Another senior administration official told Reuters any such "secondary sanctions" on Chinese banks and other companies were on hold for now to give China time to show it was prepared to fully enforce the latest and previous rounds of sanctions.

(Source: Reuters)

## Israel PM supports Kurdish independence vote in Iraq

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu voices support for the formation of a Kurdish state in the lead-up to a planned independence referendum in Iraq's Kurdistan region, which has sparked strong criticisms from the central government as well as Iraq's neighbors.

In a Wednesday announcement, Netanyahu's office said Israel supports the "legitimate efforts of the Kurdish people to attain a state of its own."

The statement, however, noted that Tel Aviv opposes the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has long been fighting for autonomy in Turkey.

"Israel opposes the PKK and considers it a terrorist organization," it said.

During a meeting with a delegation of 33 U.S. Republican congressmen in mid-August, Netanyahu expressed interest in partitioning Iraq and establishing an independent Kurdish state in the country.

Netanyahu does not frequently speak publicly about the highly sensitive issue which also worries Turkey.

The last time Netanyahu addressed the issue publicly was in 2014 when he said in a speech that Israel should "support the Kurdish aspiration for independence."

Israel has a longstanding relationship with the Kurds, whom it regards as one of the few non-Arab allies in the area.

A report published in the New Yorker magazine in 2004 said Israeli military and intelligence operatives were active in Kurdish areas and providing training for commando units.

According to the report, Israel has been expanding its presence in Kurdistan and encouraging Kurds, its allies in the region, to create an independent state.

The Kurdish referendum is scheduled for September 25, despite the strong opposition from the central government in Baghdad and Iraq's neighboring countries.

On Tuesday Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi rejected the planned Kurdish referendum on independence from the Arab country as "unconstitutional," warning that the Kurds are "illegally" exporting Iraq's oil.

The comments came a few hours after the country's parliament overwhelmingly voted against the plebiscite, which has been planned by the Kurdistan Regional Government. The vote prompted Kurdish lawmakers to quit the parliament floor.

(Source: al Alam)

## Hariri and Putin talk trade, security

Saad Hariri was assured Wednesday by Russian President Vladimir Putin that Lebanon would not be affected by ongoing conflicts in the region.

Hariri met with Putin in Sochi at the Russian president's summer residence.

"Putin supports disassociating Lebanon from any of the ongoing conflicts in the region," Hariri said following the meeting.

The PM added: "We discussed military aid for Lebanon and we hope to improve economic and political ties to our country's advantage."

As for Syria's eventual post-war reconstruction, Hariri said, "Our country is a station for the rebuilding of Syria."

Prior to the meeting, Hariri had said his talks with Putin would revolve around increased economic and military ties between the two countries. "We hope that these ties will be on the same level as our political ties," Hariri told Putin prior to the meeting.

"We will discuss all these things and hopefully come out with positive results," Hariri added.

Putin welcomed Hariri and voiced his confidence that agreements signed Tuesday between the two countries would strengthen bilateral ties.

"But the trade between the two countries rem

(Source: Daily Star)



## Syria has liberated 85% of its territory from terrorists

### Syrian president, Russian defense minister discuss anti-terror operations



The sixth round of the intra-Syrian talks is scheduled to be held in the Kazakh capital city, Astana, to facilitate the creation of the fourth de-escalation zone in Syria's western province of Idlib, where significant numbers of Takfiri terrorists, most notably from al-Nusra Front, are operating. The five previous rounds of such talks were also held in Astana, with Russia, Iran and Turkey serving as guarantor states.

The United States and its allies have been bombarding what they call Daesh positions inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a United Nations mandate. The Syrian government has time and against expressed its strong opposition to the so-called military campaign.

In early August, Damascus wrote similar letters to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the chairman of the UN

Security Council, calling for the dissolution of the US-led coalition.

According to a report by the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights in August, 42,234 documented airstrikes in the country had resulted in a minimum estimate of some 7,000 civilians killed by the US-led coalition between 2014 and 2017.

The UK-based group also reported on Tuesday that the so-called "coalition airstrikes killed 12 members of a single family, among them five children, in a village on the eastern banks of the Euphrates River," in the village of al-Shahabat in Dayr al-Zawr province.

Syria has been fighting different foreign-sponsored militant and terrorist groups since March 2011. The Damascus government has repeatedly blamed certain foreign countries for the spread of the devastating militancy.

## Assad & Shoigu

Meanwhile, Syrian President Bashar

al-Assad and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu have met to discuss bilateral defense ties and an upcoming Damascus offensive to fully liberate the eastern city of Dayr al-Zawr from Daesh terrorists.

During the Tuesday meeting in Damascus, Shoigu submitted a letter from Russian President Vladimir Putin to Assad, "congratulating him on lifting the siege" imposed by Daesh on Dayr al-Zawr, the Syrian presidency said in a statement.

The two sides underlined their resolve to continue counter-terrorism efforts across Syria until terrorism is defeated completely, noting that the fate of the war in Syria will determine the future map of the region.

"During the meeting, the issues of military and military-technical cooperation were discussed in the context of the successful actions of the Syrian

government troops with the support of the Russian Aerospace Forces" aimed at the complete destruction of Daesh, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

## 'Syria anti-terror war almost over'

On Tuesday, Lebanese daily al-Akhbar cited Hezbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah as saying that the Syrian government has won the war in the country.

"We have won in the war (in Syria)... and what remains are scattered battles," said Nasrallah.

Over the past six years, Hezbollah has been assisting Syria's government in the fight against terrorists in a bid to prevent a spillover of violence into Lebanon.

The group launched an operation last month to recapture areas from other terrorist groups in Lebanese regions near the Syrian border.

(Source: agencies)

## Mogherini's responsibility for JCPOA



But now the question is till when will these generalized speeches of Mogherini and other European leaders in support of the JCPOA go on? Is not it really the time for EU's explicit support in action rather than speech? Federica Mogherini European foreign policy chief who simultaneously chairs the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has done nothing in response to the violations of the nuclear agreement by the US (both under Obama and Trump administrations).

The same assertion can be made about the officials of the three European countries involved in the nuclear agreement. Currently, Mogherini has kept silent over the released news about the conspiracy of the officials of US and European troika who are seeking renegotiation of the nuclear deal. Undoubtedly, any effort for renegotiating the nuclear deal means infringing the agreement. At such a situation Iran's right of protesting or even leaving the nuclear agreement is reserved.

Mogherini should accept that she and her companions have failed in the test for protecting the nuclear agreement. Her silence over US de facto violation of the JCPOA (especially in the case of passing new anti-Iran sanctions by US congress which is against the article 29 of the agreement) cannot be simply ignored. For sure, if she keeps failing practicing her duties in preserving the nuclear agreement, her lip service to the deal will be of little value.



## There is no plan B for Pyeongchang Games: IOC’s Bach

The International Olympic Committee is not considering any plan B for the Pyeongchang 2018 winter Olympics despite the escalating crisis with North Korea, IOC President Thomas Bach said on Tuesday.

The run-up to the first winter Games in Asia outside Japan has been overshadowed by the diplomatic crisis and the United Nations Security Council unanimously stepped up sanctions on Monday against the country over North Korea's sixth and most powerful nuclear test conducted on Sept. 3.

Bach said any scenario other than holding the Games in Pyeongchang in February next year would be undermining diplomatic efforts for a peaceful solution.

“Speaking now about different scenarios for the Olympic winter Games would send the wrong message,” he told at the opening of the IOC session in the Peruvian capital.

“It would be a message against our own belief in peace and diplomacy. It would undermine the efforts of those who are working toward a diplomatic solution so that peace will prevail on the Korean peninsula.”

Earlier this month North Korea launched its biggest nuclear bomb test, prompting global condemnation as U.S. President Donald Trump said “appeasement” would not work.

North Korea has warned the United States that it would pay a “due price” for spearheading efforts on U.N. sanctions, which now include a ban on the country's textile exports and capping imports of crude oil. “We know how volatile this situation continues to be. So we will follow the developments closely and will keep promoting our position,” Bach said.

The Pyeongchang Games will run from Feb 9-25.  
*(Source: Reuters)*

## Ronaldo fans want Messi banned for putting hands on ref

Lionel Messi was shown a booking after putting his hands on the referee at the game against Juventus and Cristiano Ronaldo fans aren't happy.

The Barcelona superstar grabbed the referee's shoulder as he appealed for an opponent to be shown a yellow card in the 54th minute. The Barcelona superstar grabbed the referee's shoulder as he appealed for an opponent to be shown a yellow card in the 54th minute. But it backfired for the Argentina international, who was himself booked instead.

Meanwhile, Ronaldo fans have taken to Twitter to express anger at the fact that Messi hasn't been more severely punished.

The Real Madrid forward was handed a five-match ban after pushing a referee during a match against the Catalans last month.  
*(Source: Daily Star)*

## He doesn't have to be crazy - Mourinho urges Ibrahimovic

Jose Mourinho has urged Zlatan Ibrahimovic to take his time with his rehabilitation from a serious knee injury following the Swede's one-year contract renewal with Manchester United.

Ibrahimovic suffered ligament damage during United's Europa League quarter-final with Anderlecht last season and that appeared to have ended his Old Trafford stay having only joined the previous July. But United announced on August 24 that Ibrahimovic had signed a new one-year deal, seeing him return to the club until the end of the 2017-18 campaign.

Social media posts from the former Barcelona, Juventus and Paris Saint-Germain star seemed to show that he was making strong progress, with speculation suggesting he could be even make his return before the end of the year.

However, Mourinho has tempered such hysteria, demanding patience and caution from the striker.

“I think we need him,” Mourinho said. “We wait for him, but with patience. He has to be patient.

“He doesn't have to be emotional and he doesn't have to try to make crazy things to improve [recover] quicker in his mind.

“Because I know that his desire is to improve quicker. So [Mourinho wants him to be] calm – [take things] step by step.

“We want him, but we want him in his best condition.”  
*(Source: Soccerway)*

## LA Lakers to retire Bryant's number eight and 24 jerseys

The LA Lakers are to retire both of five-time NBA champion Kobe Bryant's number eight and 24 jerseys.

Bryant, 39, retired in April 2016 after a 20-year career with the Lakers, scoring 60 points in his final game.

He finished as the Lakers' all-time point scorer and third on the NBA's all-time list with 33,643 points.

“I always dreamed of my jersey hanging in the Lakers rafters, but I certainly never imagined two of them,” said Bryant, who made his debut in 1996.

The jerseys will be retired at a half-time ceremony on 18 December when the Lakers host the Golden State Warriors.

Bryant is the 10th player to receive the honour, after Wilt Chamberlain, Elgin Baylor, Gail Goodrich, Magic Johnson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Shaquille O'Neal, James Worthy, Jerry West and Jamaal Wilkes. Kobe's jerseys are taking their rightful home next to the greatest Lakers of all time,” said Lakers chief executive Jeanie Buss.

Bryant wore 24 while playing at high school, before switching to 33. When he was drafted by the Charlotte Hornets and traded to the Lakers in 1996, he could not take the number 33 as it had already been retired for Abdul-Jabbar and 24 was already taken.

He decided on number eight and won three NBA titles, before changing to 24 for the 2006-07 season, going on to win a further two titles. Bryant said at the time he made the change as he wanted a new number for the second half of his career.  
*(Source: BBC)*

# World Anti-Doping Agency clears 95 Russian athletes



providing lab data, and its practice of destroying tainted urine samples that would be plainly incriminating.

Still, sports officials charged with building cases against the 95 athletes in question appear to have never followed up on certain leads. Most notably, none requested interviews with the whistle-blower Dr. Grigory Rodchenkov — Russia's former antidoping lab chief now living in the United States, whose tell-all account prompted Mr. McLaren's inquiry report — raising questions about their willingness to discipline a major sports power.

In a letter obtained by The Times, Dr. Rodchenkov's lawyer wrote to the antidop-

## FIFA still resistant to change, says former official

FIFA is struggling to implement reforms and change its operating culture because its leaders are more worried about their own political futures, a former top official said on Wednesday.

The global soccer body has been trying to overhaul its operations in the wake of the worst crisis in its history, sparked in 2015 by the indictment in the United States of several dozen soccer officials on corruption-related charges.

Miguel Maduro, a former head of FIFA's independent governance and review committee, also told a British parliamentary hearing that FIFA's leadership tried to persuade him not to block Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko from being re-elected to its top committee.

“There is a culture in the institution ... that is extremely resistant to accountability, to independent scrutiny, to transparency, to prevention of conflicts of interest,” Maduro told the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee.

He said FIFA president Gianni Infantino “realized that if he wanted to survive politically, he had to choose to protect the inde-

pendence of bodies, and therefore to keep us in place, or answer to his constituency.”

Neither FIFA nor Infantino could immediately be reached for comment.

Maduro, a Portuguese lawyer and politician, was removed from his post in May, two months after ruling that Mutko could not stand for re-election for his place on the FIFA Council.

His responsibilities had included conducting eligibility checks on candidates for places on FIFA committees.

At the same time, FIFA also decided not to renew the mandates of Cornel Borbely and Hans-Joachim Eckert, the two heads of the independent ethics committee responsible for banning a number of soccer officials over the previous three years.

“If they wanted in FIFA to really have independent scrutiny, they ought to have protected us,” said Maduro. “I think that ultimately, he [Infantino] chose to politically survive.”

“I was clearly told that declaring Mr Mutko ineligible would probably cost the presidency because the World Cup would be a disaster and as a consequence the presidency would be put under question,” Maduro added.  
*(Source: Eurosport)*



## Hamilton chasing Singapore hat-trick but wary of Ferrari

Lewis Hamilton arrives in Singapore as Formula One leader and the season's first back-to-back winner, but Ferrari rival Sebastian Vettel could dash the Mercedes driver's hopes of a third win in a row on Sunday.

Hamilton led team mate Valtteri Bottas in a dominant one-two at the Italian Grand Prix two weeks ago to take his second successive win from a record 69th pole position.

Vettel trailed home in third place, more than half a minute behind the Briton, and lost the overall lead he had enjoyed all season with Hamilton now three points clear and seven races remaining.

Now Mercedes are braced for a Ferrari backlash at the Marina Bay street circuit.

“Singapore will be a different story but it's better to go there in the lead than behind,” the team's non-executive chairman Niki Lauda told Reuters after the Monza race.

Hamilton also expects a closer battle.

“I think the learning from these two weeks should hopefully put us in a better position for Singapore,” he told re-

porters. “But I think still Ferrari are going to be quick there. They're rapid through the medium and low speed sections of the circuits.”

The tight twists of the Singapore track, which has the most corners of any circuit on the calendar, should play to Ferrari's strengths.

The Italian team, now 62 points behind Mercedes in the team standings, have been dominant this year at similar venues like Monaco and Hungary, scoring one-two finishes at both.

Hamilton and Mercedes also have a chequered history in Singapore, even if now retired 2016 champion team mate Nico Rosberg won there last year.

The Briton is one of only four drivers to have won the race since it joined the calendar in 2008 but Hamilton has only two wins there to Vettel's four.

The German, the most successful driver around the city-state's floodlit streets, scored the last of those for Ferrari in 2015, when Mercedes failed to finish on the podium.

“In 2015, Singapore provided us with one of the most

painful experiences in recent seasons, so we rolled up the sleeves, learned from it and managed to bounce back with a great win last year,” said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff.

“But notwithstanding that success, this is a circuit we have found difficult to master.”

Red Bull, who took Vettel to three of his wins, boast the best record of all teams in Singapore and see this year's race as a real opportunity.

“I believe Singapore won't be our only chance but is one of our best chances of a win in the second half of the season,” said Australian Daniel Ricciardo.

“I've started second and finished second at this track in the last two years, with fastest lap both times, so my aim this year is definitely to start on pole and try to go one better in the race.”

All eyes will also be on McLaren, with a split from engine partner Honda and new relationship with Renault set to be announced imminently.

*(Source: Reuters)*





# Iran come from behind to beat the U.S. at FIVB Grand Champions Cup

**S P O R T S** Iran earned their second consecutive win in the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup on Wednesday.

The Iranian national volleyball team beat the U.S. 3-2 (20-25, 17-25, 25-21, 27-25, 25-21, 15-12) at the Nippon Gaishi Hall.

Milad Ebadipour, who was contained by the U.S. in the first two sets, stepped up on offence and finished with 18 points.

Amir Ghafour and Mohammadjavad Manavinezhad were among the Iranian players vital in comeback, scored 15 and 11 points, respectively.

Matthew Anderson and Taylor Sander made 17 points apiece on a losing effort.

Iran maintained their clean win-record, while the U.S. dropped to 1-1 in the 2017 edition of the World Grand Champions Cup.

Five of Iran's six wins at the tournament have come in five sets.

The U.S. fielded in a powerful combination of players led by Sander and Anderson who dominated in attacks to overwhelm Iran in the first two sets. The U.S. led in the third set but lost their grip as Iran setter Saied Marouf made brilliant plays for his hitters. Ebadipour made up for his previous attack mistake to put Iran ahead at 27-26, until Manvinezhad's strong spike close the set in their favor. Iran had momentum on their side and took advantage of the U.S.'s string of errors to win the last two sets.

Team Melli will play the event's most decorated team Brazil on Friday.

The competition has brought six teams Iran, Japan, the U.S., France, Italy and Brazil together in Nagoya and Osaka, Japan from 12 to 17 September.



## Igor Kolakovic: We waited for opportunities and beat the U.S.



Iran coach Igor Kolakovic said that they defeated the U.S. at the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup since they waited for opportunities and finally did it.

"It was such a difficult game. There were two different parts of the game. I have to say the U.S. played unbelievable on reception, side-out and service in the first two sets," Kolakovic said.

"I talked to my players and told them if they played like that, there wasn't much we could do, so we had to wait for opportunities," the Serbian coach added.

"I told them they would give us opportunities for sure because they can't play at that high level all the time. And we did that," Kolakovic stated.

(Source: FIVB)

## Iran played great volleyball: John Speraw



The U.S. volleyball coach John Speraw said that the Iranian team played a great volleyball.

"We came out and played some really great volleyball in the first two sets, particularly passing the ball. We just played great," Speraw said.

"I think we will look back on a period of about two minutes in the third set when we were up and there was a little bit of lack of focus. In that moment, Iran

took advantage and made some good plays, particularly (Amir) Ghafour," the U.S. coach added.

"We didn't play bad volleyball from that point; we just didn't score any points. Our offence continued to be OK, but not as good as earlier. But Iran played great volleyball from that point on offensively and we struggled to score points," Speraw concluded.

(Source: fivb)

## 10-man Persepolis advance to AFC Champions League semis

**S P O R T S** Islamic Republic of Iran's Persepolis booked a place in the 2017 AFC Champions League semi-final after beating Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli 3-1 (5-3 on aggregate) at Mohamed bin Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, the UAE.

Branko Ivankovic's side will face Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal in the semi-final.

Two late penalties gave Persepolis the victory as the Iranians showed a great spirit, as they had done in their first-leg two-goal comeback, in Abu Dhabi.

Ali Alipour gave the Persepolis the lead after receiving a long pass just five minutes into the match.

The Iranians' fortunes suffered a blow when midfielder Kamal Kamyabinia received a straight red card after a

challenge on Waleed Bakshwan in the 12th minute.

Al Ahli capitalized on their one-man advantage and grabbed an equalizer when winger Saleh Al Amri curled one in from the edge of the area in the 52nd minute.

With the 1-1 result favoring Al Ahli on away goals, Persepolis piled the pressure in pursuit of a winner and Al Ahli's defense cracked under pressure.

First Al Ahli captain Motaz Hawsawi handled the ball in an attempt to clear off his line and the referee awarded a penalty for Persepolis and sent him off.

Substitute Godwin Mensha converted the penalty-kick to restore Persepolis' lead and Mahdi Taremi added a second from the spot in added time to put the win beyond doubt.

"First of all, I would like to thank our fans who supported us in two matches against Al Ahli. We earned a dramatic win with their support," Ivankovic said.

"We played better and won the match. Our player was sent off in the 12th minute and it was difficult for us to attack with a man down because we didn't want to concede more goals. Our plan eventually worked and we could change the result with our substitutes," he added.

Persepolis will face Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal in the ACL semi-final.

"We know that Al Hilal are one of the Asia's most decorated teams but we are preparing for a great challenge," Ivankovic stated.

## Saeid Marouf: Iran won an unbelievable match against the U.S.



Iran national volleyball captain Mir Saeid Marouf says that they won an unbelievable match against the U.S. at the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup.

"It was an unbelievable match, so I'm happy we won it. In the first two sets, we didn't have anything," Marouf told fivb.org.

"They killed us with their serve and side-out and they were amazing. After that, we played without fear and to our full potential," he added.

"Our substitutes did well and all the players helped us in this victory, so I'm happy. Congratulations to all Iranians, to my team and the staff," Marouf stated.

(Source: FIVB)

## The U.S. captain David Smith praises Iranian volleyball team



The U.S. captain David Smith lauded the Iranian volleyball team because of staying in the match despite a 0-2 deficit.

"I think we came out well with a continuation from last night. In the third set, Iran made some substitutions and we couldn't match them tactically and emotionally. All credit to them for stay-

ing in the match. It's something we have to learn to do better," Smith said.

The U.S. player Matt Anderson also said, "We came out with pretty high energy and executed our game plan. They changed some players, forcing us to adapt; unfortunately, we weren't able to."

(Source: FIVB)

## Magnificent Urawa Reds through ACL semis after super show

Toshiyuki Takagi struck the decisive blow as 2007 winners Urawa Reds completed a sensational turnaround to progress to the 2017 AFC Champions League semi-finals on Wednesday, winning their quarter-final second leg against Kawasaki Frontale 4-1 to progress 5-4 on aggregate.

Elshino gave Kawasaki a 1-0 lead in the 19th minute, beating the offside trap and nudging beyond a hesitant Shusaku Nishikawa after a clipped through ball from Kengo Nakamura, but Shinzo Koroki pulled one back for Urawa with a neat finish 10 minutes before half time.

The hosts were offered further encouragement when Shintaro Kurumaya was sent off for Kawasaki after a high boot on Koroki in the 38th minute, and Koroki again went close with a header in first half stoppage time.

Substitute Zlatan Ljubijankic put Reds 2-1 up on the night with a towering header from a Yosuke Kashiwagi corner in the 70th minute, before Rafael Silva levelled things up on aggregate after picking his spot and rifling across Jung with six minutes to play.

Takagi then ensured there was to be no need for extra time less than 60 seconds later, applying an exquisite final touch to a Ryota Moriwaki cross and caressing the ball over Jung and home.

Urawa will now face Shanghai SIPG in the semi-finals on September 27 and October 18, after the Chinese side defeated Guangzhou Evergrande 5-4 in a penalty shoot-out after the other eastern quarter-final ended 5-5 on aggregate.

(Source: the-AFC)



## Uefa charges Celtic after fan runs on to pitch 'and aims kick at Mbappe'

Celtic have been charged by Uefa after a fan ran on to the pitch and appeared to aim a kick at Paris St-Germain striker Kylian Mbappe.

The incident happened late in the first half of Tuesday's Champions League match at Celtic Park, shortly after the visitors' third goal in a 5-0 win.

PSG also face a charge after seats were damaged in the away section.

The cases will be dealt with by Uefa's control, ethics and disciplinary body on 19 October.

Police Scotland reported seven arrests at the match, including a 21-year-old man charged with alleged pitch incursion and assault.

He was taken into custody, along with three other men who were accused of assault, breach of the peace and violating the offensive behavior at football act 2012.

Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers said he was pleased the rest of the sell-out crowd booed the intruder.

"I think their reaction said it all," he said. "It was disappointing at any ground, at any club, a supporter getting on the pitch like that. It was bitterly disappointing and I am sure the club will deal with whoever that supporter was. It shouldn't be anything that we should see."

"I think the stewards dealt with it at the time and I am sure the club will deal with it."

In July, Celtic were fined £20,600 after an "illicit banner" was displayed during their punishment win over Linfield.

It was the club's 11th punishment in six years relating to misconduct from supporters during European ties.

Following the initial charge, they announced a two-game closure of the area of the stadium occupied by the Green Brigade fans' group.

(Source: BBC)

## World Cup tickets to cost from \$105 to \$1100

Tickets for next year's World Cup in Russia will go on sale from Thursday with prices ranging from \$105 for the cheapest seats at group stage matches to \$1,100 for the most expensive seats at the final, FIFA said on Tuesday.

The global soccer body said in a statement that sales, which would be made through its website, would be divided into two phases, followed by last-minute sales.

"We have put in place a ticketing system that will enable all fans a fair chance to secure tickets," said FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura. "Throughout history, fans have made a key contribution to the fascination of the FIFA World Cup."

Three categories of tickets will be available, with Category 1 the most expensive, FIFA said.

The cheapest seats, Category 3, will cost from \$105 for group stage matches, to \$175 for the quarter-finals and \$455 for the final. Category 1 seats will cost between \$550 in the group stage and \$1,100 for the final.

FIFA said there would also be a Category 4 price band, available only to Russian residents at discounted prices varying between 1,280 roubles (\$22.19) for group stage games to 7,040 roubles for the final. A similar policy was used in Brazil in 2014. The first phase of sales will run from Sept. 14 to Nov. 16 and the second from Dec. 5 to Jan. 31 and then March 13 to April 3, FIFA said. Last-minute sales would be offered between April 18 and July 15, the day of the final.

FIFA confirmed that all supporters would need an official identity document known as a FAN ID, issued by the Russian authorities, to attend games.

(Source: Reuters)



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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### “Dinner with Friends” at Tehran theater

**A R T TEHRAN** — A loose adaptation of American playwright Donald Margulies’ 1998 play “Dinner with Friends” is currently on stage at the Se-Noqteh Theater Complex in Tehran.



Ayyub Abolfathi is the director of the play, which is about a happily married middle-aged couple, Gabe and Karen, whose best friends, Tom and Beth, tell them that they are getting a divorce. Tom and Beth’s breakup affects Gabe and Karen’s relationship and marriage.

Kambiz Nikamiz, Aram Soleimani, Hoda Fallah and Abbas Khodavardian are the main members of the cast for the play that will remain on stage at the Rokneddin Khosravi Hall of the complex until September 21.

### Disney delays “Star Wars: Episode IX” after J.J. Abrams takes over

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Walt Disney Co delayed the release of the ninth installment of the “Star Wars” saga to Dec. 20, 2019 after announcing on Tuesday the return of filmmaker J.J. Abrams to the franchise to write and direct the movie.



Director J.J. Abrams arrives as a guest at a premiere of the film «Arrival» in Los Angeles, California, U.S., November 6, 2016. (Reuters/Danny Moloshok/File Photo)

Disney pushed back “Star Wars: Episode IX” from its initial May 2019 release date after Abrams replaced filmmaker Colin Trevorrow, who parted ways with Disney last week citing differing creative visions with the studio.

Abrams launched Disney’s reboot of the “Star Wars” franchise with 2015’s box office hit “The Force Awakens,” which reunited original 1977 stars Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill and introduced a new generation of characters. The film made more than \$2 billion at the global box office.

“With The Force Awakens, J.J. delivered everything we could have possibly hoped for, and I am so excited that he is coming back to close out this trilogy,” Lucasfilm President Kathleen Kennedy said in a statement.

“Episode IX” faced creative challenges after the sudden death of Fisher, who plays the franchise’s Princess Leia, last year. Her character, now called General Leia Organa, has a central role in the upcoming December film “Star Wars: The Last Jedi,” the eighth installment in the saga written and directed by Rian Johnson.

“Episode IX” was the second “Star Wars” project to lose a director this year. Disney said in June that filmmakers Phil Lord and Christopher Miller had left the upcoming Han Solo “Star Wars” spin-off movie due to creative differences. They were replaced by Hollywood veteran Ron Howard, the Oscar-winning director of “A Beautiful Mind.”

“Star Wars: Episode IX” is part of Disney’s expanding slate of “Star Wars” films that continue George Lucas’ Skywalker saga as well as introducing standalone spin-off films set within the galaxy far, far away.

### UK art dealer jailed for stealing works by Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood

**LONDON (Reuters)** — A British art dealer who abused his position by stealing clients’ artworks, including many paintings by Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood, was jailed on Tuesday, the state prosecution service said.

The artworks, taken over a 27-year period, included portraits of Mick Jagger, Bob Dylan, Ringo Starr, Marilyn Monroe and model Kate Moss painted by Wood, who has pursued his love of painting in parallel with his career as a rock musician.

Art dealer Jonathan Poole, 69, whose clients included the estates of Miles Davis and of John Lennon as well as wealthy art collectors, surreptitiously sold some of their possessions and pocketed the profits. He also took percentages of legitimate sales to which he was not entitled.

Poole made over 500,000 pounds (\$664,000) from the thefts, which took place between 1986 and 2013.

# “The Salesman” wins big at Iran Cinema Celebration

**A R T TEHRAN** — Oscar-winning drama director Asghar Farhadi’s “The Salesman” received more honors for director Asghar Farhadi in his homeland by collecting top awards at the 19th Iran Cinema Celebration on Tuesday night.

The film was honored in seven categories, including best film, best director, and best screenplay while “The Salesman” actor Babak Karimi and Farhadi’s assistant, Maryam Naraqi, accepted the awards in his absence.

Farhadi, who is currently busy making his new film “Everybody Knows” in Spain, thanked the Iranian House of Cinema, the organizer of the gala, in a video screened during the celebration at Tehran’s Payam Club.

The films’ star Shahab Hosseini was named best actor and Farid Sajjad-Hosseini won the best supporting actor award for his role in the movie.

Film editor Hayedeh Safiyari and set designer Keyvan Moqaddam also received awards for their collaboration in the film.

“Subdued” by Hamid Nematollah also emerged victorious by winning five awards at the celebration.

Leila Hatami was named best actress for her role in the film and the director of photography Farshad Mohammadi, sound engineer Babak Ardalan, sound effects engineer Bahman Ardalan, and special effects engineer Sina Qavidel were also honored for their collaboration in the movie.

“Red Nail Polish” by Seyyed Jamal Seyyed-Hatami brought its star Pantea Panahiha the best supporting actress award.

Karen Homayunfar received the best composer award for Puria Azarbaijani’s war drama, “Arvand.”

The award for best costume designer was presented to Abbas Bolondi for “The Orphanage of Iran” by Abolqasem Talebi, while Abdollah Eskandari and Mehrdad Mirkiani won the award for best makeup artist for “Lanturi” by Reza Dormishian.

Monir Qeidi’s debut feature film “The Villa Tenants”



This combo shows Farid Sajjad-Hosseini (L) holding the supporting actor award for his role in “The Salesman” and Leila Hatami with the best actress award for “Subdued” during the 19th Iran Cinema Celebration at Tehran’s Payam Club on September 12, 2017. (Mehr/Behnam Tofiqi)

won Iman Karamian the award for best practical special effects supervisor.

Farnush Abedi’s “The Servant” was selected as best animation and “Animal”, co-directed by Bahram and Bahman Ark, was named best short.

“Womanliness” directed by Mohsen Ostadali won the best documentary award and Mehdi Qanavati received the best director award in the documentary

category.

The organizers also paid a tribute to director Vahid Jililvand and actor Navid Mohammadzadeh for their triumph at the Venice International Film Festival. Earlier on Sunday, Jililvand won the Orizzonti award for best director for “No Date, No Signature” and Mohammadzadeh received the Orizzonti best actor award at the Italian event.

### “Nobody” honored at Animanima festival



A scene from “Nobody”

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian director Elham Toroqi’s animated film “Nobody” has won the special jury award at the 11th Animanima, an international animation festival in Cacak, Serbia.

The film is about a white cat that lives in a city full of black people and animals. The cat is so desperate

because nobody cares about it, until it meets a white bird.

“Nighthawk” by Spela Cadez from Slovenia won the Grand Prix of the festival, which was held in the western Serbian city from September 5 to 9.

“Hedgehog’s Home” by Eva Cvijanovic from Canada received the audience award.

### Levon Haftvan to stage “The Yalta Game” in Toronto



Helia Imani (L) and Vahid Rohbani rehearse in an undated photo.

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian director Levon Haftvan will perform Irish writer Brian Friel’s “The Yalta Game” at the Fairview Library Theater in Toronto, Canada on Friday.

The play will be produced by Haftvan’s Lemaz Productions and Artists Management in Canada.

“The Yalta Game” is based on Anton Chekhov’s 1899 story “The Lady with

the Lapdog.” It is about a married man who is on holiday alone, leaving his wife and family behind in Moscow. While away, he meets a married young woman and they start talking together, but that is only the beginning.

Vahid Rohbani and Helia Imani are the main members of the cast for the play, which will be performed in Persian.

Haftvan staged the play in Tehran during April and May 2016.

## Mohsen Sharifian authors book on Iranian bagpipe teaching

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian bagpipe virtuoso Mohsen Sharifian has authored a book teaching lessons about playing the bagpipe, which is referred to as the neyanban in Persian.

“Teaching Neyanban” was unveiled during a special ceremony at the Institute for Promotion of Contemporary Visual Art in Tehran on Wednesday.

“One the main aims of my concerts and workshops in Iran and abroad has been to introduce the neyanban,” Sharifian said at the ceremony, which was attended by Music House director Hamidreza Nurbakhsh and a large number of musicians.

“Today, I am so pleased that I could publish the book with the help of my



Neyanban virtuoso Mohsen Sharifian (L) and his colleague Babak Shahraki hold a copy of “Teaching Neyanban” after unveiling the book at the Institute for Promotion of Contemporary Visual Art in Tehran on September 13, 2017.

(Honaronline/Sara Abdollahi)

## Arrest of prominent Russian director hampers premiere of “Nureyev” ballet

**MOSCOW (Reuters)** — The arrest of prominent Russian theater and film director Kirill Serebrennikov has complicated plans to stage the premiere of a ballet about the late Soviet ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev at the Bolshoi Theater, its director general said on Tuesday.

It is also possible that the ballet ‘Nureyev’, originally due to premiere on July 11, will be performed in the absence of its director Serebrennikov, Vladimir Urin said.

Russian authorities detained Serebrennikov in August on charges of embezzling state funds, placing him under house arrest until Oct. 19 pending trial.

Serebrennikov has a history of criticizing the authorities but President Vladimir Putin

denied last week that censorship or political pressure was behind his detention.

“I want to confirm that I strongly hope that we will definitely stage the premiere of ‘Nureyev’ in the 2017/18 season, that is in the current season,” Urin told reporters.

Urin said he had agreed with Serebrennikov before his arrest that they would meet again in September to decide on the time frame of the premiere.

Urin also said he had asked investigators to allow him to meet Serebrennikov while he is under house arrest.

“Now it (the premiere) depends on one person, on what decision Serebrennikov takes - whether he allows us to stage the ballet without him or asks us to wait until

his situation has been clarified and that it go ahead in his presence.”

The ballet was pulled in July just two days before it had been due to open. Urin said at the time the performers were not ready and that it would instead be staged next May.

Russia’s Investigative Committee has said it suspects Serebrennikov of embezzling at least at least 68 million rubles (\$1.18 million) in state funds earmarked for an art project. Serebrennikov denies the charges.

Nureyev is viewed as one of the world’s most gifted male ballet dancers. His dramatic defection to the West in 1961 was a blow to Soviet prestige. He later served as



Director general of the Bolshoi Theatre Vladimir Urin speaks during a ceremony opening a new season in Moscow, Russia September 12, 2017.

(Reuters/Sergei Karpukhin)

director of the Paris Opera Ballet and died of AIDs in 1993 aged 54.