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© Tehran Times/ Mahid Asgaripour

Deadly quake claims hundreds of lives

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Macron's remarks not accurate: Iran

By Mohammad Homaeefar

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Monday that the recent remarks made by French President Emanuel Macron about Iran's missile program were "not accurate".

"We want France to pay closer attention to regional issues, as there are many enemies here [in the region] trying to affect Iran's relations with European countries, especially France," Qassemi said in his

weekly press conference.

During a visit to Dubai on Thursday, Macron said he was "very concerned" by Tehran's missile program after Riyadh claimed it had intercepted a missile fired from Yemen and accused Iran of arming Houthi Ansarullah fighters.

The French president also called for a firm stance over Iran's ballistic missile program, raising the prospect of possible sanctions on Tehran with regard to those activities. **→2**

Syria war intended to divide, weaken independent nations: Sydney professor

By Zahra Khezri

Tim Anderson, a senior lecturer in political economy at the University of Sydney, believes that the war on Syria was intended to weaken and divide independent countries in the region.

"The war has aimed at weakening

and dividing the region's independent countries," Tim, writer of the book titled "The Dirty War on Syria", tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

Below is a full transcript of the interview: **→6**

I have trouble understanding no military solution was possible in Syria: Erdogan

Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that those who do not believe in a military solution in Syria should pull their troops out, after Russia and the United States said no military solution was possible in Syria.

"I am having trouble understanding these comments. If a military solution is out of the question, then those who say this should pull their troops out," Erdogan told reporters before flying to Russia.

He said he would discuss the issue with Russian President Vladimir Putin, as well as a political solution in Syria, joint steps with Russia in Syria's Afrin region, and details of an S-400 air defense missile system deal.

■ **Persian Gulf crisis**

Erdogan also said Monday he will discuss a solution to the five-month dispute between Qatar and its Persian Gulf Arab neighbors during a visit to Kuwait. **→13**

Saudi act humiliates Lebanese people, Al-Mustaqbal: expert

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Iranian expert Sadeq Maleki says Hri's resignation under the pressure of Riyadh is not only humiliation of the Lebanese people but also the humiliation of Al- Mustaqbal bloc.

Developments such as launch of missile to Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh by Yemenis government and announcement of resignation of Saad Hariri as Lebanese Prime Minister attracted the attention of political and media circles towards Saudi Arabia by plotting charges against Iran accompanied by massive arrests under the leadership of Mohammad bin Salman.

To learn more about this, our correspondent has conducted an interview with Sadeq Maleki senior Political Analyst and Expert.

Hereunder is excerpt of interview:

■ How do you evaluate the wave of changes and developments in Saudi Arabia?

A: Although changes and developments in Saudi Arabia at the first glance can lead to the power struggle among Saudis, in a more accurate assessment, it can be said that these changes are an indispensable and inevitable necessity that should sooner or later put Saudi Arabia in a position in conformity with the development criteria. Continuation of Saudi Arabia's life with a traditional system depending on the tribal ar-

rangements which is the brainchild of Salafism is no longer viable.

The world, region and even social context of Saudis have changed but Saudi Arabia is still captured by an old system that is not responsive to the current condition of this country and world.

The developments in Saudi Arabia have been made with the aim of structural changes and its process will continue with ups and downs.

■ Are these changes in Saudi Arabia attributed to its internal circumstances?

A: In response to your question, I should say that all socio-political changes in all communities such as Saudi Arabia have both internal and external origins. **→7**

Flying girl of Iran hopes to increase female skydivers

By Naghmezh Mizanian

TEHRAN — Fatemeh Akrami, the only female skydiver in Iran, hopes to instruct skydiving to as many interested girls as possible.

"My goal is to become a skydiving instructor for Iranian girls," Akrami, 24, said in an interview with the Tehran Times.

"I am an Iranian girl and my responsibility is

to boost the number of female skydivers in the country", she stated. Akrami went on to say that if she lived abroad, she would prefer to fulfill her own wishes, but, in her homeland, she has another duty.

"There is no female skydiving instructor in Iran and there are many interested women who do not have the chance to learn skydiving abroad as I did", she noted.

Inter-Islamic comparative studies for Muslim World Today

TEHRAN — (MNA) — University of Islamic Denominations has been a step forward in Inter-Islamic Comparative Studies and is ready to share and transfer their experiences in this regard.

Dr. Yahya Jahangiri, Vice-Chancellor of International and Scientific Cooperation, with the emphasis of full readiness of the University of Islamic Denominations for Academic exchanges with Islamic world universities in educational,

research and student fields, added: The scientific power of the universities of the Islamic world is in their synergy and interconnectivity.

Vice-Chancellor of International and Scientific Cooperation who is present at the Third International Scientific Forum of Iran-Arab World in Tunisia said: "Today, the Islamic world more than ever needs scientific and academic exchange in the field of Islamic Denominations.

"Today, every single Muslim country should use the capacities of the others to promote the Islamic knowledge and fight with Islamophobia around the world," he said.

Yahya Jahangiri, by underlying the maximum use of academic capacity to introduce the Islam to the younger generation, accentuated that the joint research can contribute to a better approximation among Islamic Universities and can help to an accurate recognition of Islam.



© Tehran Times/ Mahnaz Abdi

Expo Pakistan aims to strengthen trade with Iran

By Mahnaz Abdi

KARACHI — Expo Pakistan is the biggest trade fair in Pakistan, showcasing the largest collection of export merchandise and services. Foreign exhibitors from neighboring countries also use this platform to display their products.

First held in 2005, the success of last Expo Pakistan in 2015 was manifested by the participation of a large number of local and foreign buyers who settled business deals estimated at around \$1.2 billion. **→4**



PERSPECTIVE

By M.A. Saki

Deputy editor-in-chief

Lessons from Kermanshah earthquake

The earthquake in the western province of Kermanshah late on Sunday teaches us important lessons.

On the one hand it shows that Iran has made great progresses in the face of very strong earthquakes and on the other it proves that supervision over construction of some buildings is still lax.

Some buildings in the city of Sar-e Pol Zahab have been severely destroyed while some others, just dozens of meters away, have suffered minor damages or no damages.

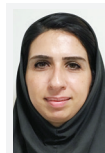
This earthquake proved this fact that it is not a very difficult to build houses resistant to very powerful earthquakes. The buildings that survived this earthquake, which measured 7.3 on the Richter scale, demonstrated that Iran has emerged rather successful in what I call the war on "strong earthquakes".

Even if such a strong earthquake had stricken the most prepared nations like Japan, which have made their countries quake-proof, it would have still caused damages let alone Iran which is still in the middle of the road.

Yet as a country vulnerable to repeated quakes, officials and responsible bodies in our country must have enforced a stricter standard for house construction. The strong earthquakes in Tabas in September 1978, Roudbar and Manjil in June 1990 and Bam in December 2003, which each left thousands of people dead, served as bitter lessons not to allow house constructors to play with the lives of citizens by ignoring building standards.

Now the Kermanshah earthquake must come as another wakeup call for responsible bodies to fully observe standards. It also shows the urgency to take immediate action to reconstruct buildings not resistant to strong tremors, especially in the most populated areas.

In addition, the judicial bodies must bring to book those contractors or engineers who oversaw the construction of the Mehr buildings in Sar-e Pol Zahab which suffered great damages in this earthquake.



ARTICLE

By Setareh Behrooz

Tehran Times journalist

Develop reading habit amid busy life!

As a commuter with a pile of chores waiting for you at home, may be you think that there is no time for reading books! But when there is a will, there is a way. Even in a busy life, you can stay a bonafide book reader if you believe in book reading as a must.

Iran annually celebrate National Day of Book and Book Reading in mid-November. A reminder for many of us to escape the day-to-day routine and sit back for a moment.

Life is a mix of fun, learning and work, not only overwork so you can enjoy it by a balance! Books can bring you fun and learning so don't miss this chance and find a way to read more books! Here you can find some hints about this idea:

■ **Put down your smartphone!**

Addicted to check your smartphone all the time? You are not alone in this modern compulsion! Believe it or not it is one of the main reasons for not reading books!

Your smartphone is your constant companion at doctor's waiting room, on the bus, at the traffic light and wherever you think!

Smartphone, modern trusty factotum, provides you with short 'informative' messages and in this way your sense of learning is fulfilled!

But what is wrong with that? The point is social networks provide you with unnecessary information if you don't manage your time and your apps!

You can choose the book you want and it is not limited to some sentences, you should spend time to read it and engage with it. May be that is why that it creates a world for you to enjoy it!

■ **Create profitable reading time!**

Commuting time and waiting time provide great opportunities for you to read more books!

Always carry a book with you and then you can enjoy each and every moment in your crazy busy life.

Even when you get ready for sleep, you can allocate some minutes to read some pages of a book and in this way you can read chapters of a book you like during a week! **→9**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani appoints new advisor

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Monday appointed Hamid Aboutalebi as his advisor.

“Considering your commitment, academic capabilities and valuable experiences, you are being appointed as ‘advisor to the president’,” Rouhani said in a letter.

“I wish you success in fulfilling your responsibilities, upholding the principles of rule of law, moderation and ‘Code of Ethics of the Administration of Prudence and Hope’ and serving Islam and the great nation of Iran.”

Mahmoud Vaezi, the presidential chief of staff, also on Monday named Majid Takht-Ravanchi as his deputy for political affairs.



Iran sticks to limits of nuclear deal: IAEA report

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran has remained within the main limits on its nuclear activity set by its 2015 nuclear deal, the UN atomic watchdog said in its first report since U.S. President Donald Trump decertified Iranian compliance with the terms, Reuters reported.

Iran’s stock of low-enriched uranium as of Nov. 5 was 96.7 kg (213.2 pounds), well below a 202.8-kg limit set by the deal, and the level of enrichment did not exceed a maximum 3.67 percent cap, said the confidential International Atomic Energy Agency report sent to IAEA member states and seen by Reuters.



Tehran urges EU to persuade JCPOA parties to honor nuclear deal

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Deputy Foreign Minister Morteza Sarmadi on Monday called on the European Union (EU) to persuade all the parties to remain committed to the international nuclear pact.

Sarmadi made the remarks during a meeting with visiting EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan, IRNA reported.

The EU official, for his part, said the 28-nation bloc has taken steps to convince European banks to develop relations with Iran and will continue to do so.

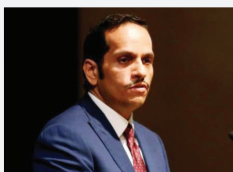


Hariri’s Riyadh trip reminiscent of Sadr’s to Libya: politician

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, said on Monday that the way Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri was invited to Riyadh was reminiscent of Imam Musa al-Sadr’s invitation to Libya and his subsequent abduction.

In a tweet on Monday, Abdollahian suggested that Saudi Arabia had forced Hariri to resign as prime minister of Lebanon, saying the kingdom “does not have mercy, even on its friends,” ISNA reported.

On November 4, Hariri announced his resignation in a televised program broadcast from Saudi Arabia.



Qatar says Tehran-Riyadh conflict might trigger regional crisis

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Qatar’s Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said on Monday that the existing tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia might trigger new crisis which is beyond the tolerance of the region.

In an interview with Turkish TRT news channel on Monday, Al Thani said Iran and Qatar share common interests with Saudi Arabia and that differences should be resolved through negotiations between the two sides.

Countries that have blockaded Qatar never miss the opportunity to mount crisis against Qatar and are opposed to any type of negotiations to help resolve the dispute, he said.



Tehran-Erbil relations in suspension: envoy

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Iraqi Kurdistan envoy to Iran, Nazem Dabaq, said on Monday that relations between Tehran and the Kurdistan region are in suspension.

Dabaq said relations would be improved after a possible agreement between Erbil and Baghdad, Tasnim news agency reported.

Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government held an independence referendum on September 25 after its president Masoud Barzani turned a cold shoulder to international calls against the vote.

Following the vote, which was described as unconstitutional by the Iraqi central government, Iran severed its ties with Kurdistan.

Leader thanks Iraqis for hosting Arbaeen pilgrims



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Monday that the Arbaeen march shows the promotion of the spirit of “jihad” and “martyrdom” and thanked the Iraqi government and people for hosting millions of pilgrims.

“Participation of this huge crowd from various parts of the world in spite of terrorist threats is a great phenomenon which shows promotion of ideology of fight on the path of God,” the Leader said during a meeting with cultural officials and activists from the provinces of Qom and East Azerbaijan.

Arbaeen is a religious observance that occurs 40 days after the Day of Ashura.

Pilgrims, including more than two million Iranians, convened in the holy city of Karbala - where Imam Hussein is buried - to mark Arbæen on November 9.

Arbaeen has also become a rallying cry

EU3 says wants Iran deal to live on

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign ministers of the three European parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have emphasized the necessity to save the Iran nuclear agreement.

In a meeting before a gathering of the EU Foreign Affairs Council summit in Brussels on Monday, the top diplomats from Germany, Britain and France discussed the importance of protecting the nuclear deal, the German mission to the European Union said Monday.

Later, Sigmar Gabriel, the federal minister for foreign affairs of Germany, said in comments at the FAC meeting that Berlin needs to work in close cooperation with its allies

regarding the JCPOA.

“Europe wants to uphold the agreement,” Gabriel said, adding he was going with his British and French colleagues, as well as Federica Mogherini, the EU’s foreign policy chief, to “discuss on how to engage in dialogue with the United States in order to maintain the agreement.”

The Foreign Affairs Council, made up of EU member state ministers responsible for foreign affairs, defense and development, convened on Monday for talks on various topics, such as the EU-Africa relations.

The EU has been at odds with U.S. President Donald Trump who has repeatedly described the JCPOA as a disaster

and accused Iran of violating the deal.

The EU, Iran, Russia and China maintain that the JCPOA is a multilateral and non-renegotiable pact that could not be scrapped unilaterally.

The 159-page nuclear accord clinched in July 2015 went into force in January 2016.

Under the deal Iran is obliged to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified Iran’s compliance with the JCPOA in all of its reports after implementation of the deal.

Macron’s remarks not accurate: Iran

1 → Qassemi added Macron’s upcoming visit to Tehran could be a step to reduce misunderstandings and disagreements between the two countries.

■ ‘Iran does not interfere in Yemen’

Qassemi said Iran does not interfere in Yemen or other countries.

Earlier this month, the Houthi movement, which has been fighting off a Saudi-led coalition with allied army troops and tribal fighters, fired a missile at the King Khalid International Airport in northeastern Riyadh. Saudi Arabia said it intercepted the missile mid-air.

Citing the Saudi blockade of Yemen, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said Iran cannot send weapons to Yemen even if it wished to do so. “We can’t even send humanitarian aid to the country, let alone weapons,” he explained.

Such claims of interference by Iran are part of the enemies’ psychological war against the Islamic Republic.

■ ‘Hariri case is no one’s business but the Lebanese’

The spokesman also said Tehran has always been pushing for stability, security and peace in Lebanon and that the Islamic Republic regards the questions surrounding the resignation of Prime Minister Saad Hariri as a purely Lebanese issue.

On November 4, Hariri surprised the world by announcing his resignation in a televised program broadcast from Saudi Arabia. A number of Iranian officials said he had been forced by the Saudis to resign.

“Based on the official policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we never interfere in other countries’ internal affairs,” Qassemi said.

Qassemi was responding to a question by the Tehran Times correspondent on whether the Foreign Ministry would react to Hariri’s house arrest in Saudi Arabia by pursuing the issue through international channels.

“Hariri’s case is no one’s business but the Lebanese,” he noted, emphasizing that Iran follows a non-interventionist policy and urges other countries to resolve their issues through dialogue.

He said Hariri’s resignation was “unexpected” and “suspicious” since he announced his resignation while he was in another country.

In a television interview on Sunday, Hariri said he will return home in days to formally submit his resignation. “I have resigned. I am going to Lebanon very soon and I will resign in the constitutional manner,” he said.

The Foreign Ministry official said Tehran is hopeful that the Lebanese prime minister will soon return to his country and officially follow up on his resignation there.

He further voiced optimism over Hariri’s Sunday night TV appearance, hoping his return would bring back stability to Lebanon.

Deadly quake claims hundreds of lives

World dignitaries offer their heartfelt condolences

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

TEHRAN — Dignitaries from around the world offered their heartfelt condolences over the deadly quake which jolted Iran’s western province of Kermanshah on Sunday night local time.

By Monday night 450 were reported dead and more than 6,700 injured from the magnitude 7.3 earthquake that had hit Kermanshah province.

According to the Iranian Seismological Center, the incident occurred at 9:48 pm local time. The epicenter of the earthquake which struck at a depth of 11 kilometers was Ezgeleh, a border town adjacent to Iraq.

Following the devastating earthquake, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei sent his sincere condolences to the families of the deceased.

“I sadly received news about an earthquake in the western part of the country, which resulted in the death and injury of a number of dear fellow countrymen and caused a lot of damage.”

The Leader also urged all officials, military and civilian forces along with public organizations, to “rush to the aid of those affected in these early hours [after the incident].”

“Conveying sincere condolences to Government and People of Iran following last night’s deadly earthquake on western border. Situation was unclear around midnight, now, as the sun rises this morning, we know more about the number of dead/injured. UN will assist if requested,” UN Resident Coordinator in Iran Gary Lewis said in his Twitter message which was released on Monday.

In a statement, Irish President Michael D Higgins also extended his sympathies to those affected by the earthquake. “May they receive the urgent assistance, and the solidarity, they need from the global community and their institutions,” he said.

British Ambassador to Iran Nicholas Hopton wrote on his twitter “So sad to hear of the terrible earthquake in Kermanshah last night. My condolences to the families of those killed and sympathy to all affected.”

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan offered condolences to the victims of the earthquake, saying “I wish a speedy recovery to the people of Iraq and Iran after an earthquake that happened in northern Iraq yesterday night, [and] I offer my condolences.”

Erdogan said Turkish aid agencies, including the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) and Red Crescent, were conducting search-and-rescue efforts in the affected region.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives in the devastating earthquake. “My thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones in the tragic earthquake that has affected parts of Iran and Iraq. I pray that those injured recover at the earliest,” Modi tweeted.

British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson also expressed his deepest condolences, saying, “The UK stands ready to help the victims and the recovery effort”.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed his condolences on Twitter.

“Canadians offer their deepest sympathies to the families affected by the earthquake in the region,” he said.

“Convey sincere condolences of Germany to the Government and the People of Iran on occasion of the deadly earthquake in western parts of Iran. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families.”

German Ambassador to Iran Michael Klor-Berchtold wrote on his twitter that “Germany ready to help if needed.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a message published on the Kremlin’s website that “Please accept sincere sympathy and support for the relatives and friends of those who perished and wishes of early convalescence to all survivors of this calamity”.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres offered his condolences to the government and people of Iran.

“The Secretary-General is deeply saddened by the loss of life and damage following the earthquake that struck the border region of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq on Sunday evening,” according to a statement by the UN.

“He conveys his condolences to the bereaved families and to the Governments and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq. He wishes those injured a speedy recovery,” it added.

Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs also made an announcement on the earthquake that struck Iran and Iraq.

“We express our deep sorrow over the tragic aftermath of the earthquake that struck Iran and Iraq on the evening of 12 November,” the announcement said. “In these difficult hours, we address our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and the undivided support and solidarity of the Greek government and the Greek people to the friendly peoples and governments of Iran and Iraq.”

The French embassy in Iran also offered their deepest condolences to the family of the deceased and victims of the sever earthquake.

Noor Muhammad Jadmani, the former ambassador of Pakistan to Iran, also expressed his sorrow. “I am distressed to learn of the devastating earthquake that has taken so many precious lives,” he told the Tehran Times.

“Please accept our deep condolences and sympathies on this tragic accident. May God protect our brothers and sisters in IR in Iran. May God Grant strength to our Iranian brothers to bear this loss and emerge stronger through their usual strong resilience,” Jadmani said.

Kuwait’s Emir Sheikh Sabah IV Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah cabled a message on Monday to President Hassan Rouhani to express condolences on devastating quake claiming the lives of some Iranian people in Kermanshah province in west of Iran.

In separate messages, Kuwait’s crown prince and the country’s prime minister also extended their condolences to President Hassan Rouhani over the fatal quake in west of Iran claiming lives of many people.

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan also in a message to President Rouhani sympathized with victims of the fatal quake in western Iran.

■ The deadly quake

The quake is believed to hit the town of Sarpol-e Zahab, about 15km from the border in Kermanshah, the hardest. The death toll is expected to grow, some building are razed to ground and dozens are still trapped under rubble.

A majority of the victims were from Sarpol-e Zahab.

Regional countries including Turkey, Kuwait, and the UAE also reported feeling a tremor.

Members of the Army, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Basij force, and the Red Crescent Society were dispatched to the area soon after the incident.

Electricity and water supply were cut off in several cities and thousands of people are in need of emergency shelter and blankets in cold weather.

Ordered by the President Rouhani, the ministry of energy is striving to troubleshoot the problem of water and power cuts in the earthquake-hit regions.

Esmail Najjar director of the national crisis management headquarters told Mehr news agency that a great deal of the problem would be fixed by nightfall.

Police chief Hossein Ashtari, Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, and Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi have travelled to the quake-hit areas.

President Rouhani is also slated to travel to the earthquake-stricken areas today.

‘Hezbollah prepared to face any military scenario’

A senior official of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement says his group is ready for any military scenario amid indications that the House of Saud regime is pushing the Israeli regime to launch a new military onslaught against Lebanon.

“The Israeli enemy understands very well the repercussions of any act of aggression against Lebanon. It cannot withstand those consequences,” Deputy Chairman of Hezbollah’s Executive Council Sheikh Nabil Qaouq said on Monday.

He added, “Nothing can undermine Hezbollah’s capabilities as its positions are deep-seated and unwavering. The resistance movement is prepared to confront anything. It is fully capable of securing victories and repelling any aggressor.”

Addressing his supporters via a speech broadcast live from the Lebanese capital city of Beirut on November 10 and on the occasion of Arba’een and Hezbollah Martyr Day, Hezbollah’s Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah stated that the Saudi regime has appealed to the Tel Aviv regime for a military campaign against Lebanon in the name of fighting Hezbollah, and is ready to spend billions of dollars to attain this objective.

“Saudi wants to destroy Lebanon under the pretext of combating Hezbollah. It was the main architect of Israel’s war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006,” he pointed out.

“Israel may push Takfiri militants to start a war against Lebanon. I don’t think Israelis would choose to get into a war with Lebanon following an act of cool calculation,” Nasrallah said.

“Saudi Arabia is afraid of facing Iran, and



wants to take revenge of Hezbollah instead,” he commented.

About 1,200 Lebanese, most of them civilians, lost their lives during Israel’s 33-day war on Lebanon back in the summer of 2006.

According to the 629-page Winograd Report by the Israeli regime itself, Hezbollah fighters involved in defending Lebanon against the Israeli war defeated the enemy and Tel Aviv was compelled to withdraw

without having achieved any of its objectives.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which brokered a ceasefire in the 2006 war, calls on Israel to respect Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with Lebanon-based Arabic-language al-Manar television network on July 14, Head of Hezbollah’s Executive Council Sayyed Hashem

Safieddine stated that the resistance movement will “surprise” Israel in any future war, relying on its enhanced military capabilities.

Safieddine stressed that Hezbollah has been changing and developing new military capabilities, and Israeli reports on Hezbollah’s weaponry are “inaccurate as the enemy intelligence agencies can never reach veracious data in this context.”

(Source: al Alam)

Orthodox leaders urge probe into Israeli arms for Myanmar

A group of prominent Orthodox leaders has asked the Knesset (unicameral national legislature of Israel/Israeli Parliament) to investigate reports that Myanmar is using weapons sold by Israel to commit atrocities against Rohingya Muslims.

A dozen Orthodox rabbis submitted a letter to lawmaker Avi Dichter who chairs a Knesset committee tasked with overseeing Israel’s arms exports, Ha’aretz reported on Monday.

“Has Israel sold arms to Myanmar in recent years, as alleged in several foreign reports, and continued to do so even after the publication of several reports on severe human rights violations in the country?” they asked. “If so, why was there no veto issued on the exports?” read the letter.

The letter reportedly contained reports and testimonies showing that Israel had sold weapons to Myanmar.

“And is Israel still selling arms to Myanmar?” it continued, and further asked if Tel Aviv had actually stopped the weapons’ sales, why it had not publicized it.

The United Nations has accused the Myanmar government of conducting systematic “ethnic cleansing” against the Rohingya Muslims.

On Sunday, a UN special envoy said Myanmar soldiers “systematically targeted” Rohingya women for gang-rape



Myanmar’s visiting military Chief of Staff Min Aung Hlaing (R) meets Israeli President Reuven Rivlin.

during violence against the minority Muslim community which triggered an exodus to Bangladesh.

Pramila Patten, a special representative of the UN Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict, said many of the atrocities “could be crimes against humanity.”

“I heard horrific stories of rape and gang-rape, with many of the women and girls who died as a result of the rape,” Patten told reporters in the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka.

Israel was one of the few parties selling weapons to South Africa during apartheid and only stopped selling weapons to Rwanda during the genocide there after the UN Security Council passed a resolution that put an arms embargo on the country.

Last month, Haaretz said Israel had not said that it would stop selling weapons to the military junta in Myanmar, despite UN data on massacres the country’s military had perpetrated against the Rohingya minority.

The paper separately said Israel sold advanced weapons to Myanmar during an “ethnic-cleansing campaign” going against the Rohingya and that the Myanmar naval commander had visited Israel in the past year, his second in the past five years.

“There’s a remote weapon station, made by Elbit Systems, which allows the firing of a heavy machine gun or cannon of up to 30 millimeters,” it said.

Last month, 55 Israeli rabbis representing various denominations signed a petition calling on Israeli authorities to end arm sales to Myanmar but Tel Aviv has kept mum on its military dealings with the regime.

More than 350 rabbis from the United States subsequently signed a similar letter, which also called on the U.S. government to end training Myanmar troops.

(Source: agencies)

EU preparing for possible collapse of Brexit talks

The European Union’s chief negotiator says the bloc is preparing for the possible collapse of Brexit negotiations with Britain and is making contingency plans in this regard.

Michel Barnier made the remarks while talking to French newspaper Le Journal du Dimanche on Sunday, days after giving Britain a two-week deadline to clarify its position on key issues.

He said that the failure of negotiations was a “possibility” but went on to clarify that he did not want such an outcome.

“It’s a possibility. Everyone needs to plan for it, member states and businesses alike. We too are making technical preparations for it. On March 29, 2019, the United Kingdom will become a third country,” he told the newspaper.

“A failure of the negotiations would have consequences on multiple domains,” he added.

Last Friday, Barnier told Britain that it had just two weeks to make its position clear on the Brexit divorce bill or the EU could block a transition deal with the country.

“We want to reach an agreement [with the UK] within the next 14 working days. Today, we are not there. The rendezvous will be postponed if progress is not sufficient,” he stated.

Britain has said that London is willing to offer the other 27 EU members “further



assurance” on its divorce before the next summit in December.

Britain has also expressed its willingness to pay up to 40 billion euros to the bloc as it wanted considerable progress on settling Britain’s liabilities before Brexit talks resumed.

But, Barnier has said that the two sides are stuck in a “disturbing deadlock” over the divorce bill.

Britain’s Brexit Secretary David Davis has said it is in the interests of both sides “to work to find solutions.”

On Friday, Davis claimed good progress was being made by negotiators, and that the talks had narrowed to a “few outstanding, albeit important, issues.”

Barnier has said Britain must increase its financial offer before negotiators will move on to discuss the future trading relationship with the EU.

EU leaders have been increasingly frustrated about divisions in Prime Minister Theresa May’s cabinet over Brexit, saying they were still unsure what Britain wanted, even after

five rounds of negotiations.

The slow progress of Brexit talks has fueled fears that May’s government may collapse, or worse that London may fail to strike a withdrawal agreement with Brussels before its formal exit from the EU on March 29, 2019, which could cause economic and transport turmoil in Britain and EU.

■ **40 MPs ready to oust Theresa May**
Meantime, nearly 40 Conservative MPs (Member of Parliament) have agreed to sign a letter of no confidence in Prime Minister Theresa May, according to The Times.

A vote of no confidence means that May could be forced from office and replaced by another Conservative.

There is a need for eight more MPs to trigger a party leadership contest. That is not unlikely as the number of parliament members, who want to oust May, has increased in recent weeks.

One minister told the paper, “It’s a horrible thing to say... but we are getting closer and closer to the point whereby we need some time in opposition to regroup.”

Divided over how to pull Britain out of the European Union and hit by several sex scandals involving ministers, May’s government has been getting weaker in asserting control over the country’s chaotic political situation

(Source: agencies)

Saudi Arabia says will lift its siege of Yemen air, sea ports

The House of Saud regime’s mission to the United Nations says Riyadh and its allies will reopen airports and seaports in Yemen which is already facing a dire humanitarian situation in the face of a crippling blockade.

The announcement came after the UN and more than 20 aid groups strongly denounced the blockade, warning that it could bring millions of people closer to “starvation and death.”

“The first step in this process will be taken within 24 hours and involves reopening all the ports in areas controlled by” the Riyadh-backed former Yemeni government, the mission said in a statement on Monday. Those ports are in Aden, Mocha and Mukalla in southern Yemen.

Early this month, the House of Saud regime announced

that it was shutting down Yemen’s air, sea, and land borders, after Yemeni fighters targeted an international airport near the Saudi capital with a cruise missile.

For the ports in Ansarullah (Houthi) movement-controlled areas, including Hudaydah, the Saudi regime mission said that it had asked the UN to send a team of experts to discuss ways to stop what it called weapons smuggling into Yemen.

On Sunday, the Ansarullah movement threatened to strike warships and oil tankers of the Saudi regime and its allies in the war in retaliation for the blockade imposed on the Yemeni ports, particularly the southwestern port of Hudaydah.

Meanwhile, thousands of Yemeni people on Monday staged a protest in front of the UN headquarters in the capital Sana’a

against the Saudi blockade and the closure of the country’s land, air and sea ports.

The House of Saud regime has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015 in an attempt to reinstate former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who is a staunch ally of Riyadh.

More than 12,000 people have been killed since the onset of the campaign more than two and a half years ago. Much of the Peninsula country’s infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and factories, has been reduced to rubble due to the war.

Another 2,100 people have died of cholera since April as hospitals struggle to secure basic supplies across the country.

(Source: Press TV)

Nobody thinks Russia had impact on election: U.S. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin

Whatever Russia did during the presidential campaign in the United States last year, it had no impact on the outcome, the U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said. The official is in charge of implementing sanctions on Russia for alleged election meddling. In an interview on CBS News’ Face the Nation, the treasury secretary commented on President Trump’s remarks, in which he said he believes that Russian President Vladimir Putin was sincere in denying the allegations of meddling in the 2016 election. Mnuchin argued that the U.S. public was “ready to move on” from the issue.

“Let me be clear, nobody thinks this has had any impact on the election. So whatever occurred, there was no impact,” he said. “So I think the American public is ready to move on to more important issues: tax reform and foreign policy and national security.”

Face the Nation host John Dickerson responded that on “the national security front, people think this is an enemy. We should behave with them as such.” And then he moved on with the interview.

Earlier, Trump made another one of his famous flip-flops over the allegations. First he said he believes that when the Russian President Vladimir Putin told him Russia had not interfered in the election, the Russian leader “meant it.” Hours later, he expressed his trust in the U.S. intelligence community, which said it was certain that Moscow had a hand in the election.

Russia adamantly denies the allegations and believes it is being used as a scapegoat by Democrats to explain Hillary Clinton’s surprise loss to Trump. The narrative is currently prominent in the U.S. media and was cited by U.S. lawmakers as the reason for imposing additional sanctions on Russia. This latest round sparked outrage in some European countries, which said the U.S. was blatantly targeting Russian projects to push Russian companies out of the European market.

Mnuchin, the person charged with implementing the sanctions, stressed that his department was carrying out the sanctions, even though he questioned the reasons behind them. He also refrained from commenting on the intelligence related to the alleged Russia meddling that he had being briefed on as part of the Trump administration.

(Source: RT)

Trump and Duterte bond at Asia summit; U.S. says human rights mentioned briefly



The United States President Donald Trump said on Monday he had a “great relationship” with his Philippine counterpart, Rodrigo Duterte, while a White House official said human rights got only a brief mention when the two met on the sidelines of an Asian summit.

A spokesman for Duterte said there was no mention at all of human rights or extra-judicial killings during their conversation.

The meeting between the two presidents was one of the most anticipated at the summit of East and Southeast Asian leaders in Manila, with human rights groups pressing Trump to take a tough line on Duterte over his bloody war on drugs, in which thousands of people have been killed.

“The conversation focused on ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/ISIL/Daesh), illegal drugs, and trade,” said White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders. “Human rights briefly came up in the context of the Philippines’ fight against illegal drugs.”

Harry Roque, Duterte’s spokesman, told a news conference that the Philippine president had explained his anti-drugs policy at length to Trump, who “seemed to be appreciative of his efforts”.

“There was no mention of human rights, no mention of extra-legal killings,” he said. More than 3,900 people have been killed in a war on drugs that Duterte declared when he took office last year. His government says the police act in self-defense, but critics say executions are taking place with no accountability.

“We are your ally. We are an important ally,” Duterte told Trump at the beginning of their talks, according to reporters allowed in to the meeting room.

Trump replied: “We’ve had a great relationship. This has been very successful. And the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) conference has been handled beautifully by the president in the Philippines.” Duterte, who has been called the “Trump of the East” for his brash style and provocative language, said last week he would tell the U.S. president to “lay off” if he were to raise accusations of rights violations.

■ Love song

Trump was criticized in May for praising Duterte during a phone call for the “great job” he was doing to counter illegal narcotics.

The United States and the Philippines, a former U.S. colony, have been strategic allies since World War Two. But their relations have been strained by anti-U.S. outbursts from Duterte and his enthusiasm for better ties with Russia and China.

However, Duterte clearly appears to be getting on better with Trump than he did with his predecessor, Barack Obama.

Trump and Duterte seem to have warmed to each other after meeting for the first time on Saturday at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group meeting in Vietnam.

On Sunday, Duterte crooned hit Filipino love song “Ikaw” (You) at a gala dinner for summit leaders in Manila, saying it was on “the orders” of Trump.

One of the song’s verses, translated from Filipino, begins: “You are the light in my world, a half of this heart of mine”.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I sang uninvited, upon the orders of the commander-in-chief of the United States,” Duterte said later, according to the ABS-CBN news channel.

Roque described the relationship between Trump and Duterte as “warm, friendly and candid”.

(Source: Reuters)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	87832.5
IFX	987.68

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	41,020 rials
EUR	48,500 rials
GBP	54,850 rials
AED	11,240 rials

Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$63.50/b
WTI	\$56.83/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.61/b
Gold	\$1,278.95/oz
Silver	\$16.91/oz
Platinum	\$994.90/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iran intl. auto part expo hosting 1080 companies

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Attended by more than 510 foreign exhibitors and 570 domestic participants, the 12th edition of Iran International Auto Part Exhibition kicked off in Tehran on Monday, IRIB news reported.

Exhibitors from 23 foreign countries including Turkey, China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Poland, the United Arab Emirates, Austria, Spain, Japan, Sweden, France, England, Argentina, Romania, Brazil, the Netherlands and Indonesia, are participating in this four-day exhibit which is held at Tehran International Permanent Fairground.



15 countries participating in Meatex 2017 in Tehran

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 2nd Iran International Meat Exhibition (Meatex 2017) started operation with participation of companies from 15 countries in Tehran on Monday, IRNA reported.

Companies from Spain, Australia, Germany, the United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Brazil, Mongolia, China, Lithuania, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, England, Belgium, and Switzerland are taking part in the four-day event at Tehran International Permanent Fairground.

Some foreign delegations from various countries including New Zealand, Portugal, France, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, and etc. also plan to visit the exhibition, the same report confirmed.

As predicted, the event will host 15,000 Iranian and 1,000 foreign visitors.

As IRIB news reported earlier, the exhibition seeks to meet the need of producers and consumers in markets of Muslim countries in Middle East, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and East Europe.

The event is held by Tejarat Farasoo Holding at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds and under Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade.



Iranian businessmen exploring more trade, exports ties with Philippines

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN**— Iranian businessmen are exploring expansion of trade and exports opportunities in Philippines, Malaya Business Insight reported on Monday.

Oil, fertilizer, coal, and cement are the fields of interest. The governments of Iran and the Philippines are exploring the possibility of sourcing crude oil from the former which would be refined in a third country for export to the Philippines at a lower price.

The Philippines currently buys oil and petrochemical products from traders in Singapore at 40 percent markup, however, Iran could similarly purchase the same 20 percent cheaper than what it currently buys.

Bitcoin price drops 29% in four days

Bitcoin has crashed by more than a fifth after plans to alter the underlying technology were abandoned, leading some to embrace a rival cryptocurrency.

The price of one bitcoin dropped from a high of over \$7,800 (£6,000) last Wednesday to just over \$5,500 on Sunday morning, a drop of 29pc in four days. By Monday morning it had recovered slightly to trade at \$6,400, 21pc down from last week's peak.

The violent swings are likely to embolden critics of the virtual currency, who view it as inherently unstable and say it is in the late stages of a financial bubble.

The fall comes after proposals to upgrade the bitcoin network in an attempt to increase the speed of transactions were shelved last week amid floundering support. (Source: The Telegraph)

Expo Pakistan aims to strengthen trade with Iran

1 → Organized by the Ministry of Commerce and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), the 10th Expo Pakistan was held from November 9 to 12, 2017 at Karachi Expo Center.

Among the many foreign delegations visiting this year's event, there was a delegation of Iranian businessmen headed by Nazar Muhammad Ranjha, the commercial counselor of Pakistani embassy in Iran.

Iranian delegates from different sectors in different provinces discussed business opportunities with the Pakistani counterparts in some B2B meetings during the exhibit.

They also explored the ways to promote bilateral trade and remove existing barriers in the way of their business ties with the neighboring country in two separate meetings with Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), with headquarters in Karachi, and Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) on the sidelines of the expo.

Meeting each other best way to increase bilateral trade

On November 11, the third day of visiting Expo Pakistan, the Iranian delegates attended a meeting with Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, the vice president of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry.

Iranian Commercial Attaché in Pakistan Morad Ne'mati was also present in the meeting which was held in a hall in the exhibit.

In the beginning of the meeting, Fayyaz Magoon briefed the attendees on the activities of FPCCI.

He said: "We have 65 chambers of commerce from all over Pakistan as our members and 130 trade associations of different sectors are also our members."

"We make a bridge between the business community and our government and we also make a bridge between our businessmen and the businessmen from outside to contact with each other", he added.

"I am very happy actually to increase the business in the best way to meet with each other. Without meeting we cannot increase the bilateral trade", he noted.

"We have a very good relationship and we have very good business relationship also. So many products we are exporting to Iran and so many products we are importing from Iran", the FPCCI vice chairman stated, adding, "We are neighboring countries. We enjoy very good relations. You are here and if you need any help from us we can help you. Because all the chambers and associations all over Pakistan are our members so if you face any problem the FPCCI would like to solve it."

"In my idea the best way to increase the bilateral trade is to meet each other. So we are here planning to exchange delegations", Fayyaz Magoon told the Tehran Times in an interview after the meeting and added that by this way when there will be the exchange of businessmen from each



The vice chairman of Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan Province's Chamber of Commerce Amanollah Shahnavaizi (R) giving a gift to Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, the vice president of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry country then bilateral trade will increase.

Explaining about Expo Pakistan, he said 85 delegates from different countries are here. From UK, U.S., Italy, Brazil and any country you can name are already here because you know Pakistan is completely changing and people know that it was only in the past in wrong media that make a wrong concept about Pakistan. You [Iran] are also one of the victims of media. So whenever you are here you feel you can go everywhere especially for Iran there are very big sentiments about Iranian people and you will go to the market in Pakistan everybody will welcome you.

Direct business missing with Iran



Muffasar Atta Malik, the president of Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI), speaking in a meeting between KCCI members and Iranian businessmen

S. Azadegan oil output set to hit 100k bpd by late-Nov.

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Crude oil production from Iran's South Azadegan oil field is set to cross 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) by the end of current Iranian calendar month (which ends on November 21), head of the field's development project was quoted as saying by Shana on Monday.

Touraj Dehqani put the field's current output at 80,000 bpd saying, "With 13 new wells going online, the output will rise to more than 100,000 bpd."

Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year

(March 21), oil production from the country's biggest shared oilfield has increased by over 50,000 bpd.

Earlier in May Dehqani said the field's output is planned to reach 160,000 bpd by yearend (March 20, 2018).

Located in southwestern Iran, South Azadegan is estimated to hold 33 billion barrels of oil in place. It is part of the West Karoun oil block in Khuzestan which Iran shares with Iraq.

South Azadegan is being developed in two phases; production is set to reach 320,000 bpd in the first phase and 600,000 barrels daily in the second and final phase.



U.S. banks' 'stop gap' Brexit plans set to retain London jobs

Big US banks are drawing up "stop gap" Brexit plans in an attempt to avoid moving hundreds of jobs out of London once the UK leaves the EU and before they have had time to recruit specialist staff in the European bloc.

Morgan Stanley, Citigroup and Bank of America are among the banks planning to use London branches of their EU subsidiaries to smoothen the process of building new headquarters on the continent, according to five people briefed on the plans.

One banker involved said the option — dubbed "branch-back" by lawyers — was "the simplest arrangement" available that offered "less costs, less disruption and movement". Branch-back is essentially a reversal of the current set-up, where US banks tend to use their London operations to "passport" their services across the rest of the EU.

A second banker said using London branches of EU divisions was "a reflection of the fact that hiring [back office] staff is tight in the EU in the investment banking market; it's easier in retail, sales and trading".

However, the plans risk antagonising European regulators, who may resist moves by banks to keep staff who are handling transactions with EU clients in the UK along with much of the capital associated with the activities.

For the plans to work, UK authorities would also need to allow investment banks based in the rest of the EU to continue operating in Britain through more lightly regulated branch structures.

"All of us aren't quite sure yet where the UK regulators will come out in terms of how they treat branches of EU entities," said the

first banker. Banks would argue for newly created branches to receive the same treatment as existing ones, like the big London branch that Deutsche Bank uses for its European investment bank, the banker added.

BoFA is in the process of merging its UK bank into its Irish operation to make it a branch of its Dublin-based subsidiary and establishing a similar structure for its European broker-dealer. One banker involved in the move said the merger was part of worst-case scenario planning. It is set to be completed by July next year.

Citi already has a UK branch of its Dublin-based bank Citibank Europe, and a UK branch of the German entity that it is repurposing as its EU broker-dealer. Both branches will be more extensively used after Brexit, subject to regulatory permissions, a person familiar with Citi's plans said.

All of the banks declined to comment.

If successful, the plans could provide a boost to the City of London, following warnings that, as Europe's current financial heartland, it faces an exodus of talent. A report by Oliver Wyman consultancy estimated that Brexit could cost up to 75,000 jobs in the UK's financial services sector while the Bank of England expects 10,000 immediate job losses in the event of a hard Brexit. Representatives from Frankfurt, Paris and other continental cities have been eagerly courting banks in an attempt to snag some of those jobs.

The strategies by the US banks have emerged after they confided in Wilbur Ross, their US commerce secretary, while he was in London over their dismay at the state of Brexit talks.

They warned that the "point of no return" — where they will have to deploy their worst-case contingency plans in order to be ready for the March 2019 Brexit deadline — was fast approaching unless there was clarity over what a transitional deal might look like.

But there has been some easing of those fears of late. By Wednesday, JPMorgan — one of the banks that attended the meeting with Mr Ross last Friday — said it had gained "better clarity" on Brexit at a meeting between Jamie Dimon, its chief executive, and Theresa May, the UK prime minister.

Many global banks have their main European headquarters in London, from which they sell products and services to clients across the EU. However, the loss of the ability to "passport" across Europe as a result of Brexit means that many banks plan to establish new subsidiaries or beef up their existing structures in the 27 other EU countries.

Regulators in both the UK and the rest of Europe have warned banks that they will be watchful of any attempts at regulatory arbitrage. The Bank of England is telling foreign banks this year that they should draw up contingency plans to subsidise their UK operations, which would require far more capital.

"A lot depends on what the ECB will require of entities they supervise," said one banker involved in the US banking plans. "While traders can sit in London — at least for an interim period — and possibly forever, it is quite brave to assume that coverage bankers and salespeople can continue to operate on a passporting basis out of London."

Regulators have told banks these subsidiaries must be sufficiently capitalised and staffed with enough senior employees in functions such as governance, finance and risk to be able to stand alone and to complete the ECB's regular stress tests.

The European Banking Authority warned last month that London cannot retain access to the single market after Brexit by using "shell companies" based in the bloc.

But banks still lack clarity on exactly what functions can remain in London as opposed to the EU — and the number of people that this will affect. "We are all driving in the dark," said another banker.

Some banks are studying "back-to-back trades", in which products are sold in the EU before the risk is transferred to the UK via an internal trade, as a technique to keep more capital and staff in London.

The EBA said that back-to-backs would be tolerated, but with the caveat that enough capital and senior staff would have to be located in the EU to mitigate against risks. The UK and regulators have said back-to-backs are likely only to be a temporary solution.

Bob Penn, a lawyer at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, said: "Perhaps the most significant ongoing cost of Brexit for UK and international banks arises from the fragmentation of their balance sheets across the UK and Europe.

"For those that can manage it, re-domesticating, or a cross-border merger [resulting in a single European bank with a UK branch] represents the least-cost solution."

(Source: The Financial Times)

IMF says Europe's recovery is spilling over to rest of world

The global economy can thank Europe's robust growth for the improving outlook, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Forecasting 2.4 percent expansion in the region this year, up from 1.7 percent in 2016, the Washington-based lender said the brighter prospects accounted for the bulk of an upward revision to its global outlook published in October. It also said the difference in growth rates within the 19-nation euro area is the lowest in nearly two decades.

"This recovery in many countries of Europe is now increasingly solidifying and strengthening," Jorg Decressin, deputy

director of the IMF's European Department, said at a briefing for its Regional Economic Outlook, published Monday.

The region has benefited from years of unprecedented monetary stimulus that has helped reduce unemployment and bolster private consumption. But the IMF said that the "sustainability of the rebound remains in question" in the long term amid adverse demographic trends and subdued productivity.

For the near term, though, there are "upside risks," Decressin said.

"There could be a stronger recovery globally, but also a stronger

recovery of domestic demand within Europe, especially in those Eastern European economies where we are seeing increasingly rapid wage growth," he said.

Read More: Europe's economy moves toward golden decade Already, Europe's improved demand is boosting world trade. According to the IMF, Europe's contribution to the growth of global merchandise imports in 2016-17 is similar to that of China and the U.S. combined. One outlier is the U.K., where demand has slowed after the pound's depreciation lifted inflation and squeezed real incomes. (Source: Bloomberg)

U.S. crude oil exports to Asia soar, complicating OPEC's efforts

By Clyde Russell

U.S. crude oil is flooding into Asia, and may continue to do so as the arbitrage window that was initially created by Hurricane Harvey remains open, even though the disruption from the costliest storm to hit the Gulf of Mexico has faded.

A record amount of U.S. crude is scheduled to arrive in Asia in November, according to vessel-tracking and port data compiled by Thomson Reuters Oil Research and Forecasts.

The data show 19.7 million barrels of U.S. oil is due to arrive across Asia in November, equivalent to about 657,000 barrels per day (bpd). The data are filtered to show only vessels that are currently underway, and those that are discharging or have discharged their cargoes.

This is more than a 50 percent jump on the 427,000 bpd that was offloaded in Asia in October, and also above the previous record-high month for U.S. crude shipments to Asia of 541,000 bpd from June.

It also appears that December will be another month of strength, with 11 vessels carrying a combined 16.5 million barrels of crude already en route from U.S. Gulf ports to Asia.

When Hurricane Harvey struck the U.S. Gulf coast in late August one of the initial impacts was a drop in the price of West Texas Intermediate (WTI), the main U.S. light crude grade.

At that time it became likely that U.S. exports to Asia would ramp up given that WTI's discount to the global benchmark light crude, Brent, widened to \$5.46 a barrel at closing prices on Aug. 29.



This was enough of a gap to overcome the higher freight rate to ship from the Gulf coast to Asia, compared to similar grades of crude from African producers such as Angola and Nigeria.

WTI's discount to Brent had been just \$2.48 a barrel at the end of July, which made it harder to make a profit shipping U.S. crude to Asia.

But instead of narrowing back as refineries recovered along the U.S. Gulf coast after Harvey and started processing crude again, WTI's discount to Brent has re-

mained at elevated levels.

At the close of Nov. 10, Brent commanded a \$6.78 premium over WTI, which is even higher than what it was in the immediate aftermath of Harvey.

This makes it likely that U.S. crude will continue to flow to Asia at robust levels, as the discount provides a profitable trade for U.S. shale drillers and other oil producers.

■ Changing market dynamics

While the volumes aren't enough to threaten the position of Asia's major suppliers, such as OPEC heavyweights Saudi

Arabia, Iran and Iraq, as well as Russia, it is enough to complicate the efforts of OPEC and its allies to re-balance crude oil markets and send prices sustainably higher.

For example, China, the world's top crude importer, has been ramping up purchases from the United States, taking the equivalent of about 127,000 bpd of U.S. crude in the first nine months of the year.

While this makes the United States only China's 15th biggest supplier, it represents a staggering 880 percent increase on the same period in 2016.

Other non-traditional suppliers to China have also been making inroads as OPEC and its allies acted to curb output.

Imports from Malaysia are up 500 percent, those from Britain by 95 percent and from the Republic of Congo by 459 percent.

In contrast, former top supplier Saudi Arabia has seen a drop of 0.6 percent in the first nine months of the year compared to the same period in 2016.

China's imports from Iran are up by a modest 4.2 percent, while those from Iraq are 5.8 percent higher, both figures well below the overall increase of 12.2 percent in crude imports in the first three quarters of the year.

What the Chinese customs and the vessel-tracking data show is that the ongoing discount of WTI to Brent, coupled with the output restrictions by OPEC and its allies, are creating new market dynamics in Asia.

The problem for OPEC and other major crude suppliers to the world's top importing region is that once market share is surrendered, it may prove difficult to win back.

(Source: Reuters)

Oil steadies near two-year highs as geopolitics offset U.S. supply

Oil was largely steady on Monday, trapped between a bullish push from tension in the Middle East and downward pressure from evidence of rising U.S. production, although record fund bets on a rally kept the price in sight of two-year highs.

Brent crude futures were down 17 cents at \$63.35 a barrel by 1002 GMT, having gained 14 percent so far this month. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude eased 6 cents to \$56.68.

Traders said crude prices were generally well supported as output cuts led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and Russia have contributed to a significant reduction in excess supplies that have dogged markets since 2014.

The excess of industrialized countries' oil stockpiles over their five-year average "has fallen by more than 50 percent in 2017, with inventories currently at around 160 million barrels", consultancy Timera Energy said.

"If current trends continue, inventories are likely to return to the five-year average at some stage in 2018," it said, adding that strong demand had also helped reduce the glut.

Hedge funds increased their holdings of Brent crude futures and options in the latest week, pushing their bet on a sustained rally in the oil price to the highest on record.

Money managers now hold a net long position in Brent futures and options equivalent to nearly 544 million barrels of oil.

"Overall, there are a few reasons for confidence - compliance from OPEC - and it seems likely they'll extend the cut," Jasper Lawler, a market strategist with London Capital Group, said.

On the supply side, tensions in the Middle East raised the prospect of disruptions, traders said, adding it was unclear whether a strong earthquake that hit Iran and Iraq on Sunday had affected the region's oil production.

Bahrain said over the weekend that an explosion that caused a fire at its main oil pipeline on Friday was caused by sabotage, linking the attack to Iran, which denied any role.

The rise in WTI futures towards \$60 last week brought an increase in U.S. drilling. U.S. producers added nine oil rigs in the week to Nov. 10, the biggest jump since June, raising the count to 738, energy services firm Baker Hughes said on Friday.

The rig count is also much higher than a year ago, when only 452 rigs were active, indicating that the U.S. oil industry is comfortable operating at current prices.

(Source: Reuters)



Iraq raises Dec. Basra Light crude prices to Asia, Europe

Iraq has raised the December official selling prices (OSPs) for its crude oil sales to Asia and Europe, but trimmed the Basra Light crude price for the United States after demand slowed.

The December Basra Light OSP to the North and South American markets was set at the Argus Sour Crude Index (ASCI)

plus 20 cents a barrel, down 15 cents from the previous month, the State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO) said on Sunday.

Basra crude loadings for the United States fell to multi-month lows in October and November after U.S. refiners turned to more competitively priced supplies

produced in the Americas.

In Asia, the December OSP for Basra Light crude rose by 35 cents to 10 cents a barrel above the average of Oman/Dubai quotes, while the OSP for Basra Heavy increased by 45 cents from the previous month.

These hikes, much smaller than the 65-

cent increase seen for similar-quality Saudi Arab Medium, could support December spot trade, traders said, depending on the month's export volume.

SOMO typically informs its customers how much they can lift in the month after announcing monthly prices.

(Source: Reuters)

Over the Past Eight Years: Municipality of Qazvin Spends 20b Tomans in Sports Sector



Municipality of Qazvin spent more than 20 billion tomans in the past eight years for boosting and developing sports sector in this province.

Saeed Vazirinejad Head of Sports, Social and Cultural Organization of Qazvin Municipality announced the above statement and said: "Over the past years, Municipality of Qazvin spent more than 20 billion tomans in the software and hardware fields with the approach of developing public sports and boosting public health among noble people of this province."

He put the cost spent over the past eight years for the development of sports infrastructures of this province at 16 billion tomans and said: "Of course, this figure is except to the fund spent for the construction of new parklands in this province."

Vazirinejad also put the costs spent by the Municipality of Qazvin for organizing sports competitions at three billion tomans and said: "Totally, three billion tomans has been spent for organizing sports competitions in urban, regional, national and international levels as well as supporting sport teams of this city such as Caspian Football Team."

A number of 800 sport sets have been installed in 63 parts of this city, he said, adding: "There was no sports facilities across this city until 2009 but 800 sports facilities have currently been installed in the country, costing over 1 billion tomans, over the past eight years, Vazirinejad observed."

He further noted that 150,000 square meters

land has been added to the sports spaces of this city.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he reiterated: "Qazvin city was home to only two sports centers, as large as 14,000 square meters, in 2009, running under the strict supervision of Municipality of Qazvin, but presently, the province is home to 35 indoor and outdoor sports centers, as large as 164,000 square meters, showing a considering 10fold increase."

He pointed to the current sport spaces which are administering under the strict supervision of Municipality of Qazvin as follows: Mellat Parkland sports field, Booyeh Chess House, Kowsar Sports Complex (Mellat Ski Piste, Chess Hall, Bodybuilding, Aerobic Salons, etc.), Parastar Skate Pitch, Barajin Health Road as large as 30,000 square meters, Milad Artificial Turf, Hasht Behesht Club, SEPEHR Sports Complex, Laleh Sports Complex, Shahid Rajaei Sport Hall, Mosalla Artificial Turf, Shohada-ye Choobindar Sports Complex, Women-Only Sports Complexes (Tennis, colleyball and basketball courts, cycling track, walking ring, etc.) Pardis Sports Hall, Kaman and Zereskh Cable-Cabin Sports Hall, Pamchal and Molavi sport fields, construction of 11 sport sheds in cooperation with IRGC, etc.

Of the other measures taken by Sports, Social and Cultural Organization of Qazvin Municipality, he pointed to the construction of Shaghayegh Sport and Cultural Complex on a land area as large as 18,000 sq.m and said: "This giant complex is home to the artificial turf, cycling track, natural turf, tennis, basketball and

volleyball pitches, X-Box Hall and track-and-field piste, all of which have been constructed according to the international standards."

Turning to the construction of women-only parkland in southern part of the city, he said: "Social spaces, playground special of children, cycling track, outdoor amphitheater, sports places and complementary spaces have been predicted in this parkland."

Once this parkland is commissioned, every district of the city will be equipped with one women-only parkland, he maintained.

Vazirinejad also referred to the construction of 20 morning sport stations in Qazvin and said: "Qazvin was home only to two morning sport stations in 2009 but currently, these stations have increased up to 20."

Moreover, 400 sport programs have been implemented in this province in the past eight years, he said, adding: "A number of 400 sport programs, costing over 2 billion tomans, have been implemented by the Municipality of Qazvin in cooperation with sport boards of this city, the most important of which can be referred to: rope-towing contest, local games, climbing, ancient sports, strongest youth and teenagers in this city, futsal and volleyball competitions during Holy Month of Ramadan (Ramadan Cup)."

Moreover implementation of sport programs and contests, Municipality of Qazvin has always supported national and international competitions such as International Chess Contest, Cycling Competitions, Off-Road Contest, organizing five editions of Intl. Table Tennis Competitions, etc.

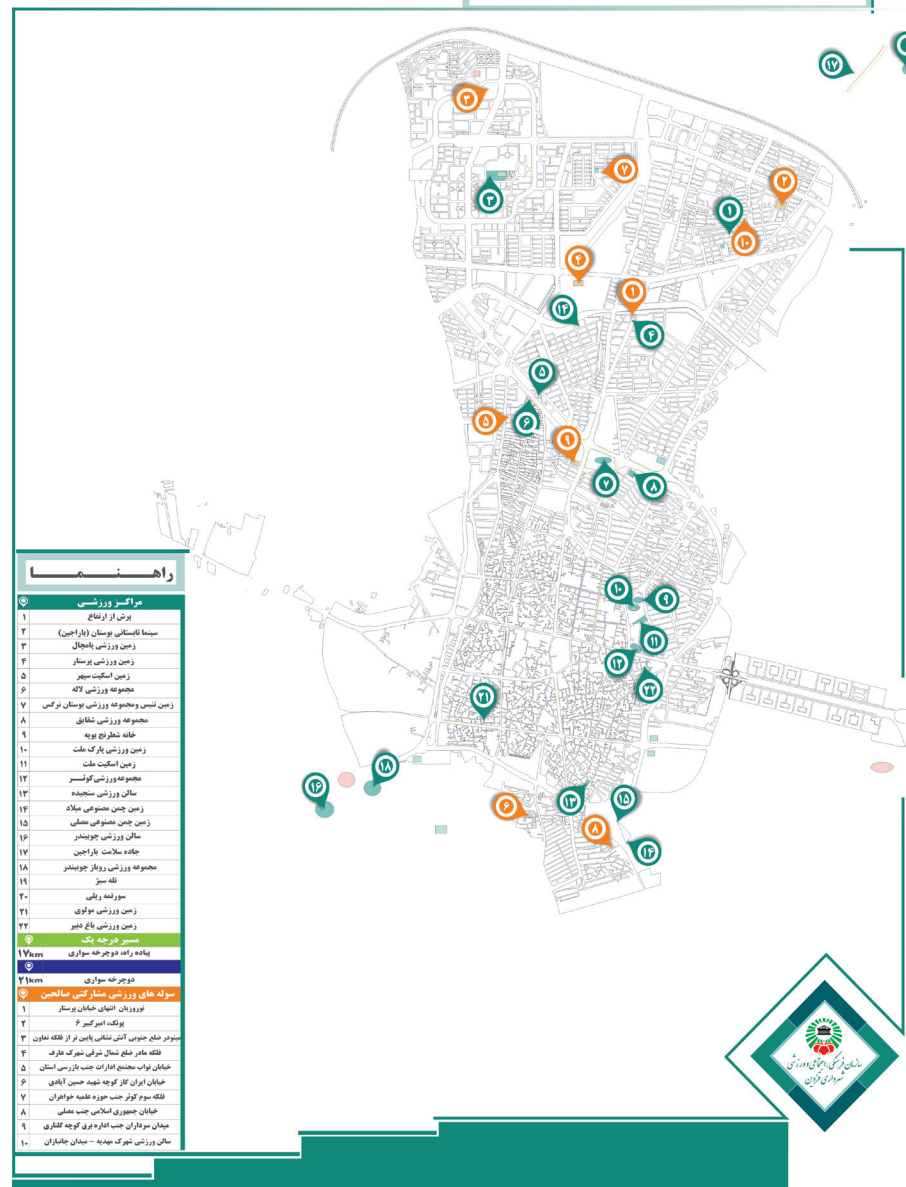
Of the other salient measures taken by the Municipality of Qazvin, he pointed to the organizing two editions of organizing medalists and champions in Asia, Olympic and world levels, he said, adding: "The 3rd edition of Honoring Medalists and Champions will be held on Dec. 5, 2017 during Unity Week at the threshold of auspicious birth anniversary of Holy Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad (S)."

This province is home to seven sport complexes in Qazvin city, he said, adding: "Construction of western line of Health Road from Barajin Parkland to Islamic Azad University (IAU), Minoodar Artificial Turf, Farhangsara Sports Hall, etc. will be put into operation by the next Iranian calendar year in 1397 (to start March 21, 2018)."

In the end, Saeed Vazirinejad Head of Sports, Social and Cultural Organization of Qazvin Municipality said: "It is hoped that sports sector of this province will be flourished in coming years at the unsparing support of wise mayor of this city and also competent councilors."



Distribution Map of Sports Centers
Sports, Social and Cultural Organization
of Qazvin Municipality
2017



Britain must atone for the Balfour declaration – and 100 years of suffering



ARTICAL

By Mahmoud Abbas

The Palestinian president

Many British people will not know of Sir Arthur James Balfour, an early 20th century foreign secretary. For 12 million Palestinians, his name is all too familiar. On the 100th anniversary of the Balfour declaration, the British government should take the opportunity to make things right.

At his desk in London, on 2 November 1917, Balfour signed a letter promising the land of Palestine to the Zionist Federation, a recently established political movement whose goal was the creation of a Jewish state. He promised a land that was not his to promise, disregarding the political rights of those who already lived there. For the Palestinian people – my people – the events this letter triggered have been as devastating as they have been far-reaching.



Arthur Balfour visits the Jewish settlement of Rishon LeZion in 1917.

This British policy, to support Jewish immigration into Palestine while negating the Arab-Palestinian right to self-determination, created severe tensions between European Jewish immigrants and the native Palestinian population. Palestine (the last item on the decolonization agenda) and we, its people, who sought our inalienable right to self-determination, instead suffered our greatest catastrophe – in Arabic the Nakba.

■ The darkest day
In 1948 Zionist militias forcibly expelled more than 800,000 men, women and children from their homeland, perpetrating horrific massacres and destroying hundreds of villages in the process. I was 13 years old at the time of our expulsion from Safad. The occasion on which Israel celebrates its creation as a state, we Palestinians mark as the darkest day in our history.

The Balfour declaration is not something that can be forgotten. Today, Palestinians number more than 12 million, and are scattered throughout the world. Some were forced out of their homeland in 1948, with more than 6 million still living in exile to this day. Those who managed to remain in their homes number roughly 1.75 million, and live within a system of institutionalized discrimination in what is now the state of Israel.

Approximately 2.9 million live in the West Bank under a draconian military occupation-turned-colonization, with 300,000 of that number being the native inhabitants of Jerusalem, who have so far resisted policies to force them out of their city. Two million live in the Gaza Strip, an open prison subjected to regular destruction through the full force of Israel's military apparatus.

The Balfour declaration is not something to be celebrated – certainly not while one of the peoples affected continues to suffer such injustice. The creation of a homeland for one people resulted in the dispossession and continuing persecution of another – now a deep imbalance between occupier and occupied. The balance must be redressed, and Britain bears a great deal of responsibility in leading the way. Celebrations must wait for the day when everyone in this land has freedom, dignity and equality.

■ Humility and courage
The physical act of the signing of the Balfour declaration is in the past – it is not something that can be changed. But it is something that can be made right. This will require humility and courage. It will require coming to terms with the past, recognizing mistakes, and taking concrete steps to correct those mistakes.

I salute the integrity of those British people calling on their government to take such steps: the 274 MPs who voted in favor of recognizing the state of Palestine; the thousands who have petitioned their government to apologies for the Balfour declaration; the NGOs and solidarity groups turning out on the streets, advocating tirelessly for our rights as Palestinians.

Despite the horrors we have endured in the past century, the Palestinian people have remained steadfast. We are a proud nation with a rich heritage of ancient civilizations, and the cradle of the Abrahamic faiths. Over the years we have adapted to the realities around us – the chain of events triggered in 1917 – and made deeply painful compromises for the sake of peace, beginning with the decision to accept a state on only 22% of our historical homeland while recognizing the state of Israel, without any reciprocity thus far.

We have endorsed the two-state solution for the past 30 years, a solution that becomes increasingly impossible with every passing day. As long as the state of Israel continues to be celebrated and rewarded, rather than held accountable to universal standards for its continued violations of international law, it will have no incentive to end the occupation. This is short-sighted.

Israel, and friends of Israel, must realize that the two-state solution may well disappear, but the Palestinian people will still be here. We will continue to strive for our freedom, whether that freedom comes through the two-state solution or ultimately through equal rights for all those inhabiting historic Palestine. It is time for the British government to do its part. Concrete steps towards ending the occupation on the basis of international law and resolutions, including the most recent UN security council resolution 2334, and recognizing the state of Palestine on the 1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital, can go some way towards fulfilling the political rights of the Palestinian people.

Only once this injustice is set right will we have the conditions for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East – for the sake of Palestinians, Israelis and the rest of the region.

(Source: The Guardian)

Syria war intended to divide, weaken independent nations: Sydney University's Anderson

Tim Anderson says ‘Washington has not yet found a way to accept defeat’ in Syria

1 → ■ Mr. Anderson could you please tell us what your book “The Dirty War on Syria” reveals about the war in Syria? And what was your motive behind writing the book?

A: My book exposes the western myths about this war and offers a more realistic history of the conflict.

The war on Syria is seen as a key part of the ‘New Middle East’ plan by Washington and its allies, to subjugate and control all independent nations of the region.

The aim was to strategically and economically dominate the region, determining the terms on which other powers, such as Russia, China and Europe, could access Middle Eastern resources, infrastructure and markets. My motive for writing the book was dissatisfaction with the shallow and misleading portrayal of the conflict in the English speaking world. I wanted to correct that misinformation.

■ You talk about “untold story” behind Syria’s conflict. What’s the main purpose of Western media outlets in covering up the ground reality of the war in Syria?

A: Western media outlets have shown themselves deeply embedded in the neo-colonial projects of their governments.

There is no ‘freedom’ of the western corporate media, in this respect. At times of war they show themselves to be completely ‘embedded’ with their states. As the successive wars have proceeded (Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, and Yemen), new pretexts have been rolled out and any dissent is attacked and intimidated.

■ You refer to “lies” in your book about the Syrian war. Could you go into detail on it?

A: The lies have to do with the character of war on Syria, the agents involved and critical incidents, or war crimes, during the war. Because the aggression is clearly in breach of international law, extreme pretexts have been invented to cover up this fact. For example, it has been argued that the armed aggression against Syria is necessary because the government is ‘killing its own people’. As each new pretext fails, another has been invented.

■ What is the objective of different power players in the Syria war?

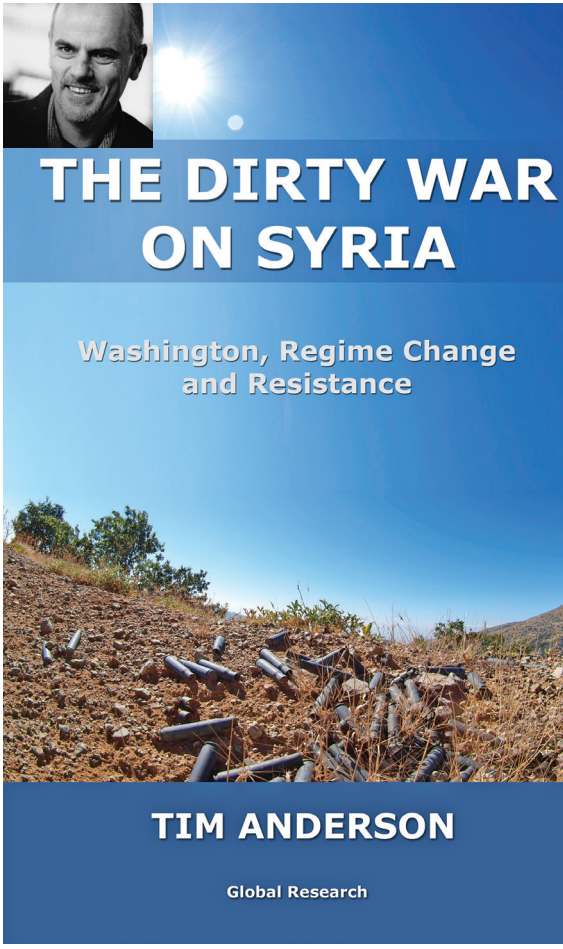
A: The U.S. has an imperial plan, which I outlined above, into which it has drawn a number of its western allies. The regional allies of the U.S.: the Saudis, Turkey, Qatar, Israel, have had overlapping interests. Overall, the war has aimed at weakening and dividing (if not destroying) the region’s independent countries.

Syria and its regional allies (mainly Hezbollah, Russia, Iran) have been defending their nations and their key interests.

■ What’s your take on Iran’s role in protecting Assad’s government and Syrian people?

A: Since 1979 Iran has enjoyed a stable and constructive strategic relationship with Syria. The Islamic Republic of Iran wants stable and constructive relationships with its neighbors, and understands that the U.S. has been trying to undermine these.

I believe the government of Iran understands very well that it has the will and capacity to lead a regional alliance in defense of common interests.



Syria and its regional allies (mainly Hezbollah, Russia, Iran) have been defending their nations and their key interests.

In particular, Iran and Syria share interests as part of a regional axis against the ethnic cleansing and apartheid of Israel. I believe the government of Iran understands very well that it has the will and capacity to lead a regional alliance in defense of common interests.

■ In your book you refer to “proxy armies” being supported by United States’ regional allies. Could you shed light on that?

A: From Feb-March 2011, Qatar and the Saudis supported the armed groups in Syria, under the control of Syria’s Muslim Brotherhood, along with their internationalist salafist supporters called, at that time, Jabhat al Nusra (al Qaeda in Syria).

Soon after there was a proliferation of similar sectarian

Islamist groups, backed by various U.S. allies, Kuwait, Israel, Turkey, the UAE, etc.

Western powers joined in with, for example, the British Government creating the al Qaeda public relations auxiliary ‘The White Helmets’.

Although there has been direct military intervention by foreign powers (occasional missile and air strikes by Israel and the USA) most of the war on Syria has been fought by proxy armies of mercenaries and religious fanatics, bonded (though at time squabbling over money) through their Saudi-style wahhabi-sectarian ideology.

■ Despite a battery of the Syria peace talks, a political solution has not been reached yet. Why?

A: The main reason for that is that Washington has not yet found a way to accept defeat. Clearly its proxy terrorist armies have been defeated by Syria and its allies,

but the terrorism persists because its sponsors have not yet adapted to this reality.

Nevertheless, the peace talks have resulted in some welcome ceasefires, and a ‘reconciliation’ process with some large scale surrenders.

■ What does the future hold for Syria as ISIS is losing ground in Syria?

A: The destruction of Daesh and the al Nusra coalition, by the Syrian and Iraqi forces and their allies, is a welcome development in the region.

It signals the beginning of the end of the U.S. plan to dominate the entire region. That includes unravelling the U.S. domination of Iraq.

In my view, despite tremendous loss of life and destruction, the patriotic regional coalition - led by Iran - has emerged stronger.

That is a hopeful sign for the region, as U.S.-domination is the main factor that has kept nations apart, assisting the ethnic cleansing by the Zionist regime.

I believe it is only a strong, new regional alliance that can prevent future interventions by outside powers, and hold the Zionist regime to account.

■ It seems that regional actors constantly violate the UN Security Council resolutions on Syria, including Resolution 2139 approved in 2014. Why doesn’t the UN take a firm stance against those who do not comply with the resolutions?

A: The UN, at least at the Security Council level, is dominated by the big powers. Only in recent years have Russia and China begun to take a stronger role. Even then those two, which remain important partners and have shown far greater respect for international law, have their own wider interests.

A strong regional alliance is essential if the sponsors of terrorism and Zionist apartheid are to be restrained. Of course, Israel and Washington understand and fear this. That lies behind their obsession with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In my view, despite tremendous loss of life and destruction, the patriotic regional coalition - led by Iran - has emerged stronger.

EU calls for removal of Saudi blockade on Yemen - what next?

TEHRAN (FNA) — The European Union says Saudi Arabia’s slight easing of its illegal blockade on Yemen is not enough to stop the country from plunging into famine, urging further measures to alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

This comes as the EU itself is under mounting pressure from the international civil society to ban arms sales to Saudi Arabia in response to the Persian Gulf state’s bombing campaign in Yemen. For this, the leaders of four political groups in the European Parliament have urged the EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, to propose an EU arms embargo on Saudi Arabia, because of the devastating war on Yemen that has left nearly 20 million people in need of humanitarian aid.

The MEP leaders accuse the EU of flouting its own rules, by selling weapons to Saudi Arabia in defiance of a 2008 common code on military exports. Mogherini has the right to propose an arms embargo, but would need to win the backing of all EU member states, including the UK –which happens to be one of the biggest arms exporters to the Persian Gulf state.

Little wonder the latest call for a ban has run into immediate opposition from the British defense secretary, Michael Fallon, who has urged other EU member states not to criticize Saudi Arabia for its human rights violations and war crimes in the interests of major arms sales worth billions of dollars.

However, the EU code on arms exports lists eight grounds for turning down an arms export license, including respect for the obligations of international organizations, such as the United Nations. In particular EU member states must show special caution and vigilance when issuing licenses to Saudi Arabia where serious violations of human rights have been established by the UN and human rights groups.

■ European values
Another problem is that just like the UK, the EU continues to sell arms to Saudi Arabia. In between, no one cares about common European values, much less a common position on arms sales, that says the EU shouldn’t sell arms and military gears to a country that doesn’t respect humanitarian law or human rights, including submarines, surface ships, aircraft, attack helicopters, armored vehicles and precision-guided munitions.

Mind you, France, followed by the UK, has just issued the most valuable arms-export licenses to Saudi Arabia worth €16.9bn, according to the latest EU arms export report, which also shows that 17 EU member states sold arms to the Persian Gulf state.

As per international law, any such arms exports to Saudi Arabia are in direct violation of at least criterion two of the common position in regard to the country’s involvement in grave breaches of humanitarian law as established by competent UN authorities. True, the European Parliament passed a symbolic resolution in



favor of an arms embargo in February 2016, but member states, which hold the levers of EU foreign policy, have so far ignored calls for action. The EU’s foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini can put the issue on the agenda, but is reluctant to do so too. Worse still, the UK will no longer be bound by the EU’s arms export code after Brexit.

This is while the EU does not want disorder and turmoil on its southeastern flank. Wars in Syria, Iraq, and

Afghanistan have produced mass migration into Europe and ISIL militants ready to hit the Continent. In this sense, the Yemeni conflict is a significant and immediate menace to European security.

It is time for the EU to keep human rights at the center of its foreign policy. European arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries engaged in the Yemeni conflict have infringed the EU’s code on military exports. Under the bloc’s legislation, EU member states cannot transfer arms to countries that do not comply with humanitarian law and international rules. As well, weapons sales are forbidden if they pose a threat to regional peace, security, and stability.

Tragic enough, for some EU countries it seems that arms contracts with Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern cronies worth billions of dollars are more important than human rights and geopolitical stability in their own neighborhood. Instead of transforming itself into a military-industrial complex in conjunction with opportunities to continue the illegal war on the poorest nation in the Middle East, the EU could devise a common position on halting all arms exports to Saudi Arabia if they want to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, and to be credible in their promotion of humanitarian law and dialogue-based approach to conflict resolution in Yemen.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) office in Tehran is seeking for a qualified consultant for preparing a Discussion Paper and an Urban Diagnostic Report, as a first step in the process of developing national urban policy in Iran.

The ideal candidate has over 15 years of experience in urban planning including experience of undertaking urban development policy work at the national level. Further details and ‘how to apply’ can be found on the UN Iran web page <http://www.un.org.ir> under the Job Opportunities section, or <http://www.unhabitat.org.ir>.

The closing date for applications is 22 November 2017. Interested applicants are requested to study the job requirements carefully, taking note particularly of the requirement for complete proficiency in spoken and written Persian and English languages.

Saudi act humiliates Lebanese people, Al-Mustaqbal: expert

➡ Saudi Arabia, like other countries, is not immune to external influences.

With the revolution and fast-paced development of communications in the contemporary world of today, the dimension of time and place lost its traditional meaning and Riyadh cannot avoid the effects of these changes. The new generation of Saudi Arabia such as Muhammad bin Salman has been nurtured and raised with western teaching who is familiar with the necessities of modernity. The teachings and traditions, originated from traditional and tribal society of Saudi Arabia, which are based on Salafism can no longer secure interests of Saudis.

On the other hand, U.S. government attaches great importance to Saudi Arabia as a staunch ally, so that Saudi stability is a fundamental principle for the United States. It seems that an agreement has been concluded between Riyadh and Washington for transition of Saudi Arabia from traditional society towards a developed and modern society.

This issue has nothing to do with U.S. President Donald Trump and even Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. This change had to take place between Saudi Arabia and U.S. anyway.

■ But arrests in Saudi Arabia indicate internal opposition to this trend. What is your opinion in this regard?

A: These changes happened in Saudi Arabia are difficult and costly in some cases. By reformation of its traditional policy, Saudi Arabia is reforming its old structures and emergence of new structures in accordance with the modern-day condition. The previous factors associated with the United States, that cannot and/or do not have the capacity of accompanying these changes, are eliminated and replaced by the new faces.

■ How some global circles especially western supporters and advocates of human rights have adopted silence against the wave of arrests in Saudi Arabia?

A: Do not believe the Western considerations of human rights significantly. Political considerations are often concealed on the issues related to the human rights. It should be kept in mind that Saudi Arabia is a Western alliance, so observers and claimants of human rights can ignore their performance.

On the other hand, developments in Saudi Arabia are internal changes that are encouraged by the West and the United States in particular. Broadly speaking, there is a full harmony between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and United States.

The experience of this kind of changes has already occurred in Turkey with the indigenous and systemic considerations and its developments are still continuing in this country with ups and downs. Turkey has also redefined its political, economic and social structure with Erdogan and AKP government and even, wave of arrests related to it still continues. In Saudi Arabia, beliefs in Salafism and religious-based view cannot serve the changes. The removal of them and silence of the West towards the arrests is the result of this equation.

■ This means that you believe Washington and Riyadh have gone away and adopted a wide gap from extremist groups, stemming from Salafist thinking and/or will bury them at the grave. Would you mind explaining more on this?

A: In response to your question, I should say that Saudi Arabia and United States, etc. have a strategic vision to



© Tehran Times/Majid Asgaripour

It should be noted that Salafism and extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIL were once offering services to the United States of America in line with securing its interest but these groups have no longer their previous performance. Of course, these groups have been marginalized and in some cases, they have been misused.

the extremist groups such as ISIL and Al-Qaeda and will not relinquish this important tool. Therefore, the duo will take advantage of ISIL and Al-Qaeda according to the current situation. Presently, Salafism and its broader context in Saudi Arabia have prevented development and modernization of Saudi Arabia and in some cases, it brought about catastrophes such as Sept. 11 terrorist attack. I am of the opinion that Salafism should be weakened and controlled completely. In general, Salafism should be managed for specific purposes as well.

It should be noted that Salafism and extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIL were once offering services to the United States of America in line with securing its interest but these groups have no longer their previous performance. Of course, these groups have been marginalized and in some cases, they have been misused.

■ Mohammad bin Salman himself is accused of abuse and corruption. How has he been a leader of fighting against corruption?

A: It is not supposed anyone come from outside and manage the trend of changes in Saudi Arabia. For example, Turkish President Recept Tayyip Erdogan also move from the Municipality of Istanbul to the position of presidency. When he assumed as Turkish President, he dealt with

the systemic cleansing and change of structures in this country. Yes. The issue of corruption is seriously raised with regard to Mohammad bin Salman but one in the system should be initiator of changes in Saudi Arabian government. It seems that both internal and external agreement is on Mohammad bin Salman.

■ How do you evaluate the charges stated by Saudi Arabia and the United States with regard to the launch of Yemeni missile by Iran?

A: These charges have a goal beyond the geopolitics of Saudi war with Yemen. Implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is the result of heroic leadership of Iran and powerful Rouhani Administration. However, implementation of JCPOA thwarted plots and conspiracies of Saudi Arabia and U.S. President Trump. For a long time, exertion of pressure to Iran has been intensified over its missile power. Saudi Arabia and United States claim that the missile hit Saudi Arabia is Iranian-made missile.

As a matter of fact, the duo have accused Iran of availing Yemeni government with its powerful missile under the pretext of re-imposing new waves of sanctions against Iran. According to the statistics, casualties in Saudi Arabia have risen caused by Yemeni missile strikes to this Arabic country while Saudi officials state that Yemeni missile strikes had not any casualties in Saudi Arabia.

Adopting silence in the face of siege led to the spread of hunger and comprehensive cholera in Yemen which is the result of U.S. support of Saudi Arabia in this unequal war.

■ What is your analysis over resignation of Saad Hariri Former Lebanese Prime Minister in Riyadh?

A: In the field of art and architecture, some historic monuments have been named as Seven Wonders. By announcing the resignation of Hariri in Riyadh, a file should be opened in politics and state management, so that Hariri's resignation should be termed as the first historic wonder.

The history of such a humiliating resignation has not yet been recorded. This is not the humiliation of Lebanese people, rather, it is the humiliation of Al-Mustaqbal political trend in Lebanon.

By reading the text provided by Saudi Arabian government, Hariri practically conveys the message of Saudis to Tehran which is going to take revenge of their failure in Yemeni war from Lebanon but this project will fail too. The experience of civil wars in Lebanon will not be repeated. Among the Islamic countries, there has been the highest index of interfaith relations in Lebanon.

Lebanese people are the most political people in the region and are aware of plots in the region. Lebanese Resistance Movement "Hezbollah" is the crystallization of resistance and national element in Lebanon.

Not only all Lebanese people but also people of region have special tendency to Hezbollah. The record of Iran and Saudi Arabia with regard to the terrorist groups such as ISIL is crystal clear to everyone and is a guide to action.

■ Is there possibility of military confrontation between Riyadh and Tehran?

A: In the political arena, everything is possible but experience shows that Riyadh and Tehran do not appear to be in direct military action. It should be kept in mind that Iran and Saudi Arabia are following up economic development and improving relevant indicators, so that this objective can be achieved in peace. It seems that the scene of politics should be warded off from war and the login of peace should replace instead of war.

■ Will reforms in Saudi Arabia have regional implications?

A: In response to your question, I should say that any development in Saudi Arabia or any other country in the region will affect the surrounding environment considerably. Due to the position of Saudi Arabia in regional equations, any development in this country will affect other countries in the region as well.

Moving away from Salafi, giving priority to Arabism and moving towards secularism will affect Shiites of the region as well.

Development in Baghdad-Riyadh and trips of Muqtada Sadr and Haidar Al-Abadi are part of crystallization of reforms in Saudi Arabia.

Buhari free Sheikh Zakzaky now!



TEHRAN — (MNA) — Musa, the President of IMN's Media Forum told Mehr News Agency that after 700 days of unwarranted detention of Sheikh Zakzaky, Zakzaky's wife, and companions, still nobody has heard of his destiny.

Ibrahim Musa, the President of Media Forum of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) told Mehr News Agency on Sunday that Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is trying to cover up his tyrannical treatment of Muslims in the African country.

Here comes the full text of his message sent to Mehr News on Sunday:

700 days of illegal detention: Buhari free Sheikh Zakzaky now!

It is now 700 days since the unwarranted detention of our leader, Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky, his wife, Zeenah, and several hundreds of other members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria in various detention centers. That was sequel to the cruel attack by the Federal government using its Military might in an attempt at exterminating the Movement, its leadership, membership and properties. As we are all aware, since that murderous weekend of December 12, 2015, we are still looking for justice on the matter.

What happened between December 12 and 14, 2015 and subsequently has largely been deliberately kept hidden by the perpetrators. Amnesty International (AI) in its report called it "Unearthing the Truth": Unlawful killings and mass cover-up in Zaria." The report, which was a product of extensive field investigation by independent investigators, has since been irritating the Nigerian government, who are hell-bent on covering what actually happened that cost the lives of over a thousand innocent citizens, using all instruments of state powers.

Only recently, they have tried unsuccessfully to stamp the cover up using the so-called Presidential Investigation Panel, headed by Justice Biobele A. Georgewill, purportedly established to probe human rights abuses of the military. However, when it mattered most, the panel clearly demonstrated its lack of credibility and independence, when it took weeks before the panel was given "permission" to entertain the memo of the most victimized petitioner, who suffered what could best be described as state-sanctioned genocide. Even at that, the panel did not have the liver to take testimony in public, as it tried to hide evidence from public glare and scrutiny. The government of Buhari was not prepared to face the truth.

It is only now that it is becoming clear to people that right from the outset; the intent was to destroy in whole the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN). That was clearly demonstrated by the military personnel that repeatedly chanted "No more Shi'ah" and other anti-IMN slogans as they massacred women, children and all others in Zaria. That would explain why they destroyed all properties of IMN including schools and religious centers as well as desecrated grave yards where members of IMN were buried. They massively killed over a thousand members of the IMN, including those they had shot and injured but could not be taken to shelter. They burnt people alive as well as the corpses of those they had killed!

Who would quantify the serious bodily or mental harm the unprecedented Zaria massacre and the persistent follow through had caused to members of the Islamic Movement and their relations? Those who had escaped with their lives faced other shades of brutality till this day. Hundreds were arbitrarily arrested and are detained, some being wrongly accused with framed up charges. It is only now that the courts have been vindicating us, discharging and acquitting the wrongfully accused and detained. Many are still being kept in secret confinement without charges or trials. Many were denied appropriate medical attention and died in custody. Pregnant women had premature deliveries while in custody and some others suffered miscarriages. The hallmark of the mental torture was the secret burial of those they killed in mass graves without letting their relations give them a befitting burial. In fact, their relatives have not been informed of the extrajudicial execution of their loved ones.


Shaikh Zakzaky's health condition continues to deteriorate in detention, a condition calculated to bring about his physical destruction. Even as the courts had passed judgment calling for the release of the Sheikh and compensation for illegal detention, the government is still holding him in contempt to that judgment almost a year after. For the last seven hundred days of their incarceration, Sheikh Zakzaky was allowed access to his lawyers only twice.

For the last seven hundred days, we are being denied our rights to our faith in Kaduna, Kano and Sokoto as well as some few other states. We have been denied the right to freely associate, assemble or peacefully protest. You all are witnesses to all these acts of intimidation.


As of today, the government of Buhari has not arrested a single person for these serious crimes. It has shown obvious unwillingness to appropriately prosecute the perpetrators of this genocide. It only seeks to further protect them and even further perpetrate more crimes. We are prepared to take all necessary legal ways to seek redress. In the international scene, we shall proceed to urge the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague to indict President Muhammadu Buhari, Governors Nasiru ElRufai and Umaru Ganduje, General Yusuf Buratai and all others who meticulously planned and executed the Zaria genocide and are actively perpetuating it.

The Islamic Movement in Nigeria wishes to appreciate all persons and groups who are standing by us since the last seven hundred days. The road was long, rough and tortuous, but at every turn you were all there with us. The work ahead remains arduous. We will however not relent in stepping up our peaceful protests for the release of our leader and all those being held. We are not cowed by their terror tactics against us.

First Announcement



N.I.O.C
1396.3679



National Iranian
Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First Publish/Seconed Publish)						
One-Stage(compressed)						
TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
13.246	535/000/000	10/692/128/000	P/F : MCCOY (FARR) HYD. POWER	1505683	Tender No. :FP/04-95/046 Indent No.:08-22-9545034	1

Brief discription of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase its requirements from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender (compressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (J) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender documcets. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

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**Foreign Procurement Dept
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Why is Tanzania so quiet?

By Elsie Eyakuze

How has Tanzania been faring under the stewardship of one John Pombe Magufuli these past 24 months? The short answer is that we are still being our usual dependably peaceful quiet selves, stubbornly refusing to feed into the "Africa is a Headcase" narrative at some cost to ourselves.

If you take a look around the neighborhood, you can imagine how we have learned to work this image in our favor. It keeps the donors and investors happy, and more importantly, it means nobody is trying to learn Kiswahili and actually listen in on our business. This year we can be thankful that Kenya - our beloved sibling and most annoying rival - is keeping it together as best it can, so far. They have held the international press busy and distracted, bless them.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, also considering a flirtation with voting, has never been a republic nor indeed meaningfully democratic, but we're living in the hope that someday soon it could happen. They too, thankfully, have

similarly kept the international press busy and distracted.

Notice that both countries are being led by sons of former presidents, a particular circumstance we have yet to experience in good old Tanzania and are doing our best to avoid.

■ Real men of land

We like our presidents to be real men of the land, village-born boys raised on public schooling and scholarships, boys who grew up to be long-suffering civil servants molded by our most dependable institution: the state.

I am just back from Mwanza, the largest city in the Lake Zone of Tanzania where President John Pombe Magufuli chose to celebrate his first biennial this November. It was interesting to hear local opinions about his visit as this part of the country is ancestral home for us both.

We are not a "peaceful" country by default so much as by design ...

More so for President Magufuli who has never lost the heavy clunkiness of his Sukuma

accent. His speeches are more interesting for it in our mellifluous honey-bell of a creole language, Kiswahili. In it, my president usually sounds overly-excited, furious and gauche. To be fair, he tends to have a little bit of all of that going on at any given moment.

On the main thoroughfare connecting Mwanza City to the airport, there is a bridge that President Magufuli formally opened during his stint in the city before moving on to remoter parts to impress villagers who don't have running water with the shine of his motorcade. This bridge he opened is, in fact, a pedestrian bridge, and the only one I have ever seen that puts on a light show at night. In many ways, this one little thing is indicative of President Magufuli's leadership style so far. There is flash. There is bang. There is also a lot of underwhelm. I mean ... a footbridge?

It is said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Nobody has more good intentions for Tanzania than President Magufuli. While his presidential candidacy was the result

of a spectacular fall-out within the grand old party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Party of the Revolution - CCM), during his campaign Magufuli the Unexpected made a massive impression on a voting populace left with few credible choices. As we Tanzanians like to swing the pendulum between laissez-faire and dirigiste styles of governance, his no-nonsense road-building efficiency came across well as an antidote to his predecessor's extreme relaxedness.

True to his word, Magufuli has been reforming. He has fearlessly jailed magnates and big corrupt names, taxed the living daylight out of tax-evading industries, and scrubbed the port of Dar-es-Salaam to almost-clean, to name a few of his feats. The civil service is being exorcised of ghost workers and people with fake academic credentials. Roads are being built, and houses are being destroyed to make more room for even more roads to be built. Ministers and heads of public institutions are getting hired on a daily basis, and also fired on a daily basis if they do not meet his high expectations. There

is less corruption of a certain kind. And there is more force being applied.

President Magufuli thinks that schoolgirls who get pregnant should be cut off from their right to education and that a free press is a threat to "his" democracy. Under Magufuli we have witnessed a level of harassment of the opposition that is unprecedented, culminating in an assassination attempt on the vocal lawyer and constitutional rights defender Tundu Lissu that shook the nation right down to its bone marrow. The presence of state security organs in public has gone from comforting to menacing. There is a darkness creeping upon us.

■ A vision of united nation

Our social contract is unwritten in Tanzania but it is there, and we abide by it. This has never been a one-man show, not since Tanzania's first President Julius Nyerere apologized to us for getting economics so horribly wrong when he retired in 1985, and we grappled on with the vision of a nation united. ➔13

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During recent years, electronic publishing launched some apps to use on tablets and smartphones for books in Persian language.

'Fidib', 'taaghche' and 'faraketab' are some of these apps, which are widely used by Iranian book readers.

■ "Short as life is," make it longer by reading books

Victor Hugo said, "Short as life is, we make it shorter still by the careless waste of time".

Books introduce you to people of all ages and all places and provide you an opportunity to witness different lives while you are leaning, turning its pages. Don't deprive yourself from this feast!



A family pay a visit to Tehran Book Garden on July 10, 2017

Some ways to raise a future bookworm

■ Read to your child

A no-brainer, but super important. Read books, magazines, the back of a cereal box, everything. The Reading Is Fundamental Organization notes that not only does reading to your child stimulate their imagination, but it also makes your older children want to improve their reading skills and encourages them to hit the books, too.

■ Buy age appropriate books

I know that you can't wait to read "Little Women" to your daughter, but at two, she may not be able to sit through it. Go ahead and buy those copies of Harry Potter, but encourage your child to read with age appropriate books, even if it's just a board book full of three word sentences and pictures.

■ Take them to the library

When your children see how many books there are and how accessible they are, they'll be even more excited to pick up a story or two. I absolutely loved going to the library as a kid, especially when I was let loose in the children's section and allowed to take home as many as I wanted.

■ Make a designated time for reading each day

Like rest time, screen time, and snack time, reading should have its own designated time of the day. Maybe it's after they wake up from a nap, or early in the morning when you're still cuddling in bed. But a designated time means your kids will look forward to it and know that there won't be any interruptions or huffy sighs from you because you're too busy.

■ Have your child's books accessible to them

My daughter has a basket in every room full of books, plus bookshelves she can reach herself. When the books are accessible, you'll find that your child is drawn more to them and will pull them out on their own to read.

■ Tell stories even without a book

Kids love to hear stories and they love to learn. Make it



a point to tell stories even if there's no book present, like in the car or while you're making coffee in the morning. They'll want to pick out books just to keep hearing stories.

■ Let them choose their own books

I know you have a list of books you want them to read, but let your kids take the lead on this one. Little kids have so little control over their lives that it's easy for them to feel like they don't get a say in anything.

■ Read books in front of them

Actions speak louder than words, right? Put your phone down, turn off the TV, and put away the laptop. Pull out a book when you're all doing your own thing, and you may find that your kid wants to read too, simply because you're doing it.

■ Ask them their opinions on books

Talk to your kids about the books they've read. Did they like it? Why not? What was their favorite part? What made the characters good or bad? A book doesn't have to end once

the last page is turned, so keep the conversation going. Maybe you can encourage your child to find a new book they liked better, or one in the same genre if they loved it.

■ Make reading an experience

Do voices. Point out butterflies, cows, and colors on each page. Pretend you're on stage performing a play. Reading can be so exciting when you get into your role as narrator, and your kids will be begging for just one more chapter.

■ Introduce your favorites

Kids love to hear about what you were like when you were younger, so use that to your advantage. Talk to your kids about the books you loved when you were little, and what they meant to you. Especially for kids who are on the fence about reading, this action may propel them to choose the same ones you did because they trust your opinion.

■ Don't make reading a chore

Reading should never be a punishment or a chore. That's a very fast way to make your kid hate books and reading.

■ Create a space made only for reading

Remember the reading areas in elementary school? Ours were full of twinkle lights, big soft places to sit, blankets, and even tents. Create a reading spot in your home, but make sure it's reserved only for reading. No tablets or iPods or Netflix allowed in the reading space.

■ Choose books based on your kids' interests

This is especially great for reluctant readers, but it helps for even the avid bookworm. If you know your kid is really into space, pick out books about NASA, the planets, or stories featuring a character with the same interest. Nobody wants to read a book if they're not invested, not even kids.

(Source: romper.com)

Colorful Iran: Prophet Khidr ritual



L I F E People in northwestern Ardebil Province traditionally commemorate Prophet Khidr during a ritual on a Friday in mid-winter.

For people in Ardebil, the winter is composed of two forty days, known as chelleh, which begins on December 20. The ritual takes place on a Friday between these two chellehs.

During the event, women provide a food known as Qavut, which

is composed of ground wheat and some roasted beans.

They put Qavut, a bowl of water and some fruits in a tray in a room during the night and they believe that Prophet Khidr drinks the water and eats the food and it becomes sacred and in the morning, they eat them.

As said in Surah Al-Kahf in the Holy Quran, Prophet Khidr drank the water of life and became immortal.

How to store greens and herbs?



Don't you hate it when you open up the vegetable drawer and spot that plastic produce bag at the bottom that's filled with green slime that used to be herbs? You can extend the lifespan of washed herbs and greens by several days by rolling them up in damp paper towels and placing them in zipper-lock bags with the seals left slightly open.

■ The paper towels will even give you a built-in freshness indicator. At the first

hint of decay, you'll see darker spots of liquid forming on the paper towels. This is a good sign that you should use up your herbs and greens within a day or two.

■ Keep your fridge clean! I know it's not fun, but it is a necessary evil if you want food to last longer.

Leftover residue or mold spores can increase the spoilage of all your food that is in the fridge.

(Source: seriouseats.com)

Create a relaxing home library!



Do you love to read and have a collection of books that can fit in a room by themselves? Are you an avid fan of relaxing in a quiet space, just to get away from the world and delve into a good piece of literature? Home libraries have always been a room in the home that was considered to be an extra, as opposed to the norm.

■ **Choose where it will be located:** Depending on your home layout, and how much space you have, choose an area that isn't loud and heavily trafficked. A room is ideal that has doors, although a corner of a quiet den or guest bedroom will work well too!

■ **Determine how many books you have:** For some, the library should be able to hold all the books they own, while others want a library for the peaceful setting. Assess your storage needs and decide if bookshelves from floor to ceiling are necessary. If you have a smaller collection, consider using open shelving for a modern décor touch.

■ **Choose colors:** Libraries in the past were filled with dark browns, rich burgundy and hunter greens. In today's home libraries the home owner can have a light and bright library or a deep colored traditional style décor. Choose colors that represent you, and help you and your family relax in the space.

■ **Layout a furniture plan:** All libraries require a great place to sit. Based on your space, determine how many chairs, sofa, table and lamps can fit comfortably. If the library is only for a few people, a few oversized chairs could be perfect. Ensure a small side table and lighting can sit adjacent to your seating.

■ **Install proper lighting:** Lighting is crucial in a library. In the daytime, natural light may be sufficient for reading. In the evening, side table lamps, over head lighting and accent lighting may be required for artwork displayed on the walls. Consider adding a dimmer to overhead lighting to make the room versatile for playing board games to snuggling up with a book and hot chocolate.

■ **Go vertical for optimum space saving:** If space is limited, use the full height of the wall for storage and display of books. Don't forget to use over doorways as a bonus area for storage too!

Home libraries are not only for an enthusiast of books. One can use a home library for relaxing and stimulation of the mind. Few rooms in the house can you be catapulted to different discoveries just by opening up a book, or laying back and closing your eyes. Enjoy your home library with these 10 tips to guide you.

(Source: freshome.com)



101 ITEMS FOR YOUR BUCKET LIST!

#3 Try a profession in a different field

If you don't live your days by personal goals and plans, chances are you spend most of your time caught up in a flurry of day-to-day activities.

Look at the things you did and the things you're planning to do next — Do they mean anything to you if you are to die today? Having a bucket list reminds you of what's really important so you can act on them.

What profession are you in now and how long have you been doing this? Is it time for a change in profession? It's nice to do something different from what you have been doing, and it doesn't have to involve quitting your current job — you can always experiment with volunteer work in a field you enjoy or start up a part-time business on the side. It's all about expanding your horizon and trying something new.

(Source: Personal Experience)



#IRANIANLIFESTYLE



The spirit of Tehran's Tazirish Bazaar in middle of autumn with yellow hawthorn (zalzalak), Cornelian cherry (Zoghal Akhteh) and medlar fruit (az'gil) in a photo captured by @ChefZare (Twitter/@Iran_style)

Saint Stepanos hosts 2,500 foreign travelers in H1

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Some 2,500 foreign tourists visited the UNESCO-inscribed Saint Stepanos Monastery in northwest Iran during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2017).



A view of Saint Stepanos Monastery in northwest Iran

Some 2,500 entry tickets for the monastery have been sold to foreign nationals during the period, Mehdi Abbasi, a tourism official, told IRNA on Sunday.

Located about 15 km northwest of the city of Julfa in East Azarbaijan province, the monastery together with St. Thaddeus and the Chapel of Dzordzor have been inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list as “The Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran”.

They are examples of outstanding universal value of the Armenian architectural and decorative traditions yet bear testimony to very important interchanges with other regional cultures, the Byzantine, Orthodox and Persian, in particular.

France claims new tourism record

France is once again seducing tourists from all around the world, figures reveal, and is back on track to meet its own target of attracting 100million visitors a year from 2020.



The bounce in visitor numbers has been felt across the whole of the country

Hotels and guesthouses recording a record 200million overnight stays in the last quarter, a 4% increase on the same period in 2016, it has been reported.

Two years after the terror attacks in Paris, the figures show the Ile-de-France showed the greatest increase, enjoying a 13% boost in visitor numbers for the third quarter of the year - but the bounce has been felt across the country.

Tourism in coastal resorts is also booming, with hotels there reporting a 4% jump in overnight stays over the period. Luxury hotels are seeing a 10% spike in visitor numbers compared to the third quarter of 2016 as the country recovers from the attacks in Paris in 2015, and the Bastille Day atrocity in Nice in 2016.

Other nations hit by terror attacks - including Tunisia, Turkey and Egypt - are still seeing a significant drop in tourist numbers compared to the period before the most recent events.

Currently, tourism generates 7% of France's GDP. The aim is to increase that figure to 10%. (Source: connexionfrance.com)

ROUND THE GLOBE

Agricultural landscape of southern Oland

The southern part of Oland, an island in the Baltic Sea off the south-eastern coast of Sweden, is dominated by a vast limestone plateau.

People have lived there for some five thousand years, adapting their way of life to the physical constraints of the island. As a consequence, the landscape is unique, and there is abundant evidence of a continuous human settlement from prehistoric times to the present.



Several windmills are seen in the agricultural landscape of southern Oland, a UNESCO site in Sweden

This outstanding human settlement has made optimum use of diverse landscape types on a single island. Limestone bedrock and a warm, dry climate have set limits for how the islanders can use their landscape.

Earlier, the land was divided into infields and pastures. The infields lay closest to the village and consisted of arable lands and meadows. The pastures – the alvar plains and the coastal lands – were used for grazing.

With the transformation of agriculture in the 19th century, this distinction disappeared on the mainland and elsewhere in Europe. Instead of being part of the agricultural system, pastures were used for timber production. In Oland, barren soil ruled this out, and the old division, with linear villages in 'lawful location', was retained and is easily discernible today.

Southern Oland is a living agrarian landscape where villages, arable lands, coastal lands and alvar plains make up this World Heritage property. (Source: UNESCO)

Quake harms historical sites in western Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A powerful 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck western Iran late on Sunday, causing relatively minor damage to several historic and heritage sites in Kermanshah and Ilam provinces.

“It slightly damaged five historical sites including a Safavid-era caravanserai and a Sassanid-era fortress in the counties of Qasr-e Shirin, Sarpol-e Zahab and Dalahu in Kermanshah province while assessing the damage is still ongoing,” CHTN quoted Jalil Baalai, the provincial tourism chief, as saying on Monday.

The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Department dispatched several cultural heritage taskforces to determine the extent of [possible] damage to each monument, the official said, adding “The five sites can be restored.”

UNESCO-registered sites of Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan went unhurt, ISNA quoted Baalai as saying.

Bisotun features a life-size bas-relief carving that depicts Achaemenid king Darius I and several other figures while Taq-e Bostan meaning “Arch of the Garden” is home to series of large rock reliefs from Sassanid era.

The earthquake caused some cracks in walls of an archaeological museum in Darreh Shahr, Ilam Province, as well, said Abolmalek Shanbezaheh who presides over the province's cultural heritage department. “Fortunately no damages were inflicted



A view of Bisotun bas-relief carving, a World Heritage site in Kermanshah province, western Iran.

upon display windows and historical objects within the museum.”

Initial prospects suggest that over seven

historical sites adjacent to neighboring Kermanshah may have suffered considerable damage, Shanbezaheh explained.

The natural disaster claimed the lives of at least 400 people and injured more than 6500. It was felt in several other provinces.

CHTHO highlights online handicrafts trade

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization urges exporters and handicrafts retailers to take the best use of online marketing.

“A synergy between the arenas of handicrafts, mass media and software programs can lead us to boundless online businesses with the globe,” said Pouya Mahmoudian who presides over the CHTHO exports department.

She made the remarks in an address to a conference on global online handicrafts retailing market, which was held at the CHTHO headquarters in Tehran on Sunday. “Be online and sell globally” was adopted as the theme for the event.

“By digging into electronic commerce we would become closer to world markets, as India and China have taken the initiative before, which resulted in exerting more influence

over such marketplaces,” she highlighted.

Mahmoudian added: “To claim the country's share of retail trade, the handicrafts organization has entered into a contract with Zoodel, an Iranian international post company.”

The CHTHO warmly welcomes any other companies and the private sector to join hand in this regard, she added.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, CHTHO Deputy Director Bahman Namvar-Motlaq urged media to assume an extended role in promoting the “proper usage” of national handicrafts.

Handicrafts exports from Iran hit a record high over the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22, 2017) with 45.4 percent growth in comparison to the same period last year, the organization announced in September.

Over the past couple of years, dozens of high-quality



Iranian potteries meticulously inlaid with enamel

Iranian handicrafts have been honored with the UNESCO Seal of Excellence.

Travelers love airline flash sales but the ultra-cheap fares are on the decline

The Twitter ad seemed too good to be true: fares starting at \$20 on JetBlue Airways.

A few hours after the ad appeared Tuesday on the social media site, it was gone, leaving wanna-be travelers frustrated that they missed the remarkable deal.

Those who clicked too late ended up on a page advising: “This promotion has ended. Act fast! In some cases, a fare may not even last an hour.”

Such “flash” sales are a traditional tactic used by the airline industry to fill empty seats during slow travel periods and lure travelers to an airline website where they may be tempted to book a more expensive flight.

Airlines also have used flash sales to inflict economic pain on rivals. Cutting prices on routes dominated by competitors often forces the other airlines to try to match the lower fares.

“It’s like kids in the airfare sandbox, fighting,” said George Hobica, a fare expert and president of Airfarewatchdog.com.

But such flash sales are on the decline,

industry experts say, partly because the airline industry has become more consolidated through mergers and acquisitions, which has diminished competition and reduced the need to undercut rivals with limited-time fares.

And with demand for travel reaching record levels, carriers can sell seats without resorting to deep discounts.

Flash sales are also used less often today because sophisticated computer programs have made airlines more accurate at estimating the number of seats needed for a particular route so that empty seats are more rare.

“They can manage inventory more tightly,” said Richard Golaszewski, a senior economist with GRA Inc., a Pennsylvania-based aviation consultant.

That means travelers looking for deep discounts are going to have fewer opportunities to book a bargain seat.

Since 2008, the nation’s biggest carriers have been buying smaller or weaker compet-

itors, solidifying their dominance in specific markets and hubs throughout the country.

For example, Delta and its regional carriers fly nearly 80% of all passengers who travel out of the nation’s busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. American Airlines carries nearly 85% of all passengers at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. United Airlines is dominant in Newark Liberty International Airport, flying about 51% of all passengers who use the New Jersey airport.

Combined, Delta, United, American and Southwest Airlines control more than 70% of all domestic flights in the U.S.

Strong demand for travel and sophisticated computer programs have enabled airlines to reach record rates of occupied seats per plane, known as the load factor. Commercial flights flew with an average of 82% of all seats filled in 2016, compared with a rate of 72% in 2002, according to the most recent federal data available.

The combination of these factors mean

less competition, fewer empty seats and little urgency to discount tickets to fill planes.

“Airlines actively manage their flights and capacity to meet, but not exceed, market demand,” said Henry Harteveltd, a travel industry expert with Atmosphere Research Group.

Flash sales are now used primarily by low-cost airlines, such as JetBlue, as they continue to battle with the major carriers to win greater shares of the country’s most popular markets and hubs.

A JetBlue representative declined to comment on the carrier’s use of flash sales.

But industry experts say the restrictions imposed on such sales are so numerous that the goal is not to make money from the low fares but to boost publicity and interest in the carrier.

“From a marketing perspective, you want to get [Facebook] likes or visitors or Twitter followers,” said Rick Seaney, who heads fare comparison site Farecompare.com.

(Source: The Los Angeles Times)

Treasure Beach, Jamaica: life beyond Jakes



The courtyard of Jakes Hotel in Jamaica

have hosted the Westminster Lords and Commons Cricket Club, and five-a-side football on Saturday nights draws a big crowd, not least due to the commentator who doubles as a DJ, blasting out dancehall between games, and the surreal talent contest staged on the pitch afterwards. Typical contestants include a man who can balance a bicycle on his head and a middle-aged belly rolling expert.

Overlooking the park are the Lashings Villas (four and five bedroom villas from \$3,500 a week), newly built by the owner of

the Lashings All Star international cricket team. The two luxury villas bring an upscale New York designer loft aesthetic to the dusty seaside village – all minimalist concrete and steel, vintage industrial fittings and stripped back wood – with private chefs who rattle guests around the neighborhood in an open-top jeep and take them partying, as well as serve lobster and cocktails on the poolside terraces overlooking the pavilion. Anyone previously put off by the traditionally rather hit and miss rustic luxury of the village’s other villas

can rest assured of finding Sky Sports on flatscreen TVs at Lashings.

But you do not need deep pockets to enjoy Treasure Beach. Its latest addition opened for business last month, offering one-bedroom cottages for under £100 a night. 77 West (rooms from \$115 U.S. a night) looks like a little bit of Mykonos has landed in the Caribbean. The simple, whitewashed cliff-top cottages are perched beside a timber sun deck and pool, above a private beach accessed by a flight of steps leading down to azure waters framed by reef. Absurdly romantic, 77 West lies just outside the village and offers couples privacy along with the most breathtakingly panoramic views on the south coast.

Back in the heart of the village is Frenchman’s Reef, a bar and restaurant right on the beach which opened a few years ago and offers a wide range of Jamaican and international dishes for as little as U.S. \$5, and smoothies and cocktails along with the ubiquitous rum and Red Stripe.

Like Jakes hotel’s sister restaurant Jack Sprat, it offers a delivery service for those too lazy to get out of their hammocks and down to the beach. Jack Sprat’s oven-fired pizzas draw diners from across the south of Jamaica, and on Thursday nights a chilled crowd gather for the weekly open-air movie night.

(Source: The Guardian)

Tree fossils reveal Antarctica had forest before time of the dinosaurs

The now frozen Antarctica had a forest during the Permian Period, before the time of the dinosaurs. How do ancient polar forest differ with the modern day forests we see today?

Fossil fragments of ancient trees in Antarctica suggest that the now frozen continent was not as barren as it is today. Evidence that researchers gathered after climbing the slopes of the McIntyre Promontory in the Transantarctic Mountains showed Antarctica had a thriving forest before the dinosaurs walked on Earth.

After looking for evidence of the cold continent's potentially lush past, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee (UWM) researchers found fossil fragments belonging to 13 trees that are more than 260 million years old.

■ A frozen wilderness

"We take it for granted that Antarctica has always been a frozen wilderness, but the ice caps only appeared relatively recently in geological history," Jane Francis, from the University of Leeds, has said.

The age of the fossils revealed of forest in Antarctica at the end of the Permian Period, the time before the first dinosaurs emerged.

About 251 million years ago, the Permian Period ended in a mass extinction event as the Earth's climate conditions rapidly shifted. Over 90 percent of the Earth's species were wiped out, and these included the polar forests.



The volcanic eruptions in Siberia over a period of 200, 000 years may have released massive amounts of greenhouse gases. Scientists now think that the increase in the amount of atmospheric greenhouse

gases, such as the Earth -warming methane and carbon dioxide, is behind the Permian-Triassic extinction.

At the end of the Permian Period, Antarctica was more humid and even warmer

These ancient forests were in contrast to the characteristics of modern day high-latitude forests that are marked by greater plant diversity.

when compared to what it is today. It was also part of the Gondwana supercontinent that spanned the Southern Hemisphere and also included what is now the Arabian Peninsula, Australia, India, Africa and South America.

Researchers said that the forest, which likely spanned across the whole of the Gondwana continent, likely had a mixture of ferns, mosses and a now extinct plant known as Glossopteris.

■ Fossil forests

Researchers revealed that the fossil forests were different compared with present day forests. Forests during the Permian period potentially had a low diversity of plants with particular functions that contributed to the way the forests responded to changes in the environment.

These ancient forests were in contrast to the characteristics of modern day high-latitude forests that are marked by greater plant diversity.

Unfortunately, the robust forests did not survive the high concentration of greenhouse gas during the mass extinction.

The researchers plan to return to the site to look for mass extinction event deposits that can shed more light on how the forests responded to the rising level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

"With further study, we can better understand how greenhouse gases and climate change affect life on Earth," Gulbranson said. (Source: Tech Times)

Study shows how a low-calorie diet can reverse type 2 diabetes

New research reveals the mechanisms through which low calorie diets can reverse type 2 diabetes in animals, and if those effects can be transferred over to people, we could have a host of new drug options for treating the chronic condition.

Links between type 2 diabetes and diet have been well established – it is triggered when the body can no longer manage its blood glucose levels – but this latest study adds to growing evidence that the condition could be reversed in some cases.

The team of researchers gave a very low calorie diet (VLCD) to rats with type 2 diabetes and found the animals' blood glucose levels rapidly lowered. What's more, they were able to reveal extra details about why exactly it was happening.

■ Fat metabolism

"Using this approach to comprehensively interrogate liver carbohydrate and fat metabolism, we showed that it is a combination of three mechanisms that is responsible for the rapid reversal of hyperglycemia following a very low calorie diet," says one of the researchers, Gerald I. Shulman from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Maryland.

The three liver mechanisms affected by the diet were



the conversion of lactate and amino acids into glucose, the conversion of liver glycogen into glucose, and a decrease in fat content, which then improves the liver's response to insulin.

That response is important: it's when the body can't produce enough insulin, or becomes resistant to it, that blood sugars build up and type 2 diabetes occurs.

In other words, the research shows how three causes of high glucose levels are targeted by a VLCD – and results

were noticeable in just three days. The rodents' body weight was not affected throughout the study.

Before we declare type 2 diabetes cured though, we need to find out whether this would work in humans too, and the scientists are now gearing up to use the same isotope-monitoring methods they used here in a human trial.

■ Type 2 diabetes

This isn't the first time that VLCDs have been linked to reversing type 2 diabetes, but right now we need more data and additional research to confirm what's going on, which is where this latest study on the underlying mechanisms can be helpful.

A study from 2015 found that losing just a gram of fat from the pancreas – either through a low calorie diet or through an operation – could help to reset insulin levels, though only 18 participants were involved in the study.

Earlier this year, meanwhile, a study on mice found that intermittent fasting could also reset the biological mechanisms that cause type 2 diabetes.

All this is promising stuff, but we're still at the data-collecting stage – experiments have either been run on animals or on small samples of people that aren't conclusive. (Source: sciencealert.com)

IRANCELL's Free Call Service for Disaster-Stricken People Extended until Monday at 24:00 Nov. 13

Following the deadly earthquake in western part of the country, IRANCELL provided unlimited free-to-talk calls in all parts of provinces of Kermanshah and Ilam until 24:00 of Monday (Nov. 13), Public Relations Dept. of IRANCELL reported.

Given the above issue, Iran's leading Operator IRANCELL, which had provided free of charge talk

time to residents of cities including Kermanshah, Qasr-e Shirin, Sar Pol-e Zahab and Ilam for one hour, extended the free call time until 24:00 of Aban 22 (Nov. 13) unlimited for all regions of provinces of Kermanshah and Ilam, the report added.

IRANCELL also announced that it has established "Network Sustainability Plan in Emergency Condition"

since launch of its mobile phone network, so that all necessary conditions are conducted according to its pre-scheduled program especially in emergency conditions.

It should be noted that IRANCELL network has not faced any technical problem in the areas affected by the earthquake, the report ended.

Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. to Develop Two Projects, Costing Rls.10,000b

Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company will invest 10,000 billion rials worth of capital for launching two development projects.

Eng. Mahmoud Mesrinejad CEO of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company announced the above statement and said: "Project for the construction of new pelletizing factory with the production capacity of four million tons was put atop agenda per annum."

Over 7,177 billion rials worth of capital was invested for launching this giant project, he said, adding: "This giant project will become operational during four years."

He also pointed to the construction of two 550,000-ton rolling mill (totally 1,100,000 tons) as the other programs of the company and added: "Feasibility studies are underway for the construction of this steel manufacturing unit, costing 2,646 billion rials, so that internal resources of the company and also other resources will be envisioned for

launching this project."

According to the scheduled program, this plant will be put into operation in the next three years, he maintained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, ARDAKAN Industrial Complex Manager revealed the 83% physical progress of Direct Reduction Iron (DRI) Factory in the vicinity of Steel Ingot Production Factory and said: "As one of the largest national projects with the unique structure, construction operation of Direct Reduction Iron (DRI) in Chadormalu was launched at the unsparing and unflinching efforts of industrious engineers."

Turning to the activity of Chadormalu Steel Ingot Manufacturing Plant, he said: "Fortunately, ingot production in this steel production complex is on the verge of growth and it is hoped that production volume of steel will be increased before termination of the current year (to end March 20, 2018)."



In the end, Eng. Mahmoud Mesrinejad CEO of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company reiterated: "Ingot production is still underway in three working shifts, so that necessary training services is offered to the native youth of this province both practically and theoretically."

Until Yesterday, We Were Dispatching "Packages", Today, We Send "Public Contribution"

Free Sending of Public Contributions by TIPAX Company

Hereby, all dear fellow countrymen are notified that due to the deadly earthquake happened recently in the country, TIPAX Company expresses its readiness to send all public contributions to the quake-hit areas

free of charge, Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

It should be noted that a deadly earthquake jolted western provinces of the country yesterday and claimed lives of many people in the provinces of Kermanshah

and Ilam.

For further information and coordination in this regard, please refer to the following website: www.Tipaxco.com



EDBI Mulls over Strategies for Developing Role of "Adjustment"

In a joint expert-level meeting with Sydney Philip Company, Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) studied the strategies for the development of role of "adjustment" (observing necessary rules, regulations and standards), the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

In this get-together meeting, representatives from Sydney Philip Company embarked on clarifying provisions of available standards in this field, the report added.

Given the above issue, Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) intends to expand and develop its current structures using the available opportunities in line with developing the role of "adjustment" at the bank.



Philip Sydney Company is a Dutch company which is tasked with training, consulting and evaluating adaptation in finance and credit association, so that this company is one of active units in this field.

Due to the increase of sensitivities and concerns in national and international levels with regard to misuse of banks for criminal objectives and intentions in the field of money laundering and financing terrorism, violation of international sanctions and also financial crimes especially bribery and embezzlement, the issue of observing rules and regulations at banks has become important in recent years.

Accordingly, Money and Credit Council (MCC) has recently approved an instruction entitled "instruction of observing rules and regulations in finance and credit association", so that Central Bank of Iran has notified it to all banks and credit association, the report concluded.

Why some people age faster than others

Ever wonder what it is about some people that makes them able to run marathons into their 70s? For the first time, scientists have identified a genetic pathway that may regulate the rate at which we age. Building on their research is expected to improve our understanding of how to keep our bodies healthy even as they grow older.

Because people want to live forever, most scientific research on the aging process focuses on longevity, meaning ways to stretch our natural lifespan. What it tends to overlook is age-related behavioral decline, which seems remiss since if we are all going to live forever we'd want to do so with bodies and brains that have remained healthy. Longevity and behavioral aging aren't necessarily related processes; just because we extend one doesn't mean the other gets pulled along with it.

Researchers studying nematodes called *Caenorhabditis elegans*, worm-like creatures about 1 millimeter long, discovered two genes that appeared to have recently undergone a "selective sweep," genetic editing due to the natural selection process. These particular nematodes are frequently used in anti-aging research because their naturally short lifespan means any changes to longevity are easy to observe. A paper detailing the research was published in the scientific journal Nature.

"Despite the considerable interest in studying natural variation in aging rate to identify factors that control healthy ageing, no such factor has yet been found," the authors wrote in the paper. "Here we report a genetic basis for variation in aging rates in *Caenorhabditis elegans*."

So not all the nematodes aged at the same rate. Virility and locomotion, as you might have guessed, refer respectively to physical strength and ability to walk (or wriggle) and otherwise move around. Pharyngeal pumping refers to things moving smoothly down the passages from our nose and mouth to our lungs and stomach—breathing, drinking, and eating. (Source: Newsweek)

New tool identifies headache patients at risk of aneurysms

A new tool to identify potentially fatal aneurysms in patients with headaches who seem otherwise well will help emergency departments to identify high-risk patients, improve survival rates and cut out unnecessary imaging, according to new research published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)

A bleeding brain aneurysm, referred to medically as a subarachnoid hemorrhage, can cause a sudden headache.



"Although rare, accounting for only 1%-3% of headaches, these brain aneurysms are deadly," says Dr. Jeffrey Perry, an emergency physician with The Ottawa Hospital and the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario. "Almost half of all patients with this condition die and about 2/5 of survivors have permanent neurological deficits. Patients diagnosed when they are alert and with only a headache have much better outcomes, but can be challenging to diagnose as they often look relatively well."

The Ottawa Subarachnoid Hemorrhage Rule was developed by researchers at The Ottawa Hospital, which also created The Ottawa Rules, decision tools used in emergency departments around the world to identify ankle, knee and spine fractures.

The current study, involving 1153 alert adult patients with acute sudden onset headache admitted to 6 university-affiliated hospitals in Canada over 4 years from January 2010 to 2014, validates earlier published research that initially proposed the Ottawa Subarachnoid Hemorrhage Rule.

"Before any clinical decision rule can be used safely, it must be validated in new patients to ensure that the derived 'rule' did not come to be by chance, and that it is truly safe," says Dr. Perry. "This is especially true with a potentially life-threatening condition such as subarachnoid hemorrhage."

The newly validated rule gives emergency physicians a reliable tool to identify high-risk patients and rule out the condition in low-risk patients without having to order time-consuming imaging. (Source: eurekaalert.org)

New process makes ethanol sustainable

Sweden's University of Borås doctoral student Ramkumar Nair has shown it is possible to produce bioethanol from agricultural and industrial waste in existing plants in a socioeconomically sustainable way.

Nair said, "I have been verifying a process that we hope will work in an industrial scale, when it comes to using existing ethanol factories. Thanks to that process, the industry can become more sustainable and use agricultural or industrial waste for the production of bioethanol."

Bioethanol is used for fuel for ethanol cars, among other things. Usually, wheat, sugar canes, or corn are used for ethanol production. In Sweden, wheat is the most common.

"But these are crops that could be used as human nutrition," he said. "It is more sustainable if we could use waste to create fuel, and this is something we have been working on in several projects here at the University of Borås."

Nair explained that these research and pilots project where waste is used are called the second-generation ethanol processes, whereas the current industrial production is called the first generation ethanol process. Ramkumar has now verified a process that integrates the first and the second-generation ethanol processes.

"This means that agricultural residues, such as straw, bran, or the like could be used for making ethanol without making any major investments in the factories. All we need is already there. You can use the factories existing reactors. This also eliminates the burden of using foodstuff to produce vehicle fuel," he said.

"What we added should not stop the fermentation," said Nair. "After several tests, the choice was to add phosphoric acid. It is good for the animals that eat the leftovers and it gives good results in the ethanol fermentation process." (Source: oilprice.com)

First lady wears hijab, attends Malawi Muslim women convention

Thousands of Muslim women across Malawi on Saturday gathered at Bua Community Day Secondary School ground in Mchinji to celebrate this year's Muslim Women convention (Ijtimah).

The convention is held annually and is aimed at sharing Islamic teachings and women issues among other things.

Speaking when she presided over the official launch, first lady Madam Gertrude Mutharika said women in the country play a vital role in the development of the country.

“For the country to move forward, it needs the participation of women in all spheres of life be it religion, development activities and taking care of families,” she said.

Madam Mutharika said this year's women Ijtimah theme “the role of women in development” is in line with President Mutharika's government stance of ensuring that women are promoted in the country.

“I am glad that Islam takes women as an important part of the religion, and women should learn from one another during such forums,” she said.

The first lady commended the Muslim women for organizing the convention, saying the platform should help uplift women and help them, and share experiences on how they can improve their livelihoods.

Madam Mutharika also called for women to take care of their health issues by among other things, ensuring that they go for cervical cancer screening and attend pre-natal services to prevent maternal complications.

She then stressed the need for women to uplift one another and not pull each other down.

In her remarks, Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Cecilia Chazama, called on the Muslim women to educate their children, especially girls.

She said educating girls would help them to be self-reliant in future, hence support their families and end poverty.

(Source: Nyasa Times)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Roasted cauliflower steaks

Snacking in the Kitchen “You might’ve tried boiling, mashing, and even turning cauliflower into ‘rice’. For a different take on cauliflower, try these oven-roasted cauliflower steaks seasoned with a simple lemon-garlic sauce. Serve the steaks with chimichurri sauce or topped with roasted cherry tomatoes, sliced green olives and crumbled feta cheese.”

Ingredients:



- 1 large head cauliflower, sliced lengthwise through the core into 4 'steaks'
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pinch red pepper flakes, or to taste salt and ground black pepper to taste

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Place cauliflower steaks on the prepared baking sheet.

Whisk olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, red pepper flakes, salt, and black pepper together in a bowl. Brush 1/2 of the olive oil mixture over the tops of the cauliflower steaks.

Roast cauliflower steaks in the preheated oven for 15 minutes. Gently turn over each steak and brush with remaining olive oil mixture. Continue roasting until tender and golden, 15 to 20 minutes more.

LEARN ENGLISH

Driving Sales

A: All right, people. We're holding this meeting today because we've got to do something about our sales, and we need to do it NOW! I want **concrete solutions**. How do you intend to **drive sales**? Roger?

B: Well, in fact, we're the most expensive in **the market**, so maybe we need to lower our prices **to match the competitors**?

A: Lower our prices? Not very creative. It'll never **fly with** Swan. What kind of thinking is that? Geez. Anybody else have a better plan? Natalie?

C: Um, perhaps, um, a sales **promotion**. Maybe a **two-for-one** offer, or something like that!

A: What? That's the same thing. Bad idea. Really bad idea. Dammit people come on! Think! The CEO **will be here any minute**.

D: Do we have any ideas yet?

C: Yes Mr. Swan, we were kind of **considering** a two-for-one offer to get more **competitive**.

D: A two-for-one promotion? Hmm. I kind of like the sound of that. It sounds like something we should consider.

A: Yeah, exactly. Just what I was thinking! In fact, that's a **brilliant** idea! I'm glad we thought of that. Very creative.

Key vocabulary

concrete solutions: a real or specific solution to a problem
drive sales: increase sales
in the market: in the industry
to match the competitors: be the as good as or better than others companies in the same industry
competitor: a person, team, company etc. that is competing with another
will never fly: will not work, will not be approved
promotion: something done to make people aware of a product
two for one: two items for the price of one item
be here any minute: will arrive very soon
to consider: thinking about
competitive: as good as or better than others of the same type
brilliant: excellent

Supplementary vocabulary

win sales: make sales successfully
sales strategy: plans for a company's sales activities
sales cycle: the process a customer goes though when deciding to buy a product
to outsell: to sell more than others
customer loyalty: when a customer buys the same brand over and over

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Flying girl of Iran hopes to increase female skydivers



➡ “The male skydivers guarded against me, looking at me as the weak gender who may make mistakes and mistake has no place in this field of sport,” Akrami said.

“I was not disappointed but I tried to be the best and to make the least mistake and observe my hijab”, she added.

My insistence on skydiving gave encouragement to some other women to do skydiving and today there are about five female skydivers,” said Akrami.

They all began skydiving after me. One of the Iranian female skydivers is a 15-year-old daughter of one of the male military skydivers who have learnt skydiving in Iran; the other 4 have been trained in other countries, she added.

“I will become a skydiving instructor during the coming 6 months. There are many Iranian girl who are interested in skydiving and send me messages about how they can learn skydiving,” the flying girl of Iran said.

There is variety in gymnastics and doing gymnastics since I was five lead me to seek for variety in other sports which I did not find in many sports I tried.

I did not find variety and excitement in running and Wushu, then I tried parkour and at the first session I found out that I can be good at it, said the former student of computer software engineering.

Parkour is a training discipline using movement that developed from military obstacle course training. Practitioners aim to get from one point to another in a complex environment, without assistive equipment and in the fastest and most efficient way possible. Parkour includes running, climbing, swinging, vaulting, jumping, rolling, quadrupedal movement, and other movements as deemed most suitable for the situation.

“Then I tried to join skydiving courses in Dubai which was the nearest country to Iran,” Akrami said.

There were training courses in Iran, but because of its delays I tried another country, she explained.

Skydiving is a kind of addiction, when you begin, you cannot leave it and you want more and more and reach upper stages, Akrami who has taken about 250 dives since 2012 noted.

There were two kinds of people who encouraged me to follow skydiving: first those people who believed that I, as a girl, am not able to do the job and it gave me more motivation to prove my capability.

From the beginning when I did gymnastics there were some who believed that women are weak. The same thing happened about parkour and then skydiving, the strong-minded girl said.

On the other hand, I've got the overall support of my family not caring about my sex and being the only child of the family, she stated.

The first time, I enrolled in a skydiving class in Dubai, I was late and I didn't join the class. When my mother came to know about my hesitation she, herself, booked another ticket for me and pushed me to join the skydiving course, she explained.

“Off course, skydiving is a risky sport and you should never make a mistake in it, but I believe that gymnastics is more risky than skydiving.

However, any activities has its own risk, Akrami expressed.

Although it is a very risky sport, I have an optimistic view about it. I believe if someone doubts whether her parachute works or not, it will not work. I never think bad, therefore, I am not scared of skydiving.

The first time I experienced skydiving, there were many skydivers around me who gave me a very good feeling and told me the first dive is the best experience of skydiving. When I saw their positive viewpoint, and clam and joyful reaction about skydiving, I thought that I am someone like any of them and I enjoyed my diving; and it happened, said the flying girl.

Jumpsuits covers the entire body. For skydiving a scarf covers the hair and a helmet is used over the scarf, sometimes glasses are used, Akrami explained, adding, therefore, Iranian women can join skydiving world championships observing Islamic dress code.

Recently I began a wingsuit flying that is the sport of gliding through the air using a wingsuit which adds surface area to the human body to enable a significant increase in lift, Akrami added.

The most important barrier in front of me was the expenditures of skydiving. Currently, I am driving the car of my hopes with the fastest speed but a barrier always bans the road of my success, i.e. the expenditures, said the student of physical education.

There is no sponsorship for skydiving in Iran, she noted.

Public show very good reaction about

my job and the sport of skydiving for women, she maintained.

Foreigners, too, received me very well as the first female Iranian skydiver and they were happy that I am spreading this sports in another place of the world.

Since skydiving was a sport merely done by military men, at the beginning Iranian male skydivers guarded against me, looking at me as the weak gender. They were not happy and helpful at my first dives in the sky of my country, she told in a self-confident manner.

Day by day, viewing my skill and talent in skydiving, great changes happened in the viewpoint of male Iranian skydivers about me, she expressed.

Akrami went on to explain that “now the same military men call me and invite me for skydiving events and I eagerly accept it.”

I love skydiving in the sky of Iran, she said, adding, my first skydiving in Iran was in the city of Kalaleh, Golestan Province, north of Iran. I saw the land of my country more colorful and more beautiful than the sceneries I had ever seen in the sky of Dubai, that was all desert.

Then I experienced another very beautiful skydiving in Gilan Province, north of Iran, watching beautiful landscapes

I had never seen in Dubai, the brave skydiver of Iran explained.

Girls are not more scared of skydiving than men, said the lover of art of sewing, stating, when a skydiver, male or female board the plane, all presuppositions about the genders are vanished, equality is felt and everybody is thinking of doing the right performance, she exclaimed.


All world records of skydiving are for men and women together and never a woman is considered less capable of men in skydiving, Akrami maintained.

Men's physical power is more than women and in skydiving physical power is not a matter of importance, therefore, men and women are equal in skydiving, she continued.


There are many women who want many things but they do not try hard to gain it. If someone really wants something she should make her best to achieve it, Fatemeh told the Tehran Times.

I was not grown in a very rich family, but when I wanted to reach my goal I tried hard for it. I worked hard and collected money to reach my objective. I disregarded buying a better car, a good cell phone, even going to restaurants with my friends. I disregarded my small wishes in order to reach my great wish, she noted.

Second Announcement



N.I.O.C
1396.3679



National Iranian
Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First Publish/Seconed Publish)

One-Stage(compressed)

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
7,861	305,000,000	6,100,000,000	"CAMESA" LOGGING CABLE	1,505,508	Tender No.:FP/09-96/036 Indent No.:01-23-9646000	1

Brief discription of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahwaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase its requirements from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender (compressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (J) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender documents. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, **510,000 Rials** should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.

Reciving of documents:
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN

Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurment department in due date and participates in tenderwill be known as tenderer from tender committee.

C) Delivery of envelopes of bids and call quality evaluating:
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including bank guarantees(A), financial offer(C) and stamped and signed of tender documents(B) along with qualificaion worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 40 days from last day of document recived deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN.

Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.

D) Tender Guarantee:
Type of guarantee:
A)Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activites licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to National Iranain Drilling Company.
Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR

Foreign Procurement Dept
National Iranian Drilling Company

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۰۸/۲۲نوبت دوم۹۶/۰۸/۲۳

Syria calls on UN to ‘shoulder its responsibilities’

Syria has called on the United Nations to halt the United States led-coalition’s attacks on civilians after over a dozen people are killed in separate airstrikes across the country.

In a letter sent to the UN Secretary General António Guterres and the Security Council chairman on Sunday, the Syrian Foreign and Expatriates Ministry voiced its severe condemnation of the coalition’s actions against civilians.

In the letter, Syria slammed the many parties who claim to care for the rule of law and human rights but turn a blind eye to the atrocities committed by the coalition in the provinces of Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr.

It also called on the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) to “shoulder its main responsibility of preserving international peace and security and take immediate action to stop the brutal crimes committed by the illegal coalition against the innocent civilians and prevent more crimes from happening.”

According to Syria’s official news agency SANA on Sunday, at least 10 civilians lost their lives when the U.S.-led military aircraft bombarded al-Duwaiji village in the Tal Shaer district of Dayr al-Zawr Province near the border with Iraq.

At least six people also lost their lives when a residential area of al-Da’ij village in the Hasakah Province was hit by U.S.-led fighter jets.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ Daesh) targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of achieving its declared goal of destroying ISIL.

■ Israel will continue bombing Syria
The Israeli regime has signaled that Tel Aviv would continue with military strikes across the Syrian border to thwart any al-



leged encroachment by Iranian-allied forces, including the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, even by violating a de-escalation zone designated by Russia and the U.S. in the southwest of the country.

Back on July 7, Russia, the U.S. and Jordan agreed to back a ceasefire in southwestern Syria and to establish a de-escalation zone in the Syrian provinces of Dara’a, Suwayda and Quneitra, which borders the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The truce came into force two days later and proved to be helpful in reducing fighting in the designated area.

Israel has already said that it refuses to abide by the July 7 truce deal. Later in the month, the regime’s Minister of Military Affairs Avigdor Liberman affirmed that “Israel reserves its complete freedom of action, regardless of any understandings or developments” in the region.

However, Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu, in his televised remarks opening Israel’s weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday, did not elaborate on the new Washington-Moscow arrangement for Syria.

Furthermore, Israel’s Minister for Regional Cooperation Tzachi Hanegbi told reporters after the meeting that the truce deal “does not meet Israel’s unequivocal demand that there will not be developments that bring the forces of Hezbollah or Iran to the Israel-Syria border in the north.”

Elsewhere in his comments, the Israeli minister said that Tel Aviv had “set red lines” and that it would stand “firm” on them, alluding to the Israeli military strikes in Syria, carried out against suspected Hezbollah arms depots or in retaliation for attacks launched from the Syrian-controlled Golan.

Tel Aviv has, on several occasions, targeted the territory inside Syria, often claiming that

it strikes convoys heading for Hezbollah fighters. In the latest incident, Israel announced on Saturday that its military, using a Patriot missile, had intercepted and shot down an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) purportedly operated by the Syrian Air Force in the Golan Heights, adding that it was checking whether the aircraft had any connection “to Iran and Hezbollah.”

The Hezbollah fighters have been helping the Syrian military in its battle against Fateh al-Sham (al-Nusra Front/Jabhat al-Nusra) and ISIL, two prominent Takfiri terrorist groups operating in the Middle Eastern country.

Back in April 2015, Netanyahu officially admitted for the first time that the regime’s military had conducted strikes in the Syrian territory.

Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria after the 1967 Six-Day War and later occupied it in a move that has never been recognized by the international community. The regime has built dozens of settlements in the area ever since and has used the region to carry out a number of military operations against the Syrian government.

Syria says the raids aim to boost the Takfiri militant groups fighting against the Syrian government forces. Earlier this month, Damascus called on the United Nations to take immediate action against Israel following its airstrike on a copper factory in the town of Hassia in Homs province.

On several occasions, the Syrian army has confiscated Israeli-made arms and military equipment from militants fighting pro-Damascus forces. Israel has also been providing medical treatment to the extremist militants wounded in Syria.

Takfiri groups such as ISIL and al-Nusra have never attacked Israel despite operating close to Syria’s borders with the occupied Palestinian territories over the past couple of years.

(Source: agencies)

EU countries sign key defense pact

The permanent structured cooperation on defense agreement (PESCO) seeks to improve European Union coordination on defense and weapons systems development.

It is part of efforts led by Germany and France to reboot the European Union after Britain’s shock decision to quit and follows the announcement in June of a 5.5-billion euro (\$6.4 billion) European Defense Fund.

The EU’s diplomatic Chief Federica Mogherini hailed the agreement as “a new page of European defense,” saying countries had already proposed more than 50 projects.

Similar efforts to deepen military links have been frustrated for decades, partly by Britain’s fierce opposition to anything that might lead to a European army.

But Brexit and Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 has once again brought the need for a strong European security stance back into focus.

The shift in the United States policy under President Donald Trump -- who berated European partners on military spending at a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) summit in May -- has also led many to question whether Washington can be relied upon to protect Europe as it has in the past.

“It was important for us especially after the election of the American president that we can organize ourselves independently as Europeans,” German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen said.

“This is complementary to NATO, but we also see that nobody will solve the security problems that Europe has in its neighborhood -- we have to do it ourselves.”

NATO will retain its primary role, but Mogherini said the EU could offer resources the alliance does not have, such as navigating security and development issues in Africa.

PESCO could, in theory, lead to the creation of a European operational headquarters or logistics base, but will first focus on projects to develop new military equipment such as tanks or drones.

The agreement commits countries to “regularly increasing defense budgets in real terms” as well as devoting 20 percent of defense spending to procurement and two percent on research and technology.

(Source: hurriyet)

EU approves sanctions against Venezuela

The European Union (EU) has imposed a series of new economic sanctions on Venezuela, stepping up pressure on the government of President Nicolas Maduro which the bloc blames for the political crisis gripping the Latin American state.

Foreign ministers of the 28-member bloc agreed without debate to ban arms sales and export of military and surveillance equipment to Venezuela on Monday.

“In addition to its political and diplomatic efforts in support of a peaceful negotiated way out of the political crisis, the council has today decided by unanimity to adopt restrictive measures, underscoring its concerns with the situation in the country,” the EU said in a statement.

The ministers said they held back from targeting any Venezuelan individuals, but warned that the legal basis for individual travel bans to Europe and the freezing of any assets in the bloc “will be used in a gradual and flexible manner and can be expanded.”

“Everything we do is aimed at seeking dialogue between the government and the opposition to find a democratic and peaceful solution,” Spain’s Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis said at the meeting on Monday.

In the statement, the EU also criticized Caracas over October 15 regional elections, which they said took place amid “reported numerous irregularities.”

The ruling Socialist Party of President Maduro won a landslide victory by winning governorship of most of the states across the country. The right-wing Democratic Unity Coalition, which secured five state governorships, however, refused to recognize the results and called for street protests.

(Source: AP)

I have trouble understanding no military solution was possible in Syria: Erdogan

1→ Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic and transport ties with Doha on June 5, saying Qatar supports regional foe Iran and Islamists, a charge Qatar denies.

Erdogan is scheduled on Tuesday to visit Kuwait, which has tried to mediate in the Persian Gulf dispute. On Wednesday he will visit Qatar, which Ankara has supported and where Turkey has a military base.

(Source: Reuters)

Why is Tanzania so quiet?

8→ We are not a “peaceful” country by default so much as by design, though no matter how many times I write this out loud, fellow Africans do not want to hear it. Apparently, complexity is boring.

As much as Magufuli is doing the best he can, he is also doing the worst he can. Never in my short life has the government of my beloved country been more conservative, more intolerant, more paranoid and economically illiterate and impervious to good advice, more saddled with gun-happy thugs. I want to say that this is new. Three retired presidents live in my city, and we have buried one: there is some insight that comes with this sort of thing. So yeah, this is new. And not unexpected.

John Pombe Magufuli has had an interesting two years in office. The first two years are always tough for everyone: the incumbent is finding his feet and getting drenched in the murky waters of head of statehood. Our republic has always been divided about our president, no matter who he is or was. Some of us love them, some of us don’t, and all of this is done in Kiswahili where no outsider can get a look-in. This country really is a republic and if President Magufuli is going to make it through the obligatory ten-year term, two years in is far too early to be certain about anything. They only break at five, so I am afraid it is too soon to tell. In the meantime, we are going to keep it steady, plough the fields and keep the elephants un-extinct and all of that. Check again in about another two years when the general elections are hotting up, there might be something to say then.

(Source: Aljazeera)

ASEAN summit opens in Philippine capital amid anti-U.S. protests

Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are taking part in a two-day summit in the Philippine capital, Manila, amid tight security and heavy police presence in the face of anti-United States protest rallies.

At the summit, which opened Monday, the leaders from the 10 ASEAN member states will discuss regional cooperation and developments.

Also in Manila are leaders of ASEAN’s dialog partners, including the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Australia and India.

The annual gathering opened amid fresh clashes between Philippine security forces and the protesters angry at a visit by the U.S. President Donald Trump to Manila.

Hundreds of protesters marched on the summit’s venue near Manila Bay. The rally turned violent when riot police intervened, using water cannons and blocking the demonstrators.

Trump, who arrived in Manila on Sunday on the last leg of his trip to Asia, angered people who fear he may want more military bases in the Philippines and drag their country into a possible conflict with North Korea.

During the summit, a range of regional issues will be discussed, including the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, the North Korean military program, the spread of extremism in the region, and the territorial dispute in South China Sea.

On the sidelines of the Monday event, the U.S. president sat down for talks with his Philippine counterpart, Rodrigo Duterte.

He also met with prime ministers of Australia and Ja-

pan, namely Malcolm Turnbull and Shinzo Abe, with their talks focusing on North Korea’s military program as well as trade ties.

Trump said “a lot” of progress had been made in negotiations on trade with the two leaders.

In a briefing to media, Turnbull accused North Korea of “recklessness,” saying Pyongyang needs to be stopped. Abe also said that their most immediate challenge was to ensure regional peace and stability.

According to a draft of a statement to be issued during a summit meeting in Manila on Monday, Southeast Asian countries agree that the relative calm in the territorial dispute over the South China Sea should not be taken for granted.

“While the situation is calmer now, we cannot take the current progress for granted,” said the draft, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

“Important that we cooperate to maintain peace, stability, freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the SCS (South China Sea), in accordance with international law,” it said.

The statement which will be issued after a meeting between China and the 10-member ASEAN bloc adds, “It is in our collective interest to avoid miscalculations that could lead to escalation of tensions.”

The South China Sea has been the subject of a territorial dispute between China and Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. But those countries seem to have been managing their disputes with China smoothly.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who met Duterte last week in Vietnam, said his government guarantees “safe passage”



for all countries using the South China Sea.

Trump also stepped in and offered to help settle the maritime dispute saying, “If I can help mediate or arbitrate, please let me know.”

China, however, called for him to stay away from the territorial dispute, saying, “The South China Sea issue isn’t an issue between China and the United.”

On Tuesday, ASEAN will have a 40th anniversary commemorative summit with the European Union. It will be followed by the East Asia Summit (EAS), which is composed of ASEAN members, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the United States.

(Source: AFP)

Hariri lives in mysterious circumstances with restricted freedom: Aoun

Lebanese President Michel Aoun says Prime Minister Saad Hariri, who announced his resignation in a broadcast from Saudi Arabia, is living in “mysterious circumstances” with restricted freedom in Riyadh.

Aoun said Hariri was living in “mysterious circumstances” in Riyadh, which had “reached the degree of restricting (his) freedom” and Riyadh had imposed “conditions on his residency and on contact with him even by members of his family,” Lebanon’s presidency said in a statement on Sunday.

He added that this threw doubt over anything that Hariri has said, or will say, and emphasized that the premier’s statements could not be considered as an expression of his full free will.

Meanwhile, Saad al-Hariri claims he is not being held captive in Saudi Arabia and

will be returning to his country in the next few days.

Hariri made the remarks on Sunday during an interview with the Lebanese TV channel Future TV.

He further said that his resignation had been given in the interest of Lebanon, and that the country may be facing Arab sanctions.

“I am free here. If I want to travel tomorrow, I will...I will return to Lebanon very soon,” he said, adding that he would return to Beirut “in two or three days.”

Hariri added that would be willing to “rescind the resignation” if intervention in regional conflicts stopped.

■ Maronite leader visits Riyadh amid Hariri mystery

In another development, a top Lebanese Christian religious figure was heading to Saudi

Arabia on Monday afternoon with the hope of meeting Lebanon’s Prime Minister Saad Hariri whose surprise resignation in Riyadh has raised many questions.

The visit by Cardinal Bechara el-Rai, who heads the Maronite sect, is the latest in Lebanon’s efforts to allay fears about the circumstances surrounding Hariri’s fate in Saudi Arabia.

The Maronite sect is Lebanon’s largest Christian community and the Middle East’s largest Catholic church, to which President Michel Aoun also belongs.

Lebanon’s Foreign Ministry on Monday pledged to keep up pressure on Saudi Arabia not to impede Hariri’s return, the Al Akhbar paper reported, citing sources within the ministry.

Government sources said Hariri’s announcement to return to Beirut soon showed

will house improved communications systems to make the ICBM network more efficient.

Developed by military giant Boeing, the Minuteman missile was first launched in 1961 and remains the U.S. military’s only land-based ICBM in service.

The missile is capable of carrying three nuclear warheads and delivering them to targets around 13,000 kilometers (8,100 miles) away.

Warren had also housed Peacekeeper ICBMs before they were retired in 2005 for reliability issues. The expensive missiles entered service in 1986 and could carry up to 10 warheads.

In August, the USAF (United States Air Force) announced that it had hired Boeing and Northrop Grumman to develop a replacement for the Minuteman III.

The Trump administration is working on a new nuclear weapons policy that would end the post-Cold War disarmament and allow Washington to expand its arsenal.

Washington is currently keeping some 450 long-range nuclear missiles in underground silos across the U.S., in addition to an undisclosed number deployed to its military bases in Europe.

Trump and his top national security advisers discussed the matter in September at the White House, where the first draft of the new Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) was presented.

Besides missiles, the U.S. nuclear triad features a relatively large number of ageing nuclear bombers and submarines in need of modernization.

The Pentagon says it needs \$350 billion to upgrade the whole triad along with America’s some 7,000 nuclear warheads. Some reports put the cost at around \$1 trillion.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. military planning \$5bn missile system upgrade in Wyoming

The United States government is planning to spend up to \$5 billion in order to upgrade an ageing nuclear missile system in the state of Wyoming, as part of an ongoing modernization program accelerated under President Donald Trump.

The U.S. military would use the money to modernize the intercontinental ballistic missile system at the heart of Wyoming’s F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

Assigned to the U.S. Air Force Global Strike Command, Warren Air Force base is one of the three strategic missile bases in the U.S. The facility is also home to the Twentieth Air Force, which commands all of USAF’s intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

The base, established in 1867, houses around 150 Minuteman III ICBMs in hardened underground silos.

The upgrades program will include concrete pouring for new missile silos and the construction of new buildings that

Rashford reveals Ronaldo inspiration ahead of Brazil game

Watching Brazilian striker Ronaldo score a Champions League hat-trick for Real Madrid against Manchester United 14 years ago provided a lasting inspiration for Marcus Rashford, the England forward said on Monday.

Speaking before England host Brazil in a friendly at Wembley on Tuesday, Rashford said he was a five-year-old spectator at Old Trafford when Real knocked United out 6-5 on aggregate in the quarter-finals.

After the game, he and his brother Dwaine began scouring YouTube for clips of the Brazilian.

"It's all those clips ...and my first ever game that I saw live, he was playing in it. I always remember it. It was in 2003 and he scored a hat-trick," Rashford, who has netted seven times for United in all competitions this season, told British media.

Rashford came in for high praise from Ronaldo in the build-up to last year's European championships, when the Brazilian World Cup winner said the 20-year-old Englishman reminded him of his younger self.

"He was my brother's favourite player - that's why I've grown up watching so much of him and his games... So when you know he's saying good things about you then it really stands out," Rashford said.

England, who won eight of their 10 World Cup qualifying games and were unbeaten in Group F, held world champions Germany to a goalless draw in a friendly on Friday.

(Source: Daily Star)

Federer reveals why he's happier than ever before



Roger Federer admits he is happier than he has ever been before as a professional tennis player.

Federer, 36, has enjoyed a stunning resurgence in 2017, winning two Grand Slams at the Australian Open and Wimbledon.

The Swiss legend has won seven of the 12 tournaments he has entered this year and can make that eight at the ATP World Tour Finals in

London this week. Federer says the older he has got, the more he cherishes victories because he has not expected them.

"Well it's special because Australia came so unexpected," he told Sky Sports. "I think later on in your life or your career when you're older, 35, 36, the expectations are lower.

"You can surprise yourself in a positive way much better.

"When you were young things just happened and you were like 'oh wow, that was cool, I didn't expect that, I've been working so hard I kind of deserve it'.

"All of a sudden, later on it's different.

"It's a deeper sense of satisfaction, you know how much work you have to put into it, into each and every practice, the organization, the team spirit, everything needs to be right for you to succeed.

"Happiness is probably bigger today than it's ever been."

Roger Federer opened his ATP World Tour Finals campaign with a straight sets win over American Jack Sock yesterday.

(Source: Express)

Ronaldo announces birth of fourth child, Alana Martina

Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo has announced the birth of his fourth child, a daughter named Alana Martina.

Ronaldo's new arrival is his first child with girlfriend Georgina Rodriguez.

The Portugal captain reported that both baby and mother were "doing great" in a post on Instagram that showed Ronaldo and eldest son Cristiano Jr posing alongside Rodriguez.

Ronaldo's household is set to be hectic with baby twins Eva Maria and Mateo, born of a surrogate mother, also in their infancy.

Though he has only scored once in LaLiga for Madrid, who trail Barcelona by eight points, Ronaldo has spoken of fatherhood offering him a fresh perspective, recently claiming it had "softened" him.

(Source: Goal)

Mane sent back to Liverpool with hamstring concern

Sadio Mane has returned to Liverpool after complaining of a minor hamstring problem, the Senegal national team have confirmed.

The 25-year-old only made his comeback from injury in the 4-1 Premier League win over West Ham on November 4, but was called up for this month's international matches despite his lack of playing time.

Mane played in the win over South Africa on Friday, a result that secured Senegal's place at the World Cup, setting up Diafra Sakho's goal in the 2-0 victory in Polokwane.

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp had hoped Mane would be allowed to return to England if Senegal qualified for the finals in Russia before they meet South Africa again on Tuesday.

The Senegalese Football Federation have since confirmed the forward has been sent back to Liverpool for treatment on what they describe as "his old injury".

"Following the South Africa against Senegal match on Friday November 10 in Polokwane, the player Sadio Mane slightly felt his old injury," a statement read.

"After consultations between the medical staff of the Senegal national team and Liverpool, it was decided by mutual agreement to make him available to his club with a view to continuing treatment until full recovery."

(Source: Mirror)

Brazil's money making machine has seen the team turn into football's Harlem Globetrotters

Their matches might be slightly more competitive than games involving Harlem's most famous basketball team, but Brazil are becoming Globetrotters in their own right.

On Friday afternoon they played a seemingly bizarre friendly in Lille against Japan. Tuesday evening sees them travel to Wembley for a fixture against England.

These matches only seem weird if the last five years worth of fixtures are not taken into account. The money machine that is the Brazil national team have played 33 friendlies in that time. A staggering 24 have taken place outside of their own nation.

The tour does not end at Wembley. March sees two more high-profile friendlies. They take on Russia to mark the re-opening of Moscow's revamped Luzhniki Stadium, which will stage the World Cup final, before a trip to Germany. There are reasons behind that. Brazil spent the time between the start of 2013 and summer 2014 without any competitive fixtures - barring the Confederations Cup - as they were preparing for their home World Cup.

As a result, they were available for matches around the world and probably did not want to overdo the home games prior to a long international tournament.

There is also an argument that many of the friendlies take place in venues that are convenient for their players.

Only four of their current 25-man squad are not based in Europe.

It cannot be argued that trips to Dick's Sporting Goods Park in Denver or games at the Beijing National Stadium would be convenient for Europe-based players. But a pair of matches in France and England stops



Brazil from putting their squad through too many miles.

They are also, quite simply, box office. And this is the main reason behind their ongoing global tour. A game organized against Argentina for the Melbourne Cricket Ground in June this year drew 95,969 supporters. This was the second highest attendance ever for a football game in Australia.

Even at stadiums that are not as starved of good football, such as the Emirates, Brazil draw fans. A near-sell out 60,007 turned up in north London when they took on Chile back in March 2015.

Of course, there is a cost associated with

Vettel wins as Hamilton roars back to fourth in Brazilian Grand Prix



Sebastian Vettel restored Ferrari pride with victory in the Brazilian Grand Prix on Sunday while newly-crowned four-times world champion Lewis Hamilton produced the drive of the day from last to fourth for Mercedes.

Hamilton, who clinched the title in Mexico two weeks ago, started from the pit lane after changes to his car following a crash in qualifying then began a thrilling charge through the field.

The Briton was already up to ninth after 10 laps, with the safety car deployed after opening lap collisions and led the race before the halfway stage as others pitted and he ran longer.

He finished only 5.4 seconds behind Vettel.

"It was fun. It was reminiscent of my karting days when I'd start at the back, particularly in my first year or two," said Hamilton, voted driver of the day by fans in an online poll.

"I messed up yesterday and put myself in the worst position," he added.

"Waking up this morning, my goal was really kind of just to redeem myself... I was

trying to get back to third but just ran out of tires at the end."

Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff described his stirring performance, with a series of overtakes, as "a champion's drive."

Valtteri Bottas, who had lined up on pole position for Mercedes, saw his hopes of overhauling Vettel for the runner-up position in the championship effectively disappear when he finished second.

The Finn lost the lead at the start to the German, who had the race under control from the first corner onwards on a sunny afternoon at Interlagos.

Vettel is now 22 points clear of Bottas with only the Abu Dhabi season-ender remaining. Hamilton's unassailable overall lead was reduced to 43.

It was the German's fifth win of the season, 47th of his career, and Ferrari's first success since Hungary at the end of July when Vettel was leading the championship.

Finland's Kimi Raikkonen held off Hamilton to take third place for Ferrari, the 2007 world champion's third podium finish in a row.

(Source: Eurosport)

Dementia & football: PFA tells Alan Shearer it is unsure on numbers

Professional Footballers' Association chief executive Gordon Taylor says he does not know how many of its 50,000 members have dementia.

Taylor was talking in a BBC documentary in which former England captain Alan Shearer investigates the link between the disease and heading footballs.

The PFA and the Football Association have pledged to fund research and support former players with dementia. "At least now people have started to look for answers," Shearer said.

"Nowhere near enough research has been done so far. For too long it has been swept under the carpet, which is why so many people are angry - and rightly so.

"But even before we have findings, football must look after old players with dementia and put an end to this sense that once you are done with playing you are put on the scrapheap. People still have a life to lead.

"There are 850,000 people in the United Kingdom suffering from dementia and there are a lot of footballers in those numbers.

"But the reality is, and the sad thing is, we don't know how many and that can't be right."

■ **First link to dementia was made 15 years ago**

The link between heading the ball and dementia was first made in 2002 during the inquest into the death of former West Brom and England striker Jeff Astle.

Astle died from dementia aged 59 and the coroner who found signs of brain injury - called chronic traumatic en-



cephalopathy (CTE) - said the damage had been caused by years of heading a football.

Shearer said Astle had been diagnosed with an industrial disease, but little has been done since despite several high-profile ex-players also being diagnosed with dementia.

They include 1966 England World Cup winners Nobby Stiles, Martin Peters and Ray Wilson, Liverpool legends Ron Yeats and Tommy Smith and Celtic's European Cup-winning captain Billy McNeill.

■ **Could heading be banned?**

When the link was made in the United States between brain trauma from repeated blows to the head and CTE in retired NFL players, the NFL quickly set up a compensation fund worth \$750m (£569m).

Raisman: I don't want to believe that I am a victim



Triple Olympic gymnastics champion Aly Raisman has said in an interview she did not realize at first that she had been treated inappropriately by a doctor accused of having sexually assaulted female gymnasts while he was the U.S. team doctor.

Speaking on the "60 Minutes" television program, Raisman said she wanted to educate young gymnasts that it was sometimes difficult to understand the warning signs of sexual abuse.

When first interviewed by an investigator hired by USA Gymnastics in 2015, Raisman did not immediately accuse the doctor, Larry Nassar, of inappropriate or illegal behavior.

"I was just really innocent. I didn't really know. You know, you don't think that of someone. You know, so I just, I trusted him," said Raisman, who says she was 15 when she was first treated by Nassar.

Nassar has pleaded not guilty to charges of sexual assault. He is in jail awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to federal child pornography charges.

Nassar's attorneys, Matt Newburg and

Shannon Smith, have each said that due to a gag order they had no comment on the television program.

Raisman said she felt awkward about the doctor's behavior but she thought he was a caring person.

"I said 'Well, his touching makes me uncomfortable, but he's so nice to me' ... and 'I don't think he does it on purpose because, you know, I think he cares about me'."

"I didn't know anything differently. We were told he is the best doctor. He's the United States Olympic doctor and the USA Gymnastics doctor, and we were very lucky we were able to see him.

"I was in denial. You don't want to let yourself believe (you are a) victim of sexual abuse."

It was only later that Raisman, now 23, started to question Nassar's motives and behavior.

"He would always bring me, you know, desserts or gifts. He would buy me little things. So I really thought he was a nice person."

(Source: Reuters)

PFA chief executive Taylor acknowledged that football needs to do the same sort of investigation into the damage caused by heading, and says plans are already in place.

Taylor says the PFA is looking to build a database of members with dementia, and told Shearer: "It has been put to me that maybe clubs are very wary because there may be compensation.

"But you can only be negligent if you know for certain that there is this link.

"What I am saying is that football has a duty to see if there is a causal link, because if there is, and if that could significantly increase the problems in later life, then we need to look at the rules of the game and address it."

■ **What will the study involve?**

The FA and PFA commissioned joint research into the issue in March.

They will study a group of former professional footballers and the FA's medical performance director Dr Charlotte Cowie says it will provide reliable answers "as quickly as possible".

When asked by Shearer whether the FA had run away from the issue in the past, Cowie replied: "One thing I can say with confidence is that I feel we are running towards this problem at the moment.

"The FA made a conscious decision not to wait for [world governing body] Fifa or [European football's governing body] Uefa and I think that was the right decision. It was probably a difficult decision to make.

(Source: BBC)

Iran will be at full strength for Asian Qualifiers

TEHRAN — Iran will not be holding anything back when they plunge into action at the Asian Qualifiers this month.

All the players who saw action for Team Melli at the FIBA Asia Cup 2017 have returned to the national pool for the Asian Qualifiers, led by Mohammad Jamshidi and Hamed Haddadi, who were both chosen to be among the All-Star Team in Beirut.

Iran have a good mix of youth and veterans on this roster. They have nine players who are 23 years or younger, including rising stars Behnam Yakhchali, Sajjad Masjavekhi and Vahid Dalirzahan. Seasoned international campaigners like Rouzbeh Arghavan, Oshin Sahakian and Arsalan Kazemi are also among the players in the pool, and they are sure to use their experience in tempering the talents of their younger teammates.

Haddadi, Kazemi, Jamshidi and Yakhchali are projected to be this squad's leaders, especially since they were among the team's most productive players at the Asia Cup. Not surprisingly, Iran are going to be heavy favorites in every match they enter this month, and they are expected to go 2-0.

Iran are in Group D with Iraq, Kazakhstan and Qatar. They play Iraq on 24 November at the Prince Hamza Arena before hosting Qatar at the Azadi Gym on 27 November.

(Source: FIBA)



Iran edge past Venezuela in friendly

S P O R T S Iran national football team defeated d e s k Venezuela 1-0 thanks to a goal from Alireza Jahanbakhsh on Monday.

Iran and Venezuela players observed a minute's silence to remember those killed in the magnitude-7.3 earthquake that struck late Sunday in Iran's western provinces.

In the match held at the Goffertstadion in Nijmegen in the Netherlands, Jahanbakhsh found the back of the net in the 57th minute on the counter attack.

Reza Ghoochannejad's goal was ruled out earlier for offside.

It was Iran's second victory in four days as Team Melli had defeated Panama 2-1 on Thursday in Graz, Austria.

Iran national football team stretched their unbeaten run to ten matches. Their last defeat was a 1-0 reversal against Iraq in a friendly in March.

Carlos Queiroz's team are preparing for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.



Russian weightlifter Albegov suspended: IWF



MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russian Olympic weightlifter Ruslan Albegov has been suspended for having potentially violated anti-doping rules, the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) said on Monday.

The IWF said Albegov, who won bronze at the 2012 London Games in the men's +105 kg event, was provisionally suspended for "use or attempted use by an athlete of a prohibited substance or a prohibited method", without providing further detail.

Russia is one of nine countries currently on a one-year ban from international weightlifting competitions over doping at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics. Other

banned nations include China, Turkey and Ukraine.

The IWF last year barred Russia's weightlifting team from the Rio Olympics over repeated doping offences.

Russia's participation in next year's winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, is now in limbo over investigations by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on the alleged tampering of Russian athletes' samples by laboratory and security officials at the 2014 Sochi Games.

Six Russian cross-country skiers were banned for life from the Olympics this month as part of an IOC investigation.

Pirelli cancel F1 tire test in Brazil after attacks



LONDON (Reuters) — Pirelli and McLaren have canceled a Formula One tire test scheduled for the Brazilian Grand Prix circuit on Tuesday and Wednesday after teams were targeted by armed robbers in Sao Paulo over the weekend.

"Following a robbery attempt, neutralized by Pirelli security, on a Pirelli van at the Interlagos circuit last Sunday...it has been decided to cancel the tire test," Pirelli said in a statement.

"The decision, shared with McLaren, FIA and Formula One, was made in the interest of the safety of the personnel,

both McLaren's and our own, who would have participated in the test," it added.

Sunday's attack came after armed robbers held up members of Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes team as they left the circuit in a minivan on Friday night.

Four-times world champion Hamilton, who was not present, said shots were fired and one team member had a gun held to his head.

Williams and Sauber team members reported other incidents outside the circuit while a car used by officials from the sport's governing body, the FIA, was also targeted.

We need the fans to be our 12th man, says Tomi Juric

Australia striker Tomi Juric is banking on home comforts in the decisive second leg of their FIFA World Cup 2018 Russia Intercontinental Play-off after the Soccerroos were held to a goalless draw in Honduras on Friday.

Ahead of the first leg in San Pedro Sula, the word from coach Ange Postecoglou was of a tough test in challenging conditions Soccerroos' Experience Will Negate Hostile Honduras Crowd, Says Postecoglou against a team that would be difficult at home.

However, it was Australia who bossed proceedings, dominating possession and creating the majority of the goal-scoring opportunities, with Juric himself having several chances to break the deadlock.

"Without a doubt we're disappointed," said the FC Luzern forward. "I think we had a few opportunities tonight we didn't put away and would've made the game a whole lot different."



"It would've put it in our favour, but football is one of those games where anything can happen on the day. "If you play with a lot of passion, and these guys

have that, anything can happen. So we've got to take the next game very seriously and get the job done at home."

To do so, Juric insisted, the Soccerroos will need all the help they can get from their supporters at Stadium Australia on Wednesday.

"Without a doubt we need them as a 12th man, it would be great if we could get a full house," he added.

"The atmosphere in Honduras was great, at times it was hard to communicate with each other due to the crowd noise, which at times you don't get at home, so I hope when we come to Sydney we'll have something similar.

"Something like the noise and atmosphere at the AFC Asian Cup because this is a very big occasion, and I would be very disappointed if the fans missed out on us going to Russia."

(Source: the-afc)

Bakayoko: France's midfield options 'aren't better than me'

Chelsea's Tiemoue Bakayoko has told Canal+ of his disappointment at not being called up by France this month, saying he is just as good as club teammate N'Golo Kante and his other rivals for a midfield place for Les Bleus.

A summer signing from Monaco, Bakayoko has featured in all but one of Chelsea's Premier League games to date this season, taking advantage of injury to Kante to start eight of them and win

over manager Antonio Conte.

With Kante yet to regain full match fitness after his hamstring problem, his absence from the France squad to face Wales and Germany in this month's international break was to be expected.

Bakayoko was, however, a more glaring absence, especially as Sevilla midfielder Steven N'Zonzi was handed a first call-up by national team boss Didier Deschamps instead.

While N'Zonzi replaced Bayern Munich's Corentin Tolisso to make his senior international debut in Friday's 2-0 friendly win over Wales, Bakayoko cut a frustrated figure at home.

"I think [Adrien] Rabiot, Kante, [Blaise] Matuidi, Tolisso aren't better than me," he said. "I respect the coach's choices and I also respect the players selected. They're talented, they're friends.

"I'm proud they've been called up, I'd like to be with them, but I don't think I'm any less than them.

"I'm disappointed. I believe in this World Cup [next summer], it remains a goal. I'm playing for a big club, I think that can work in my favour."

Bakayoko has just one senior France cap to his name to date.

(Source: Soccernet)

Moradi wins gold in half marathon in Beirut

TASNIM — Mohammadjafar Moradi from Iran claimed a gold medal at the half marathon in Beirut.

The Iranian athlete finished in first place with a time of 1:08:04. Jordanian runner Ahmad Sammour won the silver medal with 1:08:49 and bronze medal went to Uganda's Ismail Ssenyange with a time of 1:11:49.



Moradi prepares for the 2017 Asian Marathon Championships which will be held in Dongguan, China on November 26.

Beirut Marathon is an annual event that takes place in Beirut. The first ever BIM was held on October 19, 2003 and attracted over 6,000 runners from 49 different countries and tens of thousands of spectators in Lebanon and around the world.

Parisa Rohanian claims silver at Indoor Archery World Cup

IRNA — Parisa Rohanian from Iran claimed a silver medal at the first stage of the 2017-2018 Indoor Archery World Cup in Morocco.

She lost to Denmark's Lena Agerholm in recurve junior women final and claimed the silver medal.

The bronze medal went to Madison Devencenzi from USA.

The second stage of the Indoor Archery World Cup takes place in Bangkok, Thailand at the start of December.

An Indoor Archery World Cup was inaugurated in 2010. It is played in the off-season (November to February).

Asia's best to converge in Chinese Taipei for AFC Futsal Championship 2018

With the West Zone Qualifies having come to an end on Sunday, the cast is complete for the AFC Futsal Championship 2018.

To be hosted by Chinese Taipei, Bahrain, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan booked their seats following the conclusion of the West Zone Qualifiers in Bangkok.

They joined Japan, Korea Republic and China PR from the East Zone, whose qualifying round was also held in the neutral venue of Bangkok.

ASEAN's qualifiers are Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar and Vietnam while 11-time champions Islamic Republic of Iran lead the South and Central Zones, with Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan also through.

Hosts Chinese Taipei complete the 16-team cast for the Championship which will be held on February 1-11.

(Source: the-afc)

Modric wants Dalic to lead Croatia at World Cup

Croatia captain Luka Modric backed coach Zlatko Dalic to lead the nation in Russia after qualifying for the 2018 World Cup on Sunday.

A 0-0 draw against Greece in Piraeus was enough for Croatia to advance from their play-off 4-1 on aggregate, reaching the World Cup for a fifth time.

Dalic replaced Ante Cacic as coach in early October, leading his team to two wins and Sunday's draw and to the showpiece event.

Modric, who played a starring role in the first-leg win in Zagreb, said Dalic deserved to lead Croatia in Russia.

"It would be crazy if Dalic wasn't the coach," the Real Madrid midfielder told reporters.

"He did a phenomenal job. I'd also like to thank coach Cacic. We have all done a good job.

"Croatia is above all and most importantly we are at the World Cup."

Croatia were forced into a play-off after finishing second to Iceland in Group I of UEFA qualifying.

The 4-1 first-leg win over Greece sent them on their way to Russia, and Dalic's side sat back and comfortably held out the hosts on Sunday.

"The qualifiers were hard, but we are where we belong," Modric said. "We maybe didn't play at the level we know tonight, but the result is most important.

"We were lacking energy and concentration, but we didn't lose the game and we all fought as one.

"We knew the crowd would be crazy, that they would push them forward, but we didn't give them a clear chance."

(Source: Four Four Two)

Iran's NPC extends sympathy to quake victims

PARALYMPIC.ir — Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) offered sympathy to the families of victims of a strong earthquake that struck Iran's western provinces late Sunday.

Two-time Paralympic powerlifting champion Siamand Rahman Also offered condolences to the Iranian people for the devastating earthquake.

A powerful earthquake shook the Iran-Iraq border, killing more than 300 people and some 3,950 were injured in the mountainous region.

The 7.3 magnitude earthquake also caused major damage to buildings and infrastructure in the Iran's western cities.

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“Kupal” wins two awards at Hamilton festival

A R T **d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iranian director Kazem Mollai’s drama “Kupal” was selected as best feature film at the Hamilton Film Festival, while it also brought Levon Haftvan the award for best actor, the organizers of the Canadian event announced on Sunday night.



Levon Haftvan acts in a scene from “Kupal”.

“Kupal” tells the story of a hunter and a taxidermist called “Dr. Ahmad Kupal”. On the last day of the year, moments before the arrival of the New Year, he faces an unexpected challenge.

The best actress award was presented to Evelyne Brochu for her role in “Past Imperfect” by Nathalie Teirlinck from Belgium, and “Backstory” by Joschka Laukeninks from Germany was picked for the special jury award.

The Hamilton Film Festival was held in Ontario from November 4 to 12.

Sheed Persian Film Festival announces winners

A R T **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The winners of the 2nd Sheed Persian Film Festival, which was held in Dallas, Texas have been announced.

“Azar” by Mohammad Hamzei was picked as the best film, while “No Date, No Signature” brought its director Vahid Jalilvand the best director award, the organizers announced on Sunday.



Niki Karimi acts in a scene from “Azar” by Mohammad Hamzei

Niki Karimi won the best actress award for her participation in “Azar” and Mohsen Tanabandeh received the best actor award for his role in “Ferrari” by Alireza Davudnejad.

“Israfil” by Ida Panahandeh and “Yellow” by Mostafa Taqizadeh shared the audience award for the best film.

All the winners will be presented with a CloseUp Award in memory of the legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami at the festival’s award ceremony, which will be held in the near future.

The 2nd Sheed Persian Film Festival ran from November 10 to 12.

Shawn Mendes, Eminem and U2 among winners at MTV Europe Music Awards

LONDON (Reuters) — Canadian pop singer Shawn Mendes led the pack at the MTV Europe Music awards on Sunday night, taking home “Best Song”, “Best Artist”, and “Biggest Fans” awards, in a show that featured performances from French Montana, The Killers and Keshha.

British R&B singer Rita Ora performed the hosting duties, as well as a mashup of her 2017 hit “Your Song”, alongside her new single “Anywhere”.

U.S. rap star Eminem opened the show with a performance of his new song “Walk on Water”, with Skylar Grey standing in for Beyonce to sing the other part in the duet.

The Detroit rapper also took the award for “Best Hip Hop”, an honor which he appeared to find slightly baffling.

“I’m not really sure how I got this, ‘cause I haven’t had an album out in a few years” he quipped in his acceptance speech, adding “I got one coming though.”

“Look What You Made Me Do”, singer Taylor Swift had been the most-nominated star of the evening, with six nominations, but failed to win any awards.

Mendes performed “There’s Nothing Holdin’ Me Back”, the winner of “Best Song”.

Some big names from film and television were on hand to lend Hollywood sparkle to proceedings, including “Game of Thrones” star Natalie Dormer and Oscar winner Jared Leto, also the front man of the band Thirty Seconds to Mars that took home the award for “Best Alternative” act.

Thessaloniki festival honors “No Date, No Signature”

A R T **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Vahid Jalilvand’s acclaimed drama “No Date, No Signature” won two awards at the 58th Thessaloniki International Film Festival in Greece, the organizers announced on Sunday.

The film received the Silver Alexander, the festival’s special jury award, while “Ravens” by Jens Assur from Sweden won the Golden Alexander for the best film.

“No Date, No Signature” also received the FIPRESCI (International Federation of Film Critics) Award at the festival.

Starring Navid Mohammadzadeh, Amir Aqai and Hedieh Tehrani, “No Date, No Signature” tells the story of Dr. Nariman, a forensic pathologist who has a car accident with a motorcyclist and injures his 8-year-old son.

The film won two top prizes — best director award for Jalilvand and best actor award for its star Mohammadzadeh — in the Orizzonti section at the 74th Venice International Film Festival in September.

Iranian actor Peyman Moaadi was one of the jury members of this edition of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival.

The special jury award for best director - a Bronze Alexander - went to Hlynur Palmason for “Winter Brothers”, a co-production of Denmark and Iceland.



Amir Aqai acts in a scene from “No Date, No Signature” by Vahid Jalilvand.

Master miniaturist Farshchian donates new work to Mashhad museum



“Heaven on the Earth” by Mahmud Farshchian, which has been donated by the master miniaturist to the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum in Mashhad, is on display after being unveiled in the exhibition hall on November 12, 2017. (Mehr/Ramin Saffari)

A R T **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Master miniaturist Mahmud Farshchian has donated one of his new works to the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum in Mashhad.

“Heaven on the Earth” was unveiled on Sunday during a special ceremony attended by a number religious figures and Astan-e Qods Razavi custodian Ebrahim Raisi.

The painting measuring 101x82.5 centimeters depicts Hazrat Zainab (SA), the sister of Imam Hussein (AS), and a number of angels mourning for the Imam after being martyred at Karbala in 680 CE.

A collection of 16 other paintings by Farshchian are on display in a special section dedicated to artworks from the 87-year-old artist.

The collection contains his masterpieces “The Evening of Ashura”, “Ali-Asghar (AS)” and “The Standard-Bearer of Truth”, all of which are about the martyrdom of the Imam.

The ceremony came to an end with the unveiling of a copy of the Holy Quran engraved on 114 plates of granite by Davud Zamani-Azar.

The Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum is adjacent to the Shrine of Imam Reza (AS).

Box Office: ‘Thor: Ragnarok’ thunders to \$56.6 million second weekend

LOS ANGELES (Variety.com) — Showing plenty of staying power, Disney-Marvel’s “Thor: Ragnarok” is dominating the North American box office with \$56.6 million at 4,080 locations in its second weekend.

The figure give the third Thor movie the 29th highest second weekend of all time and the fifth best of 2017. It also took in nearly the combined total of the two new titles -- Paramount’s family comedy “Daddy’s Home 2,” with \$30 million from 3,575 sites and Fox’s mystery “Murder on the Orient Express” with \$28.2 million at 3,341 venues.

“Thor: Ragnarok,” starring Chris Hemsworth and directed by Taika Waititi, declined 54% from its \$122.7 million opening last weekend and is already the ninth highest domestic grosser of 2017 with \$211.6 million in its first 10 days. It’s also been a stellar international performer with \$438 million in less than three weeks -- topping \$650 million worldwide.

On Nov. 8, “Thor: Ragnarok” became the 12th consecutive Marvel Cinematic Universe

film to top \$500 million worldwide.

The movie has reversed a box office slump that persisted through October and left 2017’s overall domestic moviegoing down 5% from last year at \$9.14 billion as of Sunday. With Warner Bros.’ “Justice League” opening next weekend, Disney-Pixar’s “Coco” on Nov. 22 and “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” launching on Dec. 15, the industry is now poised to end the year on an upbeat note. The overall weekend totaled about \$148 million, down 6% from the same frame in 2016, according to comScore.

“Now it will take the dream team of ‘Justice League,’ ‘Coco’ and of course ‘The Last Jedi’ and a host of other films big and small to rally the industry toward a year end total that could rival last year’s record \$11.4 billion,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst at comScore. “The clock is ticking and there’s not a lot of time left on the calendar to make up the difference.”

“Daddy’s Home 2” is performing at the high end of recent forecasts and is finishing about 23% below the original’s \$38.7 million opening

in 2015. Mark Wahlberg and Will Ferrell reprise their roles as fathers co-parenting the children of Wahlberg’s character who struggle to cope when their fathers, played by Mel Gibson and John Lithgow, arrive during the holiday season. The film carries a \$70 million budget.

The original went on to gross \$150 million domestically. Paramount’s distribution president Kyle Davies pointed to an A-CinemaScore as an indication that the “Daddy’s Home 2” is resonating with all demographics -- and should perform well in coming weeks. “We are well-positioned heading into the holiday season with a movie for audiences from 8 to 80,” he added. “Murder on the Orient Express” has also launched above expectations. Kenneth Branagh stars as detective Hercule Poirot in the latest adaptation of Agatha Christie’s story of a murder mystery on a luxury train in the 1930s. The cast has plenty of star power with Johnny Depp, Josh Gad, Michelle Pfeiffer, Penelope Cruz, Willem Dafoe, “Hamilton’s” Leslie Odom Jr., and “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” actress Daisy Ridley.

“Murder on the Orient Express,” which has a \$55 million budget, also pulled in \$45.8 million in 25,903 international screens, lifting its overseas total to \$57.2 million.

STXfilms’ “A Bad Moms Christmas” finished fourth with \$11.5 million at 3,615 locations in its second weekend, showing impressive holding power with a decline of only 31%. The film has grossed nearly \$40 million in its first 12 days.

A24’s expansion of Greta Gerwig’s “Lady Bird” cracked the top 10 with \$1.2 million on 37 screens for an impressive \$33,776 per screen average. The comedy-drama posted the best 2017 platform opening last weekend with \$364,437 at four sites.

Fox Searchlight’s platform release of “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri,” starring Frances McDormand and Woody Harrelson, opened with a strong \$320,000 at four locations. McDormand plays a small town mother taking on the local police force after her daughter’s rape and murder goes uninvestigated for several months.

Longtime New York gossip columnist Liz Smith dead at 94

NEW YORK (Reuters) — New York gossip columnist Liz Smith, who covered the breakup of U.S. President Donald Trump’s first marriage and helped lead the media’s charge into celebrity news, died on Sunday at her Manhattan home, the New York Times and other media reported. She was 94.

The Texas native chronicled the lives of Hollywood and Broadway stars, along with moguls, models and the wealthy, starting in the 1950s.

She famously broke the news of Trump’s separation from his first wife, Ivana, in the New York Daily News, one of several papers where she worked over the years. She also worked at New York Newsday and the New York Post. Her column was widely syndicated, and at her peak she earned more than \$1 million a year, according to the New York Times.

Unlike her predecessors in the gossip field, her coverage often had less to do with scandal and more about offering readers a window into the lives of the rich and



Gossip columnist Liz Smith works on the red carpet at the National Board of Review gala in the Manhattan borough of New York January 6, 2015. (Reuters/Carlo Allegri)

famous.

Born Mary Elizabeth Smith in Fort Worth, she was the daughter of a cotton broker who fell on hard times during the Great Depression, the Times said. She later told the newspaper that she “couldn’t face” the family’s poverty and fell in love with the glamour of movies and their stars.