



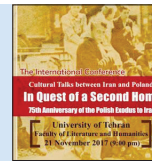
Velayati advises France against meddling in Iran's affairs **2**



Anonymous benefactor donates \$2.5m for quake-hit Kermanshah **12**



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General's promise comes true

Albukamal, ISIL's last stronghold, totally liberated as General promised

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Iran, Russia, Turkey agree on key Syrian issues

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran, Russia and Turkey, the three power brokers in Syria, on Sunday succeeded to reach an agreement on “all the key issues” to bring an end to the nearly seven years of war in Syria.

The agreement was made as Javad Zarif, Sergei Lavrov and Mevlut Cavusoglu - respec-

tively the foreign ministers of Iran, Russia and Turkey - met in Antalya in continuation of diplomatic efforts to end the conflict.

During a press briefing on the outcome of the trilateral meeting, Zarif said Iran, Russia and Turkey are ready to establish means for lasting security, stability and peace in Syria, IRNA reported. **→2**

UN reveals no missiles sent to Yemen by Iran

By staff and agency

A panel appointed by the UN Security Council sent a confidential letter to diplomats on November 10 questioning evidence presented by the Saudi-led coalition that the missile fired on November 4 was connected to Iran.

“The Panel has seen no evidence to support claims of SRBM [short-range ballistic missile] having been transferred to

the Houthi-Saleh alliance from external sources in violation of paragraph 14 of resolution 2216,” The Intercept reported on Friday.

“Analysis of the supply route options by land, sea or air identifies that any shipments of the large containers used to ship and protect the missiles in transit would stand a very high chance of being interdicted in transit **→2**

Iran's 9-month exports to EU up 107% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Imports of EU during the first nine months of 2017 from Iran hit €7.25 billion, European Union's statistics agency Eurostat reported.

In comparison with the same period in the preceding year, the figure witnessed 107 percent rise, the same report confirmed.

Iran-EU trade from January to September 2017 increased 62 percent from its previous €9.10 billion in 2016 to €14.78

billion in 2017. Europeans imported €3.49 billion of goods from Iran in the first nine months of 2016 and the value grew up to €7.25 billion in the same period in 2017.

During the said nine months, exports of EU to Iran hit €7.53 billion, boosting 34 percent from the first nine months of 2016, i.e. €5.6 billion.

Iran-EU trade balance from January to September 2017 was €278 million in Europe's favor.

ARTICLE

By Prof. Mehdi Zare & Farnaz Kamranzad

7.3 magnitude quake in Sarepol-e Zahab

On November 12, 2017, at 18:18 UTC (21:48 Iran Standard Time), a major earthquake with the moment magnitude of 7.3 occurred in Kermanshah province, western Iran.

According to the National Center of Broadband Seismic Network of Iran, the epicenter of the earthquake was located at 34.88°N and 45.84°E near the Iran-Iraq border with a depth of 23 km.

The focal mechanism solutions for this earthquake indicate a fault dipping shallowly to the east-northeast, or on a fault dipping steeply to the southwest.

Based on the active fault map of Iran, this earthquake can be triggered by the movement of the Zagros Mountain Front Fault (MFF) in the Sarepol-e-Zahab region.

The event taking as long as 30 seconds was felt in an extended area in Iran, Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, eastern Turkey, Iraq and Syria.

Until November 17, 2017, about 345 aftershocks with magnitudes over 2.5 have been recorded by the Iranian Seismological Center (IRSC) (Fig 1).

The largest magnitude of the earthquake's aftershock sequence was 4.7, which occurred on November 13th.

The strong motion of the November 12, 2017, M_w 7.3 mainshock has been recorded by 98 stations of the Iran Strong Motion Network (ISMN) (Table 1).

Among these records, the highest value corresponds to the Sarepol-e Zahab station with an uncorrected PGA of about 684 cm/s² (Fig 2). The corrected PGA values of the important records will be soon released in subsequent studies.

Based on the preliminary assessments, the maximum intensities and most of the destructions have been reported in the Sarepol-e-Zahab and Qasr-e Shirin cities of Kermanshah province. Until today (Nov. 17), 436 people are killed and over 7,500 injured. Most of the destructions have been reported in the Sarepol-e Zahab and Qasr-e Shirin.

■ Farsinaj earthquake of 13 December 1957, Ms7.1

An earthquake of magnitude Ms=7.6 and mb=6.5 occurred in the Farsinaj region of Kermanshah province on Friday morning, Dec. 13, 1957, at 5:15:00 a.m. local time, (1:45:00 GMT). **→9**

Jack Straw says Saudi Arabia is danger to Mideast

Former UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw says Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's foreign policies pose major risks to the Middle East region.

The former British diplomat made the remarks on Saturday at a summit in London where politicians and academics gathered to speak at the “Crisis in Saudi Arabia: War, Succession and the Future” summit. It was attended by around 200 people and organized by the non-profit press monitoring organization Middle East Monitor, according to Aljazeera news outlet.

Straw, who has served as Britain's foreign secretary as well as home secretary, said Saudi Arabia's defense spending is the fourth highest in the world, outstripping that of its regional rival, Iran. However, he noted that the true scale of social inequality in the country was unknown because its “absolutist”

rulers have prevented scrutiny.

“We have seen a very good example of that exercise of absolutist power with the detentions on November 4 of around 200 senior Saudis now incarcerated in the most luxurious prison in the world, the Ritz, and facing allegations of systematic corruption totaling \$100bn, equivalent to the whole of Saudi Arabia's national debt,” said Straw.

The former foreign secretary warned that Saudi Arabia poses a “threat” to stability in Lebanon unless calmer heads prevail in the kingdom.

Speaking at the conference on Saudi Arabia hosted by Middle East Monitor, Jack Straw said the policies currently being pursued by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman are extremely risky for the region. Straw also warned against military intervention in Lebanon.

Saad Hariri will be in Lebanon 'by Wednesday'

Saad Hariri has confirmed he will return home to Lebanon in the coming days to take part in Independence Day celebrations.

“I will return to Beirut in the coming days,” Hariri said in Paris, where he met French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday in a bid to solve the political turmoil surrounding his sudden resignation as prime minister two weeks ago.

“I will participate in the celebrations for our independence and it is there that I will make known my position on all the issues.”

Lebanon will mark its Independence Day on Wednesday, November 22.

Earlier on Saturday, Lebanese President Michel

Aoun and Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri both posted statements saying Hariri would return for the occasion.

A statement on Aoun's official Facebook page said the president received a phone call from Hariri after his arrival in France's capital, in which the Lebanese prime minister confirmed his participation in the Independence Day celebrations.

Berri posted a similarly worded statement on his own Facebook page.

Hariri announced his resignation as Lebanese prime minister in a televised speech on November 4, shortly after landing in the Saudi capital, Riyadh.

He has not returned to Lebanon since and his

“The generation I dealt with were much more cautious,” he said, referring to his 2001-2006 period in office, which was marked by the ill-fated Iraq War and allegations over extraordinary rendition of terror suspects. “They were much more cautious when it came to the social environment in Saudi Arabia. ... Saudi foreign policy could end up as a threat in Lebanon unless wiser council prevails.”

Another speech of the event was delivered by Paddy Ashdown, the former leader of Britain's Liberal Democratic Party who once mediated in the Bosnian conflict.

He warned that it was crucial for countries such as the UK and the U.S. not take sides in a standoff unfolding between Saudi Arabia and Iran. (Source: MNA)

trip to France's capital, Paris, on Saturday was his first outside of Saudi Arabia since he made the announcement.

Politicians within his own Future Movement, as well as his rivals, have demanded he return home to formalize his resignation.

■ Saudi role

On Wednesday, Aoun accused Saudi Arabia of holding Hariri against his will.

On Friday, Lebanon's Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, during a visit to Russia, criticised groups for attempting to “dislodge the Lebanese head of state”, without naming them.

The suspicions are not limited to Lebanese politicians. **→13**

ARTICLE

By Mahnaz Abdi

Head of the Economy Desk of the TehranTimes

Kish gas field still waiting for development

Kish gas field, discovered in 2006, is the second largest gas field in the Persian Gulf and also Iran's largest reserve of natural gas after South Pars field shared by Qatar.

The giant gas field lying under Iran's Kish Island is estimated to hold 66 trillion cubic feet of gas in place, of which 50 trillion cubic feet is recoverable. The field also holds at least 1 billion barrels (160 million cubic meters) of gas condensate, of which 331 million barrels (52.6 million cubic meters) are recoverable.

The project for development of the field started in late March 2007 through allocating \$2.2 billion from the internal sources of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) for conducting the first phase of development by Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC).

Then in February 2010, an Iranian consortium headed by Bank Mellat signed a \$10-billion agreement with NIOC to develop the field.

In a meeting participated by the oil minister on April 19, 2014, it was approved that the field would be developed by producing 1 billion cubic feet of gas and 11,300 barrels of condensate during 18 months in the first phase.

The field is projected to be developed in five phases each to produce 1 billion cubic feet of gas per day.

But, implementation of the project to start production from the field has been postponed for a number of reasons among which protection of environment has been the major one as the field is under Kish Island, a major tourism hub of Iran.

To avoid environmental damage to Kish Island, while all of the 14 onshore wells are being dug on the island, the four projected gas refineries were decided not to be built on the island and instead they will be constructed in a region called “Garzeh” some 18 kilometers far from the island on the coastline of Bandar Lengeh County of the southern Hormozgan Province, and the extracted gas will be transferred to Garzeh via a 19-kilometer pipeline. **→4**



Quake turns 130,000 to tent dwellers

The photo shows tents established to home people whose houses were partially or completely destroyed in a massive earthquake which hit the province of Kermanshah in western Iran. The 7.3 magnitude tremor, which happened on the evening of November 12, left about 130,000 homeless. The interior minister has said work has started for construction of provisional houses as the winter is quickly approaching. He said efforts for building permanent homes will begin in a month by the Housing Foundation.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Zarif renews call for ending war on Yemen

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has sent a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres insisting it is essential to end the war on Yemen.

“My message to the United Nations’ secretary general about dismal situation in Yemen and urgent necessity to study my four-item plan and reach a political solution to the human suffering,” he tweeted in Arabic on Sunday.

He attached his letter to Guterres in his twitter message. The letter was also written in Arabic.

Since the beginning of Saudi-led aggression against Yemen in March 2015, the country has been grappling with a humanitarian disaster.



Enemies trying to cause chaos in Lebanon: cleric

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — A Tehran Friday prayer leader has said that the enemies are trying to create tension in Lebanon, urging the Islamic ummah to act in unison to counter the plot.

Addressing worshippers, Ayatollah Mohammad Emami said current developments indicate that the enemies are planning to create chaos in Lebanon, a country he called calm.

Earlier this month, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned while in Saudi Arabia, unnerving people in his country.



Larijani visits quake-hit Kermanshah province

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani visited the western province of Kermanshah on Sunday to closely watch the quake-hit regions and express sympathy with the families who lost loved ones in the devastating earthquake.

During his visit, Larijani called for immediate action to reconstruct the destroyed houses, ISNA reported.

He also urged banks to facilitate the process of providing loans to rebuild houses.

Last Sunday, a 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck Kermanshah Province, leaving around 440 people dead and more than 9,000 injured.

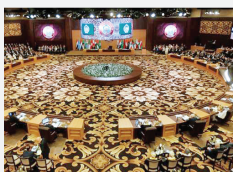


Iran, EU officials plan to meet on Monday

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Senior officials from Iran and the European Union are scheduled to hold talks in Tehran on Monday to discuss ties.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi and Helga Schmid, the secretary general of European External Action Service (EEAS), planned to chair the third round of Iran-EU talks.

Araqchi, Schmid and Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, are also scheduled to hold a seminar at the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center (INTC) on prospects and progress of nuclear cooperation.



Lebanon FM refuses to attend Arab summit on Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Lebanese Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil refused to attend an emergency Arab League summit in Cairo on Sunday which was requested by Saudi Arabia to discuss “confronting” Iran and Hezbollah, a Lebanese Foreign Ministry source told the French news agency AFP.

“This morning, a decision was taken that Lebanon would be presented by Antoine Azzam, the permanent representative to the Arab League,” the source said.

The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain — who since June have been boycotting the Persian Gulf Arab nation of Qatar in part over its warm ties with Iran — had held talks in the Egyptian capital ahead of the Arab League meeting set for later in the day. No details emerged from that meeting.



U.S. Congressman: A Saudi war against Iran would be ‘utter folly’

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Ro Khanna, a senior legislator at the U.S. Congress, has warned Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that launching a direct war against Iran would be an “utter folly”.

“It would be utter folly for the Saudi crown prince to start a direct war with Iran,” al Jazeera quoted Khanna as saying.

He urged the U.S. to slam Saudi attack plot against Iran, noting “U.S. should condemn it.”

“We should certainly not come to their defense if they are perpetrating an attack on Iran,” Khanna added.

Iran, Russia, Turkey agree on key Syrian issues



1 → He noted, “The measures taken in Astana, over the past eleven months have dramatically minimized conflicts in Syria.”

Zarif praised the role of regional co-operation in easing the Syrian crisis, saying because of such cooperation the war fatalities in Syria fell considerably and the resistance forces have gained momentum in their success against the terrorist groups.

Iranian, Russian, Turkish presidents to meet on Syria soon

Presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey will attend a summit in Sochi, Russia, on Wednesday to accelerate the peace process and find ways to guarantee a better future for Syria, Zarif said.

“We hope to prepare a suitable ground for overcoming bitter conditions of the Syrian people. Those are the Syrian people who prepare the ground for stability, peace and security of their country along with the Syrian government,” Zarif explained.

A few hours after the trilateral meeting, Zarif tweeted about the success of the peace initiative and denounced Saudi Arabia for fueling terrorism in the region.

“Working with Turkish & Russian counterparts to build on ceasefire we achieved in Syria & preparing for inclusive dialog

among Syrians,” he said.

“Irony is KSA accuses Iran of destabilization, while itself fuels terrorists, wages war on Yemen, blockades Qatar & foments crisis in Lebanon.”

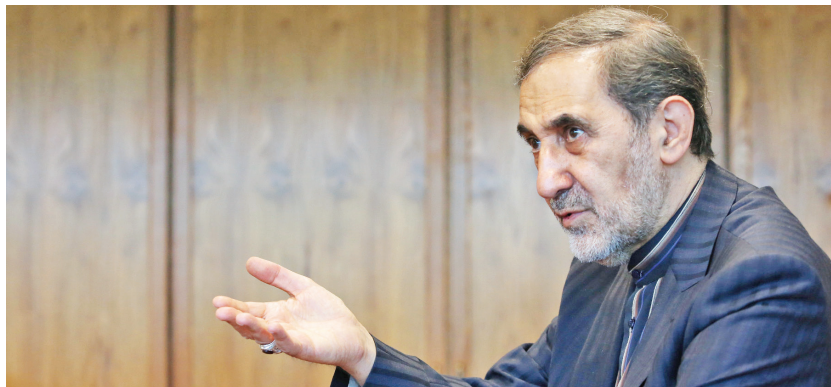
Agreement on all key issues

Lavrov told reporters that the foreign

ministers of the three countries reached agreement on all the key issues.

“We have gathered to discuss certain issues related to preparations for the summit of the three countries’ president, which is due in Sochi on November 22,” Lavrov said, TASS news agency reported. “The

Velayati advises France against meddling in Iran’s affairs



By Mohammad Homaefar

TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has advised France against meddling in Iran’s internal affairs, particularly its missile program.

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Friday that Tehran should clarify the strategy around its ballistic missile program and should be what he called “less aggressive” in the region.

“It is not to the benefit of Mr. Macron and France to interfere in the missile issue and the strategic affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which we deem as very sensitive issues,” Velayati said in a Saturday interview with IRIB news.

Such interference, Velayati warned, will have no impact other than diminishing the French government’s credibility in Iran’s eyes.

“What does this issue have to do with Mr. Macron? Who is he at all to interfere? If he wants relations between Iran and France to grow then he should try not to interfere in these issues,” the veteran politician added.

The top advisor also ruled out the possibility of any negotiations on Iran’s missile program.

“No country would bargain over its national interests,” he said.

Earlier in November, Macron paid a visit to Saudi Arabia, during which he voiced concerns about Tehran’s ballistic missile program, saying, “There are negotiations we need to start on Iran’s ballistic missiles.”

After Iran signed a nuclear agreement with six world powers in 2015, France sought to normalize relations with Tehran. However, in recent weeks, tensions between the two countries have risen.

Following Macron’s visit to Saudi Arabia, Tehran said the French president should take a clearer stance and to “gauge Middle East developments with more awareness.”

Macron’s inconsistent remarks regard-

ing the nuclear deal or the JCPOA, Tehran’s missile program and its role in the region has angered Iran, but he doesn’t seem to see his stance as contradictory.

“We want an Iran that is a less aggressive power and for its ballistic missile program to be curtailed. But Iran is a regional power and we speak to them,” Macron said at a press conference in Gothenburg, Sweden on Friday.

He also said France would not take sides between Shia and Sunni, pointing to the disputes between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which have severed diplomatic ties since nearly two years ago.

To make matters worse, Saad Hariri, who resigned as Lebanon’s prime minister this month while strongly criticizing Iran’s role in the region, arrived in Paris on Saturday. He had announced his resignation while on an official visit to Saudi Arabia.

Now, France is trying to play a “mediatory role” to ease tensions across the region.

Macron is also slated to visit Iran by the year-end at the invitation of President Rouhani to bridge the gap between the two sides’ positions on Tehran’s missile program and discuss other issues.

Macron’s visit to Iran would be the first by a French head of state or government since 1971.

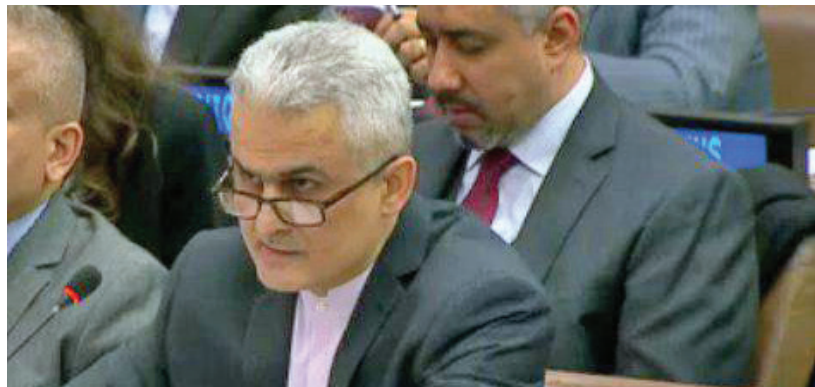
Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi announced last week that “Macron’s position on Iran’s missile program was not accurate and we would like to ask for more consideration in taking such positions.”

Qassemi said Macron’s visit to Tehran can help clear up misunderstandings over Iran’s missile program.

“His visit can prove helpful in lessening differences between the two countries on this issue,” Qassemi added.

Tehran has repeatedly said that its missile program is for defense purposes and is not up for negotiation.

Takfiri ideology is Saudi born, Iran insists



An Iranian diplomat to the United Nation on Friday insisted on Tehran’s long-held belief that Takfiri ideologies are Saudi born that cannot be underestimated.

“The toxic threat of Saudi born Takfiri ideologies cannot be underestimated,” Mohammad Hassani-Nejad said in the third committee of the UN General Assembly.

Following is full text of his speech published by IRNA:

First of all, it sounds illustrative that Saudi the bastion of democracy and human rights was consulted by Canada on a country specific human rights resolution. A terrible joke. As if, someone consults the angel of death on the virtues of life.

Secondly, the support expressed by Saudi in its intervention to terrorists, secessionist and terror cults who were once close allies of Saddam Hussein was not surprising to us. However, it should alarm some countries who intend to forget history or the horrible ramifications of their indifference or even tacit support of despots who are exactly following suit the path that Saddam once went.

Thirdly, there seems to be fewer absurd things in the world politics than the Saudis selling their divisive fanaticism and inherent sectarianism as a bright vision for promotion of human rights. After all, the toxic threat of Saudi born Takfiri ideologies cannot be underestimated.

Saudi born Takfiri ideologies act like an invasive species that attempt to uproot all other variations and bring them to the brink of extinction. Saudi government, the unelected royal family, Saudi charities, and Saudi-sponsored organizations are still busy supporting this menace and as a result sponsoring the required hardware and software for

work was very useful, we have reached agreement on all the key issues.”

“We shall report to our presidents our views on how to move forward, how to improve the process, which we call the Astana process and which should offer most favorable conditions to have the Geneva process at last gain some effective instruments to settle the tasks, outlined in the UN Security Council’s Resolution 2254,” the Russian minister said.

Iran, Turkey and Russia brokered the Astana peace initiative and agreed to act as guarantors of a nationwide Syrian ceasefire. So far, the three countries have held seven rounds of peace talks in Astana in order to find a solution to end the Syrian crisis.

The fourth round of the Astana talks in May produced a document on creating de-escalation zones in Syria.

According to the document, the de-escalation zones include Idlib province and part of the provinces of Latakia, Hama and Aleppo, the area to the north of Homs, Eastern Ghouta, as well as Deraa and Quneitra provinces in southern Syria.

The de-escalation zones are closed to the U.S.-led coalition’s aviation. The coalition’s aviation can operate only in areas controlled by Daesh (ISIS).

extremists around the world.

Saudi money and mindset has produced not only Osama bin Laden, but also 15 out of the 19 hijackers of Sept. 11; sent more suicide bombers than any other country to the conflict zones including Syria after 2003; and has supplied more foreign terrorist fighters to the ISIS than any other country.

It should be quite instructive to recall that the Daesh adopted after its establishment official Saudi textbooks for its schools. Out of 12 works republished by the ISIS [Daesh], seven are written by the founder of Saudi Takfiri school of thought. ISIS [Daesh] and similar terrorist organizations draw their ideas from what is written in Saudi texts and the Saudi principles.

Saudi Arabia, pumping out its rigid and bigoted Takfiri ideology, is undermining pluralism, tolerance and openness and as such, serving as the breeding grounds for mass atrocities, human rights violations and terrorism.

Saudi [Arabia] needs to be stopped of abusing and ridiculing international forum. Saudi remarks in defense of tolerance and human rights are blatant mockery of humanity, human rights, justice and peace.

Saudi [Arabia] can offer its citizenship to Sophia the robot though it has no male companion but cannot forever ridicule the world by distracting attentions from its abhorrent human rights records.

The Saudis cannot forever play the ‘Iran card’ to justify its engagement in wars of aggression, regional bullying, destabilizing behavior & risky provocations and absurdly blame others for their consequences. It is perhaps time for the Saudi to accept outcomes of its wrong choices.

UN reveals no missiles sent to Yemen by Iran

1 → by the Saudi-Arabia-led [sic] coalition forces or the Combined Maritime Forces naval forces deployed in the region. No such interdictions have been reported to the Committee in accordance with the requirement to report arms or arms related material seizures in accordance with paragraph 17 of resolution 2216,”

the panel’s brief said.

Saudi Arabia accused Iran of supplying Yemen with the missile which was intercepted by the Saudi Air Force in midair over King Khalid International Airport in the Saudi capital Riyadh on November 4.

Iran categorically dismissed the allegation.

U.S. President Donald Trump also claimed on November 5 that Iran is behind the missile launch. In response, Islamic Revolution Guards Corps chief Mohammad Ali Jafari said Trump has “many absurd” things against Iran and this one is like others.

Britain to pay over £400m debt to Iran: ambassador

Iran’s ambassador to Britain says an outstanding debt owed by London to Tehran will be transferred to the Central Bank of Iran soon, in what will mark an end to the decades-long legal dispute between the two sides, Press TV reported.

Hamid Baeedinejad said on his Telegram channel on Thursday that the over £400-million (\$596 million) sum will be transferred to the Central Bank of Iran “in the coming days.”

The Iranian diplomat further expressed regret over certain media attempts to link the debt pay-off to the case of an imprisoned

Iranian national.

The payment “with regard to a 1974 arms deal has nothing to do with the case of Nazanin Zaghari who has been arrested in Iran over security charges or to any other issue,” Baeedinejad told reporters on Thursday.

Iran’s intelligence authorities arrested Zaghari at the Imam Khomeini International Airport in April 2016 on spying charges as she was on her way home to London after visiting her parents in Tehran.

Zaghari was subsequently tried in an Iranian court and sentenced to five years

in prison for spreading propaganda against the Islamic Republic.

British media have said that she worked for the Thomson Reuters Foundation. However, UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said in a statement to a parliamentary committee last week that Zaghari had been “simply teaching people journalism.”

The Telegraph cited unidentified sources as saying that London was planning to transfer the outstanding debt to Iran to have Zaghari released.

The British tabloid daily, The Sun, said Iran had demanded that Britain return the money

which the former Shah of Iran paid in 1979 for 1,750 Chieftain tanks and other vehicles, almost none of which was eventually delivered.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman, Bahram Qassemi, dismissed the report on Thursday, saying that “the British government’s debt pay-off to Iran has no connection to the case of Mrs. Nazanin Zaghari and these two issues are two separate cases.”

British Prime Minister Theresa May’s spokesman also stressed Thursday that there was no link between the £400 million debt owed to Iran and the fate of Zaghari.

Mugabe sacked as leader of Zimbabwe's ruling party

President Robert Mugabe was dismissed as leader of Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF party on Sunday in a move to force a peaceful end to his 37 years in power following a de facto military coup. He was replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa, the deputy he sacked this month, sources at a special ZANU-PF meeting to decide Mugabe's fate told Reuters.

"He has been expelled," one of the delegates said. "Mnangagwa is our new leader." Mugabe's wife Grace, who had harbored ambitions of succeeding Mugabe, was also expelled from the party.

Speaking before the meeting, war veterans' leader Chris Mutsvangwa said the 93-year-old Mugabe was running out of time to negotiate his departure and should leave the country while he could. "He's trying to bargain for a dignified exit," he said.

Mutsvangwa followed up with threat to call for street protests if Mugabe refused to go, telling reporters: "We will bring back the crowds and they will do their business."

Mnangagwa, a former state security chief known as "The Crocodile," is now in line to head an interim post-Mugabe unity government that will focus on rebuilding ties with the outside world and stabilizing an economy in freefall.

On Saturday, hundreds of thousands of people flooded the streets of Harare, singing, dancing and hugging soldiers in an outpouring of elation at Mugabe's expected overthrow.

His stunning downfall in just four days is likely to send shockwaves across Africa, where a number of entrenched strongmen, from Uganda's Yoweri Museveni to Democratic Republic of Congo's Joseph Kabila, are facing mounting pressure to quit.

■ Support evaporating

Men, women and children ran alongside the armored cars and troops who stepped in this week to oust the man who has ruled since independence from Britain in 1980.

Under house arrest in his lavish 'Blue Roof'



compound, Mugabe has refused to stand down even as he has watched his support from party, security services and people evaporate in less than three days.

His nephew, Patrick Zhuwao, told Reuters Mugabe and his wife were "ready to die for what is correct" rather than step down in order to legitimize what he described as a coup.

But on Harare's streets, few seemed to care about the legal niceties as they heralded a "second liberation" for the former British colony and spoke of their dreams for political and economic change after two decades of

deepening repression and hardship.

The huge crowds in Harare have given a quasi-democratic veneer to the army's intervention, backing its assertion that it is merely effecting a constitutional transfer of power, rather than a plain coup, which would entail a diplomatic backlash.

Despite the euphoria, some Mugabe opponents are uneasy about the prominent role played by the military, and fear Zimbabwe might be swapping one army-backed autocrat with another, rather than allowing the people to choose their next leader.

"The real danger of the current situation is that having got their new preferred candidate into State House, the military will want to keep him or her there, no matter what the electorate wills," former education minister David Coltart said.

The United States, a long-time Mugabe critic, said it was looking forward to a new era in Zimbabwe, while President Ian Khama of neighboring Botswana said Mugabe had no diplomatic support in the region and should resign at once.

(Source: Reuters)

Palestinians say they won't be blackmailed by U.S. move to close PLO office

Palestinian officials expressed surprise at a United States decision to close the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) office in Washington unless the group enters peace negotiations with Israel, and said they would not surrender to blackmail.

A United States State Department official said that under legislation passed by Congress, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson could not renew a certification that expired this month for the PLO office, "given certain statements made by the Palestinian leaders about the International Criminal Court (ICC)."

The law says the PLO, the main Palestinian umbrella political body, cannot operate a Washington office if it urges the ICC to prosecute Israelis for alleged crimes against Palestinians.

In an address to the United Nations General Assembly in September, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said the Palestinian Authority called on the ICC "to open an investigation and to prosecute Israeli officials for their involvement in settlement activities and aggressions against our people."

The State Department official added that restrictions on the PLO in the United States, including the operation of its Washington office, could be waived after 90 days if the U.S. President Donald Trump "determines the Palestinians have entered into direct, meaningful negotiations with Israel."

"We are hopeful that this closure will be short-lived," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

According to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa, the Palestinian presidency expressed surprise at the U.S. move, which was first reported by the Associated Press.

Wafa quoted Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki as saying that Palestinian leaders would not give in to blackmail or pressure regarding the operation of the PLO office or negotiations on an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

The agency quoted a spokesman for Abbas, Nabil Abu Rdainah, expressing surprise, given that meetings between Abbas and Trump had been "characterized by full understanding of the steps needed to create a climate for resumption of the peace process."

A Palestinian official who spoke on condition of anonymity told Reuters the State Department had informed

the Palestinians of the decision on Wednesday.

It was not immediately clear what effect the State Department's move might have on the Trump administration's efforts to revive peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, which are led by Jared Kushner, the U.S. president's son-in-law and senior adviser.

Abbas' spokesman called the U.S. move an unprecedented step in U.S.-Palestinian relations that would have serious consequences for the peace process and U.S.-Arab relations, according to Wafa.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement on Saturday: "This is a matter of U.S. law. We respect the decision and look forward to continuing to work with the U.S. to advance peace and security in the region."

The State Department official said the U.S. move did not amount to cutting off relations with the PLO or signal an intention to stop working with the Palestinian Authority.

"We remain focused on a comprehensive peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians that will resolve core issues between the parties," the official said.

(Source: Reuters)

EU cuts Turkey funding after 'democratic deterioration'

The European Union (EU) will cut funds allocated to Turkey due to the "deteriorating situation in relation to democracy, rule of law and human rights" there, according to a European Parliament statement.

The bloc will shrink the so-called "pre-accession funds" for Turkey by 105m euros (\$124m) and suspend an additional 70m euros in the 2018 budget, the statement said on Saturday.

Ankara is entitled to receive 4.45 billion euros from the EU between 2014 and 2020 in the framework of the bloc's "Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance".

The Council of the EU and the European Parliament (EP), the two legislative institutions of the bloc, still need to formally approve the new budget.

"Concerning Turkey, MEPs made sure to cut pre-accession funds by 105 million euros (with a further €70 million in commitments put in reserve), as they consider the deteriorating situation in relation to democracy, rule of law and human rights worrying," a statement by the EP said, referring to its members as MEPs (Members of the European Parliament).

Many of the EU member states have been in condemnation of the Turkish government's arrests and purges of tens of thousands of



people after a failed coup attempt in July 2016.

Local and international rights groups have accused the government of using the coup attempt as a pretext to silence opposition in the country.

The government has said that the purges and detentions aimed to remove from state institutions and other parts of society the supporters of Fethullah Gulen, a United States-

based, self-exiled religious leader on whom Ankara blames the attempted coup.

"For those... that depart from our democratic standards and breach fundamental rights, we have sent a clear message that the money that the EU provides cannot come without strings attached," MEP Siegfried Muresan the rapporteur for the 2018 general budget, told reporters after the announcement of the deal.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

■ Turkey denies accusations

Elsewhere, Ravza Kavakci Kan, a deputy chairperson of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP/Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi), said Ankara takes the EU membership and its relations with the bloc seriously, despite, what she called Turkey's unfair treatment by the bloc.

"The EU, as well as some member states, have not been acting fair in their attitude towards Turkey for a while now. We can see it in decisions taken against Turkey by the EP as well as some national parliaments. This situation bothers us," Kavakci Kan, who is also a member of Turkish parliament's committee on EU harmonization, told Al Jazeera.

"We do not accept the accusations made by the EU. We have been particularly closely monitoring the investigations and trials that started after the failed coup in order for them to be carried out within the rule of law. Turkey should be congratulated for these efforts," she said, regarding the EU move to cut Turkey's funds. The EP, which has a limited impact over Turkey's membership talks, has at various times called for the process to be suspended in non-binding votes.

(Source: agencies)

its giant landmass, purely to act as a defensive deterrent, before it can even think of any offensive operations. Taking this into account, the Russian armed forces' 831,000 active personnel doesn't seem excessive. Especially when you consider how smaller nations like China (2.1 million) and the U.S. (1.3 million) can call on considerably larger numbers.

But the issue here is Europe, and even if Russia could divert all its troops (assuming the Asian borders will police themselves) to a conflict with the EU states, how would the numbers measure up?

So as you can see, Russia is hugely outnumbered. Even if Vladimir Putin issued a presidential decree this week, which set the desired number of Russian troops going forward at slightly over one million.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. nuclear general says would resist 'illegal' Trump strike order



The top United States nuclear commander said on Saturday that he would resist President Donald Trump if he ordered an "illegal" launch of nuclear weapons.

Air Force General John Hyten, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), told an audience at the Halifax International Security Forum in Nova Scotia, Canada that he had given a lot of thought to what he would say if he received such an order.

"I think some people think we're stupid," Hyten said in response to a question about such a scenario. "We're not stupid people. We think about these things a lot. When you have this responsibility, how do you not think about it?"

Hyten, who is responsible for overseeing the U.S. nuclear arsenal, explained the process that would follow such a command.

As head of STRATCOM "I provide advice to the president, he will tell me what to do," he said in his remarks, retransmitted in a video posted on the forum's Facebook page.

"And if it's illegal, guess what's going to happen? I'm going to say, 'Mr. President, that's illegal.' And guess what he's going to do? He's going to say, 'What would be legal?' And we'll come up with options, of a mix of capabilities to respond to whatever the situation is, and that's the way it works. It's not that complicated."

Hyten said running through scenarios of how to react in the event of an illegal order was standard practice, and added: "If you execute an unlawful order, you will go to jail. You could go to jail for the rest of your life."

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Hyten's remarks.

They came after questions by the U.S. senators, including Democrats and Trump's fellow Republicans, about Trump's authority to wage war, use nuclear weapons and enter into or end international agreements, amid concern that tensions over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs could lead to hostilities.

Trump has traded insults and threats with North Korea's Leader Kim Jong Un and threatened in his maiden United Nations address to "totally destroy" the country of 26 million people if it threatened the United States.

Some senators want legislation to alter the nuclear authority of the U.S. president and a Senate committee on Tuesday held the first congressional hearing in more than four decades on the president's authority to launch a nuclear strike.

(Source: Reuters)

7 Bahraini civilians disappeared



An independent human rights group has expressed deep concern over the fate of seven people, including two minors, who have been forcibly disappeared as the ruling House of Khalifah regime relentlessly continues with its crackdown on human rights activists and pro-democracy campaigners in the tiny Persian Gulf state.

The Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR) said in a statement that the victims, who come from five different villages, had not been heard of for weeks, Arabic-language Bahrain Mirror news website reported.

The BFHR identified the minors as Sadiq Jaafar al-Sammak from the town of A'ali, situated about three kilometers southeast of the capital Manama, and Mohsen Abdullah al-A'ali from the village of Buri, located about 13 kilometers southwest of Manama.

The human rights group stressed that the first minor had gone missing since October 5, while the second had disappeared since November 8.

The BFHR said the Manama regime had restored to enforced disappearance as a means of pressure against those arrested over exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the House of Khalifah dynasty relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from the House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

Scores of people have lost their lives and hundreds of others sustained injuries or got arrested as a result of the House of Khalifah regime's crackdown.

On March 5, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

Bahraini monarch King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3.

(Source: Press TV)

State Department claims Russia's military strength eclipses that of EU states

Across the west, the "Russian-aggression" theme is being promoted by vested interests to scare politicians and the public into agreeing to increases in defense spending. But a United States State Department claim that Russia's military strength eclipses that of European Union states is especially ludicrous. "The threat to [the West's] collective security posed by Russia is clear, and we on both sides of the Atlantic cannot ignore it," Brian Hook said. The official is a senior adviser to the U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who was addressing the Center for Strategic & International Studies' Transatlantic Forum.

According to RT News, "He went on to liken the level of the threat the West saw from the Soviet Union with the one it sees from modern Russia, claiming that 'as in the past, the threat runs from the Baltic to the Black Sea,'" before suggest-

ing that the "military arrangement of forces in Europe favors Russia." This is absolute balderdash, for reasons I will outline.

■ Different Range

For starters, the land area of the Russian Federation is almost four times greater than the size of the European Union. However, it's much less densely populated, with the EU boasting more than 511 million citizens and Russia only 146 million. Due to Russia's vast size and geographical position, it shares land borders with 16 countries, by its own definition, and maritime frontiers divide it from another pair. And co-existence ranges from the relaxed (Finland and Azerbaijan) to the friendly (China and Belarus) to the potentially unstable (North Korea and Georgia) to the downright hostile (Ukraine and the United States).

As a result, Moscow needs a large army, spread across

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	88202.3
IFX	996.96

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	40,820 rials
EUR	48,000 rials
GBP	54,808 rials
AED	11,139 rials

Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$62.72/b
WTI	\$56.71/b
OPEC Basket	\$59.98/b
Gold	\$1,295.10 /oz
Silver	\$17.73/oz
Platinum	\$953.55/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Singapore growth could top 3% in 2017

Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong says his country is expected to exceed expectations this year by recording economic growth above 3 percent.

Addressing his People's Action Party's 2017 convention on Sunday, Lee said Singapore was benefiting from an improved world economy, but would have to press on with plans to restructure and upgrade the economy to sustain growth.



“Our unemployment remains low, wages have gone up, and most significantly productivity has picked up,” said Lee. “Initially we expected 1.5 percent growth, then we revised it up to 2 to 3 percent, now it looks like we may exceed 3 percent.”

After surging to nearly 4.5 per cent in 2013, economic growth dipped below 2 percent in 2015-16 as the trade-reliant nation was buffeted by an unfavorable world economy. While a pick up in manufacturing and financial services has added momentum to the economy, a series of blockbuster land deals this year suggests the city-state's property market is also set to break out of a prolonged slump.

Looking ahead, Lee said he expected government spending on healthcare, infrastructure, and other social services to keep rising, meaning that “raising taxes is not a matter of whether, but when.”

And, despite a rail collision last week on Singapore's Mass Rapid Transit network that injured over 30 people, Lee said Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan retained his “full support and confidence.”

(Source: Bloomberg)

UK's Hammond, under pressure on budget, promises more homes

British finance minister Philip Hammond promised to speed up house building in his new budget plan this week and said he had some room to help voters despite his tight squeeze on the public finances.

Hammond, who is under pressure to help a weakened Prime Minister Theresa May with his tax and spending plans even as the economy slows after last year's Brexit vote, told the Sunday Times he would target the construction of 300,000 homes a year.

May has said she wants to help younger voters, many of whom fear they will not achieve the living standards of their parents' generation.

Hammond said he would do “whatever it takes,” including new powers and planning rules, to get builders building and pledged that “the next generation will have the same opportunities as their parents to own a home.”

Last week, the government said the number of new homes in England rose to 217,350 last year, the highest in nearly a decade but a long way below levels in the 1960s and 1970s

The Sunday Times also said Hammond suggested he would boost spending for Britain's health service and further ease a squeeze on the pay of public sector workers in his budget plan on Wednesday.

But Hammond said he had to “signal a continued commitment to fiscal responsibility,” suggesting he would stick to his targets for cutting the budget deficit.

“We are heavily constrained fiscally. We don't have huge amounts of room for maneuver. But we do have some room,” he said.

In an apparent joke at the tough balancing act he faces, Hammond was photographed by the Sunday Times looking puzzled and scratching his head as he pored over papers coming from his famous red budget briefcase.

Many economists say Hammond will struggle to meet his target of eliminating Britain's budget deficit by the mid-2020s because of the country's stubborn productivity problem.

Britain's official budget forecasters have said they expect to cut their productivity growth forecasts, suggesting slower growth ahead and less tax revenue for Hammond.

But many voters are tired of seven years of cuts to many areas of public spending and the budget is seen as vital for Prime Minister May who has made little headway in the Brexit negotiations with the EU, recently lost two cabinet members and remains weakened after losing a parliamentary majority in June. (Source: Reuters)

Iran, Austria hope for a snapback in trade

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Vice President of the Vienna Chamber of Commerce Anton Ofner expressed hope that economic bonds between Iran and Austria will soon reach its pre-sanctions level of €400 million, the portal of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) reported on Saturday.

Addressing the joint meeting of TCCIMA and Vienna Chamber of Commerce in the Austrian capital, Ofner said that both sides plan to expand their mutual economic ties via implementing accorded agreements in the long-run.

Referring to the signed contracts between Iranian and Austrian companies in 2016, he said that Austria's exports to Iran has increased in the first half of 2017 and mutual trade value is expected to hit €400 million in near future.

As he announced, Iran can become one of the main partners of Austria in fields of medicine and medical equipment,



Vice President of the Vienna Chamber of Commerce Anton Ofner addressing joint meeting of TCCIMA and Vienna Chamber

Exports from South Pars oil layer exceed 4.2m barrels

ENERGY TEHRAN — Exports of crude oil from the oil layer of Iran's South Pars field (in the Persian Gulf) has hit 4.26 million barrels during the eight stages since start of export from the layer in the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2017), according to the director of project for developing the layer.

As Fardin As'adi told ISNA, oil production from the layer currently stands at 25,000 barrels per day (bpd) on average, which will be maintained by the end of the tenth Iranian month of Dey (January 20, 2018), and some 550,000 barrels are exported in each 25 days.

He put the amount of oil production from the layer at 4.5 million barrels so far.

Iran started pumping oil from South Pars oil layer on March 19, according to Gholam-Reza Manouchehri, the deputy



managing director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) for engineering and development affairs.

South Pars, a supergiant gas field Iran shares with Qatar in Persian Gulf waters, is estimated to contain over 14 billion barrels of oil in its oil layer. The field is also estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Iran's light crude oil price nears \$64

ENERGY TEHRAN — The price of Iran's light crude oil in the week ended on November 10 rose \$3.78 to stand at \$63.82 per barrel, Shana reported on Sunday.

The country's light oil price was reported \$50.79 on average since the beginning of 2017 until November 10.

According to the report, Iran sold its heavy crude oil at \$60.15 per barrel in the mentioned week, up \$2.82 from its preceding week.

Meanwhile, with \$2.94 rise from its preceding week, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s basket price stood at \$61.66 per barrel

in the said week.

As Reuters reported, Oil prices surged in the mentioned week supported by supply cuts by major exporters as well as continuing concern about political developments in Saudi Arabia.

Oil prices rose in that week after data suggested drilling in the United States would throttle back supporting the signs that global supply glut is receding.

Traders believe prices got a boost from unconfirmed rumors that Saudi King Salman would relinquish the throne to his son Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman. Similar rumors were spread in September and October.

Kish gas field still waiting for development

I → Iran has already signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with some domestic and international companies on conducting studies on development of Kish gas field. The companies include the Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell PLC, Italy's Eni and Russia's Gazprom in addition to Iranian companies Ghadir and Saane'.

Shell presented the results of studies on the gas field to NIOC on September 12. The parties discussed the results during a meeting in Tehran attended by senior officials including NIOC Deputy Director for Engineering and Development Gholamreza Manouchehri and PEDEC Managing Director Nouredin Shahnazi-Zadeh as well as Hans Nijkamp, the head of the department for Iran affairs at Royal Dutch Shell.

Development of the field will be offered on tender based on Iran's new model of oil contracts known as IPC.

In an interview with ILNA on November 14, Shahnazi-Zadeh mentioned Shell as the most serious company to develop the field.

Iran prepares to export LNG to boost trade relations

By Irina Slav

Iran could ship its first export-bound cargo of LNG at the end of 2018, BMI Research said, after a JV between Iran's Kharg Gas Refining Co. and Helma Vantage began talks with Belgian ship owner Exmar to charter its floating LNG vessel Caribbean FLNG for the short term.

The JV has already sealed a deal with the National Iranian Oil Company to deploy the vessel, which has a capacity of 500,000 tons of LNG. The JV will also be in charge of storing and transferring the future LNG cargoes.

The project is worth \$600 million, and BMI Research says that its volume will not be all too significant, but it would achieve a tactical purpose, allowing Iran to deepen its relationship with its partners in Europe and Asia, building the foundation of what could become a profitable business in a future where LNG will only continue to gain prominence over oil.

“Iran offers one of the fastest options to employ and monetize the currently re-

dundant Caribbean FLNG vessel,” BMI said. “The facility was constructed to process natural gas, which has a high methane content of 97.6%. While the gas feed from South Pars is far wetter, with greater gas liquids and condensate content, methane from flared gas at nearby offshore projects is the targeted supply.”

Iran's ambitions in the LNG area are not new. There were plans to develop LNG production projects in place in the early 2000s. Western sanctions interrupted these plans, but now they are back on the table, unless the U.S. imposes new sanctions on the country, which is always a possibility under the current administration.

Until that happens, if it ever does, Iran has access to Western oil and gas extraction technology, and has a relationship with Total, among others. The French company signed the first new Iranian Petroleum Contract, for the development of the huge South Pars gas field. The French company has also previously expressed interest in acquiring the Iran LNG project. (Source: oilprice.com)

Total can't leave Iran's gas deal under U.S. pressure: Zanganeh

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Saturday that the French energy company Total cannot leave the gas deal with Iran under U.S. political pressures, Press TV reported.

“Iran has a valid legal contract with Total and the company can only drop the deal if the United Nations Security Council imposes international sanctions against Tehran,” Zanganeh said on Saturday on the sidelines of his meeting with visiting Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Alisher Sultanov.

Earlier in October, Total Chief Executive Patrick Pouyanne said his company will go ahead with Iran deal even if the United States decides to impose unilateral sanctions on Teheran.

In an interview with International Oil Daily, Pouyanne said, however the com-

pany would examine the consequences of Trump's decision, and if there are any laws that obliges it to withdraw from Iran, then it will comply.

The official also vowed to support Iranian tradesmen for exporting their products to Eastern Europe.

A 33-member Iranian delegation, headed by TCCIMA Secretary General Bahman Eshqi, left Tehran for Bratislava and Vienna on November 12 to negotiate expansion of economic ties with the two countries' businessmen.

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

The TCCIMA delegates participated in a meeting at Economic Chamber of Lower Austria on November 14 and attended a meeting at Bratislava Regional Chamber of Commerce the day after to explore avenues of further cooperation with their Slovakian and Austrian counterparts.

Iranian 6-month gas exports to Iraq stands at 1.2b cubic meters

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran has exported 1.2 billion cubic meters of gas to Iraq since late June, Shana reported quoting the managing director for the Iranian Gas Transmission Company, Saeed Tavakoli, as saying on Saturday.

According to Tavakoli, Iran has agreed to export up to 25 million cubic meters of gas to Baghdad on a daily basis and exports of the same amount of gas to Basra will also start as soon as Iraq is ready.

Iran signed two contracts in June to export gas, one for the Iraqi capital Baghdad and the other for southern Iraqi city of Basra.

The two countries initially signed a deal in 2013 for Iran to supply Iraqi power stations,



but officials in the past blamed poor security in Iraq for hampering implementation.

Iran, which has huge gas reserves alongside its oil resources, also exports gas to Turkey.

Iran's exports to Turkey witnessed an increase of 80 percent during the first seven months of 2017 and stood at \$4.5 billion.

as all the results are ready we will start negotiation with the investor in the framework of the IPC to begin the development process”, the managing director explained.

“We had started phase one some years ago which was stopped due to changing the investor. We have now resumed the project to supply gas to Kish Island in the first step and at the same time we send some part of gas produced in the first phase to Assaluyeh Port [an energy hub in southwestern Bushehr province] to be refined in one of the refineries over there”, he added.

While the long-time disputes over environmental issues of the project are somehow over by the decision to establish the refineries in Garzeh and also despite the willingness from both Iranian and foreign companies to conduct the project, Kish gas field is still waiting for development.

Although Shahnazi-Zadeh has said: “We have started phase one in order to prevent from loss of time.”

Italian, Chinese businesses eye growth opportunities under Belt and Road

The Belt and Road Initiative would provide long-term development chances for growing industry sectors in Italy and China, according to professionals from both countries.

The issue was discussed at a recent forum held in Italian city of Milan, which attracted Italian and Chinese entrepreneurs, officials, and experts.

Titled “Building a concrete roadmap for Italy and China's Joint Growth”, the event was organized by Italy-China Foundation with the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Economic Development and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce.

“As a comprehensive project, the Belt and Road (initiative) might give all companies a strong opportunity to reduce their costs, and cut distances in both cultural, infrastructural, and logistical terms,” Massimiliano Guzzini, vice president of lighting technology firm IGuzzini, told Xinhua.

The Belt and Road Initiative, which comprises the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, was proposed by China in 2013, with the aim of

building a trade, investment and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient trade routes.

Having spent years in China, where the firm opened a branch in 2005, the entrepreneur is able to observe “great changes” in the Chinese society, and the consumer trends in Asia overall.

“Design was not yet well known at the time (2005), but since then I have seen Chinese firms, training courses, and universities' departments and research centers growing steadily in the sector,” Guzzini said.

Now that the industry was showing vibrant signals of potential growth in the area, the Belt and Road Initiative would “indeed boost the future development of our industry”, he added.

For Italy, China is currently the ninth largest market for exports, and the first target market for sales to the Asia-Pacific region, according to Italy's state-owned export credit agency SACE. The trade exchange between the two countries suggest there is room for broad development.

(Source: China Daily)



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Yes, Trump with the nuclear codes is terrifying. But the threat of a first strike is a vital deterrent

Alarmed by President Trump’s bellicose statements and impulsive governing style, two congressional Democrats have introduced legislation that would prohibit the president — any president — from launching a nuclear first strike without a declaration of war by Congress explicitly endorsing such an attack.

We too are dismayed by Trump’s rhetoric, including his threat to rain “fire and fury” on North Korea. We shudder to think about the human consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, even in self-defense, which is why we support arms-control agreements and efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. We also believe that, as a general matter, Congress needs to be more assertive in exercising oversight over the use of military force.

But we can’t support the Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017 proposed by Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts and Rep. Ted Lieu of Torrance.

Congress shouldn’t attempt to legislate a drastic change in the president’s authority to defend the nation.



In seeking to restrict the president’s authority to launch a first strike, the bill cites Congress’ authority under the Constitution to declare war. The legislation says that the framers of the Constitution understood that “the monumental decision to go to war . . . must be made by the representatives of the people and not by a single person.”

The problem is that Congress’ authority to declare war has always been in tension with the Constitution’s designation of the president as “commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the United States,” a role that sometimes requires the president to act swiftly to defend the nation. The nuclear age further complicated the relationship between the two branches because decisions about launching a nuclear attack may have to be made under severe time pressure.

■ **Principal concern**

Our principal concern about this bill is that it would make it harder for a president not just to use nuclear weapons, but also to deter aggression by leaving adversaries in doubt about whether and when such weapons might be used.

This ambiguity is part of the paradoxical policy of nuclear deterrence that traces back to the Cold War era, in which Soviet military planners contemplating ways to overrun NATO countries’ defenses with tanks and troops had to reckon with the possibility that the U.S. might respond with nuclear weapons. But it still has some relevance today, which is why the U.S. hasn’t committed to “no first use.”

The Obama administration considered, but eventually decided against, making such a commitment. Instead, that administration adopted a policy stating that the U.S. would consider use of nuclear weapons only in certain extreme circumstances. It also promised to strengthen conventional capabilities with the goal of “making deterrence of nuclear attack on the United States or our allies and partners the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons.”

In testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee last week, Brian P. McKeon, a Pentagon official in the Obama administration, said that the Trump administration is continuing to follow the Obama policy while it develops its own approach to nukes.

That would be consistent with Trump’s comments about “first use” during last year’s campaign. In a debate with Hillary Clinton he said: “I would certainly not do first strike. I think that once the nuclear alternative happens, it’s over. At the same time, we have to be prepared. I can’t take anything off the table.”

Of course, many members of Congress — not all of them Democrats — worry that this sort of cautious formulation might give way to a heedless reaction if the mercurial Trump felt provoked.

At the Foreign Relations Committee session, Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) said he and others were concerned “that the president of the United States is so unstable, is so volatile, has a decision-making process that is so quixotic, that he might order a nuclear weapons strike that is wildly out of step with U.S. national security interests.”

We understand the concerns about Trump’s temperament. Indeed, we share them. But, despite his Twitter rants, the president has deferred to the advice of his national security team, including on nuclear strategy. So long as that is the case, Congress shouldn’t attempt to legislate a drastic change in the president’s authority to defend the nation.

(Source: LAT)

Saudis try to starve Yemen into submission



Yemen would suffer “the largest famine the world has seen for many decades, with millions of victims” if Saudi Arabia did not immediately allow food and medicine to be offloaded at all of Yemen’s seaports, and permit the resumption of air services to the cities of Sana and Aden, the United Nations official Mark Lowcock warned Security Council diplomats last week.

Saudi Arabia tightened its blockade against Yemen on Nov. 5 after Houthis threatened Riyadh with a ballistic missile. The Saudis have since partly lifted the blockade, but only of ports controlled by its allies. That is not nearly enough to get urgently needed food to nearly seven million Yemenis facing famine.

Misery has been Yemen’s lot after more than three years of unrelenting war. At least 10,000 people have been killed, many by Saudi-coalition bombings carried out with military assistance by the United States. A raging cholera epidemic has sickened some 900,000 people, and 17 million Yemenis are now completely dependent on humanitarian aid for survival. Ships and cargo planes ferrying food, medicine and vital fuel to Yemen’s war-ravaged civilians are inspected by the United Nations to make sure they are not transporting arms.

Impeding humanitarian assistance and using famine as a weapon are war crimes, and Saudi Arabia must realize that the world is finally taking notice.

On Monday, the United States Congress passed a resolution denouncing the

targeting of Yemeni civilians and calling for all parties involved to “increase efforts to adopt all necessary and appropriate measures to prevent civilian casualties and to increase humanitarian access.” The vote should serve as a warning to

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is intent on expanding Saudi Arabia’s regional influence, that while he may have the unreserved blessing of President Trump, American lawmakers are less tolerant of flagrant violations of international law

and of basic humanity.

The only way to end the Yemeni people’s hell is for Congress and the United Nations to keep pressing all parties for a political solution.

(Source: The NYT)

Washington lost Afghan war - They just hate to admit it

TEHRAN (FNA) — NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg says the U.S.-led alliance is close to having its goal of 16,000 troops for Afghanistan, and that he is “absolutely confident” they will have enough by 2018 - and that they will win.

After the U.S. announced their own escalation of the Afghan War, they began to push NATO to commit more troops to the country. With many NATO nations having withdrawn from Afghanistan in recent years, they are not very interested in going back.

The alliance is in the know that they have lost the war on Afghanistan. They just hate to admit it:

What the U.S.-led alliance has to do to understand how badly they have lost in Afghanistan is get their air forces to carry their leaders over there and fly along the route from Kabul to Kandahar, or Kabul to Jalalabad, and have a look at the roads. That’s all they need to know. Roads.

According to the Pentagon, the occupiers spent \$3 billion over 16 years paving roads in Afghanistan. In 2001, they had exactly 50 miles of paved roads. By 2016, they had paved somewhere between 8,000 and

10,000 miles of them. But that same year, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction did an inspection and reported that 95 percent of those roads were either damaged or completely destroyed. Not to mention that almost every mile of those roads on which they spent \$3 billion are too unsafe to travel on.

According to the United States Agency for International Development, an arm of the State Department, it would cost the occupiers another \$8 billion to get those roads up and running again. With no guarantee they wouldn’t get themselves blown off by an IED in the first mile.

Roads are absolutely essential to any functioning country. The occupiers got to be able to get from one place to another without dying or at least without completely destroying their trucks and military gears. Without the trucks, without the roads, without the basic texture of transportation, the whole thing about permanent occupation falls apart.

If the U.S.-led alliance can’t do something as basic as pave Afghanistan’s roads and keep them safe and

passable, they have lost. They have no business occupying there for one more minute. They should pack up all of their tanks and Humvees and helicopters, and they should load all of occupying soldiers on C-130’s and get out of there.

Sitting around Pentagon war rooms and on cable news panels talking about troop surge, some kind of reset, a new strategy that will take them from 16 straight years of losing and get them to winning is just wishful thinking. They can’t win. And no amount of talk, no new strategy, no amount of money, no additional troops are going to change it.

It’s pure folly to think that there’s some answer the Trump White House can come up with now, some new commander they can insert like a new ammunition clip, and that’s going to solve the problem. It won’t.

All the occupiers really need to do is know history, of course. They are wrong to assume that more troops and more generals and more budget will give them magic powers to win this time. It won’t. If still in doubt, they should ask the Russians.

A friend in need



France’s involvement in Lebanese affairs goes back a century, with successive French governments displaying numerous initiatives over the years as honest brokers for Lebanon, and in many cases acting as a safety net for several governments and politicians.

The impact of French culture and influence is evident wherever you travel in Lebanon, including historical spots such as the onetime residence of late French leader Charles de Gaulle, the designations of several streets named after French military leaders, and the close impression of French education that cannot but be noticed by any visitor to Lebanon.

Moreover, Lebanese politicians, artists and businessmen hold Paris as an everlasting destination for furthering their careers.

However, French involvement in Lebanon grows more pronounced during the times when Lebanon feels adrift and in crises.

Two recent examples come to mind: when dark clouds engulfed Lebanon during the late ’80s, when President Francois Mitterrand hosted then-rebel Army Commander Michel Aoun, the former considering the latter’s safety a matter of France’s honor; and later, in the ’90s, when under brighter skies, the cordial and fraternal ties between Rafik Hariri and Jacques Chirac made life easier for the Lebanese for over a decade.

Today, France’s initiative toward Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri follows that tradition, and should come as no surprise to anyone with a good sense of memory and intellect.

However, the extent of the strength and warmth of the relations coming to the surface is significant and a reminder of the ties that preceded it.

As with his father’s ties with Chirac, Saad Hariri’s close personal relationship with Emmanuel Macron could not but bode well for the Lebanese and the French.

(Source: The Daily Star)

First Announcement



N.I.O.C
1396.3844



National Iranian
Drilling Company

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

Two-Stage(Semi-pressed)

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
23/813	977/000/000	19,532,000,000	P/F “BLOHM+VOSS” MANUAL TONG TYPE BV-57	1/506/478	Tender No.:FP/05-96/059 Indent No.: 08-22-9645047	1

Brief discription of subject:

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

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

B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, 510,000 Rials should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.
Reciving of documents:
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum one week after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN
Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurment department in due date and participates in tenderwill be known as tenderer from tender committee.

C) Delivery of call quality evaluating:
Tenderers shall submit the completed documents including qualificaion worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 14 days from last day of document recived deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN.

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

More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR

Foreign Procurement Dept
National Iranian Drilling Company

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۰۸/۲۹نوبت دوم ۹۶/۰۸/۳۰

Finally, the behavior and speech of the French authorities will now be thoroughly analyzed by the Iranian people and the Iranian government. Undoubtedly, in the JCPOA being canceled by the United States, the role of France will be highlighted in this equation, and this will be influential in the relations between Tehran and Paris.

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۰۸/۲۹ نوبت دوم ۹۶/۰۸/۳۰

We mustn't be distracted from our duties towards Rohingya refugees

By Roberta Blackman-Woods

Last week, while 22,000 people were tracking in slow motion every move of Priti Patel's return flight from Kenya to resign, I joined Rohingya refugees at the Kutupalong Camp near Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, to see the scale of the crisis first hand, hear directly from those affected, and understand the reality on the ground.

The situation is hard to convey in words. The International Organization for Migration estimates that 823,805 Rohingya people now need urgent support. Some 611,000 have crossed into Bangladesh from Myanmar since the end of August – a mass exodus that represents one of the largest population movements in living memory, anywhere. It is, as the UN Refugee Agency told me, like establishing a city the size

of Manchester overnight – but one with no infrastructure, housing, water, sanitation or tools for survival.

The numbers are frightening. But it is the details that are most devastating. The recently reopened school I visited, supposed to be a rare source of hope, falls short of demand, meaning children can learn only in shifts. Two whole families, who I saw on the way out, live together under a single piece of tarpaulin. I met a community leader who was born in the same camp a generation ago – living his entire life without a permanent home.

There was the 25-year-old man I met who, more than anything, wants citizenship, residency, and the chance to make a new life; the long queues everywhere for food, shelter, and clothing packages; the

sea of makeshift shelters, stretching as far as the eye can see. It was simply heart-wrenching.

■ Traumatic experience

But amid the desperation, there is also hope. The response of the humanitarian community and the care shown by aid workers on the front line stands in stark contrast to the Rohingya's traumatic experience at the hands of the military in Myanmar.

Aid workers rarely seek recognition, but their incredible efforts in these hardest of circumstances must be truly celebrated. There was real hope too in the agency, energy, and resilience of the Rohingya refugees I met, all of whom had

fought hard for their own survival, and won.

There is much that needs to happen. In the camp itself, more physical space is urgently needed as the humanitarian operation enters the next phase. Bangladesh, Myanmar and the international community must quickly work for a solution to give the Rohingya the full citizenship they deserve.

Like Jordan or Uganda, the country of Bangladesh has taken in close to a million refugees in a short period of time, putting incredible stress on its limited resources. If Bangladesh is to deliver a progressive refugee policy under such strain, the international community must step up its support.

Bangladesh has taken in close to a million refugees, putting incredible stress on its limited resources. There's no excuse for us not to step up our support.

The UK must play its part, by continuing to pledge generously and building international political will.

There will be no quick or easy solutions. But the UK – with a very significant footprint in Bangladesh through the Department for International Development – has a key role to play in navigating the complex solutions that are needed over the coming weeks.

To do that, parliamentarians, the media and the new Secretary of State for International Development all need to keep our eye firmly on the ball in Bangladesh, rather than on Patel's self-inflicted distraction in Whitehall. It is time for the spotlight to shine not on the disgraced politician, but on the Rohingya crisis.

(Source: Independent)

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7.3 magnitude earthquake in Sarepol-e Zahab

1 → The epicenter of the earthquake was located at 34.35°N and 47.67°E with about 35 km depth. A filed investigation carried out 16 years later (Ambraseys et al, 1973) shows that this earthquake caused heavy damages within an area of 2,800 square kilometers in which 1,119 people were killed and 900 injured and 15,000 left homeless.

Macroseismic evidence suggests a somewhat more moderate epicentral intensity of VII+ (MMI). With the exception of a single aftershock which preceded the main earthquake by about 26 hours and was strongly felt at Kangavar, records of the nearest seismological stations show no trace of important seismic activity in this part of the Zagros during the preceding four months.

The earthquake and its numerous af-

tershocks destroyed or damaged beyond repair 5,000 housing units out of a total of about 9,000 (more than 55%). Most of the local types of dwellings were one-storey adobe or rubble masonry houses set in mud and covered with heavy flat roofs of tamped earth.

In the larger villages there were a few two-storey adobe houses as well as some one-storey brick masonry buildings covered with Iranian jack-arches or with light roofs of galvanized iron sheets.

A reconnaissance survey disclosed a fracture between Karaj Olia and Karkasar, probably of tectonic origin. As a matter of fact, there was linear topographic features in the form of terraces bearing 130°E. These fractures, which are mainly in alluvium, suggested very recent normal faulting and showed no evidences of lateral motion.

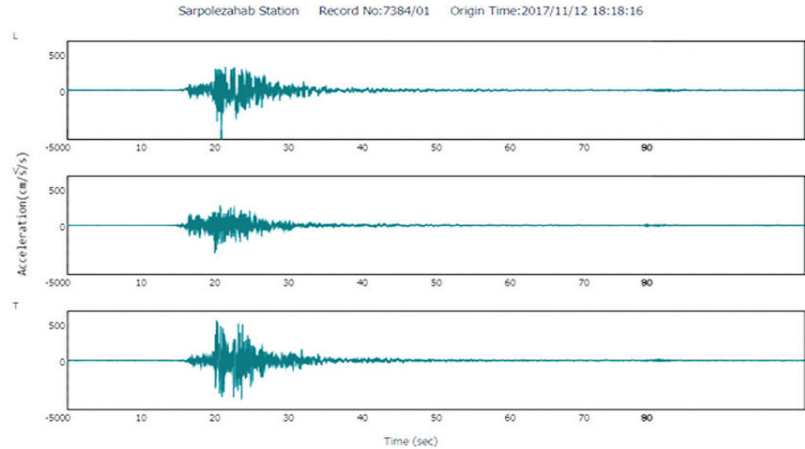


Fig 2. The maximum PGA of the 2017 Iran-Iraq earthquake recorded at the Sarpol-e Zahab Station. (record No:7384/01)

No	Station Name	Record No	Un. PGA (cm/s²)	Epicentral Distance	Station Code
1	Sarpol-e Zahab	7384/01	684	39	SPZ
2	Goorsefid	7377/01	309	66	GRS
3	Kerend	7302/01	261	66	KRD
4	Loomar	7385	139	161	LUM
5	Eslamabadqarb	7313	123	96	ELA
6	Ravansar	7296	120	70	RVN
7	Homail	7294	93	125	HML
8	Arkvaz-e-Malek Shahi	7378	91	170	AVZ
9	Shoeisheh	7317	88	93	KAT
10	Mahidasht	7295	86	101	MHD
11	Dinevari	7304	81	143	DIN1
12	Marivan	7287	70	83	MAR
13	Degaga	7310	70	67	DGG
14	Ilam1	7341	69	138	ILA1
15	Badreh	7315	64	197	BDR
16	Soomar	7375	61	106	SUM
17	Kermanshah1	7292	55	120	KRM1
18	Lenjab	7376/01	55	125	LJA
19	Sarv Abad	7290	54	70	SVA
20	Nosood	7297	53	47	NSD
21	Palangan	7279	50	70	PAG
22	Sahne	7303	45	166	SHN
23	Sar Dasht	7289	40	155	SRS
24	Firoozan	7284	36	208	FRA
25	Kamyaran	7278	35	93	KYN
26	Aran	7301	35	163	ARA
27	Pol Dokhtar	7351	35	248	PDK
28	Naqadeh	7291	33	244	NAG
29	Deh Golan	7311	33	146	DGO
30	Holilan	7320	32	161	HEL
31	Dasht-e-Abbas	7332	32	320	DAS
32	Shahin Dej	7293	30	216	SHJ
33	Chalan Choolan	7350	29	304	CHL
34	Sanandaj1	7280	28	114	SAN1
35	Chaghalvandi	7344	28	275	CLV
36	Piranshahr	7288	26	222	PRS
37	Dezaj	7316	26	189	DZJ
38	Dareh Shahr	7298	25	230	DAH
39	Pahle	7314	25	220	PHL
40	Noor Abad	7347	24	206	NRA
41	Eyvan	7338	23	116	EYN
42	Armordeh	7277	22	125	ALV
43	Moosiyani	7381	21	289	MOS
44	Saqez	7318	19	162	SAG
45	Divandarreh	7312	18	159	DIV
46	Shoosh	7356	18	363	SUS
47	Ebrahim-Abad	7299	17	154	EBH
48	Saleh Abad	7309	17	151	SLA
49	Bisheh-Deraz	7372	17	242	BIS
50	Khosro Abad	7300	16	175	KSA

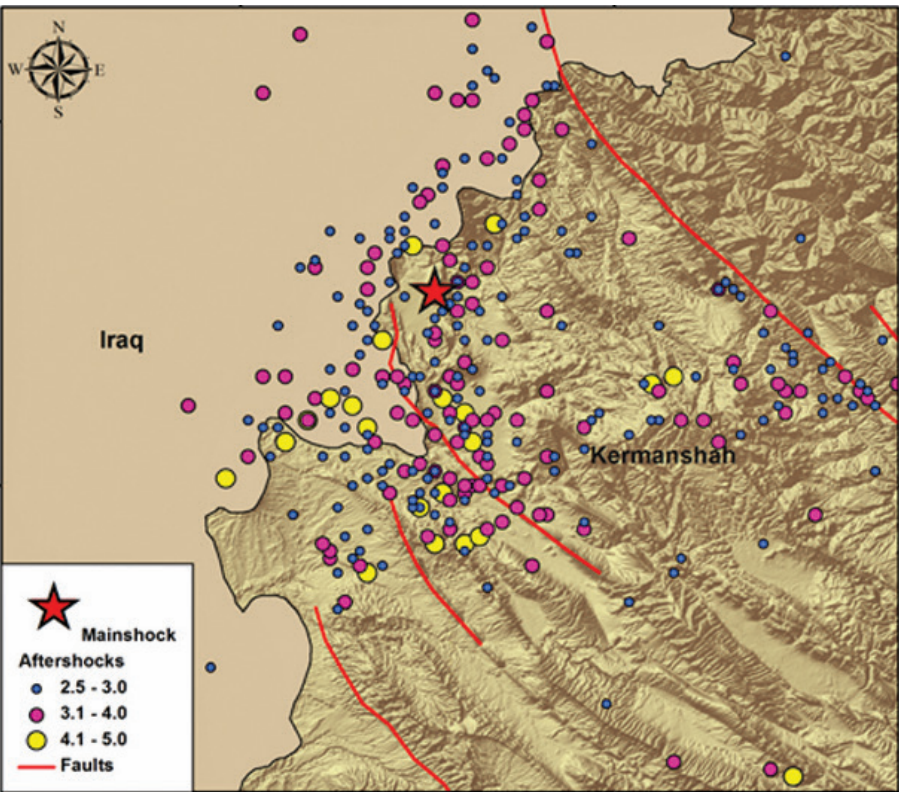


Fig 1. Aftershocks of the 2017 Iran-Iraq earthquake

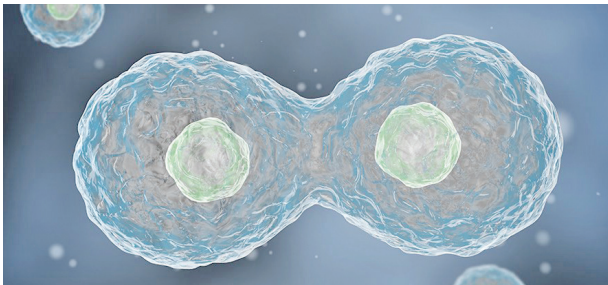
Mehdi Zare is a Professor of Engineering Seismology, International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES), and Associate member of Academy of Sciences of Iran.

Farnaz Kamranzad is a PhD Student of Mineral Exploration Engineering, Department of Mining Engineering, College of Engineering at the University of Tehran.

No	Station Name	Record No	Un. PGA (cm/s²)	Epicentral Distance	Station Code
51	Sonqor	7307	16	154	SON
52	Famenin	7283	15	282	FMN
53	Darbastaneh	7333	15	294	DRB
54	Giyani	7286	14	225	GYN
55	Sanandaj2	7281	14	113	SAN2
56	Bagh-Malek	7352	14	518	BGM
57	Shool Abad	7349	14	352	SUL
58	Aleshtar	7343	14	240	ALR
59	Sarab Doreh	7348	14	239	SRD
60	Andimeshk	7371	14	344	AND
61	Dorood	7345	13	325	DRD
62	Kangaver	7306	12	192	KNG
63	Khoram Abad1	7335	12	269	KRA1
64	Mehran	7340	11	189	MER
65	Haftgel	7346	11	504	HFG
66	Kohnnoosh	7285	10	217	KNS
67	Mamolan	7336	10	247	MAL
68	Boroojerd	7331	10	278	BRO
69	Abadan	7342	10	543	AAD
70	Ajin	7282	9	185	AJN
71	Kouhdasht	7334	9	212	KDT
72	Qom2	7321	8	456	QOM2
73	Hersin	7305	5	162	HES
74	Mehtarloo2	7319	3	413	MTL2
75	Chahardangeh2	7324	3	498	TH015
76	Tehran69	7367	3	507	TH008
77	Tehran79	7328	2	509	TH010
78	Garmsar1	7326	2	586	GMS1
79	Tehran74	7358	2	510	TH013
80	Tehran26	7362	2	504	TH009
81	Fasham1	7323	1	525	FSH1
82	Tehran90	7329	1	506	TEH90
83	Eyvanaki1	7327	1	564	EYK1
84	Tehran93	7353	1	489	TH018
85	Tehran91	7354	1	506	TEH91
86	Tehran82	7355	1	506	TH001
87	Tehran78	7368	1	508	TH004
88	Tehran70	7360	1	525	TEH70
89	Tehran76	7359	1	509	TH007
90	Tehran47	7361	1	502	TH005
91	Tehran73	7363	1	507	TH014
92	Tehran84	7364	1	499	TH016
93	Tehran85	7365	1	495	TH017
94	Tehran86	7366	1	495	TH019
95	Firoozkooh2	7369	1	631	FRK2
96	Tehran71	7370	1	510	TH003
97	Mosha2	7325	0.86	567	MOA2
98	(Bojnoord1 (University	7330	0.33	1063	BOJ1

Table 1. Strong motion records of the 2017 Iran-Iraq earthquake

Hacking the rhythm of DNA replication could kill off cancer cells



Throughout our lifetimes, our cells divide to create new cells to keep the body running, ensuring a steady supply of biological building blocks. This process not only protects against illness, it could also help fight cancer cells, according to new research.

The latest study uses mass spectrometry to analyze the way this DNA replication is regulated to keep it running smoothly – scientists have been able to precisely map the flow of nucleotides, the basic units of DNA and RNA.

And the team from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark says that by tweaking the chemical signaling that’s going on inside these cells, we could potentially cause cancer cells to crash and burn by replicating too quickly without any brakes.

“We can see that these processes follow the same periodic rhythm,” says one of the researchers, Jiri Lukas.

■ Mechanism slows DNA

“We found a mechanism that instantly slows down DNA-replication when RNR, the nucleotide factory, gets out of that rhythm, but well before the nucleotide supply becomes critically low.”

In other words, when the ribonucleotide reductase (RNR) enzyme isn’t producing enough nucleotide units, a message gets passed up the chain to slow down DNA replication too.

That’s vital as cells divide – if the DNA information isn’t exactly the same in both of the newly split cells, then our genetic code gets scrambled, which can lead to numerous diseases in the body.

A protein called PRDX2 was identified by the researchers as the chemical messenger involved, slowing down cell (and DNA) copying when there’s a bottleneck further up the chain. Eventually, nucleotide production can catch up again.

The end result is there are always enough nucleotides to ensure the DNA gets accurately copied. The overall process is well-known, but this is the first study to really examine how nucleotide production and cell division regulate their speed.

So how does all this apply to cancer? Well, cancer cells don’t happen to like speedy division and replication, and if we can switch off the chemical signaling that warns them about nucleotide slowdowns, they might produce enough errors to kill themselves off.

■ Cancer cells copy

“We found that cancer cells copy their DNA rather slowly, because they have abnormal genomes and replicating DNA has to overcome many obstacles,” explains one of the team, Kumar Somyajit. “When we remove their ability to copy their genomes slowly, the cancer cells die because they cannot cope with too many bumps on their DNA templates.”

It’s almost like putting the cancer cell production line into overdrive – at that speed the cancer cells, which are more complex than normal, can’t properly spread themselves.

Any kind of treatment based on these findings is still a long way off, but we now understand more about this most crucial of biological functions - and that’s going to help us both prevent disease and treat disease in the future.

(Source: sciencealert.org)

First gene-editing attempted in human body to cure disease



Doctors have edited a patient’s genes in a world-first attempt to alter DNA from within the human body.

Medics in California administered the experimental intravenous treatment, which provides the body with instructions to change DNA, on Brian Madeux, who suffers from Hunter’s syndrome.

People with Hunter’s syndrome are unable to break down long sugary molecules called mucopolysaccharides. This leads to the molecules building up and causing brain and organ damage, and in severe cases it can be fatal.

Sufferers require regular enzyme replacement therapy to break down the molecules, but Mr. Madeux said he opted to take part in a trial as he is “in pain every second of the day”.

The 44-year-old from Arizona underwent the treatment at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital in Oakland, California on Monday.

It is too soon to know whether the pioneering procedure has worked for Mr. Madeux, but if successful his DNA will now have the instructions for making the enzyme.

Through an IV, Mr. Madeux received billions of copies of a corrective gene and genetic tools to cut his DNA in a precise spot.

They travel to the liver, where cells use the instructions to make molecular scissors - called zinc finger nucleases - and prepare the corrective gene. The fingers cut the DNA, allowing the new gene to slip in. The new gene then directs the cell to make the enzyme the patient lacked.

“We cut your DNA, open it up, insert a gene, stitch it back up. Invisible mending,” said Dr. Sandy Macrae, president of Sangamo Therapeutics, the Californian company testing this for two metabolic diseases and hemophilia.”

Dr. David R. Liu, from Harvard University, said the trial marked a new era. The “Hunter syndrome trial, led by a pioneering company, is another reminder that we have entered an era of genome editing,” he said.

(Source: The Telegraph)

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

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

- 1Apple has delayed the release of its HomePod speaker until 2018. In a statement to The Verge, Apple says that it needs more time to work on the HomePod. “We can’t wait for people to experience HomePod, Apple’s breakthrough wireless speaker for the home, but we need a little more time before it’s ready for our customers,” an Apple spokesperson said.
- 2Bitcoin hit an all-time high just below \$8,000, on talk that a software upgrade whose suspension sent the cryptocurrency into a tailspin at the end of last week was, after all, going ahead within hours.
- 3Amazon’s India rival is making a smartphone. India’s biggest online retailer will be hoping its first device -- the Billion Capture+ -- will avoid the fate of the Amazon Fire Phone by tapping into explosive growth in mobile users in its home market.
- 4Walmart has revealed that it will be reserving and ordering 15 of the new Tesla semi trucks — with 5 slated for use in the US and 10 in Canada. And the Canada-based grocery chain Loblaw has revealed that it will be reserving and ordering a total of 25 of the new all-electric Tesla heavy-duty trucks. Loblaw is currently working towards a goal of possessing an all-electric corporate fleet by 2030.
- 5Startup accelerator Y Combinator has parted ways with Peter Thiel, where he served as a part-time adviser since 2015. The company did not specify why the two have cut ties; a short statement at the top of a Y Combinator blog post introducing and welcoming Thiel two years ago reads “Peter Thiel is no longer affiliated with Y Combinator.”
- 6Philip Hammond to say UK will have self-driving cars by 2021 in budget ‘fit for the future’. Embattled chancellor will sweep away regulation to allow testing of cars and put up £1bn for tech.
- 7Google Lens comes to Assistant on Pixel phones. Tap a camera button while using the AI helper and you can have it perform a search when you take a photo.
- 8Giant ‘Minecraft’ graphics upgrade delayed to 2018. Cross-platform play on the Nintendo Switch won’t arrive in 2017, either.
- 9Senators propose ‘USA Liberty Act’ to reauthorize NSA surveillance. It would add a warrant requirement, but critics say it doesn’t go far enough.
- 10Insurance company UnitedHealthcare is looking to integrate both Garmin and Samsung wearables into its own bring-your-own-device program that rewards members for meeting daily walking goals. The new program, dubbed UnitedHealthcare Motion, allows you to use a Samsung Gear Fit2 Pro, Gear Sport or Garmin Vivomart 3 to track your steps and earn up to \$4 per day (for a maximum of \$1,000 per year) in HSA or HRA credits if you reach the company’s specific fitness goals.

Cisco, Huawei take duel to smart cities

Cisco and Huawei are taking their long-running network equipment and management rivalry to a new location--the smart city.

At the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona this week, Cisco outlined an infrastructure financing program and Cisco Kinetic for Cities, a management platform that ingests Internet of things data from buildings, traffic lights and cameras.



With the smart cities effort, Cisco is integrating its Jasper IoT platform as well as its networking technologies. Cisco’s Munish Khetrapal, managing director of Cisco’s smart cities unit, said the company is gaining traction in more than 500 locations.

“What’s driving the smart city are deployments that are driving competitive advantages,” he said.

Khetrapal added that U.S. cities are focused more on returns, budgets and economics with deployments. Europe is more about sustainability and quality of life.

Cisco’s extension into smart cities isn’t that surprising given the company has been adept at connecting various networking protocols for decades. IoT and the smart city is essentially a big disparate network.

Not surprisingly, Huawei, Cisco’s archrival in emerging markets and China, released its own Intelligent Operations Center (IOC). Huawei wants its IOC to be the brain of smart cities.

As previously reported, Huawei’s IOC complements Huawei’s offerings of wired and wireless broadband, Internet of Things (IoT) platforms, and its LiteOS intelligent operating system, which it said form the “central nervous system” to the IOC’s brain by collecting data through sensors and cameras. Huawei likened the smart city to a living organism.

(Source: zdnet)

German Regulators Ban Smartwatches for Kids

Saying the technology more closely resembles a “spying device” than a toy, Germany regulators have banned the sale of smartwatches designed for kids, urging the parents who were dumb enough to buy them in the first place to destroy them.

Last month, the European Consumer Organization (BEUC) warned that smartwatches marketed to kids were a serious threat to children’s privacy. A report published by the Norwegian Consumer Council in mid-October revealed serious flaws in several of the devices that could easily allow hackers to seize control.

Doing so could grant attackers access to both real-time and historical locational data, as well as a wealth of personal information.

You have to wonder who thought attaching a low-cost, internet-enabled microphone and a GPS tracker to a kid would be a good idea in the first place. Almost none of the companies offering these “toys” implement reasonable security standards, nor do they typically promise that the data they collect—from your children—won’t be used be used for marketing purposes. If there ever was a time to actually sit down and read the terms and conditions, this was it.

Marketed to children ages five to 12, the devices typically offer several functions inherent to smartphones, such as voice-mail, contact lists, and the ability to make and receive calls... you know, routine stuff that kindergartners need. One of the kids’ smartwatch brands was even found by the BEUC to be transmitting children’s locations—unencrypted—to servers in China. The Norwegian council warned that the



devices, ostensibly purchased by parents as a way to safely track their offspring, might enable an attacker to contact the children directly without the parent’s knowledge—a nightmare scenario if there ever was one.

Security companies have long warned about the dangers of disguising IoT devices as toys. Cameras that allow parents to mon-

itor their kids from work are particularly worrying, since most are unsecure and the feeds can be hijacked by virtually anyone.

Earlier this year, the FBI issued a public service announcement warning that smart toys containing microphones, cameras, or GPS devices were endangering children’s privacy and physical safety. “In some cas-

es, toys with microphones could record and collect conversations within earshot of the device. Information such as the child’s name, school, likes and dislikes, and activities may be disclosed through normal conversation with the toy or in the surrounding environment,” the FBI said.

(Source: Gizmodo)

Pentagon exposed some of its data on Amazon server

Anyone with a free Amazon Web Services account could have looked at the hoard of information stored in the cloud by the U.S. Defense Department, according to Chris Vickery, a researcher at cybersecurity firm UpGuard who discovered the exposure.

Amazon Web Services is a cloud platform that individuals, businesses and the government use for things like storing data and boosting computing power. Amazon said on its website it is best practice to restrict access to information stored in the cloud to “people that absolutely need it.”

The military databases hold at least 1.8 billion internet posts scraped from social media, news sites, forums and other publicly available websites, Vickery told CNN Tech.

The posts are in multiple languages and originate from countries across the world, including the United States.

The information, which Vickery said goes back as far back as 2009, is held by U.S. Central Command (Centcom) and U.S. Pacific Command (Pacom). There’s no indication that malicious attackers accessed the databases. The Defense Department secured the data by October 1 after Vickery alerted officials of the problem in mid-September, he said.

The information that was exposed had been publicly available -- it was not, for instance, sensitive user data. Still, the failure to fully secure the data raises concerns about government cybersecurity practices.

(Source: cnn)



Tesla unveils electric truck and \$200,000 sports car



Tesla upstaged its own debut of an electric heavy duty truck when a red Roadster pulled out of the big rig’s trailer and Chief Executive Elon Musk said the new \$200,000 sports car would be the fastest production car ever.

As the presentation appeared to end, the Tesla Semi opened its trailer, and the Roadster drove out. The sports car with a removable glass roof is an updated version of Tesla’s first production vehicle. It can seat four and travel 620 miles (1,000 km) on a single charge, a new record for an electric vehicle, Musk said. It can go from 0 to 60 miles per hour (100 km per hour) in 1.9 seconds with a maximum speed over 250 mph, which would make it the fastest car in general production.

“You’ll be able to travel from LA to San Francisco, and back, at highway speed without recharging. The point of doing this is to just give a hardcore smackdown to gasoline cars. Driving a gasoline sports car is going to feel like a steam engine with a side of

quiche,” Musk boasted.

The first 1,000 cars will cost \$250,000 each, paid in full up front, with later models starting at \$200,000.

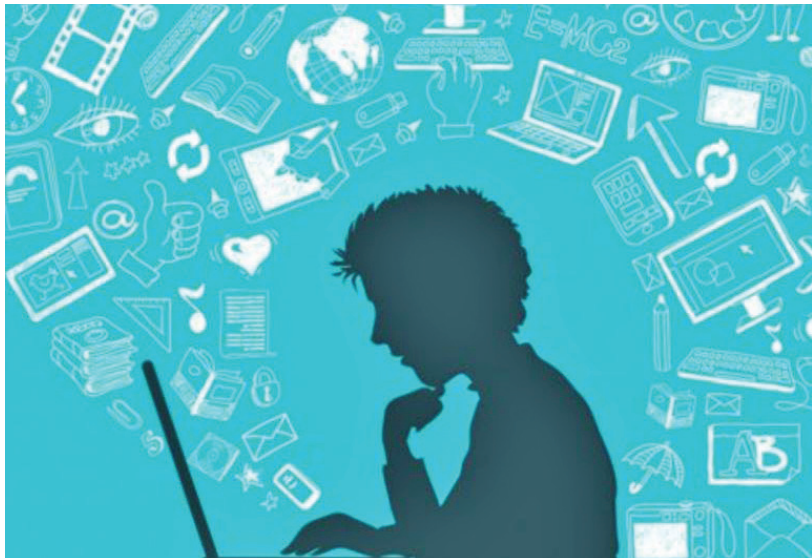
Musk did not give a price for the Semi, or say how or where either product would be built, but he said the truck would begin production in 2019 and that the Roadster would be available a year later.

The truck can go up to 500 miles (800 km) at maximum weight at highway speed, Musk said, without giving the size of the payload. Musk said the Class 8 vehicle, the heaviest weight classification for trucks, in 30 minutes can recharge the battery enough to go 400 miles, and that Tesla would build a global, solar-powered network of “megachargers.”

Diesel trucks are capable of traveling up to 1,000 miles (1,600 km) on a single tank of fuel. Musk said diesel trucks were 20 percent more expensive per mile to operate than his electric truck.

(Source: Reuters)

Brazil advances in ICT adoption



Brazil has made progress in the adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs), according to a new report from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

The Measuring the Information Society report analyzed the state of ICT across 176 countries. Brazil ranked 66th overall and 10th in the Americas, behind other Latin countries such as Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

Country performance is measured by the ICT Development Index (IDI), a combination of 11 indicators including access to tools, use and skills.

The biggest gain seen in Brazil was in the ICT skills indicator, which has gone up from 92nd to 71st place.

Brazil also evolved in terms of fixed and mobile broadband access this year, which went from 58.3 percent to 59.7 percent of the population.

The ITU report suggests that the competitiveness of the telecom

market in Brazil is expanding. It points out that the country is one of the largest telecommunications markets in the Americas and that there is competition for all services in the country’s major cities.

Growth in fixed telephony has been stagnating over the last few years in Brazil and its penetration is 20.4 per 100 inhabitants. At the same time, the report says, mobile services and VoIP are growing. Fixed broadband is available for 13 per 100 inhabitants.

The penetration of mobile telephony is 118.9 per 100 inhabitants, according to the report. 3G technology is now available for 96.9 percent of the Brazilian population.

The report also highlighted that both government and private sector are investing in the sector, with investments such as the expansion of submarine cable networks and satellites that serve the regions where it is not possible to roll out fiber optics.

(Source: zdnet)

Bright future ahead with Iran's competencies, Denmark's technology

By Lachin Rezaian

Since the lifting of the international nuclear related sanctions against Iran after the implementation day of JCPOA in 2016, Iran is again open for business in many areas providing grounds for the boost in bilateral and trade relations between Denmark and Iran.

During the years of sanctions, trade and investments in Iran in many fields was not possible for foreign companies. The implementation of Iran's nuclear deal with the 5+1 group of countries, which is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and removal of sanctions imposed on Iran affected Iran's relations with many states, including improving the conditions for Danish companies trading and engagement inside Iran.

Since the sign of historic nuclear deal two years ago, Danish trade and economic delegations have poured into Iran to invest in the country's newly opened economy.

The recent developments in the bilateral and trade relations between Denmark and Iran have improved the conditions for Danish companies to trade and get engaged in Iran in such a way that Danish export to Iran has increased by 57 % the first 11 months of 2016, compared to the same period of 2015.

Danish companies are globally renowned for their key technologies and expertise within water management and water industry, whether it is ground water, drinking water, process water, wastewater, urban water issues, etc.

Since the sign of historic nuclear deal two years ago, Danish trade and economic delegations have poured into Iran to invest in the country's newly opened economy.

During the current week, a Danish energy delegation paid visit to Iran, for the first time after 67 years, to sign MoUs with Iranian counterparts in the field of water supply and management, and aquaculture.

In light of the needs in Iran, especially in the field of efficient water solutions, there is an opportunity for Danish companies to export technology and expertise to Iran.

Since the sign of historic nuclear deal two years ago, Danish trade and economic delegations have poured into Iran to invest in the country's newly opened economy. Since improving water management and efficiency is among the key priorities for the Iranian government, Danish technology on this issue is highly demanded in order to preserve Iranian agriculture and prevent a future water crisis.

To elaborate more on this opportunity for the Danish companies in Iran, Mehr News correspondent Lachin Rezaian sat with the Head of Member Services and Business Development Halldor Halldorsson, Deputy Head of Mission at Denmark's Embassy to Tehran Malte Moller-Christensen and Iran's Mahisara's Director of Operations Ali Salehi to discuss the realization of water technology in Iranian different sectors by Danish companies.

Denmark is leading in water technology Moller-Christensen classified the visit of Danish companies to Iran in two major tracks: water technology and aquaculture, stressing that in both Denmark enjoys very long-standing expertise.

"Most of the provinces in Iran suffer from water problems and they need to save a lot of water. Denmark's water technology can help save water in Iran with very high efficiency in its using," he noted.

Aquaculture, he went on to say, is about breeding fish, not in sea but in protected environments fish.

Pointing to the delegation's trip to Karaj, Alborz province, Moller-Christensen said there is a Fish arm in the city, where



they are breeding fish and sell them to the market. This is a very hard work. If the Co2 rate changes for example they may die. The technology the Danish companies here are providing can help really make it so efficient so that fish may have very low mortality rate and you can get bigger fish with less money.

He asserted that two major Danish banks are also in Tehran to discuss ways to provide credits for the Danish companies to do large scale projects in Iran.

He said the presence of Danish banks in Iran is not a new issue; "on 21st of September this year, Denmark's Danske Bank signed a €500 million finance contract with 10 Iranian banks, becoming the second European lender to ink such an agreement with Iran."

Even though Danish export to Iran is generally increasing and there is a considerable Iranian interest towards Danish technology and services, there is still a range of challenges on the way.

Regarding the issue, he said "we are really approaching to the resolution of financing and banking problems for investment in Iran which is not easy because of the American



policies."

Some of the major challenges when doing business in Iran is the lack of liquidity and transparency in the financial sector, Moller-Christensen noted.

Danish export to Iran has increased by 57 % the first 11 months of 2016, compared to the same period of 2015.

Halldor Halldorsson also shared his views on current situation regarding Iran and Denmark ties.

"The important thing here is the technology and knowledge transfer, the cooperation and expansion of ties between the two countries, especially after the implementation of JCPOA, signed on July 14, 2015. This of

more importance for us and the other is the normalizing the whole banking sector to support trade," he reiterated.

He referred to the sign of 3 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) on Monday, in the presence of Iranian Deputy Energy Minister Alireza Daemi and Danish Ambassador Danny Annan, at the venue of Ministry of Energy; "this is the first time such a delegation in such level comes to Iran for expanding ties; we had another back in January when 17 companies came to Iran with focus on industry. This time we are more focusing on water technology and aquaculture."

He underlined that Iranian companies are very good in doing such technology, they can build pipes, make fish farms, lots of things, but what they need is to be more efficient with the modern technology.

"Iran has a lot of competencies in the field of technology and what Danish companies only do is to add more knowledge and know-how to Iran's capability," he underlined.

Pointing to the development of ties during post-sanctions era, Halldorsson said "the

largest and the only farm at the time to harvest cold-water fish breeds. In 3 years of design and establishment by Danish engineers, the farm received the title of largest farm also to produce trout breeds. Since the creation of this company, its main goal has always been to bring the highest quality of product to Iranian households, having the high cost as a secondary priority.

Buying business is not a profitable way of doing business, it's just spending money but if you learn the know-how and have a strategic partner it would work much.

Salehi said the new era in EU relations with Iran would have a direct and positive influence in very early future of aquaculture industry, as well as other sectors. Having a transparent goal and providing EU companies with non-exaggerated realism would only help realize the full potential and correct pathway to a very bright and prosperous future in this era, he noted.

Pointing to the presence of Danish delegation in Iran, Salehi said the collaboration is a good example of how Danish research can take on international tasks beyond the borders of Denmark. Danish water technology companies have the expertise to help with the demand caused by the drought; "Denmark is also a leading market in relation to managing water resources sustainably and reducing non-revenue water to secure drinking water for future generations."

Two years ago, he said, we went to Denmark and signed a new agreement on the modernization of the farm. Denmark has been always on the front line in technology upgrade.

On banking issues, he underlined "so far we have done very few banking processes with them. There are some banks in Denmark they are happy to provide long-term loans but it has not been realized yet. We hope it does soon. We do purchase things from them directly and very easily and we have not encountered any problems so far. But in terms of how much credit they can provide us with, I think there is an export credit fund. But in terms of guarantees the problems arise. What kind of guarantee we can give them and what they can have from us. So far we have not been able to provide them with that kind of guarantee."

He also touched upon the process of technology transfer through Danish side; they transfer the genetics, sperms, seeds and eggs suitable for Iranian environments. There are many countries in the world that can provide us with these services but they are not suitable for our environment. Denmark surprisingly enough provides suitable services for us. So the transfer of technology is the key for us. We already started the negotiations with the companies in Denmark on the technology transfer. Technology transfer is being done but the equipment, it is not happening yet. Denmark has done years of research on what they provide others with, they are exactly aware of what they do. You can buy equipment from anywhere in the world but technology and know-how, no.

Their presence in Iran, he concluded, is absolutely promising. "We started this business, aquaculture, before Denmark and Norway, we are the leading in the world. After the sanctions there would be less excuse for any other company to come to Iran, especially Denmark and it's an opportunity for us to learn as much as possible from them, buying business is not a profitable way of doing business, it's just spending money but if you learn the know-how, and if you can have a strategic partner it would work much.

"Technology is the key to success because they have done something right, they have started after us but are way ahead of us in this sector," he added.



Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. Contributes 5b Rials to Disaster-Stricken People in Kermanshah Prov.

In a humanitarian move, industrious staff, personnel and members of the Board of Directors of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company donated five billion rials to the quake-hit people in Kermanshah Province.

It should be noted that a deadly earthquake jolted Kermanshah Province two days ago which claimed lives of many people.

For this purpose, all staff, personnel and members of the

Board of Directors of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company offer their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of those who lost their lives in this disastrous earthquake, Public Relations Dept. of the company announced.

Iran becomes resourceful in thermowood production

By Marjan Golpira

TEHRAN — Iran has become resourceful in production of thermally modified wood, thermowood, thanks to the efforts made by Mazand Choob Aria (MCA) Co.

With an initial investment of \$14 million, the company has made strides in acquiring thermowood production technology from Finland.

On the sidelines of a visit of a Finnish delegation to the company,



the director of MCA explained that his company purchased 5.5 million euros worth of equipment for manufacturing process of thermowood from Finland last year, post-implementation of the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

"And as a result, this year, MCA's full scale production has cut down the cost of the thermowood's import to Iran by 60 percent year on year."

With MCA's production capacity of 1,800 cubic meters of thermowood per month, three times the number of the imported supply to the country (600 cubic meters monthly), Iran won't need to import thermowood supplies any longer, Bahador Ansari asserted.

Accompanied by a Finnish delegation to Iran on Nov 14-17, the head of International ThermoWood Association Jukka Ala-viikari paid a visit to the MCA Co., and granted the company a membership certificate assuring its standard product.

Treatment of thermowood is available to 15 countries that are also a member of International ThermoWood Association, and today, Iran has also the capability to produce thermowood for both its domestic and Middle Easter markets.

Thermowood, or heat treated pine, is an environmentally friendly alternative to pressure impregnated wood. The heat treatment has many benefits, such as making the wood more resistant to rot, fungi, humidity, increasing stability, causing less cracking and providing better insulation.

The property of the wood makes it an ideal material in buildings' exterior and interior constructions.

■ 'Iran can rely on Finland in technology'

The Finnish ambassador to Tehran who accompanied the delegation stressed the importance of the Iranian market for Finland.

Harri Kämäräinen said his country can assist Iran with technologies in environmental, energy, and construction sectors as well as electric power industry which in return will "provide jobs" and "investment opportunities" in Iran.

He emphasized that Finland is willing to invest in Iran although he regretted that his country is lagging behind in terms of investment in Iran compared to other European countries like Austria, Denmark and Norway.

The diplomat reassured that the Finnish embassy will encourage and pave the way for interested Finnish companies to invest more in Iran.

Upsurge in big earthquakes predicted for 2018 as Earth rotation slows

Scientists have warned there could be a big increase in numbers of devastating earthquakes around the world next year. They believe variations in the speed of Earth's rotation could trigger intense seismic activity, particularly in heavily populated tropical regions.

Although such fluctuations in rotation are small – changing the length of the day by a millisecond – they could still be implicated in the release of vast amounts of underground energy, it is argued.



The link between Earth's rotation and seismic activity was highlighted last month in a paper by Roger Bilham of the University of Colorado in Boulder and Rebecca Bendick of the University of Montana in Missoula presented at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America.

The "correlation between Earth's rotation and earthquake activity is strong and suggests there is going to be an increase in numbers of intense earthquakes next year," Bilham told the Observer last week.

In their study, Bilham and Bendick looked at earthquakes of magnitude 7 and greater that had occurred since 1900. "Major earthquakes have been well recorded for more than a century and that gives us a good record to study," said Bilham.

They found five periods when there had been significantly higher numbers of large earthquakes compared with other times. "In these periods, there were between 25 to 30 intense earthquakes a year," said Bilham. The "rest of the time the average figure was around 15 major earthquakes a year."

The researchers searched to find correlations between these periods of intense seismic activity and other factors and discovered that when Earth's rotation decreased slightly it was followed by periods of increased numbers of intense earthquakes. The "rotation of the Earth does change slightly – by a millisecond a day sometimes – and that can be measured very accurately by atomic clocks," said Bilham.

Bilham and Bendick found that there had been periods of around five years when Earth's rotation slowed by such an amount several times over the past century and a half. Crucially, these periods were followed by periods when the numbers of intense earthquakes increased. (Source: The Guardian)



Gasoline online: Iranian firm develops app to place orders

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — An Iranian company has developed an application which enables users to place orders online for gasoline.

The application will be piloted in Tehran within a month, IRIB quoted the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company marketing manager Mohammad Reza Mazloumi as saying.

The application has received the Oil Ministry's approval, Mazloumi added.

The gas delivered by the application is sold at the same price as gas stations with an added cost charged for delivery services, he noted.



Very much like ride hailing applications the user can put an order for gas by choosing his/her destination and the costs will be calculated depending on the location; once the user approves the order the nearest tank truck will transport the gas to the given location.

The tank trucks are expected to start supplying the orders from the beginning of the Iranian calendar month of Day (falling on December 22) in the metropolis of Tehran, Mazloumi highlighted.

Neighbors indeed, brothers in need

Pakistan, too, reaches to quake stricken-people of Kermanshah

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Relief assistance from the government of Pakistan for the victims of earthquake in Kermanshah was handed over to the head of Iranian Red Crescent Organization by the Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran Asif Durrani at Mehrabad International Airport on Nov 17, 2017.

The consignment of aid, delivered to Iran by Pakistan Air Force C-130, was the very first cargo transported to Iran among other nations.

In a statement, Pakistan's president and prime minister expressed solidarity with the people of Iran in which it reads: "The two brotherly countries have a tradition of helping each other during the natural calamities. The people of Pakistan appreciate and remember Iran's help to Pakistan in the aftermath of the earthquake in 2005 and floods in 2010."

A powerful 7.3-magnitude earthquake hit Kermanshah province in western Iran on Sunday night, killing as many as 437 people and injuring more than 10,000. The incident occurred at 9:48pm local time. It struck at a depth of 11 kilometers.

LEARN ENGLISH

High School Reunion

A: I hate coming to high school **reunions**.
B: It will be great honey. We will get to see your old classmates and **catch up** to see how they have been doing.
A: Yeah I guess so. Oh look! There is Robert Matthews! Rob!
C: Hey Bill! Wow great to see you!
A: **Likewise!** It's been a long time! This is my wife Dorothy.
C: Pleasure to meet you. So Bill, how have you been?
A: Can't complain! We have 2 children who are in college and my business is going well. What about you?
C: I married and I do have a beautiful daughter with Mary, you remember her? We were **high school sweetheart**, thing didn't really **work out** between us, but I really can't complain either.
A: That's good. Have you seen Frank? I was hoping he would come tonight.
C: You didn't hear? Frank **passed away** last year.
A: Are you serious?
C: Nah! I'm just **yanking your chain**. He'll be here soon. I saw him just last week and he told me he would **show up**.

■ **Key vocabulary**
reunion: a social meeting of people who have not met for a long time, especially people who were at school or college together
catch up: meet each other
likewise: also
can't complain: used to say that a situation is satisfactory, even though there may be a few problems
high school sweetheart: the person who you loved in high school
work out: have a good or specified result
pass away: to die - use this when you want to avoid saying the word 'die'
yank your chain: deceive someone in a friendly or playful way
show up: to arrive at the place where someone is waiting for you
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
reminisce: to reflect and muse about old times
stereotype: to generalize a particular person or group; a generalization, a simplified image
jock: an athlete, stereotypically popular but not very smart
nerd: a stereotype of someone who studies well but lacks in social skills

(Source: irlanguage.com)



Every action has a reaction. We have one planet; one chance.

Anonymous benefactor donates \$2.5m for quake-hit Kermanshah

U.S. sanctions against Iran block donations to quake victims

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — An anonymous benefactor has donated 100 billion rials (nearly \$2.5 million) to earthquake-stricken province of Kermanshah, head of the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation said on Thursday.

"Following a phone call from a generous philanthropist we received a cheque for 100 billion rials the next morning," Parviz Fattah said, without giving further details.

The magnitude 7.3 quake which hit Kermanshah hard on November 12 urged many celebrities, sportsmen as well as benefactors and ordinary people to collect money, food, blankets, and valuable supplies for families whose lives have been disrupted by the natural disaster.

The donations weren't solely confined to people living in the country; Iranian nationals residing in other countries also called for donations in social media and managed to collect substantial sums of money.

However, some of the donations collected in the U.S. are reportedly blocked on account of the sanctions imposed against Iran.

For one, Tohid Najafi, a medical professional based in Detroit, U.S. who had set up a Facebook page to raise money for the families of the victims and the survivors of the Kermanshah temblor, was kept from transferring the money to Iran.

According to an interview published on Aljazeera on November 16, seeing the extent of the damage, Najafi on Monday (one day after the disaster) rallied the 65,000 members of his online group, Persian Americans, to help.

He set a goal for \$110,000 over the next



An old man is standing on the ruins of his house devastated by the powerful quake in Kermanshah.

month and hoped that within the first day he would manage to raise up to \$15,000. But when he woke up the next morning, online donors had already chipped in more than \$80,000. By Wednesday, the sum raised had surpassed \$200,000.

On the first day of his effort, Najafi received a message by Facebook informing him the

funds "will not be released", until the social media site receives from him the required authorization from the United States Department of Treasury.

However, United States Treasury Department does not allow any platforms to disburse funds directly to, or be routed by proxy to a state or person that is currently

located in an embargoed region.

Regardless of the sanctions, it seems only logical that the Department should allow exemption for the time of disaster. The contributions can make a change in the disrupted lives of people who are facing their worst nightmares by losing their loved ones and a not having a roof over their head.

‘Houses of hope’, the elderly hangouts in Iran

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — ‘Houses of hope’ are cultural and social institutions in Iran for the seniors to hang out and make new friends with those who share the same interest.

Houses of hope were set up across Iran as of 2007 in association with municipalities and provincial governor general's offices to create places for the elderly to participate in socio-cultural activities, said the former director of the Civil Servants Pension Organization, Mohammad Eslamian, told the Tehran Times.

Offering counseling and healthcare assistance and taking part in sports and artistic activities are some of the services such centers are providing to the elderly, Eslamian noted.

Currently, there are some 43 houses of hope nationwide in provinces of Isfahan, Khuzestan, Golestan, Fars, Qazvin, etc. which are projected to increase by 10 in the near future, he added.

According to the Statistical Center of Iran, in 2006, some 5.1 million people were 60 or older in Iran, but the number rose to 6.1 million in 2011 and to 7.4 million in 2016. Currently, the country's total population stands at about 80 million, of which some 9.3 percent is 60 or older.

Almost 700 million people are now over the age of 60. By 2050, two billion people, over 20 percent of the world's population, will be 60 or older.

Unfortunately undermining older persons' rights and



A group of seniors are playing on the sidelines of a gathering on the occasion of the United Nations International Day of Older Persons on October 6, here in Tehran.

blocking their contributions to social, economic, cultural and political life is pretty much common in almost all communities.

Indigenous groups win greater climate recognition at Bonn summit

Indigenous groups claimed a victory at the UN climate talks in Bonn on Wednesday as governments acknowledged for the first time that they can play a leadership role in protecting forests and keeping global temperatures at a safe level.

Long marginalized and often criminalized in their home countries, the "first peoples" – as they often refer to themselves – also achieved breakthroughs in terms of official international recognition of their rights, autonomy and participation in negotiations.

This represents considerable progress for the world's 370 million indigenous peoples, whose territories are estimated to contain 20% of the world's tropical forest carbon and often have to defend it against encroachments by loggers and farmers.

"This is a victory for indigenous peoples who have always been fighting for recognition of our rights as a way to protect forests and tackle climate change. This is a big advance," said Juan Carlos Jintiaich of Coica, a group representing indigenous communities in the Amazon.

For much of the past 20 years, indigenous groups have been a disgruntled, fractious presence on the fringes of climate talks who were primarily portrayed as victims, but this has gradually changed along with a growing body of research showing that respect for the territorial rights of communal land is one of the most cost-effective ways of sequestering carbon.

The 2015 Paris accord recognized the contribution of indigenous knowledge in dealing with climate change, but the document approved in Bonn this week goes further by acknowledging that countries "should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities."

It also proposes greater participation of indigenous communities in "leadership roles" and mentions this will have budget implications, opening the possibility that they could be covered by the Green Climate Fund.

"This shows that the international community increasingly recognizes the way indigenous peoples and local communities manage their lands and territories can be an important climate change solution, because they help to protect forests and other natural resources. Now for the first time the UNFCCC [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] is establishing concrete mechanisms, with funding to support those efforts," said Penny Davies of the Ford Foundation.

(Source: The Guardian)

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Merkel in final push for coalition to avert crisis

German Chancellor Angela Merkel made a last push on Sunday (Nov 19) to forge a government, in a twin battle to save her political future and avert fresh elections that could destabilize Germany and Europe.

Elections in September had left the veteran leader without a majority and weakened as some of her party's voters turned to the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD/Alternative für Deutschland) because of anger over her liberal refugee policy.

The disputed decision to let in more than a million asylum seekers since 2015 is also proving to be a stumbling block as she seeks an alliance with an unlikely group of parties spanning the left and right of the political spectrum.

Merkel's conservative CDU party and Bavarian allies CSU, the pro-business FDP and the Greens have given themselves until Sunday to clinch a deal.

Failing which, Germany would have to hold new polls in 2018 as the center-left Social Democratic Party has ruled out returning to a coalition with Merkel after suffering a humiliating loss at September's elections.

Merkel, who has years of grueling EU negotiations under her belt, now needs to see through what is likely the most important weekend of her political life.

"If she fails, the turbulence arising from a failure would quickly engulf her personally. This weekend is about the coalition AND the chancellor," said the best-selling Bild daily.

Frank Decker, political scientist at the University of Bonn, also had no doubt about what is at stake.

"It is absolutely in her interest for this



government to come into being, because failure would spell her end," he told rolling news channel Phoenix.

A poll by Welt online, also found that 61.4 per cent of those surveyed said a collapse of talks would mean an end to Merkel as chancellor. Only 31.5 per cent thought otherwise.

■ Coalition of mistrust?

Merkel, in power for 12 years, had initially set a Thursday deadline to decide if the motley crew of parties had found enough common ground to begin formal coalition negotiations.

But the talks went into overtime without

a breakthrough.

After a day of negotiations on Saturday, co-chief of the Greens Simone Peter said there was movement but "often in different directions" - progress in some issues but backsliding in others.

The hot-button issue of immigration also remains unresolved, with the CSU and the Greens digging in their heels over their opposing demands.

The CSU, which lost significant ground in Bavaria to the AfD and faces a crucial state election next year, is anxious to limit the number of future arrivals at 200,000 a year.

But the Greens argue that refugees should be allowed to bring their family members to Germany.

Deep differences also remain on climate policy, where the Greens want to phase out dirty coal and combustion-engine cars, while the conservatives and FDP emphasize the need to protect industry and jobs.

The Greens would be wary of making concessions as it faces a party congress in a week's time, and rank-and-file members can still torpedo any deal that they deem unsatisfactory.

"There's still a whole mountain of issues to go through," said CSU chief Horst Seehofer on Saturday evening.

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier told broadsheet Welt am Sonntag that if negotiators are "battling hard over major questions like migration and climate change, that may not be a bad thing for democracy".

If the potential tie-up, dubbed a "Jamaica coalition" because the parties' colors match those of the Jamaican flag, comes together, it would be the first of its kind at the national level.

But questions abound about how stable it would be.

SPD parliamentary chief Andrea Nahles told the Funke media group she believes such an alliance would be "a coalition of mistrust, in which there is constant conflict, where each one plays his own cards, and where there isn't team work".

And political analyst Decker said he "wouldn't place a bet on whether this government will hold together for four years."

(Source: AFP)

Lebanese FM warns Israel against war, says Beirut wins

Lebanon's Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil has cautioned Israel against waging a war on his country, citing Beirut's confidence to secure victory in the battle.

In an interview with Russia's international television network RT, Bassil said Lebanon is capable to counter "any threat," but at the same time wants peace and stability in the region.

"We should not be provoking Israel into a war simply because it is likely to lose it. We should restrain Israel from starting a war exactly because Lebanon is sure to win it," he said.

Israel launched two wars on Lebanon in 2000 and 2006, in both of which the Hezbollah resistance movement inflicted heavy losses on the regime's military. Over the past months, Israeli officials have threatened another war on Lebanon.

Elsewhere in his interview, Bassil touched on Saad Hariri's abrupt resignation as Lebanon's prime minister two weeks ago while in Saudi Arabia. Lebanese President Michel Aoun has said the House of Saud regime had "kidnapped" the premier.

The top Lebanese diplomat said Hariri's resignation was a "good example [showing that] virtually anyone can start a war against us."

Bassil also noted that Lebanon has always adopted

"constructive and sound policies" towards other Arab states though such strategies have not prevented "hostile actions" against Beirut.

"We are ready to act in case of such developments, but we are trying to do everything we can to prevent this from happening and to maintain a good relationship with Saudi Arabia," he said.

Bassil said Lebanon would "stick to" its peaceful approach "unless forced to defend ourselves."

In a separate interview with Russia's Interfax news agency, the Lebanese foreign minister warned of an anti-Lebanon campaign in the Middle East aimed at "intimidating" the country.

"Some countries are trying to use certain forces to remove the head of Lebanon," Bassil said without elaborating further.

"The same forces that unleashed the war in Syria and those who are feeding into terrorists are now trying to damage Lebanon," he pointed out.

In November 10, Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said Saudi regime authorities had clearly and openly declared a war on Lebanon by holding Hariri hostage.

The House of Saud regime, he said, has even appealed



to Israel to launch a military onslaught against Lebanon in the name of fighting Hezbollah, and is ready to spend billions of dollars to attain this objective.

"Saudi wants to destroy Lebanon under the pretext of combating Hezbollah. It was the main architect of Israel's war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006," Nasrallah said.

(Source: Daily Star)

Gerry Adams to step down as Sinn Fein leader next year

Gerry Adams, the veteran leader of the Irish Republican party, Sinn Fein, has announced plans to step down from his role after almost 35 years.

His replacement will be elected by party members in the coming months, Adams told the party's annual conference in Dublin on Saturday.

"Leadership means knowing when it is time for change and that time is now," Adams said in his speech.

The Belfast-born 69-year-old leader has long been a divisive figure in Ireland and Britain.

He was a leading spokesman for Sinn Fein's paramilitary wing, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), during its decades-long bombing campaign aimed at ending British control of Northern Ireland.

Adams was also a key figure in peace ne-

gotiations in the 1990s, which saw Sinn Fein enter a government with their pro-British counterparts.

The Belfast Agreement - dubbed the Good Friday accord - largely saw the end of violence in Ireland in which more than 3,500 people lost their lives.

The 1998 deal fell short of the IRA's goal of a united Ireland, but the movement largely remained united behind the leadership of Martin McGuinness and his longtime colleague, Adams.

"I thought I needed to tell you ... I have been privileged to be part of an amazing leadership," Adams said in his speech to the Sinn Fein conference.

"One of our greatest achievements has been to build a peace process. I will not be standing for the Dail," he said, referring to the Irish parliament.

■ Somewhat toxic

Ken Murray, a correspondent for Politico in Dublin, said Adams' replacement would likely be untainted by links to the IRA.

"The established parties Fine Gael and Fianna Fail don't want to do business with Sinn Fein because, with Adams in charge, the party is viewed as somewhat toxic," Murray told Al Jazeera.

"Fine Gael, who are the governing party here, and the main opposition party, Fianna Fail, believe that as long as Adams remains in charge of Sinn Fein it is viewed as being a terrorist party," he added.

Murray argued that with Adams stepping down, Sinn Fein will find it easier to develop relationships with other Irish parties, giving it the potential to be part of future coalition governments.

"Adams has been in charge of Sinn Fein

since 1983. But things have been happening here over the last couple of years. In the general elections last year in the Republic of Ireland, Sein Fein increased its number of seats in the Dublin parliament from 14 to 23," Murray said.

"They all but wiped out the Irish Labour Party and they ended up holding the balance of power," he added.

Adams said the move to leave politics to the next generations was agreed upon with McGuinness before his death in March. Michelle O'Neill, 40, was elected as Sinn Fein's leader at Stormont (Northern Ireland parliament).

Party delegates elected Adams to carry on as president until 2018 and agreed to hold a special conference to discuss the new leadership.

(Source: AL Jazeera)

Ex-British FM Straw warns about Saudi 'threat' to Lebanon

Former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw says the House of Saud regime's foreign policy pursued by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman "could end up as a threat in Lebanon unless wiser council prevails."

Speaking at a conference hosted by London-based media monitoring group Middle East Monitor, Straw described the Saudi regime policies extremely risky for the region and warned against a military intervention in Lebanon.

Lebanon is embroiled in a political crisis with the Saudi regime over Prime Minister Saad Hariri's surprise resignation in Riyadh and his failure to return to Beirut amid speculation that the premier and his family are being held hostage by Saudi regime authorities.

The House of Saud regime has called on its citizens to leave Lebanon and described Hezbollah's presence in government as an "act of war". The Lebanese resistance movement, for its part, has accused Riyadh of having "declared war" on Beirut.

Straw said there has to be an acceptance of Hezbollah's role in Lebanese politics. "Hezbollah as a political force is a reality in the Lebanon," the Middle East Eye quoted him as saying.

The former top diplomat said that it was important to push for negotiations when dealing with international crises, citing the boycott of Hamas by foreign governments as

a failure in this respect.

"I am unhappy about our boycotting of Hamas. I talked off the record to some journalists in Riyadh in early 2006 and said we ought to be talking to Hamas," he said, adding "some people say I was removed from the post of foreign secretary" because of these comments.

Straw was sacked by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2006 amid claims that he had upset former the United States President George W. Bush with his views on the Middle East.

■ New Saudi regime rulers

Straw said the former generation of the Saudi rulers which he dealt with during his period in office between 2001 and 2006 were much more cautious "when it came to the social environment in Saudi Arabia."

Riyadh's diplomatic crisis with Beirut comes in the midst of unprecedented jailing of hundreds of princes and businessmen and seizure of their assets in the House of regime, seen as an attempt by the crown prince to assert his rule over the kingdom.

Madawi al-Rasheed, a Saudi regime opposition campaigner and visiting professor at the Middle East Center at London School of Economics, told the MEMO conference on Saturday that there were few left in Saudi Arabia who could oppose the crown prince's power grab.

"Nobody in the history of Saudi Arabia has amassed so much power and control over institutions like MbS (Mohammed bin Salman) has been able to do," she told the session.

Saudi regime authorities have characterized the arrests as part of an anti-corruption campaign which has hit a chord with young Saudis but Rasheed said all that was "a great PR initiative."

"It's almost like a phantasmagoria, an illusion that everyone is buying into," she said, pointing out that the kingdom had some of the world's highest youth unemployment, "almost equivalent to Gaza, which is under occupation."

Crown Prince Mohammed is the shoo-in for the throne and his father, King Salman, is believed to abdicate soon.

As the heir apparent, he has adopted a confrontational foreign policy and become a driving force behind a military intervention which has plunged Yemen into a humanitarian crisis.

On Saturday, Straw said, "The key cause of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is the blockade and the bombings by the Saudis and the UAE."

He warned that "as long as Saudi thinks that major Western countries are going to support whatever they do, regardless, they're going to keep doing what they're doing."

(Source: agencies)

Albukamal, ISIL's last stronghold, totally liberated as General promised

The Syrian army and its allies took complete control over Abu Kamal (Al-Bukamal), the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit's last significant town in Syria, a military news service run by the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah said on Sunday.

Abu Kamal is now totally liberated as the Iranian seasoned war veteran Major General Qasem Soleimani promised. On Sep. 22 commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Soleimani said the ISIL terrorists and its ruling will be annihilated soon.

"In less than three months, we will declare the end of Daesh (ISIL) and its ruling in this planet and we will celebrate this victory in Iran and the entire region," said Major General Soleimani also known as Haj Qasem.

Syria's Army and its allies have seized more than 80 percent of ISIL's last stronghold in the country, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) says.

The London-based group said on Sunday Syrian troops re-entered Abu Kamal two days ago, taking most of it from the Takfiri terrorist group by Saturday following a huge offensive which began on Friday night.

The town in Syria's oil-rich Dayr al-Zawr has become the scene of fierce clashes since government troops entered it a week ago and announced its liberation but then faced terrorists who had hidden in underground tunnels.

The so-called observatory's spokesman Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP on Sunday that ISIL terrorists were pushed back to the northern and northeastern sectors of the city and clashes were ongoing.

The fresh push came with heavy airstrikes and troops were advancing more "carefully" than in their previous assault to ensure their gains would not be rolled back, it said.

Syrian state television aired live footage from Abu Kamal, saying the army was preparing to "storm the remaining areas" held by ISIL in Abu Kamal's east.

"What has most impeded the Syrian army's advance is the large amounts of mines left by Daesh and its attempt at using families as human shields," it said.

Abu Kamal, near the border with Iraq, was the last significant town held by ISIL in the country after a string of defeats which have put the Takfiri terrorist group on the brink of elimination in both countries.

■ Israeli tank fire

Meantime, ISIL's defeat has coincided with a rise in Israeli attacks against Syrian troops and their allies and threats of a wider invasion.

On Saturday, an Israeli tank fired at a Syrian military position in the northern Golan Heights following what Tel Aviv alleged as construction work there.

Reports said the incident took place near the Syrian Druze village of Hader, which was targeted by al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra/Jabhat Fateh al-Sham) terrorists two weeks ago.

The attack on Hader, which began with a terrorist blowing up a car and killing nine people, raised concern about Israeli intentions to use the incident as a pretext to occupy the village and other areas nearby.

On Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signaled that Tel Aviv would take military action in Syria when it saw fit.

The regime seized 1,200 square kilometers of the Golan Heights from Syria in the Six-Day War of 1967 and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community.

Hader is situated in the part of the occupied territory that is under the Syrian control, and its population is aligned with the Syrian government.

After the attack, people in the Golan Heights held a protest to condemn what they called Israel's support for anti-Damascus terrorists. Israeli forces were deployed to the area then to disperse the protesters.

Israel is widely believed to be providing al-Nusra with weapons, salaries, medical aid and intelligence to fight Syrian troops and keep them at bay from the territories under the occupation.

Tel Aviv has also repeatedly targeted the Syrian army positions, with Damascus saying the attacks were aimed at propping up the militants.

(Source: agencies)

Saad Hariri will be in Lebanon 'by Wednesday'

➔ Earlier this week, Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador to Germany after its foreign minister, Sigmar Gabriel, condemned Saudi interference in Lebanon's internal politics.



■ Hariri to head to Cairo, Kuwait before Lebanon

Hariri is expected to travel to Egypt and Kuwait before making his return to Lebanon, media reports said Sunday.

Analysts say Hariri was targeted by Saudi Arabia as he refused to adopt a confrontational approach against Hezbollah, a powerful political party which is part of the Hariri-led coalition government.

According to informed sources, Saudi officials have given Saad Hariri two options: One: return to Beirut, but take a constant aggressive stance against Hezbollah and any government Hezbollah partakes in. Two: go to exile to anywhere in Europe, keep silent and leave politics for good.

Reports also say the Saudis are trying to put Saad Hariri's brother, Bahaa, as the leader of the Future Movement in Lebanon and the new "man of Saudi Arabia" in the country.

(Source: agencies)

Adidas ‘would have problem’ with FIFA if it has broken law

Adidas, a long-standing sponsor of FIFA, “would have a problem” with the global soccer body if it was found to have broken the law by a U.S. investigation into bribery, the company’s chief executive told a German paper.

“We expect from our partners that they abide by the laws. If a partner is convicted we have a problem with that. We then have to solve that,” Kasper Rorsted told Bild am Sonntag, without elaborating.

Along with companies including Coca-Cola, Gazprom and Visa, Adidas is one of FIFA’s top partners that contribute every four years to support the World Cup. Adidas’s current contract with FIFA runs until 2030.

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

FIFA president Gianni Infantino was elected in February 2016 to rebuild FIFA after it became embroiled in the scandal.

A prosecution witness last week testified that Mexico’s Grupo Televisa and Brazil’s Globo took part in a \$15 million bribe to a FIFA executive to secure media rights to the 2026 and 2030 World Cup tournaments.

(Source: Reuters)

Pogba is different class – Jose Mourinho

Paul Pogba was labelled “different class” by Manchester United boss Jose Mourinho after returning from injury with a goal and an assist. Pogba set up Anthony Martial for the equaliser and scored the third goal as the hosts came from behind to beat Newcastle United 4-1 at Old Trafford.

The France midfielder had missed the past 12 league and cup games with a hamstring injury.

“It was a great performance from him,” said Mourinho.

The Red Devils had failed to win three of their previous seven league games without Pogba as he recovered from injury.

However, the 24-year-old produced a man-of-the-match performance as his side set a club record of 38 games unbeaten at Old Trafford to beat the Magpies and stay in touch with leaders Manchester City.

“Paul Pogba is different class - Paul and Nemanja Matic grew up together at the start of the season and are the engine of the team,” added Mourinho, who replaced Pogba after 70 minutes with Marouane Fellaini.

“It was in Paul’s hands, how many minutes to play until he began to feel fatigued.”

On a positive day for Manchester United, striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic also returned to action with a 14-minute appearance as a substitute. Former Sweden international Ibrahimovic, 36, was making his first appearance since suffering a cruciate knee ligament injury on 20 April.

“To see him back is a great emotion,” added Mourinho. “His was such a dramatic injury.

“You recover some players and you lose others. Some teams are luckier. “We have had to go through difficult matches without important players. Let us see if we can go through the Christmas period with all the players available at our disposal.

“The more players we have, the better for me.”

(Source: BBC)

Ancelotti, Conte, Allegri on shortlist to replace Ventura

Carlo Ancelotti, Antonio Conte and Massimiliano Allegri are among the favored candidates to replace Gian Piero Ventura as Italy coach, according to Italian Football Federation (FIGC) president Carlo Tavecchio.

Ventura presided over Italy’s 1-0 aggregate defeat to Sweden in the World Cup qualifying play-off, ensuring the Azzurri would miss the tournament for the first time since 1958.

Tavecchio is adamant that Italy will have an elite coach succeed Ventura and, while he confirmed reported interest in Ancelotti, the former Bayern Munich coach is not the only one who has been identified.

Speaking to Le Iene, Tavecchio said: “Allegri and [Roberto] Mancini? You’re getting warmer. Conte? Fire.

“We’re looking for the best. They already have commitments until June from a contractual point of view. Then when we get to June, who will be free? The ones are Ancelotti, Conte, Allegri, [Claudio] Ranieri and Mancini. This is the truth of those available.”

Tavecchio reflected on Ventura’s time in charge and was baffled by a number of things from the experienced coach’s tenure. “The debacle is all technical,” Tavecchio said. “They had the wrong training.

“How can you not play [Lorenzo] Insigne? I told the staff, not him. I can’t intervene [with the coach], there are rules.

“I have to acknowledge it; I chose the coach. It’s been four days that I haven’t slept. I wake up continuously.

“We have always played crosses against tall defenders, some almost two meters tall. We had to play around them with the little players, who were on the bench.”

(Source: Goal)

Marcelo unaware of Ramos-Ronaldo rift

Real Madrid veteran Marcelo said he is unaware of a reported falling out between captain Sergio Ramos and the club’s all-time leading goal scorer Cristiano Ronaldo.

Talk of a Ramos-Ronaldo rift has emerged following a reported difference of opinion at the Spanish and European champions.

Ramos disagreed with Ronaldo’s belief that Madrid have a weaker squad this season following the departures of Alvaro Morata, James Rodriguez and Pepe.

Marcelo was asked about the reported feud and speculation linking four-time Ballon d’Or winner Ronaldo with a move away from Madrid and the Brazilian full-back told reporters: “I don’t know anything about whether or not Cristiano is unhappy.

“I don’t know if there has been something with Ramos either.

“I just want to play football, I don’t know if they’ve been fighting.”

(Source: Four Four Two)

Lewis Hamilton: Mental strength key to historic fourth F1 title



when he lost out in a bitter battle with then teammate Nico Rosberg.

Defeat to his arch rival still rankles on one level but, on another, Hamilton has been able to see the rivalry’s merits as part of a bigger learning curve during his five years at Mercedes.

“I think I came to the team with a good energy but my work ethic is so much better today — so I would have applied that at the

beginning,” he said.

“I probably would have five championships right now, but I wouldn’t change it for the world. Losing the championship last year enabled me to be the driver and the man I am today.”

Hamilton insists that he didn’t learn from how Rosberg went about his business last year. “No. Zero,” was his swift reply when asked.

“I’d say probably the only teammate I’ve

ever really learned something from would have been Fernando (Alonso) — it was my first year in F1,” he said, referring to his teammate at McLaren in 2007.

“After that, I would say I was able to have the experience, so I never felt I was taking anything from another driver. I was just always trying to enhance and unlock my own abilities.”

(Source: CNN)

Barcelona hailed real winners of bruising Madrid derby



Barcelona were declared the true winners of the Madrid derby by the Spanish media on Sunday as the thrilling yet low-quality stalemate between Atletico and Real Madrid left the Catalans enjoying a 10-point lead over the two sides in La Liga.

Barca won 3-0 at Leganes on the outskirts of Madrid, before a bruising yet goal-less first capital derby at the new Wanda Metropolitano stadium saw tempers flare all over the pitch and left Real captain Sergio Ramos with a broken nose.

“It was a war, and Barca won it,” said the front page of sports daily AS, while Marca declared “Barca won the derby”.

The cover of Barcelona-based daily Sport also focused on Ernesto Valverde’s side and their considerable lead over the two Madrid rivals, headlining their edition “10 points clear - Barca strike a blow towards the title”.

There was little mention of Barca’s nearest challengers Valencia, who can reduce the gap to the Catalans back to four points if they beat Espanyol on Sunday, a week before a top-of-the-table clash between the two teams at the Mestalla.

The editorial of AS criticized the ap-

proach of Atletico and Real in the derby.

“They were obliged to win, especially Madrid. That sensation could be felt in the atmosphere before the game but not during it. Neither side truly believed in themselves,” it said.

Atletico forward Angel Correa missed a gilt-edged chance three minutes into the game while substitute Kevin Gameiro almost found a winner but was denied by a goal line clearance from Real’s Raphael Varane.

Toni Kroos and Cristiano Ronaldo wasted Real’s best efforts as Zinedine Zidane’s side finished the game stronger, threatening Jan Oblak’s goal in the final few minutes but to no avail.

Newspaper ABC was more impressed by the performances of the Madrid sides. “As you would expect, Atletico and Real Madrid engaged in a dog fight. Barcelona raced further ahead, and the only consolation is the teams put in good performances.”

Real defender Varane said: “I’m disappointed because we played well, we defended well and created chances but we lacked a bit of luck in front of goal.

(Source: Mirror)

Postecoglou set for decision on Socceroos future



Ange Postecoglou said he will meet with Football Federation Australia next week to decide his future as question marks remain over the Socceroos head coach despite World Cup qualification.

Postecoglou guided Australia to a fourth successive World Cup berth after outclassing CONCACAF nation Honduras 3-1 on aggregate in the intercontinental play-off on Wednesday.

The 52-year-old, who has been linked with Scottish side Rangers, could walk away from the national team before next year’s showpiece tournament in Russia after doubts emerged following Australia’s AFC play-off victory over Syria.

Postecoglou has remained tight-lipped on his plans, however, as the former Melbourne Victory and Brisbane Roar boss revealed his future is set to be resolved.

“It will happen this week [meeting with the FFA],” Postecoglou told ABC’s Offsiders on Sunday.

“You don’t want to be continually asked and I’ve tried to be as honest with people without saying it will all get decided after this game. It wasn’t just about me stringing people along.

“It will happen and it will happen quickly. We’ll have those discussions and there will be a resolution.”

Postecoglou added: “It fluctuates all the time. I can’t say I’m locked.

“There are things there, some are personal, some are private, some are me as a person and some are professional, that need to be put into place.

“And also what’s going to be good for the team is a consideration — they all need to be discussed. It will be a quick resolution.”

Asked about his relationship with the FFA amid reported unrest, Postecoglou said: “People try to make out I have a broken relationship with [CEO] David Gallop or [Chairman] Steven Lowy. That’s not the way I work, I don’t work with people to become friends.

“It’s a relationship where I need to be supported 100 per cent and they’ve supported me. It’s never a relationship thing with me; it goes deeper, far beyond that. Some of it’s just me, things that people won’t understand even if I explain it. They’re going to say they don’t get it and I can’t change that.”

(Source: Eurosport)

Federer expects great things from returning trio

Roger Federer expects great things from the likes of Novak Djokovic, Stan Wawrinka and Andy Murray when they return from long injury layoffs at the start of next season.

Swiss maestro Federer took the second half of 2016 off to fully recover from a knee and back injuries and returned with a vengeance to win the Australian Open and Wimbledon - taking his grand slam total to 19.

Rafael Nadal also made an astonishing comeback from an injury-plagued 2016 to win the French and U.S. Open titles.

Federer’s staggering year ended in subdued fashion on Saturday when the 36-year-old’s hopes of a seventh ATP Finals title were ended by David Goffin in the semi-finals, Federer succumbing 2-6 6-3 6-4 at the O2 Arena.

Yet he is already looking forward with relish to when multiple major winners Djokovic, fellow Swiss Wawrinka and Britain’s Murray are expected to be back in action.

“You’ve always got to expect a slow process. Then if it goes fast, that’s great,” world number two Federer told reporters after losing to Goffin for only his fifth defeat of a year in which he won seven titles.

“You take time off, you come back, you’re good again.



That’s not how it goes. Coming back is always a challenge for the body. It’s a challenge for the team because you’ve got to be extremely patient yet positive. Not so easy, you know, in some instances.

“But I expect from the guys who have been extremely high up in the rankings, who have won slams, like Stan, Andy and Novak, of course I expect greatness from them.

“When they return at some stage, not maybe from the very beginning. But I wouldn’t be surprised if it worked

out for them as well like it worked out for me and Rafa.”

Twelve-times grand slam champion Djokovic (elbow) and three-times major winners Murray (hip) and Wawrinka (knee) have not played competitively since July.

Kei Nishikori and Milos Raonic were also missing from the ATP Finals this year, giving the tournament a new look with half the eight-man field being first-time qualifiers.

Federer believes with the returning heavyweights, the likes of Goffin and Grigor Dimitrov and a new wave led by Alexander Zverev pushing hard, 2018 promises to be a vintage one.

“I hope also Kei, Tomas (Berdych) and Milos all find their way back on Tour and are back in Australia because that would make it quite epic,” Federer said.

“Then you mix them together with the new guys from the World Tour Finals here who have just come off a great year, obviously are confident, want to stay in the top 10.

“They are sort of weaving their way in. You have the young guys coming through. I think it could be a very cool start to the year, which I’m really looking forward to.”

(Source: Reuters)

IOC President steps up to help victims of Iran quake

S P O R T S President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, has stepped up to help victims of the 7.3-magnitude earthquake that hit Iran late on Nov. 12 with thousands of supplies and humanitarian aid.

The deadly earthquake rattled the border region between Iran and Iraq last week, causing extensive damage and loss of life.

More than 500 people have lost their lives and 8,000 others sustained injuries in the earthquake. More than 12,000 homes have also been completely destroyed in the incident.

"It was with immense sadness that I received the news of the terrible devastation that the recent earthquake brought to your country. Please accept my condolences to your fellow citizens for the loss of their loved ones," Bach wrote in a letter addressed to President of the National Olympic Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kioumars Hashemi.

The letter added, "The Olympic Movement stands ready to help Iran in whatever way we can. Sport can play an important role in the rebuilding of your nation and in helping people normalize their lives."

"On behalf of the International Olympic Committee and the entire Olympic Movement, please accept our deepest sympathies at this difficult time," Bach pointed out.



Team Melli are my second national team: Branko Ivankovic

S P O R T S Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic says he doesn't like Iran and Croatia to be drawn into a same group in the 2018 World Cup.

Ivankovic led Iran national football team from 2002 to 2006. The Croat gaffer led Iran to qualify for the 2006 World Cup, where Team Melli failed to advance to the next stage.

Ivankovic earlier led the Croatian national team to a sensational third-placed finish at the 1998 FIFA World Cup finals in France as Ciro Blazevic's assistant.

"Iran are my second national team and I would rather

not to see Team Melli and Croatia national football team to be drawn into a same group," Ivankovic said.

"I was Croatia coach for seven years and also headed Iran for four years. I prefer two teams just play in friendly matches," he added.

Persepolis will host Padideh on Monday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium and Ivankovic believes that they have a difficult task ahead of them.

"Padideh are one of the best teams in the Iran's league but we have no choice but to beat them. Persepolis want to defend the title," he concluded.



Iranian football referee Faghani to officiate at 2018 FIFA World Cup



Press TV — Iranian football referee Alireza Faghani will officiate at the 2018 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, which is scheduled to take place in Russia from June 14 to July 15 next year.

The 39-year-old Iranian is among the six Asian referees, who have been chosen to officiate at the quadrennial international football tournament contested by the men's national teams of the member associations of FIFA.

FIFA has selected 36 referees from 34 countries to officiate football matches at the 2018 World Cup.

On July 8, Faghani received the Golden Whistle prize for laudably performing official duties during the 16th edition of the Persian Gulf Pro League, formerly known as Iran Pro League (IPL).

He has been officiating in Persian Gulf Pro League for seven seasons and has been on the international list since 2008.

Faghani attended the Referee Seminar

for 2018 FIFA World Cup, which ran between April 3 and 7 in the central Italian city of Florence. A total of 53 referees from across the world took part in the five-day seminar.

Last November, the AFC decorated him together with Iranian linesmen Reza Sokhandan and Mohammad Reza Mansouri with the AFC Referees Special Award 2016.

The trio received their award from the AFC Referees Committee Vice Chairman, Hany Taleb Ballan Safar, during the opening ceremony of the AFC Elite Referees and Assistant Referees Seminar in the Malaysian capital city of Kuala Lumpur on November 20, 2016.

The men's trio from the Islamic Republic of Iran officiated the final soccer match of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on August 21.

The hosts beat Germany 5-4 on penalties to win their first men's Olympic football gold medal.

Struggling Sunderland confirm appointment of Chris Coleman



Sunderland have announcement the appointment of former Wales boss Chris Coleman as their new manager.

Coleman, who guided Wales to the Euro 2016 semifinals, has signed a two-and-a-half-year deal with the Championship's bottom club.

He took training on Sunday morning and will be in the dugout at Aston Villa on Tuesday as Sunderland seek only their second league win of the season.

Chief executive Martin Bain told the club's official website: "The football club has conducted a thorough process over the last three weeks to identify the best manager for the job, before and after which Chris was the clear first choice.

"We are delighted that he and Kit Symons, his assistant manager, have joined us, and are now focused on working together to get the football club moving in the right direction."

Coleman said it was "an honour" to be named as manager, adding: "I'm over the

moon that the club believes I am the right man.

"The club worked incredibly hard to make sure we were a good fit and to show me the potential that can be achieved here."

"I believe that every person at this football club, every player and every supporter has a part to play in getting us back to where we belong."

Meanwhile, Coleman's predecessor Simon Grayson has told the BBC his successor will need time to turn the Sunderland situation around.

On Saturday, the 2-2 home draw with Millwall made them the first team in English football history to go 20 home games without a win.

And Grayson, who was in charge for 18 games but won only one, told BBC Radio 5 Live's "Sportsweek" programme: "I suffered the consequences of not winning enough matches and not being given enough time to turn it around.

(Source: ESPN)

Emre Can, Nuri Sahin to raise money for Iranian quake victims

Liverpool midfielder Emre Can and Dortmund star Nuri Sahin are raising money for the victims of Iran deadly earthquake.

The players have jointly published posts on their Instagram pages, asking the people to help the victims of the 7.3 magnitude quake. The full text of their message is as follows:

"There was a major earthquake in the Iran-Iraq area which has claimed 430 lives with more than 6,000 people injured.

According to Iranian aid agencies, as many as 70,000 people are now dependent on makeshift emergency shelters.

Because of the cold weather, those survivors are dependent on urgent relief which can only be provided with the help of donations from the public.

We ask for any donations to be sent to the account below using the following reference: "Earthquake West Iran" as well as your full name and address.

Tax-deductible confirmations will be provided immediately for all donations.

Any money received will be forwarded directly to trusted local people who have started a private initiative.

Please forward this message to as many friends and family who can help.

Thank you very much."

Iran nominated for three AFC awards

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has announced the full list of nominees for this year's AFC Annual Awards.

The gala will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, on Nov. 29.

Iran Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (IFFIRI), Japan Football Association and Korea Football Association have been nominated for the AFC Member Association of the Year Award 2017.

IFFIRI has also nominated for the AFC President Recognition Award for Grassroots Football 2017. Iran will vie for the award with Football Federation Australia and Chinese Football Association.

Iran's Taha Shariati will compete for the AFC Youth Player of the Year Award 2017 with Koreans Lee Seung-woo and Paik Seung-ho.

(Source: the-afc)

Saeid Mollaei wins bronze at IJF Grand Prix

TASNIM — Saeid Mollaei from Iran claimed a bronze medal at the International Judo Federation (IJF) Grand Prix in The Hague on Saturday.



The Iranian judoka claimed the bronze medal in -81kg weight class after defeating world number one ranked Frank de Wit from the Netherlands.

The gold medal went to Russian Ivan Vorobev who defeated German Dominic Ressel in the final match.

Action in The Hague finished on Sunday when competition were held in the women's under 78kg and over 81kg categories and the men's under 90kg, under 100kg and over 100kg divisions.

The competition brought 231 athlete from 43 nations in The Hague, Netherlands.

Naft va Gaz to represent Iran at Asian Men's Handball Championship

TASNIM — Iran's Naft va Gaz will take part at the 20th Asian Men's Handball Championship.

The competition will be held at Kotla Vijayabhaskar Reddy Indoor Stadium, in Hyderabad, India from November 20 to 30.

The Iranian team has been pitted against Qatar's Al Duhail, the UAE's Sharjah and Muscat of Oman in Pool A.

Pool B consists of Club India, Al Ahli of Qatar, Uzbekistan's Rkor, Al Najma of Bahrain and Iraq's Al Shurta.

Naft va Gaz will start the campaign with a match against Al Duhail on Monday.

Iran to ascend two places in FIFA rankings: ESPN

Iran will move up two places at the FIFA World Ranking when the new list is published on Nov. 23.

Iran is still the No. 1 nation in Asia, up two into 32nd, with Australia up four places into 39th -- the Socceroos' best place since 2013 -- but Japan slips 10 places into 54th.

World champion Germany has now held the No. 1 position for three consecutive months, and the top five remains unchanged for the second month in a row with Brazil, Portugal, Argentina and Belgium next in the ranking.

NEW FIFA RANKING TOP 10:

1. Germany, 2. Brazil 3. Portugal, 4. Argentina, 5. Belgium, 6. Spain, 7. Poland, 8. Switzerland, 9. France, 10. Chile

Jordan Burroughs sympathizes with Iran quake victims

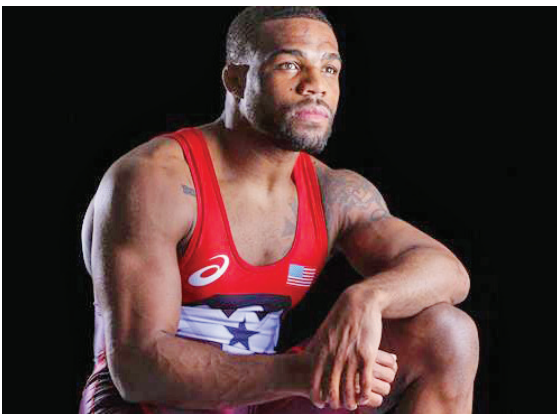
Press TV — American world and Olympic champion Jordan Ernest Burroughs has extended his heartfelt sympathy with families stricken in recent earthquake in the western part of Iran, which has left at least 500 people dead, hundreds of others injured and dozens of villages destroyed.

The quake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale rattled the border region between Iran and Iraq on Sunday night, causing extensive damage and loss of life.

According to the latest figures, at least 436 people have lost their lives and 9,388 others sustained injuries in the earthquake. More than 12,000 homes have also been completely destroyed in the incident.

"I convey my sincere condolences to Kermanshah residents and the entire Iranian nation. I share your sorrow. I want you to know we are all thinking about you, and sympathize with you in the aftermath of the earthquake," he wrote in his Persian message.

Burroughs added, "Kermanshah was a memorable city for me during the 2017 Freestyle World Cup. I was so delighted to be there and to meet hospitable people, who



adore wrestling as well."

"My family and I got very upset when we heard about the bitter incident. We pray for you and wish the situation

will improve sooner; and beautiful Kermanshah will be reconstructed again. I look forward to traveling to Iran in the future. My family and I have the best wishes for you," the American freestyle wrestler pointed out.

On February 17, Burroughs went to great pains to clinch a narrow 3-2 victory over Iranian rival Peyman Yarahmadi in the 74-kilogram class of the 2017 Freestyle World Cup.

The tournament kicked off in Kermanshah, western Iran, on February 16 and wrapped up the next day.

The Iranian sportsmen immersed spectators at Kermanshah's Imam Khomeini Sport Venue and wrestling enthusiasts worldwide into tremendous admiration, as they outmuscled their American counterparts 5-3 in their final meetings.

Azerbaijan finished in the third place after defeating Turkey in the bronze-medal playoff that ended 7-1.

Russia ended in the fifth place after downing Mongolia 7-1, and Georgia stood seventh after emerging victorious from its match with India 7-1.

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Iranian painter Vesta Kaviani wins award at Italy’s Arte Padova

A R T d e s k TEHRAN – Iranian painter Vesta Kaviani is among the six artists who won a silver recognition plate at the 28th edition of the Arte Padova, the acclaimed Modern and Contemporary Art Fair in Padua, Italy.

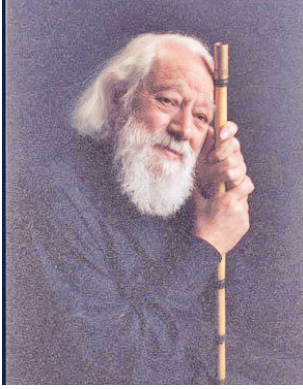


“Unconscious Birth” by Iranian artist Vesta Kaviani won a silver recognition plate at the 28th edition of the Arte Padova in Padua, Italy.

Kaviani received the prize for her expressionist painting titled “Unconscious Birth” at the art fair, which was held in the Italian city from November 10 to 13, the organizers announced. Stefano Galardi, Antonio Moresco, Enea Romanelli, Raffaella Torrisi and Michela Roffarè were other winners of the prize. The top prize of the Arte Padova went to Italian artist Antonio Gandossi for his painting entitled “You Can Read, Read, Read”. The Arte Padova is one of the most anticipated art fairs in Italy, which every year showcases works by Italian artists and others from around the world. It also attracts visitors from all over the world.

Actor Mohammad Pursattar dies at 78

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian actor Mohammad Pursattar died due to heart failure at his home in Tehran on Thursday morning. He was 78.



He mostly appeared in a number of Iranian historical, religious TV series including “The Men of Angelos” and “Prophet Joseph (AS)”, both by Farajollah Salahshur, and “Mokhtarnameh” by Davud Mirbaqeri. His funeral procession will begin from the Iranian House of Cinema in Tehran today. He will be buried in Behesht Zahar, Tehran’s major cemetery.

Golden leaf cut from Napoleon’s crown goes under hammer in France

PARIS (Reuters) — A golden laurel leaf cut from the crown of French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte will be auctioned near Paris on Sunday.

The small 10-gram decoration - worth less than \$500 if melted down for its metal - is expected to reach around 300 times that, auctioneer Jean-Pierre Osenat said.

Its value “certainly isn’t based on the weight of the gold, but on the weight of history,” he added.

Napoleon famously crowned himself emperor at Notre Dame cathedral in 1804, placing the Roman-style laurel wreath on his own head, even though Pope Pius VII was there presiding over the coronation.

The man whose empire once stretched from Barcelona to Hamburg said he owed his authority to himself and not to God. The leaf on sale on Sunday however never made it to the ceremony. Before it started, Napoleon complained the crown was too heavy, leaving its creator Martin-Guillaume Biennais to remove six leaves. Each of Biennais’ six daughters received a leaf. The one under auction has stayed in the family ever since.

The crown, inspired by the laurel wreath worn by Roman emperor Julius Caesar, contained more than fifty leaves and was melted down in 1819. “This small leaf represents the grandeur of the story of Napoleon,” Osenat said.

He said the leaf was expected to fetch between 100,000 and 150,000 euros (\$118,250 - \$177,375) at the auction house that bears his name in Fontainebleau, outside Paris. Bidders will also have a chance to buy a silk court waistcoat with gilded silver embroidery worn by the emperor and a powder box belonging to his wife Josephine.

Napoleon’s famous bicorne hat was sold at auction in 2014 to a South Korean bidder for 1.9 million euros, nearly five times the asking price.

University of Tehran to host conference on WWII Polish exodus to Iran

C U L T U R E d e s k TEHRAN — A number of Iranian and Polish scholars will get together at the University of Tehran on Tuesday to observe the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Polish refugees in Iran.

The scholars will discuss the reasons why Polish people and their children took refuge in the central Iranian city of Isfahan during World War II in the international conference named “In Quest of a Second Home”.

The Polish Secretary of State and Plenipotentiary of the Prime Minister for International Dialogue, Anna Maria Anders, Iranologist Anna Krasnowolska, Professor Renata Rusek-Kowalska of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, and translator Iwonna Novicka are among the guests.

National Library and Archives of Iran director Ashraf Borujerdi and Islamic Culture and Relations Organization director Abuzar Ebrahimi-Torkaman are also among the Iranian guests of the conference.

Schiller concerts in Tehran extend



A R T d e s k TEHRAN — German electronic music band Schiller’s concerts in Tehran have extended for three more days, the organizer announced on Saturday.

The band, which is led by its composer Christopher von Deylen, was scheduled to

perform at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry in Tehran only on December 11 and 12.

Ritmeno, an Iranian music news agency that is the organizer of the performances, has extended the concerts for three more days after all the tickets were sold out in less than two days.

Producer says no change in Iran-Turkey co-production “Beautiful Jinn”

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Mehrdad Farid has said that there will be no change in “Beautiful Jinn”, a co-production between Iran and Turkey.

He made the remarks in response to some reports published on Persian news outlets, which announced that the Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, has ordered Farid and the film’s director, Bairam Fazli, to replace Nurgul Yesilçay, the Turkish actress who is known in Iran for her role in the acclaimed TV series “The Magnificent Century”, with an Iranian actress.

“It is completely impossible to make any change in the cast or reshoot scenes from the movie,” Farid told the Persian service



Turkish actress Nurgul Yesilçay in a scene from “Beautiful Jinn” by Iranian director Bairam Fazli

Films about migration win German Bambi awards

BERLIN (Reuters) — Films about terrorism, migration and the struggle for women’s rights swept Germany’s Bambi awards on Thursday evening, with Chinese dissident and filmmaker Ai Weiwei urging the star-studded audience to keep faith in humanity.

“Courage not only belongs to the people who accept the refugees, but also the 65 million people who have lost their homes, who keep some hope in their minds,” said Weiwei, a refugee himself who has lived in Berlin since 2015.

“We must trust in courage ... we must trust in humanity,” said Weiwei, who was honored for his film “Human Flow”. The Bambi awards have been awarded annually since 1948 to those with vision and creativity. The 2017 ceremony reflected the many crises erupting around the world.

Turkish-German filmmaker Fatih Akin won a Bambi for his Oscar-nominated film “In the Fade”, which stars German-born Diane Kruger as a woman whose husband and young son are killed in a far-right bomb attack.

Akin, the son of Turkish immigrants, made the film as a response to growing right-wing violence in Germany.

“Racism is crap - here and everywhere in the world,” Akin said.

Alicia von Rittberg was honored as female actor of the year for her portrayal of a headstrong nurse in “Charite”, a television



Artist Ai Weiwei receives the Bambi trophy during the Bambi 2017 Awards ceremony in Berlin. (Reuters/Axel Schmidt)

series set at Berlin’s famed Charite hospital near the end of the 19th century, who fights to become a doctor.

Former German President Joachim Gauck, who helped lead East German protests before the fall of the Berlin Wall, won a Bambi award for a lifetime of service.

Gauck saluted the 30 million people in Germany, over a third of the population, who volunteer their time to work with refugees and on many other programs.

“We have lots of unsolved problems, but we have become a role model for many, he said.

Others recognized during the star-studded evening included German supermodel Claudia Schiffer, who said she was “living proof that if you dare to dream ... great things can happen,” and German singer and television host Helene Fischer.

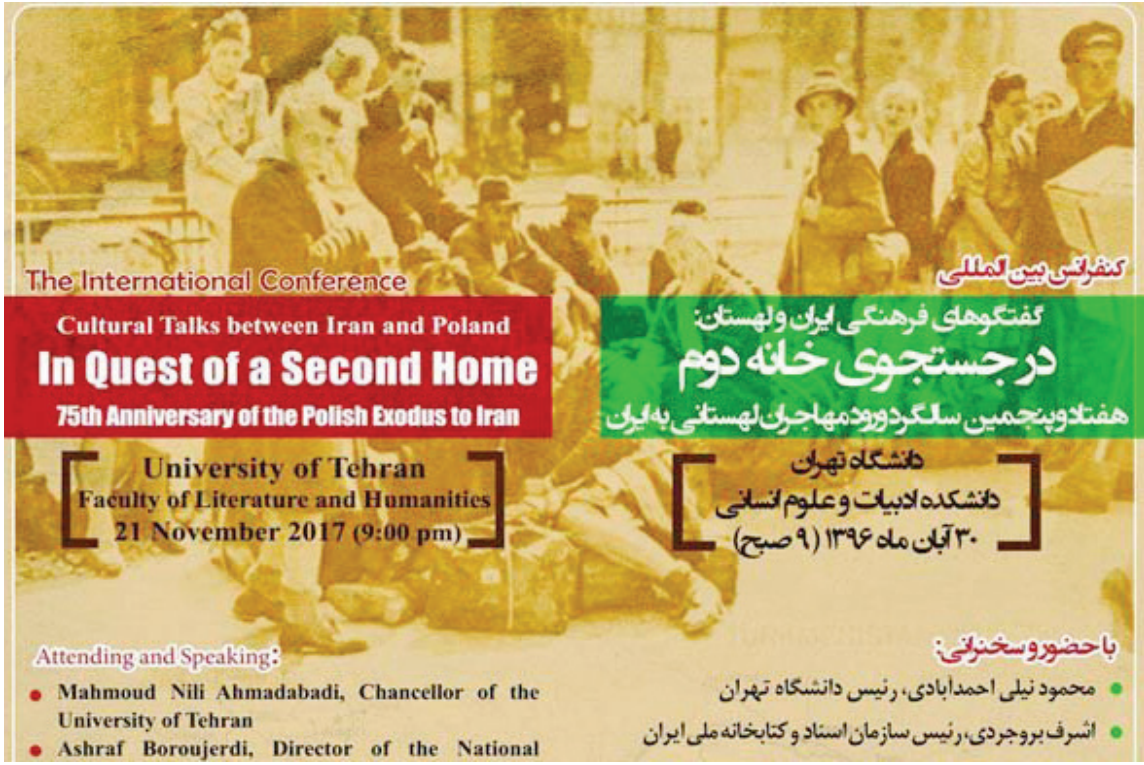
Rock legends salute Malcolm Young on AC/DC founder’s death

MELBOURNE (Reuters) — Tributes poured in on Sunday for Malcolm Young, co-founder of the Australian rock band AC/DC, a day after he died at the age 64 after suffering from dementia for several years.

Malcolm Young and his brother Angus Young founded AC/DC in 1973. Their hits included “Highway to Hell” from 1979 and “Back in Black” and “You Shook Me All Night Long” from 1980.

“Malcolm, along with Angus, was the founder and creator of AC/DC. With enormous dedication and commitment he was the driving force behind the band,” AC/DC posted on its Facebook page late on Saturday.

Young was a songwriter, backing vocalist and rhythm



A poster for international conference “In Quest of a Second Home”

Historian Alireza Dowlatzshahi, documentarian Khosro Sinai and researcher Kaveh Bayat will also speak at the conference.

An exhibition of historical documents will be set up on the sidelines of the conference. Sinai’s documentary film “The

Lost Requiem” about the Polish refugees will also be screened during the conference.

In addition, thespian Maryam Jalili is scheduled to give a performance on peace.

Czech musicians to raise funds for Kermanshah quake victims

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — A Czech dulcimer band led by Ales Smutny will give a concert at Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural Center tonight to raise funds for the Kermanshah earthquake victims, the center announced on Saturday.

The concert has been organized in collaboration with the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tehran.

The massive earthquake in the western province of Kermanshah killed hundreds and injured thousands last week.

Pavel Trkan, Jan Telecky and Radek Tyllich are the members of the band that was founded in 1999.



A poster for Czech musician Ales Smutny’s benefit concert in Tehran.

of ILNA on Saturday.

“When we submitted the screenplay to the Cinema Organization of Iran and applied for a production license for the movie, it was clear that the Turkish actress would play a role in the project and they authorized the project due to this fact,” he added.

He noted that “Beautiful Jinn” has been produced based on a contract with a Turkish company and the Iranian side is not allowed to change it unilaterally.

Farid said that he is planning to premiere the film in Iran, Turkey and several Arab countries. He also announced his plan to submit the film to the Fajr Film Festival, which will be held in Tehran during February 2018.

Da Vinci portrait of Christ sells for record \$450.3 million in New York

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Leonardo da Vinci’s portrait of Christ, “Salvator Mundi”, sold for a record-smashing \$450.3 million on Wednesday at Christie’s, more than double the old price for any work of art at auction.

The painting, only recently rediscovered, was the last da Vinci left in private hands and fetched more than four times Christie’s pre-sale estimate of about \$100 million.

It beat a record set in May 2015 by Pablo Picasso’s “Les Femmes D’Alger”, which sold for \$179.4 million, and constituted more than half the sale’s total of \$785.9 million, which came in well above the roughly \$450 million pre-sale estimate.

“Salvator Mundi” (Savior of the World) was purchased by an unidentified buyer bidding via telephone after a protracted contest of nearly 20 minutes at the New York auction house.

With at least six bidders and increments coming in at more than 15 million, sustained whoops and cheers broke out in the packed salesroom as the hammer came down.

“It was a moment when all the stars were aligned, and I think Leonardo would be very pleased,” Jussi Pyllkänen, global president of Christie’s, told Reuters after the sale.

“It’s a painting beyond anything I’ve ever handled,” said Pyllkänen, the auctioneer, adding, “I should hang up my gavel.”

The restored portrait, an ethereal depiction of Jesus Christ which dates to about 1500, is one of fewer than 20 paintings by the Renaissance



Member of Christie’s staff poses for pictures next to Leonardo da Vinci’s “Salvator Mundi” painting which will be auctioned by Christie’s in New York in November, in London, Britain October 24, 2017. (Reuters/Peter Nicholls)

artist known to still exist.

First recorded in the private collection of King Charles I, the work was auctioned in 1763 before vanishing until 1900, by which time Christ’s face and hair had been painted over - once a “quite common” practice, according to Alan Wintermute, Christie’s senior specialist for Old Master paintings.

Sold at Sotheby’s to an American collector in 1958 for only 45 pounds, it again sold in 2005 as an overpainted copy of the masterwork.

The new owner started the restoration process, and after some six years of research it was authenticated as da Vinci’s more than 500-year-old masterpiece, which culminated in a high-profile exhibition at London’s National Gallery in 2011.

deepest condolences to his family, bandmates and friends.”

Australian rocker Jimmy Barnes, guitarist Slash, horror writer Stephen King, Kiss frontman Paul Stanley, Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine, Bryan Adams, songwriter Diane Warren and Joe Elliott from Def Leppard also took to social media to pay tribute.

The band’s most recent Rock or Bust tour grossed \$180 million from 54 concerts and was the third highest-selling tour of 2015, only behind One Direction and Taylor Swift.

Young is survived by his wife O’Linda, children Cara and Ross, three grandchildren, a sister and a brother, the band said. He “passed away peacefully with his family by his bedside”, the band said.