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# Kermanshah quake: Tragedy, altruism, hope



President Rouhani on Tuesday visited people in Kermanshah's Taleqani hospital who are being treated for injuries they suffered in an earthquake that severely hit Sarpol-e Zahab and surrounding villages.

## Zarif to UN: World must help end senseless war on Yemen

**POLITICS** **d e s k** Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote a letter to the UN secretary general on Monday suggesting that it is essential that the international community get more engaged in ending the "senseless war" on Yemen. "It is the duty of the international community to get more responsibly and effectively engaged in ending the senseless war and establishing a ceasefire, ensuring delivery of humanitarian assistance and

eventually restoring permanent peace in this country through dialogue and national reconciliation without preconditions," Zarif said in the letter to Antonio Guterres. A Saudi-led coalition backed by the U.S. started the war on Yemen in March 2015 with the aim of reinstating ousted president Mansour Hadi. The war has led to famine and spread of cholera in the poor country. The UN is calling it "the world's worst humanitarian crisis." **→2**

## Hariri sought mediation between Iran, S. Arabia, Velayati says

**POLITICS** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Senior Iranian politician Ali Akbar Velayati said on Tuesday that Saad Hariri, who resigned as Lebanon's prime minister on November 4, called for a mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia whose relations have nosedived in recent years. Velayati and Hariri met on November 3 in Beirut. Hariri declared his resignation

during a visit to Riyadh, claiming Iran's interference in Arab countries' affair for his resignation. Velayati, the top advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and chairman of the Strategic Research Council of the Expediency Council, strongly refuted claims that he talked "tough" with Hariri in that meeting. **→2**

## ATR to deliver 8 aircrafts to Iran by 2018

**ECONOMY** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** —ATR aims to deliver another eight aircrafts to Iran by the end of the year after delivering six so far this year under U.S. export licenses issued following the lifting of international nuclear-related sanctions in 2016, Chief Executive Christian Scherer was quoted as saying by Reuters on Tuesday. Aircrafts whose U.S. components make

up more than 10 percent of their value need licenses from the U.S. Treasury before they can be supplied to Iran under the nuclear deal. Iran's national flag-carrier airline Iran Air signed a contract for purchasing 20 turboprop passenger planes from the French-Italian aircraft manufacturer ATR in mid-April.

**EDITORIAL**  
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## Democrats' confrontation with Iran missiles

While the "Democrat-Republican" dilemma still challenges the minds of some domestic intellectuals and they are still sorry for the failure of Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election, the American parties have begun a total and complete confrontation against the JCPOA. The law called "Iran Ballistic Missiles and International Sanctions Enforcement Act" was recently approved by the House of Representatives in May 1698. The vote was 423 to two.

This is the very law that provides grounds for massive missile sanctions against Iran. During the adoption of the CAATSA, the Democrats' Majority in the House of Representatives voted for this proposal. It is worth mentioning that this plan violates the Joint Comprehension Plan of Action (JCPOA). In the Senate, only Bernie Sanders (the Independent Senator) and the Republican Senator Rand Paul rejected this plan. But the desire of the Democrats to confront Iranian missile forces (even at the cost of breaking the JCPOA) is far more than the Republicans. In this regard there are some points that need to be addressed.

In November 2014, during the nuclear talks between Iran and the members of the P1 + 5 in Muscat, there was an unprecedented insistence by former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, on the inclusion of Iran's missile power in the content of the JCPOA. Even the U.S. nuclear negotiating team has announced that it would refuse to discuss other differences between the parties if the Iranians' missile power is not included in the deal.

Kerry's insistence on his own position led to the failure of nuclear talks in Muscat. Subsequently, at the tenth round of nuclear talks in Vienna, U.S. officials once again called for limiting Iran's nuclear missile power capability. However, the White House preferred to retreat from its willingness to negotiate Iran's missile power and its inclusion in the JCPOA. The narrative of Richard Nephew, a former member of the nuclear negotiating team of the United States, can be considered in this regard. **→13**

## Lack of banking channel main barrier for Iran-Pakistan trade

**By Mahnaz Abdi**  
**KARACHI** — The value of trade between Iran and Pakistan stood at near \$1.2 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2017) increasing from \$861 million in its previous year and the figure is planned to increase also in the current year.

While the two countries' officials have set a target of \$5 billion bilateral trade by 2021, achieving this goal faces some hurdles especially when it comes to trade between the businessmen.

A delegation of some Iranian businessmen from different sectors have recently visited Expo Pakistan 2017, which was held from November

9 to 12 at Karachi Expo Center, in a bid to find Pakistani partners and also explain their problems in the way of business with Pakistan for the Pakistani commerce officials during some meetings on the sidelines of the expo.

During the exhibition, the Tehran Times has conducted some interviews with a number of businesspeople from the both sides to take a comprehensive view about the barriers they are facing in the way of bilateral trade.

Most of them mentioned lack of banking channel as the main hurdle while there are also some other barriers such as those related to visa issuance.

Iranian delegates say that receiving visa from

Pakistan's embassy in Tehran has become more difficult recently and also duration of stay has been reduced when issuing the visas.

The following is text of the interviews with two of the businesspersons.

**■ Providing easier condition to Iran's benefit**  
Behjat Nasser, an Iranian-Pakistani woman conducting exports and imports between the two countries for some 8-9 years, mentioned delay in customs clearance as the main barrier from the both sides although she said the problem is more with the Iranian side due to the more formalities and also because there are more holidays in Iran making more delay in the clearance process. **→4**

## Iran will never compromise on its missile deterrence

**POLITICS** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a former Iranian nuclear negotiator who is currently a researcher at Princeton University, has said that Tehran will never negotiate over its missile defense capability as the country is susceptible to military threats by Israel and the United States.

"The United States and Israel have military options on the table... therefore security threats against Iran are high and serious," Mousavian told Radio America when he was whether Iran would be ready to renegotiate on the terms of the nuclear deal or even accept negotiations over its missile program.

He said the United States must not forget that Iran is a victim of "thousands of missiles and weapons of mass destruction" by the Saddam regime in the 1980s and that

Iran is located in a volatile region which accounts for about 80 percent of conflicts in the world.

Missiles are "indispensable" for defending the country's "territorial integrity", he pointed out.

Mousavian also said nuclear negotiations lasted for 12 years and now Iran, China, the European Union and Russia will not accept a renegotiation of the agreement and will not "trap" themselves for another 12-year or possibly 120-year negotiations.

On how Iran will react if the United States scarpes the nuclear deal within the next 60 or 90 days, Mousavian said if this happens and sanctions return it will be a "flagrant violation" of the nuclear deal and Iran no longer is committed to honor restrictions on its nuclear activities.

"In that situation Iran will act based on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty without any limitations and (contrary to claims) it will not also seek to build nuclear weapons both because of the fatwa (religious decree) by the Supreme Leader and because of accepting and committing itself to the NPT," the former nuclear negotiator explained.

The former diplomat said the behavior of the U.S. president has made Iran "convinced" that it cannot trust Washington.

Trump has made repeated attacks against the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. His rhetoric against Iran and its nuclear program has been welcomed by the Israeli prime minister.

Mousavian said the United States and the Zionist regime are not qualified to be the world's "nuclear police".



© Tehran Times/Mohammad Khodabakhsh

## Ava born one day after massive earthquake

A mother is taking care of her baby who was born just one day after a massive earthquake struck the city of Sarpol-e Zahab in the western province of Kermanshah. The girl, named Ava, was born in a field hospital established in the city by the Army. Physicians and nurses rushed to the help of the mother after she went into labor. The birth of the baby created a feeling of joy amid a sense of tragedy and grief that has gripped the city after the devastating earthquake.

## Israel deploys missile systems after bombing Gaza

Israel has deployed missile systems to the center of occupied territories for fear of a possible retaliatory attack, two weeks after the regime's warplanes bombed Gaza and killed a dozen members of Palestinian resistance movements there.

The Israeli military made the announcement on Monday, but did not elaborate on where the so-called Iron Dome batteries had exactly been installed.

This is the first time such a war-like posture has been adopted by the Tel Aviv regime since 2014, when Israel launched a bloody 50-day war on the blockaded Gaza Strip.

In late October, Israeli fighter jets destroyed a lifeline tunnel in the southern part of the besieged Gaza Strip, killing 10 members of the Gaza-based Islamic Jihad resistance movement and two other fighters with the fellow Hamas resistance group.

In a video posted on YouTube on Saturday, Israeli Major General Yoav Mordechai warned Islamic Jihad that any retaliatory attack by the group "will be met with a powerful and determined Israeli response, not only against the Jihad, but also against Hamas."

A day later, the resistance movement said in a statement on Sunday that it would not back down on its "right to respond to any aggression, including our right to respond to the crime of aggression on the resistance tunnel."

The Israeli "threats to target the movement's leadership is a declaration of war, which we will confront," the statement read.

In yet another measure against Islamic Jihad, Israel arrested one of its senior leaders, identified as Tareq Qadaan, near the city of Jenin in the northern part of the occupied West Bank on Monday.

Israel claims that resistance fighters use the Gaza underground tunnels to stockpile weapons and infiltrate into the occupied lands.

They, however, say the tunnels are needed to transfer essential supplies, including food and fuel, into the Palestinian territory, which has been under a crippling Israeli siege for over a decade.

The blockade has caused a decline in living standards as well as unprecedented unemployment and poverty.

The fresh Israeli campaign of confrontation comes as Palestinian factions Fatah, based in Ramallah, and Hamas, which used to run the Gaza Strip, have reached a national unity deal designed to bridge the political rift between them and to allow Fatah to govern the coastal enclave.

(Source: Press TV)



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



IRGC transfers biggest portable field hospital to Kermanshah

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has moved Iran's biggest portable field hospital to the western province of Kermanshah in order to treat those who sustained injuries in Sunday's 7.3-magnitude earthquake.

As part of its rescue and relief operations, the IRGC transferred the field hospital from Isfahan province to Kermanshah, Tasnim news agency reported on Tuesday.

The field hospital is portable and has tents and connexes, operating rooms, outpatient wards, gynecology ward, pharmacy, radiology labs, and even dental facilities.



Zarif honors global aid offers for quake victims

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has expressed gratitude for global expressions of sympathy and offers of assistance in the aftermath of the deadly earthquake in western Iran that killed hundreds of people, left thousands injured, and tens of thousands homeless.

"Heartbreaking images from the earthquake damage and loss of life in Kermanshah (and in Iraq). We are grateful for global expressions of sympathy and offers of assistance. For now, we can manage with our own resources. Many thanks for all offers and we will keep you posted," Zarif tweeted on Tuesday.



Three ministers appointed to Supreme Council of Spatial Planning

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has appointed three new members to the country's Supreme Council of Spatial Planning, Mehr news agency reported on Tuesday.

In a decree, the president appointed Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zangeneh, Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari as new members of the council.

Rouhani said he chose the three ministers because of their "competence, commitment and experiences."

He also called on the new members of the council to use all their scientific and technical abilities to advance spatial planning systems.



Intelligence Ministry seizes large amount of contraband

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Intelligence Ministry announced on Tuesday it has seized 1128 containers carrying smuggled goods in the port city of Bandar Abbas.

The smuggled goods included home and office appliances, building equipment, hotel supplies and sporting goods.

Security forces also disbanded an organized group of smugglers, Tasnim news agency reported. 23 members of the group were arrested, it said.



Senior MP meets Ukrainian foreign minister

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, met on Tuesday with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin to discuss bilateral ties.

Boroujerdi, heading a high-ranking parliamentary delegation, arrived in Kiev on Monday to hold talks with senior Ukrainian officials. He is visiting Ukraine at the invitation of his Ukrainian counterpart, Fars reported.

The senior lawmaker also met with Ukrainian Parliament Speaker Andriy Parubiy on Monday as the two sides discussed broadening of parliamentary relations.



New responsibilities passed to provincial governors

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Deputy Interior Minister Javad Naserian said on Tuesday that new responsibilities have been passed to provincial governors, emphasizing that the move will speed up proceedings.

In an interview published on the Interior Ministry's website, Naserian said under the changes, more than 16 new responsibilities have been delegated to governors.

He added that the most important change is that the governors are now tasked with appointing prefects, who were previously appointed by the interior minister.

# IAEA report proves U.S. claims wrong: Iran



**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The new report by the International Atomic Energy Agency which once again confirms Iran's compliance to the 2015 nuclear deal proves the U.S. claims against Iran are "wrong", Tehran's ambassador to the IAEA said on Monday.

"New report of the agency which is the 9th one since implementation of the JCPOA and 8th one to the Board of Governors on verification of implementing the JCPOA, once again confirms, contrary to the U.S. claims, that Iran's nuclear activities totally conform to the JCPOA," Reza Najafi said in a statement.

Najafi also said that Iran and all the members to the IAEA expect the UN nuclear body to keep verifying implementation of the JCPOA "professionally" and "neutrally".

According to Reuters, the UN atomic watchdog said on Monday in its first report since U.S. President Donald Trump

The diplomat has been Iran's top negotiator in the peace talks in the Kazakh capital of Astana aimed at ending the Syria crisis through diplomacy.

The 7th round of Syria peace talks, brokered by Iran, Russia, and Turkey, was held in Astana on October 30 and 31.

Back in May, the fourth round of the talks produced an agreement on de-escalation zones in Syria, sharply reducing fighting in the country.

## Iranian, Russian diplomats meet to discuss Syria

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Jaber Ansari met on Tuesday with his Russian counterpart Mikhail Bogdanov in Moscow to discuss issues of mutual interest, including regional developments, especially the Syrian crisis, IRNA reported.

Jaber Ansari is heading a high-ranking delegation to Moscow.

## France does not get past EU to pressure Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The European Union has said no to Paris which in recent days waged an impressive campaign in favor of posing new restrictions on Iran despite the 2015 nuclear deal.

On Monday evening, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said the 28-nation bloc does not have any plan to make a change in its agreement, along world powers, with Iran.

"First of all, let me say that we did not discuss today nor last week, nor do I foresee any discussion in the future about further sanctions from the European Union side on Iran," she said, according to the European External Action Service.

Mogherini made the remarks in a press conference following the EU's Foreign Affairs Council meeting as a reporter said French Foreign Minister Jean Yves Le Drian had on the same day had said Paris supports putting sanctions on Iran over its ballistic missile tests.

"This is not part of our current discussions. And, as you know, we have lifted all our nuclear-related sanctions on Iran in compliance with our own commitments with the JCPOA. Ballistic missiles are not in the scope of the JCPOA; and it is extremely important that we keep that outside of the JCPOA. This is a discussion and a proposal that was never raised at our table in these recent months and I don't foresee this to happen in the near



future," Mogherini stressed.

French President Emmanuel Macron took anti-Iran positions during his last week visits to the UAE and Saudi Kingdom.

Macron seized the opportunity to sing in unison with Arab states in accusing Iran of being responsible for a missile that had been launched on Riyadh from the Yemeni territory a while back. He then moved swiftly to call for sanctions on Iran for its missile program.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Monday said Macron's understanding of the Iranian 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.

The Foreign Ministry official went on to express hope that Macron's upcoming visit to Tehran could be a step to reduce misunderstandings.

## German envoy: U.S. urged to remain committed to JCPOA

**TEHRAN** — Germany's ambassador to Iran has said the European parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have urged the U.S. to consider the consequences of scrapping the nuclear deal, saying a weakened JCPOA would threaten security of the U.S., its allies and the region.

In an interview with the Tasnim published on Tuesday, Michael Klor-Berchtold reiterated Berlin's support for the JCPOA, the nuclear agreement signed between Iran and the 5+1 group (Russia, China, the U.S., Britain, France plus Germany).

Voicing the European Union's call that the U.S. government should honor its commitments under the JCPOA, the envoy said the 28-member bloc has reminded that Washington take into account the consequences of its measures for the security of itself, its allies and the region.

The three European parties to the JCPOA have encouraged the U.S. government and Congress to think twice before taking steps that could undermine the nuclear deal, Klor-Berchtold added.

His comments came after the foreign ministers of Germany, Britain and France emphasized the necessity for saving the JCPOA in a Monday meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) in Brussels.

decertified Iranian compliance with the terms that Iran has remained within the main limits on its nuclear activity set by the nuclear deal.

In his new Iran strategy declared on October 13, Trump decertified the nuclear deal and asked Congress to decide about the fate of the agreement despite eight reports by the IAEA which confirmed Tehran's compliance.

Congress now has to decide whether to reimpose economic sanctions on Tehran that were lifted under the deal. Trump said if Congress does nothing he himself will terminate the deal.

The nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, was signed by Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia in July 2015. The agreement went into effect in January 2016.

Diplomatic efforts to end fighting in Syria gained momentum in 2017 with the announcement of a ceasefire in the Arab country in early January.

According to a report by the Syrian Center for Policy Research, the conflict has claimed the lives of more than 470,000 people, injured 1.9 million others, and displaced nearly half of the country's pre-war population of about 23 million within or beyond its borders.



German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said later the day that Berlin needs to work in close cooperation with its allies regarding Iran nuclear deal.

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.

Iran and the 5+1 group (also known as the P5+1) reached the 159-page nuclear accord in July 2015 and implemented it in January 2016.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified Iran's compliance with the JCPOA in all of its reports after implementation of the deal. Its newest report that Iran is abiding its commitments was issued on Monday.

## Zarif to UN: World must help end senseless war on Yemen

**1 →** Following is full text of Zarif's letter published on the Iranian Foreign Ministry website:

I would like to draw your urgent attention to the extremely appalling situation in Yemen, caused by aggression, indiscriminate targeting of civilians and a blockade, imposing intolerable suffering on the Yemeni people and resulting in an unprecedented famine and outbreak and spread of cholera in that country.

The war in Yemen, now in its third year, continues to exacerbate with no end in sight. The circumstances are pugnaciously swirling into a pandemonium of mass destruction and calamitous human suffering, while the war of aggression, itself, has become a quagmire for its initiators. Over 30 months of aggression against an already impoverished Yemen has claimed thousands of lives of civilians, in particular women and children, and brought about the destruction of Yemen's civilian infrastructure including hospitals, schools, roads, food

factories and power plants, thus depriving civilians of their most basic necessities. Blocking of humanitarian access to an already famine-stricken Yemen and the decision to "close all Yemeni air, sea and land ports," have further deteriorated the humanitarian nightmare in Yemen, that – as described recently by UN officials, could lead to "the largest famine the world has seen for many decades".

The international accountability for committing war crimes and violating international humanitarian law falls upon the perpetrators who have sought and continue to seek a military solution for this crisis, notwithstanding their attempts to shift the blame and distract attention from their war of aggression. However, after more than two and a half years of blind attacks, the war initiators should have realized by now that "there is no military solution for Yemen".

It is the duty of the international community to get more responsibly and effectively engaged in ending the senseless

war and establishing a ceasefire, ensuring delivery of humanitarian assistance and eventually restoring permanent peace in this country through dialogue and national reconciliation without preconditions. The Islamic Republic of Iran has emphasized, from the beginning of this crisis, that the only way to restore peace and stability is to allow all Yemeni parties to establish, without any foreign interference, their own inclusive national unity government.

I believe that it is long overdue to consider and implement the four-point plan that I proposed in my letter of 17 April 2015 addressed to your predecessor contained in document S/2015/263 right after the Saudi-led coalition initiated war on Yemen. Today, the same plan, which includes the following, remains to be applicable and indeed imperative in order to end this nightmare:

1. Ceasefire and immediate end to all military operations;
2. Unimpeded urgent humanitarian

and medical assistance to the people of Yemen;

3. Resumption of Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned national dialogue, with the participation of the representatives of all political parties and social groups;

4. Establishment of an inclusive national unity government.

I am confident that you will urgently use your good offices to help make the necessary arrangement for conducting consultation with all concerned parties and expeditiously initiate a genuine dialogue to explore a political solution to this tragic crisis. In advancing this objective, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to continue to assist you and engage with you and all other relevant stakeholders in a meaningful dialogue so as to pursue and operationalize this peace plan. We also express our readiness to work with the United Nations in order to promptly dispatch the necessary humanitarian and medical assistance to the people in need in Yemen.

## Hariri sought mediation between Iran, S. Arabia, Velayati says

**1 →** Velayati said, "Our ambassador to Lebanon also attended our meeting. There was no threats during the meeting. We discussed bilateral and regional relations and he [Hariri] called for mediating between Iran and Saudi Arabia and I told him that we do not have any problem with negotiation, however, tell the Saudis that it has been three years that you are 'devastating' Yemen."

"I told Mr. Hariri to tell the Saudis to stop committing humanitarian crimes in Yemen and hold talks with Yemenis because the problem can be solved politically and not through blind bombardment."

### 'Hariri resignation is an internal issue'

Velayati went on to say that Hariri's resignation is an internal issue and expressed hope that Hariri would review his decision and remain in his job.

"Resignation of Mr. Hariri is an internal issue and we hope that he would return to Lebanon and the Lebanese people decide in this respect," said Velayati who was Iran's foreign minister from 1981 to 1997.

### 'Iran and Lebanon are allies'

Velayati also praised relations between Iran and Lebanon. "Iran and Lebanon are brothers and allies and have strategic relations."

### 'Saudi Arabia will fail to unsettle Lebanon'

The senior Iranian politician added Saudi Arabia has been interfering in regional countries' affairs and been unsuccessfully seeking to disintegrate Iraq and Syria.

Saudi Arabia also seeks to create tension in Lebanon but will not succeed there either, he noted.

In a television interview on Sunday, Hariri said he will return home in days to formally submit his resignation.

On Sunday, he again said the main problem for the region was "Iran interfering in Arab states."

Many analysts and politicians believe that Hariri was forced to resign under pressure from al-Saud family.



# EU: Hariri should return, warns Saudi

Hariri says to return to Lebanon in next two days

The European Union (EU) says Saad Hariri, who shockingly resigned as the Lebanese prime minister in Saudi Arabia more than a week ago, should return to his country, and warns against foreign meddling in Lebanon's affairs.

"We appeal first of all to the political forces to focus on Lebanon and what they can deliver to their citizens, Prime Minister Hariri to return to his country and the unity government ... to focus on domestic achievements," the EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, said on Monday, after hosting a meeting of all 28 EU foreign ministers in Brussels.

She said foreign interference in Lebanon was a "current and always existing threat," implying a warning to Riyadh.

Hariri announced his resignation in Riyadh on November 4, shortly after travelling to Saudi Arabia. The televised announcement saw him reading out from a statement.

Sources close to him later told Reuters that he had been given the statement. However, Hariri gave an interview earlier this week amid growing criticisms of the House of Saud regime, describing himself as a "free man" who intended to "return" to his home country "within days."

The EU's diplomatic chief further said that the meeting of the bloc's foreign ministers had voiced unanimous support for Lebanon's "unity and stability."

"We expect no external interference in this national agenda and we believe it is essential to avoid importing into Lebanon regional conflicts, regional dynamics, regional tensions that have to stay out of the country," Mogherini said.

She added that she would meet Lebanese Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil in Brussels on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Germany's Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said Hariri should return as his departure has shaken Lebanon.



French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian likewise called for "non-interference" in Lebanon. "For there to be a political solution in Lebanon, it is necessary that all of the political leaders have total freedom of movement and that non-interference is a fundamental principle," he said as he arrived for the EU meeting.

Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn warned Riyadh that a meltdown in Lebanon would further destabilize the tumultuous Middle East, adding that "a hostage crisis, if that is what is happening with the Lebanese prime minister in Saudi Arabia, is not very good news for the region."

Last Saturday, Reuters quoted Hariri

sources as saying that the House of Saud regime "has concluded that the prime minister had to go because he was unwilling to confront Hezbollah."

Hariri's government shares power with the resistance movement.

Riyadh is uneasy with Hezbollah's considerable military and political influence in Lebanon, which has significantly contributed to the country's security.

## Next 2 days

Meanwhile, Saad al-Hariri said he was fine and would return to Lebanon in the next two days.

Writing on Twitter, Hariri urged Lebanese to remain calm and said his family would stay in Saudi Arabia, calling it "their country".

Hariri's resignation while in Saudi Arabia pitched Lebanon into political crisis.

Top Lebanese government officials and senior politicians close to Hariri believe the House of Saud regime Arabia coerced him into quitting and has been holding him against his will ever since, though Hariri and Riyadh have denied this.

Hariri gave his first public remarks on Sunday, saying in a televised interview in Riyadh he planned to return to Lebanon within days to affirm his resignation.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun, who has stated that he believes Riyadh is restricting Hariri's freedom, has refused to his resignation until his return from Saudi Arabia.

(Source: agencies)

## Russia: U.S. providing cover for ISIL in Syria

The United States is providing de-facto cover for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit pockets in Syria and only pretending to fight terrorism in the Middle East, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Tuesday.

The ministry said the U.S. air force had tried to hinder Russian strikes on ISIL terrorists around the Syrian town of Albu Kamal.

"These facts are conclusive evidence that the United States, while imitating an uncompromising fight against international terrorism for the global community, in fact provides cover for ISIL units," the defense ministry said.

## Airstrikes leave 53 Syrian civilians dead in Aleppo

Over 53 civilians have lost their lives and several others sustained injuries when unidentified fighter jets carried out a series of airstrikes against a residential area in Syria's northwestern province of Aleppo.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights

(SOHR) reported that at least 53 civilians, including five children and three women, were killed on Monday, when the military aircraft launched three aerial raids against an outdoor market in the town of al-Atari, located 25 kilometers west of the provincial capital city of Aleppo.

The Britain-based observatory added that the overall death toll is expected to rise because dozens of people have been wounded or are still missing after the airstrikes.

The development came a day after more than a dozen civilians were killed and several others injured when the U.S.-led coalition purportedly fighting the ISIL Takfiri terrorist group conducted separate aerial attacks in Syria's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr as well as the northeastern province of Hasakah.

Syria's official news agency, SANA, reported that 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.

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

On October 11, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem said the U.S.-led coalition was trying to destroy the country and prolong the armed conflict there.

Muallem stated that Damascus would demand the dissolution of the military contingent, stressing that thousands of Syrian women and children had been killed by coalition airstrikes in the troubled northern province of Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr province.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be ISIL targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a United Nations mandate.

(Source: agencies)

## Theresa May accuses Russia of interfering in elections and fake news

British Prime Minister, Theresa May has accused Russia of meddling in elections and planting fake stories in the media in an extraordinary attack on its attempts to "weaponize information" in order to sow discord in the west.

The prime minister spoke out against "the scale and nature" of Russia's actions during an address at the lord mayor's banquet, saying it was "threatening the international order on which we all depend".

Listing Russia's attempts to undermine western institutions in recent years, she said: "I have a very simple message for Russia. We know what you are doing. And you will not succeed. Because you underestimate the resilience of our democracies, the enduring attraction of free and open societies, and the commitment of western nations to the alliances that bind us."

"The UK will do what is necessary to protect ourselves, and work with our allies to do likewise." Her speech is a serious escalation of Britain warnings about Russia as Boris Johnson, the foreign secretary, prepares to visit Moscow before the end of the year as part of a strategy of cautious engagement with Russian President Vladimir Putin's administration. Since Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, May said Russia had "fomented conflict in the Donbass [eastern Ukraine], repeatedly violated the national airspace of several European countries, and mounted a sustained campaign of cyber-espionage and disruption".

"This has included meddling in elections, and hacking the Danish ministry of defense



and the Bundestag [German parliament], among many others," she told the audience of City of London business figures.

"It is seeking to weaponize information. Deploying its state-run media organizations to plant fake stories and photo-shopped images in an attempt to sow discord in the west and undermine our institutions."

She said Britain did not want to "return to the Cold War, or to be in a state of perpetual confrontation" but Britain would have to act to protect the interests of Britain, Europe and rest of the world if Russia continues on its current path. A Downing Street source said May was not making the intervention in response to any specific event but rather to a growing body of evidence that Russian

agencies have been attempting to interfere with western politics.

The prime minister's strong criticism of Russia's activities comes in contrast to comments this weekend by the United States President Donald Trump, who said on Saturday that he believed Vladimir Putin's denials of having meddled in the American presidential elections.

Asked by reporters if he had raised the issue of Russian interference during conversations with Putin at a summit in Vietnam during a tour of Asia, Trump said: "Every time he sees me, he says, 'I didn't do that.' And I believe - I really believe that when he tells me that, he means it."

The U.S. president appeared to contradict

that stance on Sunday when he said he was "with our agencies" on the issue.

May did not say on Monday whether she was concerned with Russian intervention in any British democratic processes, but Ben Bradshaw, a leading Labour MP (Member of Parliament), is among those to have called for a judge-led inquiry into the possibility that Moscow tried to influence the result of the Brexit referendum.

Russia has been accused of running "troll factories" that disseminate fake news and divisive posts on social media. It emerged on Monday that a Russian bot account was one of those that shared a viral image that claimed a Muslim woman ignored victims of the Westminster terrorist attack as she walked across the bridge.

The account that tweeted the picture, @SouthLoneStar, was identified as a Russian bot as part of a U.S. investigation into the country's influence on the 2016 presidential election. The prime minister's attack on Russia's actions also came as MPs on the House of Commons media committee prepare to begin an inquiry into whether Moscow has tried to interfere in British politics, which is due to hear from representatives of both Twitter and Facebook.

May told the banquet that she would do everything possible to protect Europe's security cooperation even though Britain is leaving the EU and argued that reform of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) would maintain a vital alliance in deterring and countering hostile Russian activity.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Four UNSC members boycott U.S.-arranged meeting on Venezuela at UN

Four members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) have boycotted an informal meeting of the Council arranged by the United States to discuss Venezuela, arguing that the body should not meddle in the domestic affairs of countries.

The United States had arranged the meeting to discuss the political situation inside Venezuela, where there have been tensions between the government and the opposition recently. The UN ambassadors of Russia, China, Bolivia, and Egypt, who boycotted the event, reminded that meddling in the internal affairs of other countries was a violation of the

UN Charter and described the U.S. move as "illegal." Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia told reporters that he hoped Venezuela could settle its issues peacefully without any external interference.

In hostile remarks, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley told the so-called Arria-Formula meeting, "Venezuela is an increasingly violent narco-state that threatens the region, the hemisphere, and the world."

Referring to the U.S.-arranged meeting, Venezuela's UN envoy, Rafael Ramirez, said, "This is a hostile act by the United States and clearly an act of interference."

The U.S. is a fierce critic of the government of Venezuela, often communicating with Venezuela's opposition against Caracas. The Venezuelan government has repeatedly urged Washington to stop meddling in its affairs and orchestrating moves to destabilize the Latin American country. Venezuela has been gripped by an acute economic crisis that has spilled into the political scene, with President Nicolas Maduro's critics blaming him for the ailing economy. Tensions previously rose over the establishment of a Constituent Assembly as well.

(Source: Reuters)

## Trump skips East Asia summit plenary, but says trip was a success



The United States President Donald Trump skipped the plenary session of a summit of East and Southeast Asian leaders in Manila on Tuesday because of scheduling delays, but he said his marathon trip to the region had been a success.

Trump left for home from the Philippines after a lunch with the other leaders, as meetings were running about two hours behind schedule.

He told reporters on Air Force One that he had delivered his prepared remarks during the lunch instead of the summit meeting. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson would attend the plenary session in his place, a senior White House official said.

Trump said his trip had resulted in at least \$300 billion, possibly triple that figure, of deals being agreed. He did not elaborate. "We've explained that the United States is open for trade but we want reciprocal, we want fair trade for the United States," he said.

Trade and concern about possible protectionism under Trump's "America First" agenda have come up during his visit to the region, which included stops in Japan, South Korea, China, and Vietnam before concluding in the Philippines.

Earlier in the day, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau raised the plight of Rohingya refugees and extra-judicial killings in the Philippines at the summit, sensitive human rights issues skirted by almost all the others.

There was no pressure from Trump over the Philippines' bloody war on drugs during a meeting on Monday with President Rodrigo Duterte on the sidelines of the summit.

A joint statement after the meeting said the two sides "underscored that human rights and the dignity of human life are essential, and agreed to continue mainstreaming the human rights agenda in their national programs."

However, Trudeau said that during his conversation with Duterte, he "mentioned human rights, rule of law and specifically extra-judicial killings as being an issue that Canada is concerned with."

"The president was receptive to my comments and it was throughout a very cordial and positive exchange," Trudeau told a news conference.

More than 3,900 pushers and users have been killed in the 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.

Duterte cursed Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, last year for raising concerns about the war on drugs and he subsequently declared that he was breaking with the United States, a close ally of the Philippines since World War Two. Trump, by contrast, said on Monday he had a "great relationship" with Duterte.

## Rohingya crisis

Elsewhere, Trudeau said he also met Myanmar Leader Aung San Suu Kyi and raised the plight of Rohingya refugees, although he did not mention the Muslim minority by name.

"This is a tremendous concern to Canada and to many, many countries around the world," he said.

The government in mostly-Buddhist Myanmar regards the Rohingya as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Over 600,000 Rohingya have fled to refugee camps in Bangladesh since military clearance operations were launched in response to attacks by Rohingya militants on Aug. 25.

The plight of the Rohingya has brought outrage from around the world and there have been calls for democracy champion Suu Kyi to be stripped of the Nobel peace prize she won in 1991 because she has not condemned the military's actions.

Some countries in the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), particularly Muslim-majority Malaysia, have voiced strong concern over the issue recently.

However, in keeping with ASEAN's principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, it appeared to have been put aside at the summit, which brought Southeast Asian nations together with the United States, Japan, China, India, Australia and Canada.

(Source: Reuters)

## Iraq's Kurdistan says respects secession ban ruling

Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region (Kurdistan Regional Government/KRG) says it abides by a recent top court ruling that bans any secession from the mainland, expressing hope that the decision will set the stage for dialog between Baghdad and Erbil.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the KRG conceded that it would respect the November 6 Supreme Federal Court order that stated no region or province could break away from Iraq.

"We believe that this decision must become a basis for starting an inclusive national dialogue between Erbil and Baghdad to resolve all disputes through implementation of all constitutional articles and in a way that guarantees all rights, authorities and status mentioned in the constitution," the statement read.

The court ruling came in response to a request from the central government in Baghdad to end any "wrong misinterpretation" of the Iraqi constitution and assert the country's unity.

It followed a controversial referendum on the secession of the Kurdish region, which was held on September 25 in defiance of strong objection from both Baghdad and Iraq's neighbors, particularly Iran and Turkey.

The plebiscite sparked tensions between the KRG and Baghdad, with the Iraqi army conducting a military campaign to retake the areas overrun by the Kurdish militants in the course of the fight with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi had previously called on the Kurdish region to honor the court ruling.

(Source: Press TV)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	87949.8
IFX	989.38

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	41,160 rials
EUR	48,750 rials
GBP	55,000 rials
AED	11,280 rials

Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$62.77/b
WTI	\$56.45/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.91/b
Gold	\$1,273.50/oz
Silver	\$16.99/oz
Platinum	\$931.45/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Tehran to host ECO’s next CHCA meeting

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran has been chosen to host the next meeting of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Council of Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA), IRIB news reported on Tuesday.



The decision was made during the 8th round of the event which was held in Pakistan.

In the meeting, Iran presented a technical documentation of Iranian customs’ model of electronic information exchange which was welcomed by other ECO members.

According to Iranian customs administration, CHCA is eager to know more about Iran’s achievements in electronic customs and electronic information exchange.

Euro zone annual growth exceeds U.S., backs ECB QE taper

The euro zone economy grew by more than the United States in the third quarter compared with a year earlier, data showed on Tuesday, supporting the European Central Bank’s move to begin reducing its bond-buying program.

The European Union’s statistics office Eurostat confirmed its estimate from Oct. 31 that the gross domestic product (GDP) of the 19 countries using the euro grew by 0.6 percent in July-September from the previous three months and was 2.5 percent higher than in the same period of 2016.

In the United States, the economy grew 0.7 percent quarter-on-quarter and 2.3 percent year-on-year in the third quarter. The annual rate was also greater in the euro zone in the second quarter.

The euro zone growth rate also exceeded that of Britain, which will leave the European Union in March 2019. Its economy expanded 0.4 percent quarter-on-quarter and 1.5 percent year-on-year.

Separately, Eurostat said euro zone industrial production fell by 0.6 percent month-on-month in September as expected by markets but rose 3.3 percent year-on-year, slightly beating economists’ average forecast of a 3.2 percent increase.

In October, the ECB took its first step towards weaning the euro zone off ultra-loose money by saying that from January it will halve the amount of bonds it buys every month to 30 billion euros (\$35.1 billion). It nevertheless promised years of stimulus and left the door open to backtracking.

(Source: Reuters)

German growth surprise lifts Europe as China subdues Asia

Strong German economic growth data drove the euro to a three-week high on Tuesday and gave European stocks a lift after five days of falls put them at a two-month low.

The uplift to sentiment came after disappointing Chinese industrial and retail figures had subdued Asia, with investors also pondering whether a marked flattening in the U.S. yield curve might be a harbinger of a more global slowdown.

There was no sign of that in German where an 0.8 percent third-quarter growth reading beat forecasts and showed the economy growing at annualized rates of more than 3 percent.

The euro jumped to \$1.1696 versus the dollar on the figures and reached a one-year top against Sweden’s crown after inflation figures there came in weaker than expected.

“It is not the dollar that is weak, it is the euro that is strong,” said John Hardy, Saxo Bank’s head of FX strategy.

Combined with signs of a move up again in European bond yields, that suggested some traders were back to pricing in an end to the European Central Bank’s stimulus, he said.

Also ahead on Tuesday were 13 central bank speakers, including the heads of the U.S., European, British and Japanese central banks

The mood in Asia wasn’t nearly so bullish.

(Source: Reuters)

Lack of banking channel main barrier for Iran-Pakistan trade

**1 →** She said the reason that Iran is lagging behind the other countries in supplying the Pakistani needs is the absence of LC, and as the other countries can open LC they can export big consignments.

So, if the banking problem is solved many problems will be removed, she stressed.

“Iran and Pakistan are two neighbors working with each other since the old time. There are many cultural affinities between them even in the language and if we provide easier condition for trade it would be in our interest because we have many products to export to Pakistan”, she added.

Nasseri further said that development of Ian’s southeastern Chabahar Port in recent years has played some fruitful role in facilitation of trade between the two countries.

■ Proper true channel required

Also, Anis Majeed, the chairman of Karachi Wholesale Grocers Association (KWGA) and also the chairman of Bombi’s Group based in Karachi, referred to banking problems as the main barrier saying: “As the major problem with Iran and Pakistan we don’t have the complete good business banking channel and that is a problem because we cannot establish LC and from there they cannot establish LC so most of the business is being done via Dubai or on the border side. So, we would like to have some banking channel.”

“If the banking channels are started and LCs are established we can sell some rice directly to Iran and we can buy something from Iran. Because it’s not the proper true channel, that is very difficult for the business in Pakistan”, he stated.

“So, you know on the border business, we do not prefer to do more business with borders only because we want to do business through proper channel”, he added.

“We have also problem with getting visas for there and we don’t have the direct airline”, Majeed further complained.



Iranian trade delegation headed by Pakistan’s Commercial Counselor in Iran Nazar Muhammad Ranjha (1st R) in Expo Pakistan 2017

“We should have more relation with Iran and we should have direct airline and all the visa facilities, and also direct vessel to Iran because it’s the neighboring country and if we have a direct vessel to Iran that would be much cheaper and easier for everybody”, he added.

“We are the neighbor countries and all over the world the neighbors do most of the business because it is very cheaper and very easy to reach the cargo in few days. So, that is the most advantage for business between Iran and Pakistan. So, we should have more bilateral relations”, he concluded.

TCCIMA delegation holds talks with Austrian, Slovakian counterparts

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian trade delegation from Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) explored avenues of further cooperation with their Slovakian and Austrian counterparts respectively at Bratislava Regional Chamber of Commerce on Monday and Economic Chamber of Lower Austria on Tuesday, the portal of TCCIMA reported.

The 33-member Iranian delegation left Tehran for Bratislava and Vienna on Sunday to negotiate expansion of economic ties with the two countries businessmen.

The delegation includes Iranian entrepreneurs and businessmen active in sectors such as medicine and medical equipment, food industry, mining, steel, agriculture, investment and etc.

■ Economic Chamber of Lower Austria hosts TCCIMA delegation

TCCIMA delegation on Tuesday participate in a meeting at Economic Chamber of Lower Austria attended by TCCIMA Secretary General Bahman Eshqi, Iranian Ambassador to Austria and accredited Ambassador to Bratislava Ebadollah Molayi and Austrian Chamber’s Vice President Christian Moser.

During the meeting, Moser referred to his last year’s visit to Iran and the taken measures, expressing readiness for expansion of economic ties with Iranians.



TCCIMA Secretary General Bahman Eshqi speaking at Economic Chamber of Lower Austria

After the meeting, the Austrian participants were briefed about the available economic opportunities in Iran as well as possible areas for cooperation. Iranian and Austrian attendants started direct bilateral negotiations following the meeting.

■ TCCIMA delegation at Bratislava Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Iranian delegation’s Monday meeting at Bratislava Regional Chamber of Commerce was attended by Eshqi, Molayi and President of the Bratislava Regional Chamber of Commerce Igor Jonas.

During this meeting, Eshqi expressed con-

tent about the various bilateral visits paid by Iranian and Slovakian senior officials to each other’s countries during the past two years (as of the implementation of Iran’s nuclear deal in January 2016), such as the visit paid by Slovakian ministers of finance and economy to Tehran and Iranian foreign minister’s visit to Bratislava, saying that both sides seek expansion of mutual cooperation.

He named auto industry, renewable energies, telecommunication, agriculture, water management, tourism and research as the fields that Iran can take advantage of Slovakia’s experience in them.

The TCCIMA official also referred to the signed one-billion-euro contract between 14 Iranian banks and Austria’s Oberbank as well as the MOU signed between Iranian banks and South Korea’s Exim Bank and Denmark’s Danske Bank as the examples of the ever-increasing ties between Iranian banks and international banks in the country’s post sanction era.

He called Iran-Slovakia banking cooperation significant since international banks have opened branched in Bratislava adding that Slovakia’s Eximbank plans to open a €100-million credit line to back joint projects with Iran. Eshqi, accordingly, called for Slovakian government and banks to take measures on the way of easing banking ties with Iranian banks.

Iran’s October oil output at 3.823m bpd: OPEC

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — According to OPEC’s latest monthly report published on November 13, oil production in Iran stood at 3.823 million barrels per day (bpd) in October, falling 12,000 bpd from 3.835 million bpd in September, based on secondary sources.

The OPEC’s report also announced Iran’s oil output based on direct communication. It said the country’s oil production in October stood at 3.810 million bpd, a 38,000 bpd decline from 3.848 million bpd in September.

Meanwhile, the report put the country’s heavy oil price at \$54.29 in October, an in-

crease of \$2.02 or 3.9 percent from \$52.27 in September.

According to the report, the country’s year to date average heavy crude price stood at \$50.08 almost \$12 more than the figure for last year’s same time span.

The number of oil rigs in the country hasn’t

changed in October and the figure was reported to stand at 61, the same number as in September.

The report stated that Iran posted a strong GDP growth of 16 percent year on year in the first quarter of 2017 since the quantities of crude oil exports soared by nearly 30 percent over the same period.

For global economy, slowdown in China couldn’t be better timed

China’s moderation in growth last month comes at the right time for a global economy that’s benefiting from Europe’s pick up and the U.S.’s strength.

That’s especially the case if it means the world’s second-largest economy is moving toward more sustainable drivers with less reliance on cheap debt. Click here to read details of Tuesday’s data.

While China is far from falling over, the slowing of credit growth, industrial output, retail sales and investment helps validate the view that activity will moderate now that the Party Congress is all wrapped up. The thinking is that President Xi Jinping can now place less emphasis on arbitrary growth targets and take stronger action to rein in risky lending.

“In the current global setting, with synchronized growth, the pending moderate slowdown in China is not a major problem,” said Louis Kuijs, head of Asia economics at

Oxford Economics in Hong Kong. “While we expect China’s contribution to global growth to come down next year, it remains solid enough not to be a serious threat.”

What counts for moderation in China is still enviable by global standards, meaning China is forecast to contribute more than a third of global growth in 2017, according to International Monetary Fund calculations. Even as old-world economies begin to contribute more, those numbers mean that China’s economy still matters a great deal for the rest of the world.

Seasonal factors had some impact on the data in October, with days lost due to a holiday and the Party Congress, while pollution control as authorities seek to clean up the skies also weighed. But the dominant factor remains the government’s desire to plow ahead with a deleveraging campaign.

“After a year in which policy makers have been able to begin addressing financial risks

without sacrificing too much on growth, trade-offs are going to start getting sharper,” Bloomberg Economics analysts Tom Orlik and Fielding Chen wrote in a note.

Credit figures for October showed broad money supply growth was the slowest since at least January 1996 and indicators for credit growth fell to their lowest in a year.

While credit supply typically slows toward the end of the year as banks exhaust their quotas, officials point to the slowing of M2 as the prime indicator that their campaign to weed out excess borrowing is working.

The People’s Bank of China has also been guiding market interest rates higher. And amid concern over the debt campaign, selloff in Chinese sovereign bonds has deepened, with the yield on 10-year notes reaching 4 percent for the first time in three years.

Still, officials aren’t likely to allow growth to crater either. A spokesman for the National Statistics Bureau told reporters Tuesday

UK grocery inflation hits highest level in four years: Kantar Worldpanel

British grocery inflation hit its highest level since November 2013 in the past quarter, driving supermarkets’ sales growth, industry data showed on Tuesday.

Market researcher Kantar Worldpanel said grocery inflation was 3.4 percent in the 12 weeks to Nov. 5, with prices rising fastest in products such as butter, fish and cola and falling in only a few products, including crisps and fresh poultry.

It said that over the course of a year, this could add 143.7 pounds to a typical family’s grocery bill.

Official data released on Tuesday showed overall British consumer price inflation held at an annual rate of 3.0 percent in October, its highest level in five-and-a-half years.

Kantar Worldpanel said overall UK grocery sales increased in value by 3.2 percent year on year in the 12-week period. “Volume sales have increased by less than 1 percent,



meaning it’s price rises keeping supermarket performance buoyant,” Fraser McKevitt, head of retail and consumer insight at Kantar Worldpanel.

Of Britain’s big four grocers, Sainsbury’s, the No. 2 player, was the best performer for the first time since April 2016, with a sales rise of 2.6 percent.

Sales at market leader Tesco increased 2.3 percent. Morrisons and Asda followed with rises of 2.1 percent and 1.5 percent respectively.

However, all of the big four still lost market share to German discounters Aldi and Lidl, which continue to open lots of new space.

Lidl was Britain’s fastest growing supermarket for the fifth straight period with sales up 15.1 percent. Rival Aldi’s sales rose 13.1 percent.

(Source: Reuters)



# OPEC raises demand forecast for next year's oil

OPEC's in-house analysts have sharply raised their demand forecast for the cartel's oil in 2018, predicting a growing market deficit that will be in focus when the group's ministers meet later this month to discuss extending supply cuts.

Writing in its monthly market report, OPEC said forecast demand for its oil next year had increased by almost 400,000 barrels a day from the previous month to 33.4m b/d, a level higher than the group was producing at present.

Demand for the group's crude was also revised higher by 200,000 b/d for this year, as consumption continued to exceed many analysts' expectations and helped to draw down inventories that accumulated during the crude glut from late 2014.

Stronger demand has combined with the 1.8m b/d of production cuts led by OPEC and Russia since January this year to help tighten the market, pushing Brent crude oil, the international benchmark, back to more than \$60 a barrel for the first time in two years.

Opec is due to meet on November 30 to agree whether to extend the cuts beyond March, but forecasts for a growing market deficit may be discussed, as the cartel — and its allies in Moscow — are wary of driving prices too high and reigniting production



from other sources, including U.S. shale. Saudi Arabia and Russia, who have led the cuts, have both indicated they back extending the cuts deep into 2018 to keep drawing down stocks, but may examine

whether there is a way to start slowly returning barrels to the market should prices rise too high.

OPEC's analysts said the cuts "have clearly played a key role in supporting

stability in the oil market and placing it on a more sustainable path" and would consider "how best to continue these efforts in the coming year".

Higher demand for OPEC's oil may also help the group accommodate members Nigeria and Libya, who were exempt from the cuts due to long-running supply disruptions in their countries, but who have seen output rebound this year.

The cartel's analysts said demand for Opec crude was expected to reach 34m b/d in the second half of next year — a level about 1.4m b/d above what was pumped last month, according to secondary sources used by the cartel to assess member output.

OPEC pumped 32.59m b/d in October, the secondary sources said, down by 150,000 b/d on the previous month as output in Iraq and Venezuela fell.

Venezuela's output has slumped well below 2m b/d — the lowest in almost three decades — as the country grapples with an economic crisis, contributing to lower supplies from the group.

Inventories in developed economies are trending lower towards OPEC's stated target of reaching the five-year average, dropping by almost 24m barrels in September. They are now 154m barrels above the target.

(Source: Financial Times)

## U.S. congress slashes support for renewables and EVs

With all the rhetoric about governing for all Americans, sometimes politics is just about picking winners and losers.

Take the ongoing soap opera of who in the energy sector is likely to gain or lose benefits from the current Congressional tax plan.

While retaining at least \$15 billion in tax subsidies for fossil fuel producers (coal, crude oil, natural gas), the House of Representatives plan would slash support for both renewables and the electric car industry.

The primary move criticized by both the renewable community and environmentalists are the proposed changes to the renewable electricity production tax credit (PTC).

This credit provides benefits to generation of wind, solar, geothermal, and other types of renewable energy.

Now, the PTC is already scheduled to be phased out in three years (by 2020).

Both wind and solar energy producers have been factoring this into forward guidance as more cost savings are introduced into the renewable sector.

But the House tax plan would accelerate the cut by more than a third. An analysis just completed by an industry player concludes the proposed change could reduce the credit's value by up to 45 percent.

The renewables industry is quick to point out that the PTC has created hundreds of thousands of jobs nationwide, spawned significant ancillary economic investment, and resulted in the U.S. becoming a major center for wind and solar power development.

But apparently that's not enough, and it's now on the chopping block — as far as the House is concerned.

The Senate, however, may be planning something else.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Solar companies are scrambling to find a critical raw material

Solar manufacturers are being battered by higher costs and smaller margins, after an unexpected shortage of a critical raw material.

Prices of polysilicon, the main component of photovoltaic cells, spiked as much as 35 percent in the past four months after environmental regulators in China shut down several factories.

That's driving up production costs as panel prices continue to decline, and dragging down earnings for manufacturers in China, the world's biggest supplier. Canadian Solar Inc. and Hanwha Q Cells Co. have already reported steep declines in profit, and other companies will probably be affected as well.

The price spike came after an environmental crackdown in China coincided with an annual lull in polysilicon output, according to Jenny Chase, head solar analyst at Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Oil markets cautious as rising U.S. output undermines OPEC supply cuts

Oil prices fell on Tuesday as the prospect of further rises in U.S. output undermined ongoing OPEC-led production cuts aimed at tightening the market.

Brent crude futures were at \$62.94 per barrel at 0415 GMT, down 22 cents, or 0.35 percent, from their last close. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was at \$56.62 per barrel, down 14 cents, or 0.25 percent.

The falls came after both crude benchmarks early last week hit highs last seen in 2015, but traders said the market had lost some momentum since then.

Traders said they were cautious on betting on further price rises.

"Prices...are starting to look like a pause

or pullback is needed," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at futures brokerage AxiTrader.

This sentiment comes in part on the back of rising U.S. oil output, which has grown by more than 14 percent since mid-2016 to a record 9.62 million barrels per day (bpd).

The U.S. government said on Monday U.S. shale production for December would rise for a 12th consecutive month, increasing by 80,000 bpd.

Fitch Ratings said in its 2018 oil outlook that it assumed 2018 "average oil prices will be broadly unchanged year-on-year and that the recent price recovery with Brent exceeding \$60 per barrel may not

be sustained".

So far in 2017, Brent has averaged at \$54.5 per barrel.

Despite the cautious sentiment, traders said oil prices would unlikely fall very far, largely due to ongoing supply restrictions led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia, which have contributed to a reduction in excess supplies.

In China, refiners raised crude oil processing runs to near record monthly levels in October, with operations increasing by 7.4 percent to 50.51 million tonnes, or 11.89 million bpd, China's statistics bureau said on Tuesday.

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## The rise and fall of Lebanese stability

By Nahla El-Zibawi

Since the birth of greater Lebanon under the French Mandate in the year 1920, Lebanon has been witnessing several forums of fluctuations that are normally found in the life of any nation.

If we take a broader look, we realize that Lebanon's political life is somehow similar to the economic cycle, or what is also known as the business cycle. Every time Lebanon reaches its peak in stability and prosperity, it falls again.

French economist Clement Juglar, one of the pioneers in analyzing the economic cycle, stated that each cycle ranges between seven to 11 years. Years later, an economist Joseph Schumpeter, one of the world's greatest intellectuals, added to Juglar's cycle four stages in which each cycle is supposed to experience.



Schumpeter identified the four stages as follows: the expansion phase, which is mainly described as growth; the crisis phase (known as the depression phase), when stock exchanges fall and several bankruptcies of firms happen; The recession phase, which is a contraction period characterized by a slowdown of activities; and the recovery phase, when the rate of activities slowly returns to normal.

### ■ Political cycle

Accordingly, the first political cycle started with the expansion phase of Lebanon after the birth of the nation in 1920, its independency in 1943 and the election of the first president after independency, Bechara El-Khoury. This was followed by a decline in the Lebanese political life during the period of Camille Chamoun's presidency. The crisis was pictured by a revolt when Chamoun reached the U.S. for help, and then the arrival of U.S. military forces in Lebanon. After that, high demands requesting the resignation of Chamoun appeared, which rendered the phase one of recession. Finally came the recovery phase, which started with the election of Fouad Chehab as a president in 1958.

After the election of Chehab the second cycle was launched. The cycle's expansion phase was in the Chehabism era when Lebanon experienced a peaceful period accompanied with a high rate of tourism and an improvement in the banking sector. After that a crisis, started by the Civil War, took place between 1975 and 1989, followed by the Israeli invasion in 1982 and the "War of Camps" between 1985 and 1989.

Last but not least, the end of the war in 1989 marked the recession phase of this era. However, the end of this cycle was labeled with the Taif Accord in 1989 which is known to be an agreement that put national unity as a priority with the aim of reaching Lebanese political reconciliation.

The beginning of the Lebanese third cycle was in the year 1992 when Rafik Hariri was named as Lebanon's premier for the first time.

### ■ The Harirism era

The Harirism era is considered to be Lebanon's resurgence. In 1994, he launched a holistic plan to rebuild Beirut Central District and his plan helped improve the Lebanese economic and societal life. The crisis of this cycle took place in 2005 with his assassination. After that, the recession phase took place when more than a million Lebanese citizens demonstrated in the streets, which resulted in the resignation of the government. The end of this cycle witnessed the election of Michel Suleiman as president.

Since the end of the third cycle, Lebanon didn't experience the beginning of another cycle. Although, four different governments were elected during this period, each was disabled for a certain period of time.

For instance, from the first government led by Prime Minister Saad Hariri (2009) up until the government led by Prime Minister Tammam Salam (2014), with one in between headed by Najib Mikati (2011), each was inactive for at least two months.

However, the immobilization in Lebanon didn't stop here, because it manifested for over 30 months without a president.

At the end of this period with a power vacuum, Lebanon finally had the chance to see the birth of a new era in which each Lebanese citizen put high hopes.

From there, the expansion period started on Oct. 31, 2016, with the election of Michel Aoun as president, followed by the appointment of Saad Hariri as prime minister on the Nov. 3, 2016, and subsequently the formation of a national unity government.

Consequently, since last week, specifically Nov. 4, 2017, and upon the resignation of Hariri as prime minister, the second stage of the cycle titled as a crisis has begun. However, there are no indications as to when recession and recovery will take place, and in what form.

Until then, two questions will stay open. When will the current cycle reach recession and then recovery? And will the new cycle begin in the year 2020, the 100th Centennial of Greater Lebanon?

(Source: The Daily Star)

# Don't count on the cabinet to stop a Trump-ordered nuclear strike

By Edward-Isaac Dovere

Stop counting on Secretary of Defense James Mattis or Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to stop a nuclear war if Donald Trump wants one, says Bill Perry. They couldn't.

Perry, who served as secretary of defense for President Bill Clinton, is a 90-year-old arm-waving apostle of doom — "the possibility of an apocalypse thrust itself upon me," he told me in an interview for Politico's Off Message podcast. He says nuclear war has "become more probable in the last year, partly because of President Trump," and partly due to events beyond the president's control. He thinks Trump doesn't understand the North Koreans, and doesn't understand what his rhetoric is doing.

That the president and his Cabinet secretaries are so often putting out conflicting messages makes the situation worse. And though Perry subscribes to the idea that Mattis and Tillerson are a "stabilizing influence," he said that with this president, "I'm not really comfortable with anybody."

While bills by Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) and Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) to restrict first use of nuclear weapons have stalled in Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) is set to put some muscle behind his very public anxiety about Trump's leadership. On Tuesday, Corker will hold a committee hearing on nuclear authorization — the first on the topic since Gerald Ford was president — prompted by concerns he's heard from members both on and off the committee over letting one person, and this person in particular, have the unfettered ability to launch a nuclear war.

Perry knows Mattis well — while Perry was defense secretary in the 1990s, Mattis worked for him directly, and they both ended up at Stanford University in recent years. The two still talk, and Perry thinks Mattis understands the nuclear threat well — he just doesn't think Mattis would necessarily be able to do anything if Trump decided to go ahead with a strike.

### ■ Nixon's final days

Perry's heard the story of Richard Nixon's final days in the White House, when Defense Secretary James Schlesinger supposedly told generals that any nuclear strike order from the clearly distressed president be run by him first.

But that's not really the way it works, Perry said.

"The order can go directly from the president to the Strategic Air Command. The defense secretary is not necessarily in that loop. So, in a five- or six- or seven-minute kind of decision, the secretary of defense probably never hears about it until it's too late. If there is time, and if he does consult the secretary, it's advisory, just that," Perry explained. "Whether [the president] goes with it or doesn't go with it — [the secretary] doesn't have the authority to stop it."

Perry lived through two nuclear apocalypses.



## James Mattis and Rex Tillerson can't stop a nuclear war if President Trump wants one, says former Defense Secretary Bill Perry.

lypse scares. The first lasted for days, when as a consultant, he was brought by the CIA to help sort through intelligence during the Cuban missile crisis. The second lasted for a split second, when as a lower-ranking Pentagon official during Jimmy Carter's term, he was woken by a phone call warning him that it looked as if 200 nuclear missiles were already in the air — but it was immediately explained to him that this was a computer error. The experiences were searing, and left him convinced that only good luck and a little bit of good management saved the world from ending under John F. Kennedy, and that the context of lower tensions during that 1979 computer error stopped the situation from spiraling out of hand.

Today, Perry sees worse management and higher tensions. He worries that America's luck may have run out.

It's not hard for him to imagine what would happen if a terrorist group acquired fissile material and then set it off in New York, Washington or another major city: The country wouldn't rally together or easily recover, like in a disaster movie.

"If you look at 9/11, besides the 3,000 casualties, there were very significant economic and political and social consequences. There were new laws passed. There were new restrictions put on our freedoms because of that. All of those effects would probably be magnified tenfold or a hundredfold if a nuclear bomb goes off in Washington," Perry said. "If you imagine that some sort

of a law passed — 10 times the Patriot Act, for example — that's the sort of thing we would see. You might see attacks on citizens who were believed to be somehow related to or associated with the terror attack. It would be ugly."

America is vulnerable, he said, and America would be wounded, perhaps mortally, if terrorists took advantage of that vulnerability. Once the consequences are considered, Perry said, "the terrorists would have succeeded in some sense in changing our country, in changing it in ways that are very negative."

### ■ Nuclear terrorism

Perry's been on the road, entering his 10th decade of life while playing the part of a reluctant Cassandra, but is channeling much of his energy into a free online Stanford course about nuclear terrorism — one meant to sound the alarms he can't believe aren't ringing. Already, 6,000 people have accessed it, and 3,000 have signed up, looking for his answers to the question, "Is the threat of nuclear terrorism real?"

I asked him whether anyone in the Trump White House has signed up.

"I don't hear from the Trump White House," he said.

Trump and many of his allies blame 20 years of bad negotiations for the current predicament with North Korea, stretching back to the Clinton years — when, in 1999, Perry went to Pyongyang and returned with a handshake agreement for a nuclear nonproliferation framework he believes his

boss would have signed had Al Gore won the presidency.

"I think we can learn some lessons from negotiating with North Korea, but I think the Trump administration has learned a wrong lesson. They're tough negotiators. They've demonstrated an inclination and a capacity to evade and cheat on treaties. So I think what we've learned from that is that when we negotiate with them, we ought to have strong verification. Even the Agreed Framework — which I believe they cheated on toward the end of the century — delayed their nuclear program by probably six, or seven or eight years," Perry said. "So it was something."

Perry acknowledges his own negotiations had problems, but says that President George W. Bush's decision to pull away from them forced the current situation upon the world: The idea that North Korea won't be a nuclear power is out the window, and the most that can be hoped for is to persuade the regime to scale back its missile tests. Where it seemed like Kim Jong Il wanted international respect, Kim Jong Un appears to instead prioritize the security and continuity of the regime.

"We missed our major chance to negotiate with them back at the turn of the century, but that doesn't mean that diplomacy has no role today," Perry said. "And when you consider the alternatives to diplomacy, it's pretty clear we ought to be trying it."

(Source: Politico)

## China and South Korea: Examining the resolution of the THAAD impasse

THAAD will remain in South Korea, but Beijing secures important assurances from Seoul.

By Ankit Panda

China and South Korea's foreign ministries released coordinated statements at the end of last month announcing they would move to repair their once fast-improving relationship.

Back in 2016 — after the United States and South Korea decided that U.S. Forces Korea would deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense shield system in South Korea — relations between Beijing and Seoul fell off a cliff.

China unofficially sanctioned South Korean firms, including Lotte, the conglomerate that would eventually cede land to the South Korean government in the country's south to allow for a deployment of the missile system. Chinese tourism to South Korea came to a near standstill. Altogether, the sanctions over THAAD cost South Korea billions of dollars. Now, seemingly out of the blue, both sides have decided that enough is enough.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in on the sidelines of the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Da Nang, Vietnam, to kick off a new period of detente between the two countries. What really happened here? Did China simply cut its losses over THAAD?

For Beijing, the U.S. deployment of THAAD was never about the missile interceptors. Rather, Beijing has long expressed open concern — even through its foreign minister — about the powerful X-band AN/TPY-2 radar that accompanies the THAAD system.

The Chinese fear is that this radar could be linked to other theaters and homeland missile defense systems and degrade the PLA Rocket Force's ability to carry out a nuclear second strike in a war against the United States.

The United States and South Korea long maintained that the deployment was solely about the North Korean threat to U.S. military assets in South Korea. To convince China of this, the United States invited China to technical talks, which Beijing rejected.

China's technical claims about the radar were vastly overstated, especially when it came to the system's range and operating capabilities. So, on first glance, now that Seoul and Beijing are mending their ties with the THAAD system in place, it appears to be a defeat for China — an example of failed



economic coercion. Matters, however, are not that simple.

From its side, South Korea gave China three assurances, or the "three no's". South Korea would not consider additional THAAD deployment, would not consider the use of other U.S. missile defense systems and would not consider joining an alliance with the U.S. and Japan.

It is unclear if Seoul coordinated these "three no's" with the United States, but based on U.S. National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster's reaction to a question before Trump's Asia trip on the matter, it appeared to have been a product of behind-the-scenes South Korea-China diplomacy.

### ■ THAAD deployment

The consequences of these assurances are troubling. Indeed, by tolerating a single THAAD deployment, China has received considerable assurances about the scope of South Korean behavior within its alliance with the United States.

Even while the assurances are in accord with existing South Korean policy and an alliance with Japan is unlikely given the deep divisions between Seoul and Tokyo, that a U.S. ally would give Beijing such assurances is worrying in itself.

All of this comes, too, as the U.S.-South Korea alliance is strained by North Korea's acquisition of an intercontinental-

range ballistic missile capability, which makes U.S. alliance management considerably more challenging than before. Seoul must believe that Washington would come to its assistance, as North Korea can target U.S. cities.

Not only that, but the strained and difficult personal relationship between the left-leaning South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Donald Trump only further intensifies the alliance management task, especially given Trump's repeated criticism of the South Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

The long-term implications of the China-South Korea understanding on missile defense remains to be seen. Effectively, by employing economic coercion, China has constrained the United States' relationship with a key ally in Northeast Asia.

If, in the future, realities change and additional U.S. missile defense deployments become necessary, China will probably again retaliate economically against South Korea.

Time will tell who — Seoul or Beijing — came out on top in the THAAD saga, but it is far from obvious that this was an instance of failed Chinese economic coercion.

(Source: The Diplomat)



# Hariri’s Resignation A Saudi-Israeli Plot to Destabilize Lebanon, Iran: U.S. Analyst

**TEHRAN — (Tasnim)** – A senior political analyst from the U.S. State of Illinois said Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri’s resignation is part of a US-backed plot dictated by Saudi Arabia and Israel to destabilize Lebanon and Iran.

“Part of what is behind it is a Saudi/Israeli plot to destabilize Lebanon and Iran, Washington likely involved, a true axis of evil,” Chicago-based Stephen Lendman said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency.

Stephen Lendman is a writer, syndicated columnist, activist, News TV personality, and radio show host. He currently writes for MoneyNewsNow.com and VeteransToday.com and hosts, since 2007, a progressive radio show at The Progressive Radio News Hour on The Progressive Radio Network.

The following is the full text of the interview:

Tasnim: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced his resignation in a televised statement from Riyadh, citing several reasons, including the security situation in Lebanon, for his sudden decision. He also said that he realized a plot being hatched against his life. What is your take on this?

Lendman: I’ve written about Hariri’s forced resignation, the Saudis behind it, his reasons utter nonsense. Something else is going on.

Part of what is behind it is a Saudi/Israeli plot to destabilize Lebanon and Iran, Washington likely involved, a true axis of evil. Another factor is the Hariri-owned construction company in Saudi Arabia, Saudi Ogan, hugely profitable when oil prices were high and the Saudi economy prosperous, not so now.

Reportedly, Hariri owes \$3.5 billion to Saudi banks Riyadh wants repaid, likely a big reason for his forced resignation and detention in the kingdom.

Tasnim: This came after MBS’s (Mohammed bin Salman) ongoing purge of princes and businessmen, including the wealthiest



of them all, the business mogul and Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal, to consolidate his power, well before his father, King Salman, passes from the scene. Do you see any connection between Hariri’s resignation and the Royal crackdown? What’s all this fuss about?

Lendman: There is a connection to crown prince Mohammed bin Salman power play, arresting scores of princes, ministers and others.

Much more involved, including Riyadh accusing Lebanon and Iran of declaring war on the kingdom, accusing Tehran of supplying Yemeni Houthis with missiles

Saudi aggression on Yemen achieved nothing but mass slaughter of civilians, vast destruction, and humanitarian crisis conditions.

Its attempt to bully Qatar into submission failed. So has its support for ISIS (Daesh)

and other terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

Iran and Damascus are rising regionally, Russia a key player. Riyadh’s strategic plan failed, likely key reasons behind crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman’s purge, Hariri’s forced resignation, and hostile accusations against Lebanon and Iran - along with Bin Salman’s power play.

Riyadh may be shifting its troublemaking from Syria to Lebanon and Iran, America and Israel seeking to weaken both countries, or something more sinister.

All these factors I think are behind what’s going on. It could get worse if either Lebanon or Iran is attacked directly by Washington and its allies or by proxy terrorist fighters, the failed Syria strategy.

Tasnim: How do you see Trump’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu’s role in this scenario?

Lendman: Netanyahu wants Hezbollah neutralized and Iran as its main regional rival eliminated. If America wanted war on the country, he would be a willing partner.

Kushner may or may not be involved, more likely hawkish Trump administration and Pentagon generals along with the CIA.

Tasnim: MBS has threatened to attack Lebanon and even Iran. Is this a game of bluff?

Lendman: The Saudis will not attack any country alone, nor will Israel attack Iran solo. In 2006, Hezbollah embarrassed the IDF. I do not know if Israel would dare attack Lebanon again on its own, knowing Hezbollah missiles could blast its cities and nuclear facilities, especially if hostilities on Iran erupt.

Regional conditions are very tumultuous. Something is up with all of the above going on. We will have to wait to see what unfolds.

## 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 criticise 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.

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.

## Will Theresa May resign?



By Hossein Yari

**TEHRAN** — As time passes, the UK prime minister’s conditions become harder. After the defeat in the recent election, the conditions of the conservative party have shrunk. This has led some conservative representatives in the British Parliament to support Theresa May’s resignation and her removal from power. Other conservative leaders, however, are opposed to the resignation of the prime minister. However, the controversy over Teresa’s political situation in Britain continues to be among the members of the conservative party.

Recently, Up to 40 Conservative MPs are now said to be prepared to sign a letter of no confidence in Theresa May. The number has increased in recent weeks, since the Tory conference after Ms May’s Government has been hit by a series of crises. If eight more MPs put their name to the letter it would trigger a vote of no confidence which, if lost, would lead to a Conservative leadership contest.

A senior Tory MP told The Independent: “Patience is wearing very thin and in some cases, it has snapped.”

After Ms May’s disastrous conference speech there were said to be around 35 names on the list, precipitating an attempted coup which failed due to insufficient support. But since then, the sexual harassment scandal, the loss of Sir Michael Fallon and Priti Patel from the cabinet, a severe gaffe by Boris Johnson which led to a British woman facing a longer jail term in Iran and divisions over Brexit have all contributed to fears in the party that Ms May is losing grip.

**The members of British Conservative Party are also pressing Theresa May to abandon power. Some Conservative members, who are still in shock over the recent general election, believe that May’s history of political power has expired and she should resign as Prime Minister David Cameron did.**

As the Guardian reported, former Conservative minister has suggested that Theresa May’s ill-fated speech to her party conference in Manchester had left a number of MPs convinced that the time had come for her to resign. Ed Vaizey said that he was finding it “increasingly difficult to see a way forward” and was worried about the state of the party.

“I think there will be quite a few people who will now be pretty firmly of the view that she should resign,” the former culture minister, who was sacked when May took over in 2016 after six years in government, told the BBC.

“The Tory party conference was a great opportunity to reboot the party and therefore reboot the

country to give a clear sense of direction and that did not happen, and so, yes, I am concerned.”

Vaizey’s comments came as another former minister said the prime minister had gone into the party conference two crises away from needing to go, and now had one chance left.

A third quoted Macbeth, saying: “Opinion in the party is moving from, ‘Oh god we better hang until after Brexit,’ to ‘If it were done when tis done, then twere well it were done quickly.’”

But others questioned the motives of some of those speaking out.

The small business minister, Margot James, told News night: “There are some ex-cabinet ministers or ex-ministers who are extremely embittered individuals who just want to get their own back – on the fact that they don’t feel recognized and, you know, life is full of that, you have to move on, keep going and disregard it. That would be my advice to the prime minister.

What is certain is that Theresa is facing a difficult situation. The prime minister seems unable to overcome the existing difficulties and crises. Some analysts in Britain believe that Teresa will soon step down.


The members of British Conservative Party are also pressing Theresa May to abandon power. Some Conservative members, who are still in shock over the recent general election, believe that May’s history of political power has expired and she should resign as Prime Minister David Cameron did. However, May has been able to remain in power with the support of senior party members. The British prime minister has set the date for her resignation, during meetings with some members of the party. According to the Mirror, May has revealed that she will quit on August 30, 2019. It means she has two years to get Britain out of the European Union.

On the one hand, the British prime minister faces dissatisfaction with the members of the conservative party and, on the other hand, has no power to resolve issues and crises such as the withdrawal of Britain from the European Union. He has also lost the power of managing the situation in Scotland. In recent months, many Scottish people have called for independence from England and a referendum on this issue.


It seems that party pressure on May to resign from power has intensified. Conservatives rightly believe that May’s action in early elections not only led to a reduction in the number of Conservative party representatives in the House of Commons, it also increased the power of Jeremy Corbyn and other Labour party officials. May’s incorrect calculation of the domestic situation in Britain and her hopes for victory in the early elections, have put the Conservatives in a difficult situation.

The main question is, who will replace him in the conservative party in the event of the resignation of the British prime minister? According to recent polls in the UK, the conservative party is in no good position and will be defeated by the Labor Party in the next election. Is Teresa’s resignation likely to improve the conditions in the conservative party?

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# Heidegger is a mystic, not a philosopher: Manoochehr Ashtiani

## I was influenced by Hedayat, Fardid and Nima

By Somaye Rezaei

**TEHRAN** — Manoochehr Ashtiani has PhDs in sociology and philosophy. He wrote his philosophy dissertation under the supervision of Karl Löwith (Heidegger's student and critic) and Dieter Henrich (one of the four great contemporary German philosophers); and his sociology dissertation under the supervision of Ernst Topitsch (Austrian philosopher and sociologist and member of Vienna Circle). Upon his return to Iran, he has worked as a professor at the universities of Beheshti, Tarbiat Modarres, and Allameh Tabatabayi. His paternal family, Ashtiani provided him with a clerical-political background and his maternal family, Esfandiari gave him a literary-political background. He has been politically active in the youth branch of Tudeh Party of Iran and accompanied the young members of Iran's National Front during the Nationalization of the Iranian Oil Industry Movement. His political and academic memoir of that time is in press.

The following is based on our long interview with this pioneer professor of philosophy and sociology about his memoirs and academic reflections.

■ Our goal in this interview is to get to know the narrative of your intellectual and scientific life, your experiences in formal academic environments or in informal places like cafés or among your friends. Your narrative—as one of the first graduates of sociology, educational sciences and philosophy in Iran—can be of great benefit to researchers. Let us start with your time at high school and how you entered the University of Tehran.

A: I entered the University of Tehran in the late 1320s (late 1940s). At the time, the Higher Teacher Education College included the Literature Faculty of the University of Tehran. There was only one student who wanted to do the philosophy major, and no one was going to enroll besides that person; therefore, philosophy was integrated into educational sciences and it was named after both of them—philosophy and educational sciences. I had philosophical background and the courses were rather easy for me; but for most of the students, they were difficult and only 5 out of 50 students passed courses every semester. I remember Shams Al-e-Ahmad was among the ones who failed the courses and after two years dropped out and started to study archeology. The ones who wanted to become teachers chose the educational sciences major and after a few semesters they received an allowance.

■ Who were your teachers?

A: To name just a few: Dr. Shafagh taught modern philosophy, Dr. Yahya Mahdavi philosophical texts, Dr. Sedighi sociology, Allameh Fazel Tooni ancient philosophy, Mr. Khansari formal logic.

■ Do you remember any of your outstanding classmates?

A: Haghsheenas and Zaryab Khoiyi, Zarrinkoob, Dr. Mohaghegh and many others—whom you still might hear of—were students at the time. Most of them are dead now, only few are alive. I am one of the few ones still alive from that generation.

■ At the time, which sociology works translated in Iran ignited your interest and made sociology your specialty?

A: Our educational material were all pamphlets. Professors would quote from different sources and the students would take notes. No one would ask any questions and if someone asked a question, the teachers would not give correct answers. I remember one of the students once asked a teacher that what he was saying was contradictory to what he had talked about previous week. The professor answered that there were a lot of paradoxes in Hume's thoughts.

In the educational sciences major, the only course was the one that Dr. Sedighi taught. He was educated in France and was very proud that he was a student of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who in turn was Durkheim's student and son-in-law. Dr. Sedighi coined the word 'sociology' (Jame'eh Shenasi) in his translations. Before him, sociology was called 'the science of the society,' 'The science of the society' included law, politics and sociology. This was based on the distinction made by Auguste Comte between social sciences and sociology. Dr. Sedighi taught 800 pages summary of Sorokin's book—who was a Jewish Russian scholar at Harvard. The students asked him to turn the pamphlet into a book, but he did not dare to do so; he was afraid to publish it and its faults would be revealed.

However, in 1307 (1928), two years before I was born, Dr. Yahya Mahdavi had translated, authored and edited a book called The Science of the Society which was an anthology and abridged volume.

It is the oldest book in the field.

In philosophy, people were not familiar with Kant or Hegel, because none of their works were translated. Descartes's Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason was translated by Zaka-al-molk recently—which was the only available translated book on philosophy. At the time, the late Fardid had translated bits and pieces from David Hume and excerpts from Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. I took these with me to Germany and these were all there was, pieces that were translated based on necessity and whims. Nowadays, there is such controversy over ideas of different thinkers; it was absolutely unheard of at the time.

Back then, we tried to devote some time to learning foreign languages; Persian sources were not very good and most students liked to go abroad to continue their studies in higher levels.

■ What language did you choose?

A: Originally, I did not learn English, because we spoke French in the family. Since French language was losing its status in Iran and more people favored English, some decided to revive it. My uncle, Nima Yushij, told me that there is a center in Pasteur Street called "Institut Français" and he has been a teacher there for a while. Therefore, I enrolled there and used to participate in the meetings afterwards. The meetings were founded by Francophiles. People like Dr. Karim Mojtahedi were also among the participants. These literary meetings were held in the Institut Français; where we dramatized parts of Moliere or Rimbaud's works among other French poets and writers. I was about 22. I was young. We used to stage French stories in original—like Moliere's works. Whenever we made a mistake, Sadegh Hedayat cursed and Ahmad Fardid hit the ceiling.

■ How was your relationship with Sadegh Hedayat and Ahmad Fardid?

A: I got to know them in those meetings. I had heard of Sadegh Hedayat from my uncle, Nima Yushij, but I had not seen him before. Sadegh Hedayat, Ahmad Fardid, and Hasan Ghaemian were in charge of the literary meetings. Intellectually, they were half Iranian, half French, especially Hedayat. Of course, Hedayat and Fardid were familiar with Sartre in Paris and had talked on numerous occasions with him in sidewalk cafés. You know it is quite easy to spot the likes of Foucault or Lyotard in sidewalk cafés in Paris. Even now, the philosophy and humanities professors still have this habit. Ghaemian had studied in France and was translating Kafka.

We used to go the cafés in Lalehzar, where Hedayat and Fardid used to discuss, and we sat at a table near them, because they were important people and we were only students. At the time, I was 23 and they were in their 40s. They discussed existentialist issues, apparently pretending to be existentialists. In other words, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Heidegger and others, influenced them. Thus, during my four years of studies I was under the influence of Hedayat and Fardid.

■ Do you have any recollections from Hedayat and Fardid circle in 1320s?

A: Yes, Mr. Ghaemian was part of the circle. He was translating Kafka. I think that later he published two or three of his books. Ghaemian and Hedayat were similar to some extent. None of them got married and they both committed suicide. Of course, Dr. Shahidi was also part of the circle, but the main intellectual force was Fardid. Although, Hedayat had an inkling, but it was Fardid who introduced Hedayat to Camus and Kafka. None had the philosophical knowledge that Fardid had. Sadegh Hedayat was very knowledgeable in literature, but he used to ultimately accept Fardid's opinions in discussions. For instance, Hedayat had a general idea of Sartre's literary works, but he did not understand existentialism deeply; while Fardid knew much more about eastern and western philosophy.

Of course, we had our own ideas. I remember that once I was sitting at a table with my friends and we were talking about national and patriotic issues. Hedayat came to us from the other side of the café—we were his students and he knew who we were. Although, he loved his country, but he loathed nationalistic talk, so he changed his voice and pronounced the word nation sarcastically.

■ Please explain your relationship with Nima. How did he influence your thoughts?

A: Nima was a very influential character and he had connections with many contemporary poets—and I got to know them through him. I remember visits from Shamloo, Kasravi and Sayeh; sometimes, their visits lasted till morning. When they



talked about poetry, Nima used to tell Mr. Shamloo and others that you have to write poetry as if you are using language for ordinary purposes. These group used to visit for a long time and sometimes they even went to cafés.

Hedayat and Nima's motto was that "what is, should no longer be and something else must come." The youth, back then, were lovers of everyday love; they were not concerned with celestial-mythical love. Therefore, Nima could influence them. Although, Nima was influenced by Hafiz and we know that he wrote the poem "Afsaneh" (The Legend) inspired

my mum, Nima stated that his brother Ladbou had decided to research the relation between Mulla Sadra and Hegel.

■ [After returning to Iran] you were offered a job at the University of Tehran, how come you went to the National (Beheshti) University?

A: Dr. Mahdavi told me that he would give me an office till the next semester starts and I would start teaching sociology at the University of Tehran. However, a day later, I got a letter asking me to call a certain number. I told myself that it is SAVAK (Organization of National Intelligence and Security)! Now that I am get-

**Nima was a very influential character and he had connections with many contemporary poets—and I got to know them through him. I remember visits from Shamloo, Kasravi and Sayeh; sometimes, their visits lasted till morning.**

by him. Later, I had disagreements on Hafiz with my Marxist friends.

When I left for France and Germany to continue my studies, I lost contact with

ting a job and I want to find employment, they have contacted me. I was doubtful whether to call the number or not. I consulted my father and he told me to call



Nima until his death. I was in Germany for 6 years that I heard from the students returning from Iran that my uncle has passed away. They asked me to organize a conference to talk about him. Students from around Germany were gathered and I talked about Nima. Later, when I came back to Iran, I continued to attend poetry and literature meetings with poets like Akhavan Sales.

■ How did you end your studies at the University of Tehran?

A: I wrote my B.A. thesis under the supervision of Dr. Moin. It was about the Iranian national movements in the first three centuries [after Islam]. It must still be available at the university. In this book, I made it known that there were 123 other national movements besides Taherian, Saffarian and Samanian movements.

Finally, I came in first and the King awarded me two golden fountain pens and a medal. I got my degree and went abroad. Most people, like Dr. Mojtahedi went abroad after high school, but I left after my B.A. I went to high school with Dr. Mojtahedi. He left for France after getting his high school diploma.

During that time, I was also under the influence of my uncle Nima. My other uncle, Reza (Ladbou) Yushij had left Iran for the USSR a long time ago. Ladbou has written a few books and done research studies on philosophical waves before Zarathustra, Mithraism, Zurvanism, Kiumartheh, etc., in which he has compared them to the new western philosophies. In a letter to

class and Germany would suit you better. I studied German language for two or three months, but I found out that it is not that easy. As I had come in first, I could go abroad with a governmental scholarship. Nevertheless, my father was against the King; the government had seriously hurt him. He told me not to go with the government money and even if he had to sell his clothes, he would pay for my education. In the end, I got a student loan from the university that covered half of my expenses, and my family paid the other half and I went abroad. My expense were around 200 Marks with the exchange value of 9 Rials per Mark. The government paid 90 Rials and my father 90 Rilas. This continued for 7-8 years, until Mark became more expensive and I needed more money; therefore, I looked for jobs in factories or other places that one could find student jobs.

■ What did you study there?

A: In France, I enrolled in Sorbonne University as a philosophy major. At the time, it was really crowded—unlike now that it is much better suited for studying. My cousin was the Iranian Consul in Hamburg. I wrote him a letter expressing that I wanted to go there. He told me to take the train and go there without hesitation; that he would help me change my major and country.

■ What year was it? Which city and which university you chose in Germany?

A: I went to Germany in 1334 (1955). There was no Iranian studying humanities or sociology in Germany. They usually studied medicine. The only one we heard of was Dr. Falaturi who taught philosophy at the University of Tübingen. Anyway, I went to Hamburg and then to Heidelberg and stayed there till 1973. There was a literary society in Heidelberg where all the noblemen's children and the rich kids used to meet, people like Dowlatabadi, Firouzabadi and General Rahimi (who broke Mosaddegh's door with a tank).

After a while, because I fell out with the Tudeh party, the Tudeh party's followers and the royalists cut their ties with me. I was not only exiled from the city; they completely ousted me and thus, because of these issues and the insults, I relocated to a place 17 km outside Heidelberg. I stayed there until I came back to Iran. Because my stance was that according to the communist manifesto, all communists have the duty to aid regimes that are fighting capitalism and monarchy and to support them wholeheartedly.

In Germany, I did cultural work in addition to scientific work at the university and political activism in the Confederation of Iranian Students. For instance, one of my friends informed me that there is a lecture in Vienna on different religions and one of the speakers is Iranian. We went there together. A Christian, a student and a professor gave their lectures. Then, a man with a black turban and cloak and blue eyes started speaking in a very eloquent German about the similarities and differences between different religions. I asked who he was and I was told that he was Dr. Beheshti. His wife was also there; she was wearing a suite with a scarf. I introduced myself and told them who I was and that my forefather was Mirza Hasan Ashtiani. He knew him well and told me that I must be a very devout person! I asked him where one could meet him in Germany and he told me that he was the Imam of the Hamburg mosque.

I used to meet him in Hamburg for a while. I asked him what his general perspective on Islam was. I noticed that he had a socialist notion of Islam. He replaced the unity of the proletariat with the unity of the oppressed people of the world. Like Motahhari, he believed in fighting Imperialism and called it the battle against the Global Arrogance. I talked to my friends and told them he is a Muslim socialist. Some time passed and I never saw him again.

Soroush used to give lectures every Friday in Aghdasieh mosque after the Islamic Revolution—during Mr. Hashemi's second term as the president. He would imply that there is no such thing as Vilayat-e Faqih; he would say that it is a construct and that it did not exist in Islam. A group of his apostles -300 to 400 people- used to listen to his lectures. He would criticize Motahhari that he had gone too far left and had accepted the notion of class conflict; that he accepted the existence of Imperialism and said that we must fight it. He also said that they—namely Soroush and people like him—consider it an illusion; there is no Imperialism in the real world and it is made up by Marxists.

■ What was the topic of your dissertation?

A: My first dissertation was on language. In 1971, I wrote my PhD dissertation on a comparative study of Mawlana (Rumi) and Meister Eckhart. Karl Löwith was my supervisor. I found out there is actually similarities between western philosophers and Muslim mystics (Sufis)—that the comparisons are not without merit. I published it under the title of Historical Sociology. In this book, I showed that Mawlana, Eckhart and Heidegger's ideas are not philosophical but mystical. Gadamer read my works and told me that I was right, he told me that "for the last thirty years, I've been saying that my dear teacher, Heidegger, is a mystic, but no one believes me. You are the first one that has written this down."

It is surprising that Mr. Ayatollahi, Davari Ardakani and Dinani also believed this and they told me once that Heidegger's being a mystic is the reason that they agree with his ideas. I told them that because I believe that Heidegger is a mystic, I am rejecting and criticizing him; because Heidegger is deviating from the rational German philosophy.

■ As a last question, I want to ask you that—as a person who had Marxist tendencies—how do you assess the conditions of the leftist movements and communism around the world right now?

A: In many countries, there are remnants of socialist and communist parties, which still have some power. They might not be able to act directly, but they influence the social movements in many countries, for instance the Occupy Wall Street movement. I believe that the socialist and Marxist movements still exist because capitalism exists. And as long as capitalism exists, its opponent would continue to live on; if there is capitalism, there will be indispensable critiques.

But there are also anti-regressive and progressive movements that play their part on history's stage, but they are not leftist in a literal sense of the word. For instance, reformist movements like social democrats who are not opponents of capitalism but they put pressure on capitalism to reform it.

There is another movement that started around 40-50 years ago resisting Imperialism and it is a grand one, much more powerful than the other ones. It is the pro-independence movements of countries like Brazil and many other Asian and African countries who want to be independent and not to serve any other country. Our country is among these countries that want to be independent and not subservient. That is why we emphasize independence.

A country that is not independent cannot establish social freedoms, because she would be forced to accept others' definition of freedom and democracy. A country that is not independent would not have freedom and social justice. These three movements want to restrain the global capitalism's ruthlessness and brutality. These movement are based on defending the billions of poor people's rights against the five or six hundred million wealthy capitalists.

■ Finally, how do you assess the Islamic Revolution of 1979 based on your intellectual line of thought?

A: Put simply, nations react differently in different historical epochs. Their reaction depends on the available directions at that particular historical era. As Max Weber says, the leaders of revolutions are history's signalmen (switchmen). The reaction of a nation depends on what railroad is open to its locomotive of history. If a religious railroad is opened, the locomotive would follow that road, if a socialist one is opened, it would move on the socialist railroad like the October Revolution in Russia. It is very complicated matter and does not take any one's lead. This is determined by history; history does not stand still.

If the intellectuals do not know what they want, but the clergy know that they want an Islamic republic, the history would not stand still and it will not rule for its own death. The intellectuals do not know what they want, so, the history would follow the ones who know what they want. We could see this during the war as well. They wanted to destroy the Islamic Republic with war. The history asks whom wants to go to war, do the members of the Tudeh party and communists want to go to war? When the history sees that the followers of the movement that believes in Islam—from 14-15 year old boys to 70 year old men who call Imam Hossein when using their bodies as shields against bullets—are doing something, it would support them. History needs people who go to war. When a country is invaded, what use does history have for people who sit at home and recites slogans?



## 10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

Here are high rated IT titles in the world that reviewed by savvy tech users:

**1** Nvidia expands new GPU cloud to HPC applications. With more than 500 high-performance computing applications that incorporate GPU acceleration, Nvidia is aiming to make them easier to access.

**2** Korea's 'gigatopia': KT delivering gigabit speeds over copper. Korea Telecom is working to provide gigabit-speed broadband even for its 10-20 percent of customers still on ADSL by using 'GIGA Wire' technology over copper and coax cable.

**3** Linus Torvalds quietly released the latest Linux 4.14 kernel on Nov. 12. It won't be a quiet release, though. The Linux developers had previously announced that 4.14 would be Linux's next long-term support (LTS) version of the Linux kernel. That's important because Linux LTS version now has a six-year life span.

**4** According to a tip revealed by accessory maker RAVpower, the upcoming official release iOS 11.2 will be the software update that will unlock faster wireless charging for the iPhone 8, 8 Plus, and iPhone X. It looks like the feature is already part and parcel of the iOS 11.2 beta, which is available to developers and adventurous folk alike, and is enabling all three iOS devices to get topped up by at 7.5W by compatible Qi wireless chargers.

**5** Apple and Nike have just announced a new partnership for the launch of limited edition Watch Series 3 with LTE. The new wearable device is called Midnight Fog and it's supposed to match Nike's new Air VaporMax running shoes that will be launched later this month.

**6** Mobile chipmaker Qualcomm Inc rejected rival Broadcom Ltd's \$103-billion takeover bid, saying the offer undervalued the company and would face regulatory hurdles. Shares of Qualcomm were up 1.8 percent at \$65.74 in early afternoon trading, while those of Broadcom were down 0.4 percent at \$263.95.

**7** IBM, Google, Microsoft, and 33 more partner to ensure Kubernetes workload portability. The Kubernetes ecosystem is taking a big step today aimed at fulfilling the promise of fully portable application workloads. Thirty-six technology companies have announced their participation in Kubernetes Conformance, a certification program that's aimed at ensuring different pieces of software provide a consistent experience when using the open source container orchestration software.

**8** The EU unveiled a process through which the public can submit comments about their experience with fake news. In addition, the EU is requesting nominations for a panel of "experts" from academia and the media to conduct an in-depth study around the issue and offer an attack plan.

**9** Uber's chief of policy for India and South Asia has quit, two sources familiar with the matter said, in the latest high-level departure at the online taxi company. Shweta Rajpal Kohli, a former Indian journalist who joined Uber last year, would join cloud-based software maker Salesforce.com Inc next month, the sources told Reuters.

**10** Alphabet Inc's Google in the last few months has begun removing from YouTube extremist videos that do not depict violence or preach hate, YouTube said, a major policy shift as social media companies face increasing pressure from governments.

## Bill Gates firm puts \$80 million behind 'smart city' in Arizona

One of Bill Gates' firms invested \$80 million into nearly 25,000 acres of land west of Phoenix, Arizona to build a 'smart city' of the future. The proposed community, called Belmont, will have high-speed communications infrastructure, autonomous cars and data centers. In short, a hyper-connected place suitable for new companies to set up shop in.



"Belmont will create a forward-thinking community with a communication and infrastructure spine that embraces cutting-edge technology, designed around high-speed digital networks, data centers, new manufacturing technologies and distribution models, autonomous vehicles and autonomous logistics hubs," Belmont Partners said in a news release, according to KPNX.

The land itself has been eyed for development since the early 90s, according to AZ Central. 3,800 acres will be zoned for commercial and office space and 470 acres will go to public schooling, with projected housing for 80,000. That will make Belmont the area and population of Tempe, according to the Arizona-based Belmont Partners' press release. It will be situated along the projected path of the not-yet-built I-11, which runs from Las Vegas to Mexico.

Otherwise, there's not much known about the development, including when anyone will break ground on the land and start building the Belmont of tomorrow.

(Source: Businessinsider)

# Retailers urged to withdraw toys that allow hackers to talk to children

A consumer group is urging major retailers to withdraw a number of "connected" or "intelligent" toys likely to be popular at Christmas, after finding security failures that it warns could put children's safety at risk.

Tests carried out by Which? with the German consumer group Stiftung Warentest, and other security research experts, found flaws in Bluetooth and wifi-enabled toys that could enable a stranger to talk to a child.

The investigation found that four out of seven of the tested toys could be used to communicate with the children playing with them. Security failures were discovered in the Furby Connect, i-Que Intelligent Robot, Toy-Fi Teddy and CloudPets.

With each of these toys, the Bluetooth connection had not been secured, meaning the researcher did not need a password, pin or any other authentication to gain access. Little technical knowhow was needed to hack into the toys to start sharing messages with a child.

When switched on, the Furby Connect – on sale at Argos, Amazon, Smyths and Toys R Us – could be connected with any device within a Bluetooth range of 10 to 30 metres.

With the i-Que Intelligent Robot, available from Argos and Hamleys, the investigation discovered that anyone could download the app, find an i-Que within their Bluetooth range and start using the robot's voice by typing into a text field. The toy is made by Genesis, which also manufactures the My Friend Cayla doll, recently banned in Germany owing to security and hacking concerns. Both toys are distributed in the UK by Vivid.

CloudPets toys, on sale at Amazon, are stuffed animals that enable friends to send a child messages that are played on a built-in



speaker. But Which? found the toy could be hacked via its unsecured Bluetooth connection.

Also available from Amazon, the Toy-Fi Teddy allows a child to send and receive recorded messages over Bluetooth via a smartphone or tablet app. Which? found the Bluetooth connection lacked any authentication protections, meaning hackers could send voice messages to a child and receive answers.

"Connected toys are becoming increasingly popular, but as our investigation shows, anyone considering buying one should apply a level of caution," said Alex Neill, the managing director of home products and services at Which?. "Safety and security should be the absolute priority with any

toy. If that can't be guaranteed, then the products should not be sold."

Which? has written to retailers to urge them to stop selling connected toys that have proven security issues.

Argos said in a statement: "The safety of the products we sell is extremely important to us. We haven't received any complaints about these products but we are in close contact with the manufacturers, who are already looking into [these] recommendations."

Hasbro, which makes the Furby Connect, said: "Children's privacy is a top priority, and that is why we carefully designed the Furby Connect and the Furby Connect World app to comply with children's privacy laws. We

feel confident in the way we have designed both the toy and the app to deliver a secure play experience."

The British Toy and Hobby Association, of which Vivid and Hasbro are members, said: "The industry takes its responsibilities incredibly seriously when making products for children, with BTHA members investing heavily in everything from toy safety to data privacy and online security."

"We are aware of the Which? report, but understand the circumstances in which these investigations have taken place rely on a perfect set of circumstances and manipulation of the toys and the software that make the outcome highly unlikely in reality." (Source: Guardian)

## Red Hat Enterprise Linux for ARM arrives after seven years of development

For years, we've wanted ARM servers. Even Microsoft has thrown its server hat in the ARM ring. Now, Red Hat has moved this from an idea to a shipping product: Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL) for ARM.

RHEL for ARM has a RHEL 7.4 user space with the 4.11 Linux kernel. It also comes with updated standard RHEL 7 Server RPMs packages.

The new corporate Linux is for use with 64-bit server-optimized System on a Chip (SoC) silicon. These are designed for cloud, telecom, edge, and high-performance computing core applications.

Why do we care about yet another platform being support by Linux? Simple. A 64-bit ARM-powered microserver has a thermal design power (TDP) of between 10 and 45 watts.



A conventional x86 server runs at 90 watts. The lower the power consumption, the lower your server and data center operating running costs.

Jon Masters, Red Hat's chief ARM architect, is very

## SK Telecom deploys LTE Cat-M1 for IoT speed boost



SK Telecom has deployed LTE Cat-M1 that will allow high volume data transfers in Internet of Things (IoT) applications, the company said.

LTE Cat-M1 is an upgraded standard from LTE-M that supports data rates of up to 1 Mbps. The telco said its deployment will boost voice and photo transmission in IoT applications.

It will link the standard with its low-power, low-volume LoRa network -- which has a data transfer rate of 5.4 kbps -- to offer a hybrid network that allows customers to allocate applications' low and high data depending on need from one server.

For example, in case of a fire, data from flame and temperature sensors will use

the LoRa network while scene photos will be delivered on LTE Cat-M1.

LTE Cat-M1 modules are also cheaper than LTE-M and will burden IoT device owners less, the company said.

SK Telecom worked with Ericsson and Qualcomm, which supplies the base station and modems, for the trial and deployment.

The telco commercialized the IoT-dedicated LoRa network last year in July.

SK Telecom is also preparing its 5G offering, which it will deploy at the Pyeongchang Winter Games in South Korea next year. In September, it said it successfully reduced latency to 2 milliseconds for 5G.

(Source: totaltele)

## Missouri AG wants to know if Google broke consumer protection laws



The attorney general's office of Missouri has announced it's investigating whether Google broke the state's consumer protection and antitrust laws. AG Josh Hawley's statement expressly questioned the search giant's practices regarding collection of user data, potential content taken from competing websites and preferencing companies it owns in search results.

That last charge was central to the EU court's recent antitrust case against Google, for which it served the internet titan a record-setting \$2.8 billion fine. But the search company has been punished before for illegally collecting

and storing user data. In 2013, Google paid out \$7 million to 37 states (and the District of Columbia) due to a 'rogue engineer' acquiring personal information (passwords, emails and the like) collected over unsecured WiFi by its Street View cars.

"There is strong reason to believe that Google has not been acting with the best interest of Missourians in mind," Hawley said in a statement on the Missouri Attorney General's website. "My Office will not stand by and let private consumer information be jeopardized by industry giants, especially to pad their profits."

(Source: Reuters)

## YouTube will stop showing the suggested video links you didn't click

Have you ever clicked a YouTube creator's suggested video link when it pops up mid-clip? No? You're far from alone. YouTube has revealed that it's removing the ability to promote videos, playlists or livestreams through in-video notifications as of December 14th. The streaming service isn't shy about the reason why: few people were actually interested in these links. Only 1 in 20 people actually clicked on them, and many of those people were taken to a dead livestream. Users said it felt like spam, according to YouTube.

The company doesn't think this will cause too many problems. Cards and end screen video links



are more effective, YouTube said. For third-party links, it wants you to use video descriptions, channel pages or even your channel artwork.

YouTube told us this will remove existing in-video notifications, which could lead to some awkward moments in videos where presenters point to pop-ups that no longer exist. On the balance, though, this appears to be positive news if you're a YouTube fan. It should mean fewer intrusions while you're viewing on the web, and fewer creators going out of their way to plug one video while you're watching another.

(Source: youtube)



# Global carbon dioxide emissions to rise after three stable years, researchers say

By the end of 2017, global emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels and industry are projected to rise by about 2% compared with the preceding year, with an uncertainty range between 0.8% and 3%. The news follows three years of emissions staying relatively flat.

That's the conclusion of the 2017 Global Carbon Budget, published 13 November by the Global Carbon Project (GCP) in the journals *Nature Climate Change*, *Environmental Research Letters* and *Earth System Science Data Discussions*.

The announcement comes as nations meet in Bonn, Germany, for the annual United Nations climate negotiations (COP23).

Lead researcher Prof Corinne Le Quéré, director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia, said: "Global carbon dioxide emissions appear to be going up strongly once again after a three-year stable period. This is very disappointing."

## Human activities

"With global carbon dioxide emissions from all human activities estimated at 41 billion tons for 2017, time is running out on our ability to keep warming well below 2 °C let alone 1.5 °C."

"This year we have seen how climate change can amplify the impacts of hurricanes with stronger downpours of rain, higher sea levels and warmer ocean conditions favoring more



powerful storms. This is a window into the future. We need to reach a peak in global

emissions in the next few years and drive emissions down rapidly afterwards to ad-

**"With global carbon dioxide emissions from all human activities estimated at 41 billion tons for 2017, time is running out on our ability to keep warming well below 2 °C let alone 1.5 °C."**

dress climate change and limit its impacts."

China's emissions account for 28% of global emissions. Budget co-author Glen Peters, research director at CICERO in Oslo, who led one of the studies, said: The "return to growth in global emissions in 2017 is largely due to a return to growth in Chinese emissions, projected to grow by 3.5% in 2017 after two years with declining emissions.

The use of coal, the main fuel source in China, may rise by 3% due to stronger growth in industrial production and lower hydro-power generation due to less rainfall."

## Several factors

"Several factors point to a continued rise in 2018," said Robert Jackson, a co-author of the report, co-chair of GCP and a professor in Earth system science at Stanford University. "That's a real concern."

The "global economy is picking up slowly. As GDP rises, we produce more goods, which, by design, produces more emissions."

Yet the team said that despite the growth in 2017, it is too early to say whether this is a one-off event on the way to a global peak in emissions, or the beginning of a new period with upward pressure on global emissions growth.

In the long term, emissions are unlikely to return to the persistent high growth rates seen during the 2000s of over 3% per year.

(Source: *phys.org*)

## Polluted water whale invents new feeding strategy

Baleen whales feed by opening their gigantic maws, lunging forward in the water and engulfing gallons of seawater in their mouths. They strain the seawater back through their baleen plates, trapping vast numbers of tiny critters — fish, krill and others — that then get swallowed all at once.

The species that share this method include what are called the rorqual whales, which include fin whales, sei whales, blue whales and humpback whales.

But now a team of Japanese and Thai researchers has discovered a never-before-seen type of feeding behavior in a rorqual called a Bryde's whale.

These whales don't bother with the lunge. They simply open their mouths at the surface and let the seawater flow in, before straining and expelling the seawater through their baleen as usual.

## Undulating tail

The researchers call it tread-water feeding because of the way the whales gently undulate their tails to keep their heads near the surface of the water. They say it's the first passive



feeding strategy ever seen in a baleen whale. The team, led by Takashi Iwata from the University of Tokyo, observed 31 different whales feed this way in the Gulf of Thailand.

Tread-water feeding is more energy-efficient than lunge-feeding, since the whales just have to bob their heads near the

surface. But Iwata thinks that the odd behavior may have a darker origin.

The upper Gulf of Thailand is hypoxic — there's a serious lack of oxygen dissolved in the water, thanks mostly to sewage that flows into the sea from nearby rivers.

## Oxygen level

The low oxygen levels might force the whales' prey towards the surface, where oxygen is a bit more plentiful. And if all the food is in one spot, then tread-water feeding might be the only way to get enough nutrition. Which means that these whales apparently improvised an improved strategy for survival in their polluted habitat.

Iwata wrote in an email that his team witnessed tread-water feeding most often in adult-calf pairs. That observation leads him to suspect that the behavior might be socially learned, passed from parents to their offspring via imitation.

If that's true, then tread-water feeding could represent a form of culture, unique to the Bryde's whales that live in the Gulf of Thailand.

(Source: *Scientific American*)

## NASA will launch E. Coli into space to study antibiotic resistance

The Cygnus cargo mission carrying this experiment launched on Sunday, Nov. 12. Its planned launch attempt on Nov. 11 was aborted when a wayward aircraft entered the restricted airspace near the launch site.

*E. coli*, a common bacterial pathogen responsible for millions of urinary tract infections and foodborne illnesses every year.

The *E. coli* AntiMicrobial Satellite (EcAMSat) mission is scheduled to launch

to the ISS on Orbital ATK's Cygnus cargo spacecraft at 07:37 A.M. EST (1237 GMT) along with a slew of other science experiments and supplies for the Expedition 53 crew. You can watch the launch live on space.com, beginning at 07:00 A.M. EST (1100 GMT), courtesy of NASA TV.

After the *E. coli* samples arrive at the ISS, the experiment will examine how microgravity affects the bacteria's ability to thrive while exposed to antibiotics. Since

humans started using antibiotics in the mid-20th century, pathogens like *E. coli* have evolved new genes that make them increasingly resistant to antibiotics.

"EcAMSat will investigate spaceflight effects on bacterial antibiotic resistance and its genetic basis," NASA officials said in a statement.

"Bacterial antibiotic resistance may pose a danger to astronauts in microgravity, where the immune response is weakened.

Scientists believe that the results of this experiment could help design effective countermeasures to protect astronauts' health during long-duration human space missions."

Here on Earth, this study could help medical researchers better understand how bacteria respond to stress, which may lead to the development of more effective antibiotics, according to the statement.

(Source: *space.com*)

## VP: BMI's Support of Knowledge-Based Firms Should Be a Model for Other Banks

Bank Melli Iran's support for knowledge-based companies should be taken as a model for other banks in the country, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

In his meeting with the Chief Executive of Bank Melli Iran (BMI), Vice President for Scientific and Technology Affairs Dr. Sorena Sattari said: "Salient activities taken by the bank can be a model for other banks."

BMI has taken giant strides in supporting startups and knowledge-based companies which is appreciable, he said, adding: "Setting up an innovation center by Bank Melli Iran is an important infrastructure that was realized under the auspices of chief executive and members of the Board of Directors of the bank."

He placed special emphasis on the necessity of all-out



support from startups and activities of knowledge-based companies and said: "Startups and knowledge-based

companies are first established and then, relevant rules are imposed on them. For this reason, startups are leader in their activities."

In the end, Vice President for Scientific and Technology Affairs Dr. Sorena Sattari said: "It is hoped that activities of the bank will be continued in coming years in related issues."

For his part, Dr. Mohammad-Reza Hosseinzadeh Chief Executive of BMI said that his bank will spare no effort in supporting knowledge-based companies and startups."

Talents and genius youth in the country should not face financial problem in financing their projects, he maintained.

## BIM and EXIM Bank of China Ink Agreement to Issue Executive Guarantee Letter

The Cabinet of Ministers allowed the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance (MEAF) to issue relevant executive guarantee on behalf of the government for enforcement of financial agreement related to the project inked between Bank of Industry & Mine (BIM) and Exim Bank of China for electrification of Tehran- Mashhad Railway, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

The license was issued in line with equipping and

providing foreign financial resources required within the framework of directives of development programs and yearly budget rules of the country.

As chaired by President Rouhani, the Cabinet of Ministers in its Sunday evening session studied a comprehensive report on Plan and Budget Organization with regard to the generalities of 2018 Budget Bill, the report ended.



## IMIDRO Chief Appreciates Salient Activities of ANGURAN Mine in National Exports Day

A high-ranking delegation from GLENCORE Company paid a visit to Anguran Mine deposit, the Public Relations Dept. of IMIDRO reported.

For his part, Chief Executive of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian said: "A high-ranking delegation from GLENCORE Company will visit Iran in coming weeks in order to visit ANGURAN Mine."

Speaking in a seminar on National Exports Day, held in Amphitheater of Zanjan Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines, he said: "ANGURAN Mine has played a considerable



role since years ago in zinc industry and it seems necessary that new expert-level studies should be made in this mine with more efficiency."

GLENCORE Company is a prestigious Swiss-based company which is regarded as one of the largest mines and mineral companies in the world, he maintained.

The value of export of minerals during the seven months of the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (from March 21 to Oct. 22) stands at \$5.4 billion.

The mineral sector accounts for 5-6 percent share of gross national product (GNP) but 20% share in this field indicates significance of mines and mineral sector in booming exports.

He put the export value of minerals in seven months of the current year (from March 21 to Oct. 22) at \$5.4 billion.

The export volume of steel in the first seven months of the current year stood at more than 4,700,000 tons, expandable to eight million tons before termination of the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (to end March 20, 2018).

In the end, Chief Executive of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian pointed to the role of large export companies in the field of development of economies of the countries and said: "Activity of these types of companies in China and success of this country in the field of minerals is a solid evidence of this claim."

## Exercise increases brain size, new research finds

Aerobic exercise can improve memory function and maintain brain health as we age, a new Australian-led study has found.

In a first of its kind international collaboration, researchers from Australia's National Institute of Complementary Medicine at Western Sydney University and the Division of Psychology and Mental Health at the University of Manchester in the UK examined the effects of aerobic exercise on a region of the brain called the hippocampus, which is critical for memory and other brain functions.

Brain health decreases with age, with the average brain shrinking by approximately five percent per decade after the age of 40.

Studies in mice and rats have consistently shown that physical exercise increases the size of the hippocampus but until now evidence in humans has been inconsistent.

The researchers systematically reviewed 14 clinical trials which examined the brain scans of 737 people before and after aerobic exercise programs or in control conditions.

The participants included a mix of healthy adults, people with mild cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's and people with a clinical diagnosis of mental illness including depression and schizophrenia. Ages ranged from 24 to 76 years with an average age of 66.

The researchers examined effects of aerobic exercise, including stationary cycling, walking, and treadmill running. The length of the interventions ranged from three to 24 months with a range of 2-5 sessions per week.

Overall, the results - published in the journal *NeuroImage* - showed that, while exercise had no effect on total hippocampal volume, it did significantly increase the size of the left region of the hippocampus in humans.

(Source: *eurekalert.org*)

## Gobbling down food increases risk of obesity, heart attack and stroke

In an era of TV dinners, fast food and on-the-go snacking, the pleasure of languidly savoring a meal has become a luxury largely consigned to special occasions.

But a new study suggests that taking the time to stop and enjoy each mouthful could be the secret of a healthy heart, and a slimmer waistline.



Research by Japanese scientists has found that people who eat slowly and mindfully are less likely to pile on the pounds or develop metabolic syndrome - the name for a cluster of dangerous health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity which can damage the heart.

For the new study, researchers followed more than 1,000 middle-aged men and women for five years, monitoring their eating speed, and health.

They found that just 2.3 percent of the slow eaters developed metabolic syndrome over the study period, compared with 6.5 percent of medium speed eaters, and 11.6 percent of the fast eaters.

It means that fast eaters who gobbled down their food were five times more likely to develop symptoms which raised their risk of a heart attack, diabetes and stroke. The faster eaters were also more than three times more likely to have gained three stone in weight.

Scientists believe that eating too quickly prevents the brain from noticing when the body has taken in too many calories. When the body cannot use up calories it stores them as fat, placing pressure on the heart. Eating too fast also appears to cause spikes of blood sugar, which can stop insulin working effectively.

"Eating more slowly may be a crucial lifestyle change to help prevent metabolic syndrome," said Dr. Takayuki Yamaji, study author and cardiologist at Hiroshima University in Japan.

(Source: *The Telegraph*)

## Emojis could help understand science

Sure, emojis are great for reducing typing and lightening the mood, but if one group of research scientists gets their way, the ubiquitous little pictures could also help make science more rigorous and transparent. And right now, a government agency is looking for scientists to chime in about the best way to design emojis that could do just that.

These aren't the science-themed emoji you already know and love, like the rocket, the syringe full of blood, and the alembic. They would be tailored by scientific communities for scientific communities to help the best science stand out.

"We're all prone to unconscious bias and that can influence our science, so you have to take steps to minimize potential bias," Shai Silberberg, a program director at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke who also works on improving science, told *Newsweek*.

Good experiments regularly build in protections like researchers not knowing whether someone is receiving a drug or a placebo, but those steps usually aren't discussed when scientists are presenting their research to colleagues. "I get totally frustrated listening to talks and you have no idea how experiments were done, you have no idea if they were carefully done or not," Silberberg said.

So he started thinking about ways to easily document in a presentation or poster which steps a researcher had taken to ensure their science held up. For him, the obvious choice was emojis, and he convinced his department to issue a request for information based on the idea. That means that until December 15, scientists can send in their thoughts about the idea.

(Source: *Newsweek*)



## Kermanshah quake: Tragedy, altruism, hope

The quake-hit city of Kermanshah is now the stage of inextricably mixed tragic, altruistic and hopeful scenes.

All rescue and relief forces along with military personnel and volunteers have joined hands to help the victims. While tragic scenes of people mourning the loss of their beloved family members are heartbreaking the incessant work of relief forces to help people still raise hope.

The magnitude 7.3 temblor jolted Kermanshah late on Sunday, leaving at least 530 dead and more than 7,500 injured. The epicenter of the earthquake was Azgaleh, a city near Iraqi border. The earthquake was so massive that many western, southern and central provinces of Iran as well as neighboring countries felt tremors.

The earthquake caused widespread devastation in the town of Sarpol-e Zahab, about 15km from the border in Kermanshah, as the majority of the victims were from this town.

Due to the great magnitude of the earthquake the death toll and casualties grew minute by minute, and some 12,000 buildings were razed to the ground and left many homeless who are still in need of tents and blankets.

The cut-off of electricity, gas and water has added insult to the injury which was fixed to a great extent by Monday night. Effort to fix the remaining problems are still ongoing.

Officials travelled to the earthquake stricken areas on Monday and since the next morning

after the deadly quake flood of condolences from around the world poured.

Russia, Turkey, the U.S., France, Ireland, India, Britain, Germany, Greece, Brazil, Argentina, as well as UN officials were among those who conveyed their heartfelt condolences to the government and people of Iran.

President Hassan Rouhani travelled to Kermanshah on Tuesday and promised to rebuild the country's earthquake-devastated area in the "shortest" timespan possible.

The president noted that some 30,000 houses must be built to accommodate the homeless people.

Rouhani said his administration plans to support reconstruction with both handouts and loans. He said he appreciates foreign countries for expressing sympathy with victims of Sunday's temblor.

Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri also tasked responsible organizations to follow up on the matter and provide the quake-hit areas with proper services.

Moreover, Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhouni pledged that the reconstruction of houses in the area will be soon started.

Tehran Municipality has dispatched some 40,000 blankets as well as two food trucks to quake-hit areas. Besides, the public, nationwide, have made contributions or collected vital items to help the victims of the tragic incident.



© Tehran Times/ Mohammad Khodabakhsh

Amid the tragic and heartbreaking scenes of mourning and searching through the rubbles and pulling out dead bodies miracles happened, too. Ava, a baby girl, was born early Tuesday morning in the earthquake-stricken town of Sarpol-e Zahab.



© Tehran Times/ Mohammad Reza Abbasi

On Tuesday, President Hassan Rouhani travelled to the quake-stricken areas making a promise to rebuild the city.



© IRNA/ Seyed Musleh Pirkhriyan

Military personnel, army, IRGC, and Basij hand in hand with rescue and relief forces of Red Crescent Society are clearing through the rubbles.



© ILNA/ Mehdi Nasiri

As most of the earthquake victims suffer from crush injuries, they need blood transfusions to replace blood lost during the injury. Many Iranian referred to blood transfusion services to donate blood to their fellow countrymen.



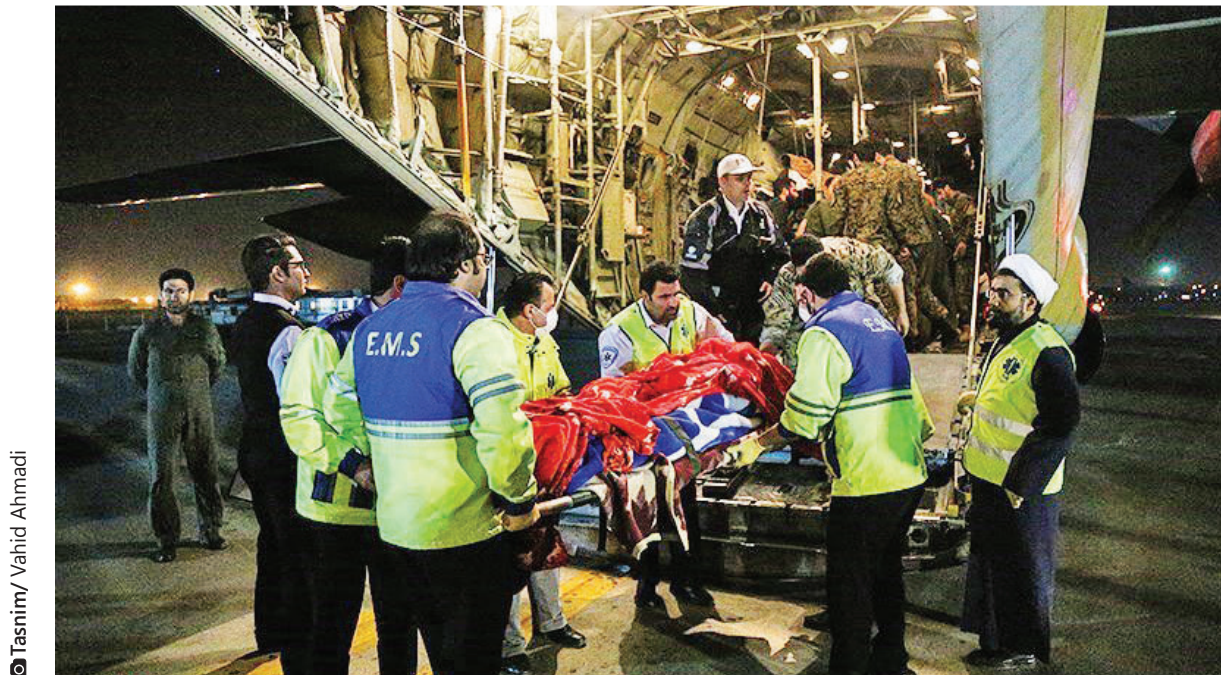
© IRIB/ Morteza Fakhr Nejad

Some of the victims who sustained serious injuries were transferred to other hospitals to receive professional medical care by air medical services.



© IRIB/ Elham Omi

In the city of Sanandaj, western Kordestan province, people donated food, drinks and blankets to help earthquake-stricken citizens of Kermanshah.



© Tasnim/ Vahid Ahmadi

On Monday night some victims of the earthquake were transferred to Tehran to receive proper medical care.



© Tasnim/ Farzad Menati

Field hospitals are set up in different parts of the cities hit by the earthquake to offer treatment to the victims.



# Yemenis decry Saudi regime deadly war, blockade of ports

UN urges Saudi coalition to open ports

Thousands of Yemenis have taken to the streets of capital Sana'a to voice their outrage at the ongoing military coalition, led by the House of Saud regime, against their impoverished nation and a crippling blockade the invading alliance has imposed on Yemen's ports, particularly the vital port of Hudaydah.

Yemeni protesters marched in the Settin Street in the capital, shouting anti-Saudi regime slogans and demanding the immediate lifting of the persisting blockade from all Yemeni ports.

The demonstrators also chanted slogans such as "The famine and blockade are creations of the evil alliance" and "The blockade is unjust, the world is sleeping."

The protesters, who also carried large Yemeni flags, finally convened in front of the United Nations office in Sana'a, calling on the world body to intervene and prevent the Saudi regime-led coalition from further bombing the crisis-hit nation.

Saleh al-Sammad, the president of Yemen's Supreme Political Council of the popular Ansarullah (Houthi) movement, then addressed the protesters, saying Yemen's launching a missile towards the Saudi regime capital was a natural stance his nation adopted to combat the Saudi regime war machine.

On November 4, the Saudi regime's military announced that it had intercepted a missile launched by the Ansarullah over an airport near the Saudi capital, prompting Riyadh to close all land, air and sea ports in Yemen. The strike appeared to be the deepest yet within the Saudi territory.

Since March 2015, the House of Saud regime has been heavily bombarding Yemen as part of a brutal campaign against its impoverished southern neighbor in an attempt to reinstall Yemen's former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, a staunch ally of Riyadh, and crush the Ansarullah movement, which is in control of large parts of Yemen, including the capital Sana'a. The Saudi regime campaign, however, has failed to achieve its goals.

Since the onset of the brutal war, Ansarullah, the national army and popular



groups have joined forces to defend the country against the House of Saud regime aggression. Over the past two years, the Ansarullah movement has also been running the state affairs.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sammad added that after nearly three years of ceaseless airstrikes on Yemen by Saudi regime-led military alliance, the Yemeni nation has become resolute, more than ever, in defending their country against the invading forces.

He further noted that the only option before the Saudi regime leaders is to end the futile war and removing the blockade from the Yemeni ports.

Latest figures show that the war has so far killed over 12,000 Yemenis and wounded thousands more. The military campaign has also taken a heavy toll on the country's facilities and infrastructure, destroying many hospitals, schools, and factories.

The House of Saud regime has also imposed a total embargo on Yemen, causing severe food and medicine shortages and a

cholera epidemic that has so far claimed the lives of nearly 2,200 people. After nearly three years of the imposed war, the impoverished nation has seven million people on the verge of famine and has had 900,000 suspected cholera cases in the past six months.

**■ UN warns millions at risk in Yemen, urges Saudi coalition to open ports**

Meanwhile, The United Nations aid coordinator called on the Saudi regime-led coalition to open all Yemen's seaports urgently on Tuesday, saying millions of lives were at risk.

The Saudi regime-led coalition said last week it had closed all air, land and seaports in Yemen.

"We have some 21 million people needing assistance and seven million of those are in famine-like conditions and rely completely on food aid," UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen Jamie McGoldrick said.

"The continued closure by the Saudi-led coalition of critical seaports and airports is aggravating an already dire humanitarian

situation. I think it poses a critical threat to the lives of millions who are already struggling to survive."

McGoldrick was speaking to reporters in Geneva by phone from Amman, because he said flights into Sana'a were blocked.

"The humanitarian impact of what is happening right now is unimaginable," he said.

McGoldrick said the Saudi regime plan to supply Yemen through the Saudi port of Jizan in the north and Aden in the south was too complicated, dangerous, slow and expensive, adding an estimated \$30 per ton to every shipment.

"We would ask that the coalition opens all the seaports as a matter of urgency and allows humanitarian and other supplies to move, as well as the movement of aid workers," he said.

Humanitarian agencies had been successful in preventing famine and tackling a cholera outbreak that has sickened more than 900,000 people in six months and killed over 2,200.

"This import blockade will reverse those gains and leave millions of people in a very precarious situation as we move ahead. The humanitarians are just holding things together, waiting for a peace process which is very much in the distance."

The north of the country, home to 78 percent of the population, had 20 days' stocks of diesel, crucial for pumping water and fighting cholera, and 10 days' stocks of gasoline, with no prospect of resupply soon, he said.

Yemen had commercial wheat stocks for three months for the entire population of 28 million and about 120 days of rice.

The UN children's agency UNICEF had only three weeks of vaccine supplies left in Yemen, and both UNICEF and the World Health Organization had shipments of essential medicines and vaccines blocked in Djibouti, McGoldrick said.

Yemen's national airline said on Tuesday a commercial flight had landed at Aden international airport after acquiring security permits.

(Source: agencies)

## Qatar's emir: Siege countries do not want end to crisis

Qatar's emir says neighboring countries that have imposed a land, sea and air blockade on the Persian Gulf state have no desire to end the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

Speaking at a session of Qatar's Consultative Assembly (the Shura Council) on Tuesday, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani said that the House of Saud regime, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt have shunned dialogue and do not want to resolve the situation.

The blockading countries severed ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing it of supporting "terrorism" and seeking close ties with Iran. Qatar denies the allegations.

"I am talking to you with all transparency. We mean what we say when we say we are ready for agreements through dialogue based on mutual respect for sovereignty and shared commitments ... but on the other hand, we know that the indications we receive say siege countries don't want a solu-

tion," Sheikh Tamim said.

The emir also said the blockading countries had underestimated the strength of Qatar's people living under the blockade.

"These countries with this attitude have opened a new stage in the relations between Gulf nations. We have benefited from this experience; it brought out the best from these people, it contributed to shaping Qatar's national identity and reinforced the national unity with the leadership," he added.

Sheikh Tamim said that Qatar has been "following a policy of self-restraint" during the crisis and that "the blockading countries have not been able to convince the international community about their allegations against Qatar".

"Qatar's record on fighting terrorism is documented and known to everyone," he added.

(Source: Al Jazeera)



## North Korea nuclear arsenal too developed to destroy quickly: Moon

Abe: North Korea still developing missiles despite launch pause

South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Tuesday it would not be easy for reclusive North Korea to destroy its nuclear arsenal quickly, even if wanted to, given its weapons programs were so developed.

North Korea is under heavy international pressure to end its weapons programs, pursued in defiance of the United Nations Security Council resolutions. But it has vowed never to give up its nuclear arsenal.

Speaking to reporters in the Philippines, Moon said that if North Korea agreed to hold talks, negotiations could be held with all options open.

"If talks begin to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue, I feel it will be realistically difficult for North Korea to completely destroy its nuclear capabilities when their nuclear and missile arsenal are at a developed stage," Moon said in a briefing.

"If so, North Korea's nuclear program should be suspended, and negotiations could go on to pursue complete denuclearization."

Moon's remarks were made available by the presidential Blue House.

Last week, the North said it did not oppose dialogue, but would "never put the issue related to the supreme interests of the DPRK and security of its people on the

bargaining table".

"We are not interested in such dialogue and negotiations in the least," the North's official news agency said, referring to the country by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The North defends the programs as a necessary defense against the United States plans to invade. The United States, which has 28,500 troops in South Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean war, denies any such intention.

U.S. President Donald Trump has traded insults and threats with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as North Korea races toward its goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the United States.

Trump threatened in his maiden UN address to "totally destroy" North Korea if the United States was threatened and has said the time for talking, the policy of previous U.S. administrations, is over.

Moon reiterated his stance that now was the time to increase pressure on North Korea so that it would come to talks.

He said differences in understanding between South Korea and China, North Korea's lone major ally, regarding the deployment of the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense

(THAAD) system on South Korean soil had not been resolved.

"China has not said it has changed its stance to agree to THAAD and still says THAAD infringes on its security. We have, in turn, explained THAAD is not aimed at China but only toward curbing North Korea's nuclear and missile provocations," he said.

Last month, South Korea and China agreed to end a year-long standoff over THAAD which had seen South Korean companies doing business in China suffer from retaliation against the system's deployment.

**■ Abe remarks**

Also Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Tuesday said an almost two-month pause in North Korean missile tests was no indication that it had halted its weapons development, insisting it was too early for any talks with the regime.

"I believe that it continues to develop its weapons," Abe told a news conference in Manila after a series of meetings with other Asian leaders at a gathering of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and East Asia Forum.

"There is no point for talks for the sake of talks," he said.

Abe's insistence that tough sanctions,

including restrictions on oil sales, are necessary to soften up the North Korean regime over the coming winter could put him at loggerheads with other countries such as South Korea that might agree to open talks if approached by the North.

After firing missiles at a pace of about two or three a month since April, North Korean missile launches paused in September, after it fired a rocket that passed over Japan's northern Hokkaido island.

Abe said he would work closely with other countries in the region including China and Russia to persuade North Korea to halt missile development and give up its nuclear weapon ambitions.

Abe, in a meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping at an Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Vietnam on Saturday, hailed a "fresh start" to the relationship between Asia's two biggest economies and military powers, including cooperation on North Korea.

Abe on Tuesday said that he wanted to deepen cultural and economic ties with China.

The Japanese leader, who also called for an Indo-Pacific region that is "open and free to all" returns to Japan on Wednesday.

(Source: Reuters)

## High-profile PKK terrorist killed in anti-terror op in Turkey's Sirnak

Turkish security forces have killed a senior member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militant group during an anti-terrorism operation in the country's southeastern province of Sirnak.

Turkey's Interior Minister, in a statement released on Tuesday, announced that Hülya Eroğlu, better known by the nom de guerre Gülbahar, was killed during an offensive in the Bestler-Dereler district of the province, situated some 1,000 kilometers (621 miles) east of the capital Ankara.

The statement added that she was a member of the so-called PKK executive committee, and on the red category of the terror blacklist.

The ministry further noted that 30 other PKK terrorists were also been killed in the counter-terrorism operation, which had been going on since November 2.

Ankara has been engaged in a large-scale campaign against the PKK in its southern border region. The Turkish military has also been conducting offensives against the positions of the group in northern Iraq.

The operations began in the wake of a deadly bombing in the southern Turkish town of Suruc. More than 30 people died in the attack, which the Turkish government blamed on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group.

After the bombing, the PKK militants, who accused the government in Ankara of supporting ISIL, engaged in a series of attacks against Turkish police and security forces, prompting the Turkish military operations.

(Source: Press TV)

## Democrats' confrontation with Iran missiles

**1 ->** Nephew said that during the 18 months of negotiations leading to the nuclear agreement, Iran resisted the U.S. pressure to put up its missile program for negotiations and successfully campaigned to limit the talks to the nuclear issue due to a lack of international support for the US position. Nephew warned that "Abandoning or undermining the JCPOA will, if anything, make it more difficult for Washington and its allies to address the [perceived] threat".

According to Nephew's remarks, the U.S.'s resilience to the issue of Iran's missile capability was due to the special international conditions of that time and increased probability of failure of the nuclear talks. It is certain that this opposition has no intrinsic side!

Democratic absolute ties to the Republicans during the passage of Resolution 1698 in the House of Representatives indicate that the party's leaders would also like to take advantage of Trump's presence at the White House to include Iran's missile power issue in the JCPOA. Some Democrats believe that this should be added as an "amendment" to the JCPOA. Others agree to conclude a secondary agreement on this matter.

However, both of the US main parties, regardless of formal differences, share a major aspect of the issue. Richard Nephew, a former member of the U.S. nuclear negotiating team, has advised US officials that in order to push Iran toward the table of negotiations on its ballistic missiles, Trump should pursue a "twofold" strategy.

"First, Washington should pursue measures, such as targeted economic sanctions, to slow and stymie the advance of Iran's missile program; and second, it should seek to negotiate a deal with Iran that would facilitate arms control." He also added that such an agreement could also include a ceiling on the number of missiles owned by regional governments.

One can see that the so-called moderate democrats, even prepared the details of their agreed missile deal with Iran in their own minds and presented it to the Republicans! Officials from the former U.S. administration believe that the cooperation of the European Troika with Washington on the inclusion of Iran's missile power in the JCPOA, or the conclusion of a second consensus, which includes restrictions on Iran's missile activities, is a huge bonus for Trump, and the new U.S. president should use it.

Former Secretary of State John Kerry has just announced that he will hold talks with European officials to keep up the JCPOA. Kerry opposes Trump's insistence on changing the Sunset Clauses and making the restrictions on Iran's nuclear program, permanent, but there is little opposition to the inclusion of nuclear missile power of our country in the content of the JCPOA. In other words, Kerry's consultations with Democrat senators and European officials on the issue of securing the JCPOA are not essentially over the issue Iran's missile power.

Even it seems that Kerry and other members of the former nuclear negotiating team have made suggestions to the Republicans to address the barriers and legal implications of the inclusion of Iran's missile power issue in the JCPOA. Democrat senators are currently busy with tight talks with Tom Cotton and Bob Corker over how to limit Iran's missile capability in the Congress plan.

Recently, the Associated Press reported that in Cotton-Corker joint plan, prepared in consultation with the White House, any attempt by Iran to convert the space launcher into an intermediate- or long-range missile, would automatically lead to automatic nuclear sanctions. Another part of this plan emphasizes that the flight test, production, or deployment of continental ballistic missiles would be synonymous with the violation of the JCPOA by Iran and means the return to nuclear sanctions.

Interestingly, according to the latest estimates in the U.S. Congress, most Democrats do not oppose the integration of Resolution 2231 and the JCPOA with each other, and to establish a direct link between Iran's missile program and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (which is contrary to the nuclear agreement).

Ultimately, the approach of former U.S. government officials and Democrats' senators towards the changes of nuclear talks, naturally leads to the false propaganda of the "Democrats' being a benign gland"! The proposition that was wrongly shaped by some of our politicians and created a lot of expenses for our country.

## Regional conference on Afghanistan kicks off in Ashgabat

The two-day 7th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA VII) kicked off in the capital of Turkmenistan Ashgabat on Nov. 14, a source familiar with the organization of the event said.

It is expected that the prospects of projects implemented within the RECCA in its main areas – energy, transportation networks, trade and transit facilitation, communications, will be studied during the event.

The RECCA, initiated in 2005 in Kabul, aims to consolidate the efforts of the countries of the region in stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan and promoting regional economic integration of South and Central Asia.

Issues such as partnerships in the field of regional interchange, the benefits of water use, the fight against drugs, transport, trade facilitation and the business climate are discussed during the conference.

**■ Taliban attack**

Meantime, almost two dozen police officers have been killed by Taliban terrorists in southern Afghanistan.

Police said on Tuesday that the terrorists staged a series of attacks on more than a dozen checkpoints in the province of Kandahar.

The overnight attacks left 22 police officers dead and 15 other wounded, according to police.

Authorities said government forces killed 45 militants and wounded 35.

The militants failed to seize any of the checkpoints.

"Our forces resisted until they received reinforcement and air support," said Zia Durrani, a spokesman for Kandahar's police chief. "The Taliban were defeated."

Local sources cited Kandahar police as saying that Taliban militants attacked security checkpoints in Zhari and Maiwand districts. The attack was one of the biggest attacks by the Taliban group in the past years.

Afghanistan is engulfed by violence and many parts of the country remain plagued by militancy despite the presence of foreign troops.

The United States and its NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies occupied the country as part of Washington's so-called war on terror in 2001, which toppled the Taliban regime.

Over the past 16 years, the Taliban have been carrying out a militancy across Afghanistan, killing and displacing government officials, security forces, and civilians.

(Source: agencies)



## Injured Rafael Nadal pulls out of ATP Finals



Rafael Nadal pulled out of the season-ending ATP Finals on Monday after being hampered by a knee injury during his round-robin defeat by Belgian David Goffin.

“I’m not ready to play... I fought a lot knowing it was my last match of the season,” the world number one, who had also quit midway through the Paris Masters tournament two weeks ago, told reporters following his 7-6(5) 6-7(4) 6-4 defeat by Goffin.

“My commitment was to try... I’ve missed this event too many times in my career,” added the Spaniard who has been plagued by knee injuries throughout his career.

Nadal, who was hobbling around the court for much of the third set of his contest against Goffin, qualified for the season ending tournament for the 13th successive year but withdrew before the start on five previous occasions.

Monday’s withdrawal means the 31-year-old, who claimed the French and US Open trophies this year to increase his Grand Slam haul to 16 titles, has yet to win the season-ending tournament.

“I was not enjoying it (out there today) so it was no fun to play like this. But I had an unforgettable season,” he added.

(Source: Fox Sports)

## Leicester City’s owners will fight ‘£323m lawsuit’

Leicester City Football Club’s owners have said they “categorically deny” a report that they owe £323m to the Thai government.

On Monday a court in Bangkok was reported by Reuters news agency to have accepted a lawsuit against King Power International.

However, the club and King Power say the allegations “have yet to be accepted”. They said they would “fight rigorously” any attempts to “discredit them”. The lawsuit accuses King Power of failing to pay the Thai government 14 billion baht (£323m) from the operation of a duty-free franchise it was awarded in 2006.

The case is also being brought against executives of state-owned Airports of Thailand, Reuters said.

A criminal court in Bangkok will now hear from witnesses next February, the news agency added.

But, Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha, King Power chief executive and Leicester City vice-chairman, said the alleged charges “have yet to be accepted by the court”.

“[The allegations] are categorically denied,” he said.

“King Power has always followed and been absolutely committed to the highest standards in proper and ethical business practice.

“We are proud of our company’s good name and honest reputation and will fight rigorously any attempts to discredit them”.

(Source: BBC)

## VAR coming to LaLiga next season, president confirms

LaLiga will have video assistant referee (VAR) capability starting next season, the competition’s president Javier Tebas has confirmed.

Italy’s Serie A and the German Bundesliga both introduced the system for this term, allowing referees the opportunity to review incidents before making a final decision.

It has not been entirely without controversy, though, with Bundesliga’s VAR project manager recently getting axed from his position after accusations of manipulating results.

Nevertheless, Spanish officials have been eager for the introduction of technology, with Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) president Juan Luis Larrea publicly revealing his desire for VAR in October.

And LaLiga president Tebas - who was previously opposed due to the expense - has seemingly come around to the idea, claiming for the first time that VAR will be implemented for the start of the 2018-19 season.

Speaking at a media conference on Tuesday, Tebas said: “Next season there will be VAR in LaLiga, for sure.”

Testing will begin in the second leg of Atletico Madrid’s Copa del Rey clash with Elche at the Wanda Metropolitano on November 29.

(Source: Goal)

## Watford dismiss Everton’s approach for manager Silva

Watford have rejected an approach from Everton for their manager Marco Silva, sources close to the Vicarage Road club have told ESPN FC.

Everton are continuing their search for a new manager following the sacking of Ronald Koeman and Silva has emerged as one of their top targets.

Watford are determined to keep hold of Silva as they look to build on his promising start to life at Vicarage Road this season and have informed Everton that any approach will not be welcome.

Sources have told ESPN FC that Silva would be interested in speaking to Everton about the vacancy at Goodison Park, but it remains to be seen if Watford would change their stance on the Toffees’ interest.

Everton under-23s coach David Unsworth is currently in caretaker charge of the club and secured his first win against Silva’s Watford before the international break.

(Source: ESPN)

# Shock and grief in Italy as World Cup dream implodes



“This match mirrors our country which is falling apart,” said a disappointed Stefano Pioli as he left the San Siro.

Italy is slowly recovering from a prolonged recession, but most people say they see no sign of the pick-up, with wages stagnant and unemployment stuck above 11 percent. On the political front, opinion polls predict that parliamentary elections due by next May will result in a deadlock.

Governments normally hope that the feel-good factor from sporting triumphs feeds over into the political sphere.

In the wake of Monday’s downfall, the normally busy Twitter feeds of ruling politicians

were quiet, while some opposition leaders sought to score quick points.

“There are too many foreigners on (our) pitches, from youth teams to Serie A and this is the result,” said Matteo Salvini, head of the anti-immigrant Northern League, echoing criticism in far-right quarters over the space given in sport to outsiders.

“STOP THE INVASION. Give more room to Italian lads,” he wrote, drawing hundreds of largely negative comments on his Twitter feed.

Italy last won the World Cup in 2006, but exited at the group stage in 2010 and 2014 after lacklustre displays. This latest setback showed how far the team have drifted from their peak,

belying the widespread expectation that they would have eased past Sweden.

“For years I’ve had this feeling that Italian football is a little like Italy itself, which lives a lot in the past when the reality is that it finds itself dealing with things that are quite intense, even shocking,” said Matteo Maragnano, peeling oranges in a cafe near Milan’s gothic cathedral.

Grasping for silver linings, newspaper commentators recognized that the Italian team was weak and would not have got very far in Russia.

“The only consolation is that we would have made utter fools of ourselves at the finals,” La Stampa said.

(Source: Reuters)

## Hong Kong soccer fans defy Beijing by booing Chinese national anthem



Hundreds of Hong Kong soccer fans booed and jeered the Chinese national anthem at an Asia Cup qualifier match on Tuesday

in defiance of Communist Party rulers in Beijing, while others turned their backs.

The booing of the anthem, “The March of the Volunteers”, has become a fixture at Hong Kong football matches, with some parallels to protests in the United States where American football players have knelt during the national anthem, an act denounced by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Now the former British colony is preparing to enact a law that will penalize people who boo the anthem, a measure that critics say undermines the city’s autonomy and freedoms guaranteed when it returned to China 20 years ago.

Details of the law, including jail terms and the scope of enforcement, have yet to be set. China extended the law to cover Hong Kong earlier this month.

Chinese officials have said the law is necessary to safeguard the authority of the state.

Several hundred fans greeted the anthem before the match against Lebanon with jeers and boos, with some unfurling banners that said “Die for Hong Kong”, while others yelled “We are Hong Kong” in English, rather than the local Cantonese

dialect. Some security guards signaled to the supporters to behave.

“I’m not scared even if it becomes law ... I will go to the toilet instead of sitting when the national anthem is on,” Hong Kong supporter Bendter Chong said when asked if he would continue to jeer the anthem when the law is enacted.

Tensions between Hong Kong and mainland China have increased in recent years amid calls for greater democracy. Mass street protests in 2014 paralyzed parts of the city although they failed to secure concessions on electoral reform from Beijing.

Most of the jeering fans were youths, underscoring how the younger generation has become increasingly disaffected by political tension and economic hardship.

Security was tight at the Hong Kong Stadium, the venue for the city’s annual Rugby Sevens tournament, with thousands of fans gathered for the match. The stadium has capacity for 40,000.

Hong Kong returned from British to Chinese rule in 1997 under a “one country, two systems” arrangement that guarantees a high degree of autonomy, including an independent judiciary and freedom of expression.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Trump asked for Xi’s help in UCLA players’ shoplifting case in China



U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he sought the help of Chinese President Xi Jinping in the case of three UCLA basketball players detained in China on suspicion of shoplifting last week, and said he hoped they could come home soon.

“What they did was unfortunate,” Trump told reporters in Manila. He said the trio could have faced long prison sentences, and described Xi’s response as “terrific”.

“They’re working on it right now.” Trump had raised the issue with Xi during a dinner held during the U.S. leader’s Nov. 8 to 10 state visit to Beijing. Trump was in the Philippines capital for a summit of Asian leaders.

“We hope everything works out,” Trump said, adding that he hoped the players could come home soon.

Asked about the trio and Trump’s discussing the issue with Xi, China Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a daily news briefing in Beijing: “Until now, I have not received any update, so I am unable to provide any further information”.

He did not elaborate. The three basketball players from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) were

detained by police on Nov. 7 in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou over allegations of shoplifting and were not on the team’s return flight to the United States on Saturday.

According to a senior White House official, the players had so far been given relatively light treatment as a result of Trump’s intervention.

“It’s in large part because the president brought it up,” the official told Reuters.

The UCLA team had been in China for a game against Georgia Tech in Shanghai on Saturday, which UCLA won 63-60. The teams had traveled to Hangzhou earlier in the week to visit the headquarters of the game’s sponsor, Chinese tech giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

The three students - freshmen LiAngelo Ball, Cody Riley and Jalen Hill - were taken in for questioning by police about alleged shoplifting from a Louis Vuitton store during the Hangzhou visit.

They were released early on Wednesday, but are barred from leaving China and confined to a luxury hotel in Hangzhou pending legal proceedings, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

(Source: Reuters)

## International return for Zlatan gets Sweden talking



seem entirely positive about a possible return.

“Zlatan is, as I expressed it, our greatest player of all time, a fantastic athlete in every way, but he has chosen not to take part,” he told a news conference in Milan on Tuesday.

“These guys who did take part and have performed fantastically. It’s sad to sit and talk about someone who hasn’t been here. I have a gang that has done fantastic, we can talk

about them instead.”

The Manchester United striker, who is currently recovering from a serious knee injury, has always been something of a divisive figure in his native country, adored for his skills but often perceived as arrogant and selfish.

After his departure and that of former manager Erik Hamren, the Swedes went back to their traditional style of being a tightly-knit collective where no individual is more important than the team - a return for Zlatan now could upset that delicate balance.

Andersson’s players were not in the mood to discuss a possible return either.

“First and foremost he must open up the possibility himself. Otherwise I don’t think one should have this discussion,” defender Ludwig Augustinsson said after the Italy game.

Ibrahimovic’s agent Mino Raiola was a lot more positive towards a comeback for his client.

“If it’s up to me, I’ll deliver him myself,” he told Sweden’s SportExpressen.

(Source: Mirror)



# Kianoush Rostami to sell his gold for quake victims

**S P O R T S** Olympic gold medal winner d e s k in Rio 2016 Kianoush Rostami is going to auction his medal to give the money to the people who were affected by the earthquake.

A 7.3 magnitude earthquake that struck Iran's western provinces has killed at least 450 people and injured more than 7,000 others.

The earthquake also caused major damage to buildings and infrastructure in the cities.

"My gold medal belongs to my people and I just hand it back to them. I didn't sleep in the previous nights due to a sorrowful event," Rostami said.

Rostami set a new world record of 396

kilograms in his 85kg weight class, winning his first Olympic gold medal.

According to Tasnim, which quotes the Iranian sports ministry's website, a number of top athletes and sports celebrities are set to meet at Tehran's Shiroudi stadium on Wednesday to raise money for earthquake victims.

Iran sits on a major fault line between the Arabian and Eurasian plates and has experienced a number of earthquakes in the past.

The deadliest this century occurred in 2003 when a magnitude-6.6 earthquake struck the southeastern city of Bam, killing some 26,000 people.



## Tractor Sazi win Shohada Cup

**S P O R T S** Tractor Sazi of Tabriz football team d e s k defeated Saipa 3-0 in the third edition of the four-a-side Shohada (martyrs) Cup on Tuesday.

In the match held in Tehran's Takhti Stadium, Farzad Hatami scored twice in the 27th and 74th minutes.

Omid Alishah scored the third goal in the 85th minute with a header.

"We took advantage of two matches in the competition. It was a good opportunity for us to prepare our players for

the League," Tractor Sazi coach Yahya Golmohammadi said in the post-match news conference.

"We could test some of our unused players in the competition," he added.

On Monday, Padideh defeated Pars Jonoubi Jam in penalty shootout to finish in third place.

The first edition of Shohada Cup was held in 2012, where Tractor Sazi won the title after defeating Esteghlal 2-1.

Saba claimed the title of the second edition, edging past Persepolis 1-0.

## In-form Iran could cause a stir at Russia 2018

With Monday's 1-0 win over Venezuela, Iran are now unbeaten in their last ten games and building well ahead of next summer's FIFA World Cup.

Team Melli were the third team to seal their berth at next summer's World Cup, behind hosts Russia and five-time champions Brazil, after securing qualification back in June.

The benefit of qualifying as early as they did is extra time to prepare and get things right ahead of appearing on the biggest stage in world football.

Impressively though, Iran are doing all that while still churning out positive results.

Since a 1-0 friendly defeat to Iraq back in March, they have not tasted defeat in ten matches and have notched seven wins along the way.

Discounting that match as a non-competitive fixture, the last time Iran lost a game which mattered was all the way back at the 2014 World Cup, considering their 2015 AFC Asian Cup quarter-final exit at the hands of Iraq in the penalty shootout.

To put that into context, since they lost 3-1 to Bosnia-Herzegovina in Bahia on June 26, 2014, the Iranians have won 27 matches, drawn nine (including that shootout loss) and lost just two (both friendlies against Sweden and Iraq).



Among these positive results are a 1-1 draw against Russia, triumphs over Montenegro and Togo, as well as their most-recent back-to-back victories over Panama and Venezuela, the former of whom are also preparing for a maiden World Cup appearance.

Of course, there is the argument that results do not really matter at this point. More importantly, coaches should explore different tactics and test previously-unexposed players, all working towards the end goal of peaking next summer.

True. And that is most likely the present

manifesto in the camps of Japan, Korea Republic and Saudi Arabia, Asia's other World Cup representatives who have not enjoyed similar joy recently.

But there is also the matter of breeding confidence and developing a winning mentality which cannot be undervalued.

Team Melli are now used to tasting victory and will do whatever it takes to keep this winning feeling going.

While the World Cup draw will only take place on December 1, based on the seedings, a possible group that could be thrown up is

Russia, Mexico, Iran and Panama.

From results over the past month or so, we already know what that would mean for the Iranians. Four points from two games, which is more than most teams could ask for.

Carlos Queiroz deserves all the credit that has been thrown his way recently, for getting Iran to where they are right now: a well-organized, enterprising outfit who clearly know what they are doing on the pitch.

Nonetheless, there is also genuine star quality in the team and it should come as no surprise that a significant number of Iranians are now plying their trade in Europe, including big names like Sardar Azmoun, Karim Ansarifard and Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

Iran are no strangers to the World Cup, having played in four previous editions, but are perhaps best remembered for their exploits at France 1998, when they beat United States with a team boasting legends Ali Daei, Mehdi Mahdavia and Karim Bagheri.

It is not unthinkable – likely in fact – that players like Azmoun, Ansarifard and Jahanbakhsh will one day be mentioned in the same breath as your Ali Daeis, Javad Nekounams and Ali Karimis.

That day could just come a lot sooner if Team Melli rise to the occasion in Russia next year.

(Source: Fox Sports)

## Wenger: I could take on international role after Arsenal era

Arsene Wenger has told beIN Sports he could be tempted to take over as coach of a national team once his reign at Arsenal is over.

Wenger has been linked with both the France and England jobs on several occasions, and said the lighter schedule involved in international management could be beneficial as he gets older.

"Maybe, yes, I will do it at some stage. But until now I've liked to be involved every day in the life of a club, because the real test is there," he said.

"Four or five weeks... OK it's a different experience, it's more concentrated. But I believe the real experience to manage a team is on a daily basis.

"But I will not always have the physical strength to do that, so maybe I will move into that [international work]."

Wenger has been in charge at Arsenal for 21 years



and was given a new two-year contract in the summer despite missing out on Champions League football for the first time during his Gunners career.

He also serves a TV pundit in France during international breaks and major tournaments, and laughed at the suggestion that he could find himself coaching at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"Maybe -- you never know," he said. "I haven't decided that, to me it's just a fact that my life is linked with football.

"In what way will depend on my physical state. But until the end of my life I'll be in football. I don't know in what kind [of role], as a director, as a manager.

"As long as possible as a manager, but one day that will stop. But I will stay in football, of course."

(Source: Soccer.net)

## Drogba defends Abramovich over sackings

Didier Drogba has told RMC he does not believe the high turnover of managers at his former club Chelsea is anything exceptional in the current game.

Drogba, 39, won four Premier League titles and the same number of FA Cups in two spells at Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich has appointed nine managers in the last 10 years, but Drogba said: "Everyone says Chelsea isn't very stable. But in modern-day football, there is no coach who lasts more than three or four years at a club.

"I asked him [Abramovich]: 'We have had how many managers in how many seasons?' He replied: 'But Didier, each time I have

done it, we have got results."

Drogba said he did not believe the changing managerial cast was a conscious strategy on Abramovich's part.

"No, because when the managers come in they have carte blanche at the club," he added. "They do what they want.

"Having said that, I don't see the relationship with the chairman on a daily basis. But you can't get into a conflict with your boss. If that's the case, it's that you want to leave."

After winning the Premier League in his first season in charge, current boss Antonio Conte has seen his own future brought into question with the Blues nine points behind leaders Manchester City.

Drogba was part of the 2014-15 Premier League-winning side, which he then saw struggle badly in the following campaign after he had left for Montreal Impact.

And with Champions League demands now placed on Conte's squad, Drogba said: "What's happening now is normal.

"Two years ago, they were on the brink of relegation. Last year, with one match a week, everything went well. The coach came in with drastic methods and the club became champions again.

"But most of the players have never been further than a Champions League quarter-final or semifinal for a while.

"You have to get used to matches every



three days again, get used to the demand for results, which is permanent, to the intensity.

"You have to be at your best every day, which isn't easy."

(Source: Soccer.net)

## Mahdavia invited to attend 2018 World Cup draw

**TASNIM** — Former Iranian national football team's player Mehdi Mahdavia has received an invitation from the International Federation of Football (FIFA) to attend the 2018 World Cup draw ceremony.

The ceremony will be held at the Kremlin Palace Ballroom in Moscow on Dec. 1.



This invitation came in recognition of the great role played by Mahdavia during his career in football.

He played in four Asian Cups (1996, 2000, 2004, 2007) and two World Cups (1998, 2006).

Mahdavia made 110 performance for Team Melli and scored 13 goals.

He was selected as a member of the Hamburger SV Team of the Century in October 2012 as well.

## Iran handball team to participate in Qatar's tournament

The Iranian national handball team will take part at the tournament in Doha, Qatar.

The tournament will be held in January with participation of Qatar, Iran, Oman and Algeria.

The event comes in light of the preparation for the 18th Asian Handball Championship to be staged in South Korea in January 2018. The event will serve as a qualification tournament for the 2019 IHF World Handball Championship.

Iran has been drawn in Group A along with Japan and Iraq. Group B consists of Bahrain, Uzbekistan, Oman and Australia.

Nine-time winner South Korea, India, Bangladesh and the UAE are in Group C and Qatar, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand and China have been drawn in Group D.

Iran won a bronze medal in 2014.

(Source: olympic.qa)

## I'm not the only one - Cantona claims others want Benzema back

Eric Cantona claims he is "not the only one" who wants to see Karim Benzema back in the France team, despite the player's seemingly slim hopes of earning a recall.

Benzema has not played for Les Bleus since October 2015, having been excluded from selection contention for Euro 2016 on home soil after being charged in connection with an alleged attempt to blackmail his international team-mate Mathieu Valbuena over a sex tape.

A favorable decision by France's Court of Cassation in July led the striker's lawyer to suggest the case against Benzema could now be dropped.

French Football Federation president Noel Le Graet had previously stated that Didier Deschamps can call on the Real Madrid striker should he see fit, but the head coach this week said talk of Benzema's return is "boring".

The player himself has also indicated he does not hold out hope of being picked while Deschamps remains in charge.

Nevertheless, Cantona, who also found himself ostracized from the national team for disciplinary reasons during his playing career, wants his former team-mate to recall the center-forward ahead of the World Cup finals in Russia next year.

"Obviously we want to see the best players, I want to see Karim Benzema in the French team and in my opinion, I'm not the only one," Cantona told radio station France Inter.

(Source: Daily Star)

## South Korea 1 Serbia 1: Koo penalty earns a draw in Ivanovic's 100th game

Branislav Ivanovic made his 100th appearance for Serbia in a 1-1 friendly draw away to South Korea on Tuesday.

The Zenit St Petersburg player started and was withdrawn in the 68th minute of the match in Ulsan, where a Koo Ja-cheol spot-kick cancelled out Adem Ljajic's opener for the visitors.

Having missed out on a place at Euro 2016, Serbia responded emphatically by topping Group D of UEFA World Cup qualifying ahead of Republic of Ireland and defeated China 2-0 in their previous friendly outing on Friday.

Korea meanwhile finished second in Group A of third-round AFC qualifying behind Iran to book passage to Russia, Shin Tae-yong having secured qualification after replacing the sacked Uli Stielike in June.

Shin handed Daegu FC goalkeeper Cho Hyun-woo a debut from kick-off, while at the other end, Eibar shot-stopper Marko Dmitrovic also made his first senior appearance as a half-time substitute, replacing the experienced Vladimir Stojkovic.

And there was a second Serbia cap for promising young Lazio midfielder Sergej Milinkovic-Savic, but it was an established member of the squad who broke the deadlock in the 59th minute, Torino's Ljajic finding the top-right corner of Cho's net with a shot from the center of the box.

The lead lasted just three minutes, though, before Koo equalized for Korea with a penalty.

The match may be best remembered for Ivanovic's milestone, as the captain prepares to lead the team to the World Cup finals next year.

(Source: Four Four Two)



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## Enrique Iglesias offers sympathy for victims of Iran-Iraq earthquake

**A R T** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Spanish singer and songwriter Enrique Iglesias has extended his sympathy to the victims of the powerful earthquake that hit regions in Iran and Iraq on Sunday night.



A post published on Enrique Iglesias's Instagram on Tuesday remembers those killed in the recent earthquake in Iran and Iraq.

“Everyone please send your love, thoughts and prayers to those suffering from the earthquake in Iran and Iraq,” the singer said in a message posted on his Instagram page on Tuesday.

A number of Iranians also expressed thanks to the singer for his message.

The 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck villages and towns in the regions and killed hundreds and injured thousands.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### Germany's Schiller to perform in Tehran

**A R T** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Schiller, a German electronic music band, is scheduled to give concerts at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry in Tehran on December 11 and 12, some Persian news websites announced on Tuesday.

Composer Christopher von Deylen is Schiller's bandleader. Ritmeno, an Iranian music news agency, is the organizer of the event.



### Iranian culture minister, Italian ambassador meet in Tehran

**A R T** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi and Italian Ambassador Mauro Conciatori met in Tehran on Monday to explore ways to promote bilateral relations.

Conciatori emphasized the need to expand ties on media, publications and cinema between the two countries.

Photo: Italian Ambassador Mauro Conciatori (L) and Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi meet in Tehran on November 13, 2017.

## Sam Smith scores first top spot on Billboard 200

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Sam Smith's "The Thrill of It All" scored the British singer's first No. 1 spot on the Billboard 200 album chart, edging out new releases by Maroon 5 and Blake Shelton, according to data from Nielsen SoundScan on Monday.

Taylor Swift's latest single, "Call It What You Want," led the digital songs chart, which measures online singles sales, with some 67,000 units sold.



Singer Sam Smith arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party in Beverly Hills, California February 28, 2016. (Reuters/Danny Moloshok)

Swift's "Reputation" album sold more than 717,000 copies on Friday, its first day of release, according to BuzzAngle Music data, and is expected to debut at the top of the Billboard 200 chart next week.

Smith's "The Thrill of It All" sold more than 237,000 units in its first week to debut as No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Billboard said it was Smith's best sales week ever in the United States.

The Billboard 200 chart tallies units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

Maroon 5's "Red Pill Blues" album took the No. 2 spot with sales of some 122,000 units for the week, while country singer Shelton's "Texoma Shore" debuted in fourth place.

# Iranian artists step up Kermanshah quake relief efforts

**A R T** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian artists have announced that they would organize various programs to help the victims of the devastating earthquake that hit the western Iranian region of Kermanshah on Sunday.

The powerful earthquake killed at least 450 people and injured thousands.

The Kurdish band Tarang plans to perform a benefit concert in Tehran to aid the victims of the deadly earthquake.

The concert will be held at Tehran's Andishe Hall on November 24, bandleader Borzu Amiri said in a press release on Tuesday.

“This is not the first time that the Kurdish people feel grief... However, I hope it will be the last time they feel sad,” he stated.

Tehran's Kurosh Cineplex also plans to help with relief efforts following the natural disaster. The cineplex will allocate half of its box office revenue on Wednesday to the victims.

Tehran's Mojdeh Gallery also will organize a three-day exhibition to aid the quake-stricken people. The gallery is scheduled to put part of its treasure trove on sale during the exhibition to raise funds for the victims of the earthquake.

Gallery manager Mojdeh Tabatabai has also asked Iranian artists to join the charity by donating their artworks to the exhibition, which will open on November 24.

Legendary Iranian Kurdish vocalist Shahram Nazeri also expressed his sympathy for the victims of the quake during the unveiling of his new album “Who Is a Lover?” in Tehran on Monday.

The organizers observed a minute of silence before the unveiling ceremony in remembrance of those who perished in the earthquake.

The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has also stopped all art and cultural programs for three days to sympathize with those who have lost loved ones in the accident.

## CineIran Festival announces lineup

**A R T** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Thirteen films have been selected to compete in the 3rd CineIran Festival in Toronto, Canada, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

“Ferrari” by Alireza Davudnejad will go on screen at the opening ceremony of the festival on Friday, while “Subdued” by Hamid Nematollah will be screened at the closing ceremony on November 19.

“No Date, No Signature” by Vahid Jalilvand, “Negar” by Rambod Javan, “Yellow” by Mostafa Taqizadeh, “Azar” by Mohammad Hamzei and “Sara and Aida” by Maziar Miri are among the films.

“Israfil” by Ida Panahandeh, “Kupal” by Kazem Mollai, “Blockage” by Mohsen Qarai,



Leila Hatami acts in a scene from “Subdued” by Hamid Nematollah.

“Appendix” by Hossein Namazi, “Boarding Pass” by Mehdi Rahmani and “Untaken Paths” by Tahmineh Milani have also been selected to be screened at the event.

## Spanish exhibit explores beauty of Persian, Islamic architecture

**A R T** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Spanish architect Jose Maria Simon showcased a collection his photos depicting the glory of Persian and Islamic architecture in an exhibition at the University of Almeria in his country.

The beautiful tiles and geometric motifs used in the religious and civil structures of Iran were highlighted in the exhibit “Fascinating Persia, Beauties of Islamic Geometry”, the university announced.

The exhibit, which was held from October 6 to November 13, put 30 photos on display that Maria Simon took during a trip to Iran.

In the closing ceremony held at the university on Monday, Iranian cultural attaché to Spain Alireza Esmaeili said that the photos represented a small part of the sustainable Islamic Iranian architecture,



Photos by Jose Maria Simon are on display in an exhibition at the University of Almeria in Spain.

## Amazon to produce “Lord of the Rings” television series

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Amazon.com Inc has bought the global television rights to “The Lord of the Rings”, the company said on Monday, in what may be its biggest and most expensive move yet to draw viewers to its streaming and shopping club Prime.

Amazon said it will produce a multi-season series that explores new storylines preceding author J.R.R. Tolkien's “The Fellowship of the Ring”, the first installment in the famed fantasy trilogy.

Three movies made of the trilogy in the early 2000s, filmed in New Zealand by director Peter Jackson, garnered nearly \$3 billion at the box office and 17 Academy Awards.

Amazon acquired the rights from the Tolkien Estate and Trust but did not say how much it paid for them. The estate, HarperCollins and the films' distributor New Line Cinema will help Amazon produce the television series.

The project underscores a shift in Amazon's video programming.

Now, Amazon is looking for a dramatic show that could be a hit globally, much like HBO's popular fantasy series “Game of Thrones.” It is going head to head with Netflix Inc, Hulu and others to bid for top content.

This puts Amazon in uncharted territory, with higher production costs expected.

Amazon justifies its spending on programming as a way to draw new sign-ups to Prime, whose members buy more goods more often from the world's



The Amazon TV button on a remote control is shown in this photo illustration. Picture taken November 10, 2017. (Reuters/Mike Blake)

largest online retailer.

“Amazon Prime heads to Middle Earth”, Chief Executive Jeff Bezos said in a Twitter post.

Although “The Lord of the Rings” is the most famous work to emerge from Tolkien's pen, he wrote much else, including prequel “The Hobbit” - also made into a movie trilogy by Jackson - and the denser “The Silmarillion”. The Amazon series will delve into some of Tolkien's work that the movies did not explore.

“Amazon is committed to producing super high quality, recognized, branded entertainment,” said Wedbush Securities industry analyst Michael Pachter. “That's a departure from shows like “Transparent” and “Catastrophe”.

“By definition this will be expensive,” he added.

## Radonezh festival to screen shorts from Iran

**A R T** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Two Iranian films will go on screen at the 24th Radonezh International Film and TV-Program Festival in Moscow, Russia.

“Father's Striped Pajamas Were Blown Away by the Wind” by Mohammad Sadeqi will be screened in the official competition of the festival, while “Refugee Camp” by Saeid Naqavian will compete in the animation section.

“Father's Striped Pajamas” centers on children with Afghan-Iranian parents and “Refugee Camp” is about the immigration issue in the world.

The festival will be held from November 21 to 24.



A poster for “Refugee Camp” by Saeid Naqavian

whose examples are observed in Spain by the presence of Islam.

The rector of the University of Almeria, Carmelo Rodriguez Torreblanca, also gave a short speech during the ceremony, in which he thanked Esmaeili for organizing the exhibition.

He also expressed his hope that there would be more opportunities for Spanish people to become better acquainted with Persian art.

Also at the closing ceremony, Pilar Garrido Clemente, the professor of Arab and Islamic studies at the University of Murcia, delivered a speech titled “Spiritual Geometry and Architecture in Iran”.

Iran's Cultural Office in Spain organized the exhibit in collaboration with the University of Almeria.

## Franco hopes “Disaster Artist” conveys passion of worst film ever made

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — When James Franco set out to direct “The Disaster Artist”, a faux behind-the-scenes look at the making of 2003's “The Room”, often called one of the worst films ever made, he said it was not to poke fun at the “Room” creator Tommy Wiseau.

Franco, who also stars as the eccentric, strangely accented Wiseau in “The Disaster Artist”, said he believed the film conveyed Wiseau's passion for the medium, despite “The Room” being critically panned.

“He is an artist in that sense, so (“The Room”) is a disaster and it's a piece of art,” Franco said in an interview at Sunday's premiere of “The Disaster Artist” at the American Film Institute (AFI) festival in Los Angeles.

Franco recruited his brother Dave Franco to star as Wiseau's co-star and friend Greg Sestero, who co-wrote the book “The Disaster Artist: My Life Inside The Room, The Greatest Bad Movie Ever Made,” which Franco's film is based on.

“We never wanted to make fun of ‘The Room’ or Tommy Wiseau,” said Dave Franco.

“On the contrary, we wanted to celebrate Tommy and we wanted to celebrate this movie and celebrate people who have dreams and don't take no for an answer,” he added.

In “The Disaster Artist”, rolling out in U.S. theaters from Dec. 1, Wiseau and Sestero become disillusioned with Hollywood and decide to make their own



Director and star James Franco arrives for the gala presentation of “The Disaster Artist” at the AFI Film Festival in Los Angeles, California, U.S., November 12, 2017. (Reuters/Mike Blake)

film, which Wiseau funded, directed and starred in.

The film shows that even now, nobody knows Wiseau's age, where he is originally from and how he had \$6 million to create the “worst film ever made.”

“People would make fun of ‘The Room’ but 15 years later it's still selling out cinemas across the world,” Sestero said.

“At this point, how can you call it the worst movie? It's a success, you know.”