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Mastoureh Ardalan, a rarity of her time, the first woman historian **12**



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# Leader among quake-hit people



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## Nasrallah: U.S. did what it could to help ISIL in Syria's al-Bukamal

Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah's Secretary-General, Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, delivered a televised address on Monday, where talked about recent developments in the wake of Prime Minister Saad Hariri's resignation from Riyadh on Nov. 4.

Nasrallah said: despite the United States claims about fighting terrorism, it spared no effort to help the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/

Daesh) terrorists in the Syrian town of al-Bukamal.

"I hope to speak of two things: first, what happened last week in an army operation on the Iraqi-Syrian border on both sides fighting Daesh (ISIL) [near the eastern Syrian town of al-Bukamal]. Second is the Arab League meeting and stances that were taken as well as its final statement," Nasrallah said. **→13**

## Tehran wants France to adopt policies based on Mideast changes

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Kamal d e s k Kharrazi, the head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said on Monday that realities in the Middle East have changed and France should adopt policies based on those changes.

Talking to reporters, Kharrazi said

France adopts position based on "wrong analyses".

"French President Emanuel Macron is making mistake. They [France] failed to fulfil their duties regarding the Syrian crisis and make mistakes to make up for their failure," noted Kharrazi who was Iran's foreign minister from 1997 to 2005. **→2**

## Iran sets sights on expats to boost tourism

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian tourism body aims to exploit "untapped potential" of expatriates who can prompt foreign nationals to visit the country.

Based on a scheme proposed by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) to the Foreign Ministry, each Iranian

living abroad will receive a free airline ticket home against encouraging five foreign nationals to travel to the country.

CHTHO Deputy Director Mohammad Moheb-Khodai put forward the provision of incentives to compatriots who can act as tourism marketers or tour operators, Mehr reported. **→10**

## Iraq court rules Kurdistan secession vote unconstitutional

Iraq's Supreme Federal Court has ruled the semi-autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan Region's (Kurdistan Regional Government/KRG) controversial secession referendum as unconstitutional, saying the results of the vote are void.

"The Federal Court issued the decision to consider the Kurdish region's referendum unconstitutional and this ruling is final," a court spokesman said on Monday.

The tribunal is responsible for settling disputes between Iraq's central government and regions including Kurdistan. The verdict is final and cannot be appealed.

"The power of this ruling should now cancel all the results of the referendum," the spokesman added.

On September 25, the KRG held the non-binding referendum on secession from Iraq in defiance of stiff opposition from the central government in Baghdad and much of the international community. Kurdish officials have claimed that over 90 percent of voters said 'Yes' to separation from Iraq.

Political observers have warned that KRG's referendum scenario is in line with Israel's policy of dividing the regional Muslim states.

After the referendum, Baghdad ordered the KRG to hand over airports in the regional Kurdish capital of Erbil, and the city of Sulaimaniya, as well as its border crossings to the central Iraqi government.

It also asked the KRG to either cancel the

result of the plebiscite or face potential sanctions, international isolation, and military intervention.

A ban on international flights into and out of the Iraqi Kurdish region also took effect on September 29.

The court had already ordered on November 6 that no region or province could break away from Iraq. Iraqi government forces launched an offensive on October 16 and retook control of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and other disputed territories.

The KRG said last week that it abided by the ruling, expressing hope that the decision would set the stage for dialog between Baghdad and Erbil.

(Source: Press TV)

## Iranian military chief to visit Russia for Sochi summit

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri will travel to the Russian city of Sochi on Wednesday to take part in the trilateral Iran-Russia-Turkey summit on developments in Syria.

During the summit scheduled for Nov. 22, army chiefs of Iran, Russia and Turkey will discuss cooperation in the fields of defense and security in Syria.

The future developments in Syria, combating takfiri terrorists, and the continuation of cooperation among the three countries are among the key topics.

On Sunday talks in the Turkish city of Antalya Iranian, Russian and Turkish foreign ministers

reached an agreement on all the key issues related to preparations for the summit of the presidents of the three countries in Sochi.

Experts from the three countries got together on Saturday in Tehran to discuss the final joint statement and the agenda of the Sochi summit, followed by the ministerial meeting in Antalya on the same objective.

Talking to reporters in Antalya on Sunday, Russian chief diplomat Sergei Lavrov said 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, "The 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 nearly seven-year conflict in Syria.



## EDITORIAL

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## Hard days for Britain's Johnson

Boris Johnson's name is familiar to many people who follow the UK political developments! Johnson is one of the most prominent members of the British Conservative Party. However, he is facing hard times in his country. He is now accused of ineffectiveness in the UK's political and executive atmosphere by the media and many of the British politicians. This is while Johnson was named as one of the main alternatives for the position of the UK's Prime Minister.

Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson, known as Boris Johnson, is a 51-year-old politician who sees himself in a proper position to be the prime minister of his country. During the years between 2008 and 2016, when he was the mayor of London, he became popular with the conservative party supporters. He could even gain popularity among people with no particular political orientation. He is also known for adopting liberal approaches among conservatives. Boris Johnson is considered a different politician in the conservative party. He is especially different from members like David Cameron and Theresa May.

Johnson was one of the main supporters of his country's exit from the European Union during the Brexit referendum. Adopting this stance towards the departure of Britain from Europe has led to the anger of many of his party members, including Prime Minister David Cameron. After David Cameron's resigned his post, many British analysts thought that Johnson would be introduced as the new prime minister. But eventually, we witnessed the presence of Theresa May was at the top of political and administrative equations in London.

During the UK general election in 2017, which led to a relative defeat of conservatives, some of Johnson party members asked him to prepare himself to be the next British prime minister. It has reached a point that some English media referred to Johnson as the successor to Theresa May. However, the foreign secretary eventually preferred to stay in his position.

At the moment, Johnson doesn't have much luck to be present at the top of political and executive equations of London. In other words, **→7**



## PERSPECTIVE

Mohammad Hashemi  
Journalist

## Carl Schmitt's blueprint for Saudi MbS

In an opinion piece for the Washington Post on November 9, Fareed Zakaria wrote "Mohammed bin Salman is now applying to Saudi Arabia what has become the new standard operating procedure for strongmen around the world".

In fact, the formula for political success that the young royal is following parallels what Carl Schmitt, a German jurist and political philosopher expressed in his books.

Schmitt (1888-1985) is seen as a major figure in legal and political theory whose works have inspired important scholars like Jacques Derrida and Jurgen Habermas. He joined the Nazi Party in 1933 and supported the regime's radical policies from 1933-36. His theories were used to shore up the legal foundations of the Nazi state. Schmitt's writings were not especially well-known to the general public but after years in the wilderness, his works are attracting attention and in Iran several of them have been translated into Farsi.

Schmitt is most well-known for the concept of the "state of exception" similar to a state of emergency, in his legal theory under whose aegis the sovereign power can choose to act outside the structure of law. He believes the "sovereign is the one who decides on the exception," and take whatever action is necessary outside legal restraints to its power that would normally apply.

Schmitt argues the exception itself can be a mere fabrication of the sovereign, which acquires dubious legitimacy on the basis raw violence. In this case, it is not the exception, the state of emergency, which calls forth the sovereign decision, but the other way around, the sovereign decision creates the exception, or state of emergency.

Against this backdrop, Schmitt's conceptualization of politics can provide us with a completely new perspective on the sphere of politics in today's Saudi Arabia.

### ■ A reformer or despot?

On November 4, Saudi authorities began a widespread crackdown aimed, on the one hand, against former economic policymakers and business leaders and, on the other, **→13**



© File photo

## Korean actress Lee Young-ae backs quake relief efforts in Iran

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — South d e s k Korean actress Lee Young-ae has donated 50,000,000 Korean won (about \$45,000) to earthquake relief efforts in Iran, where she is hugely popular.

The donation was made via check handed over to Iranian Ambassador Hassan Taherian in Seoul by Korea Foundation for Persons with Disabilities Chairman Lee Seong-gyu, the Embassy of Iran in Seoul announced on Monday.

Lee Young-ae is known for her appearances in the Korean historical drama "Dae Jang Geum" (2003), which was also aired on Iranian television.

The massive earthquake in the Kermanshah region in western Iran killed hundreds and injured thousands last week.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Zarif reiterates cooperation with UN on Afghanistan

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Monday reiterated Tehran’s support for peace and stability in Afghanistan, saying Tehran is ready to cooperate with the United Nations to help meet the needs of Afghanistan.

“Iran seeks stability in Afghanistan and has made efforts in this line,” he said during a meeting in Tehran with Tadamichi Yamamoto, the special representative of the United Nations secretary general.

He also highlighted the necessity of fighting terrorists given the defeats of Daesh in Iraq and Syria.



Saudi actions in Yemen constitute ‘war crime’: Judiciary chief

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani on Monday slammed Saudi Arabia for its continued aggression against Yemen, saying Riyadh’s actions in Yemen constitute “war crime”.

Speaking during a meeting with senior Judiciary officials, Ayatollah Larijani criticized the silence of international community on Saudi crimes against Yemeni people.

He said the international human rights organizations just pay lip service to the plight of Yemeni people.

Not only they do not support the people, but also extend their support for the oppressors, the cleric said.



Rouhani presents bill to parliament to amend law on terror finance

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — On Monday President Hassan Rouhani presented a bill to the parliament to amend the law on countering the financing of terrorism, Mehr news agency reported.

The bill, titled “Amending the Law on Combating the Financing of Terrorism”, was proposed by the economy minister on October 29, 2017 during a cabinet meeting that was approved with a double-urgency.



Peaceful resolution of conflicts highly important: Turkey

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Turkish Foreign Ministry has released a statement voicing support for a peaceful resolution of conflicts and mediation as tools to achieve peace and stability in the region.

“With this understanding and with a view to contributing to the capacity building efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the field of mediation, Turkey, as the current Chair of the Summit and the Executive Committee of the OIC, will organize the first OIC Member States Conference on Mediation in Istanbul on 21 November 2017,” read the statement sent to the Tehran Times by the Turkish embassy in Tehran.



Pakistani flotilla berths at Iran’s Bandar Abbas

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A flotilla comprising two Pakistani warships berthed at Bandar Abbas port on Monday for a five-day official visit, IRNA reported.

Rear Admiral Hossein Azad, a top navy commander, said in a ceremony that the Pakistani flotilla will attend joint naval drills with their Iranian counterparts.

Captain Khalid Pervez, the commander of Pakistani flotilla, said upon arrival that spreading the message of peace and friendship and exchanging experience were the main aims of the Pakistani flotilla voyage to Iran.



Chile appoints first ambassador to Tehran since 1980

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Chilean President Michelle Bachelet appointed Ignacio Llanos Mancilla as the country’s first ambassador to Tehran since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, ISNA reported on Monday.

Iran severed its diplomatic ties with Chile on August 18, 1980, protesting Pinochet regime’s repressive policies at home and giving the Chilean Chargé d’affaires in Tehran 15 days to close the embassy and leave the country.

Since 1980, Chile had been represented in Iran through its mission to the United Nations.

Leader makes unannounced visit to quake-hit Kermanshah

Leader expresses sympathy with every bereaved soul

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — In the early hours of Monday Leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made an unannounced visit to quake-hit regions in Kermanshah Province.

The Leader initially arrived in the city of Sarpol-e-Zahab, the city hardest hit by the 7.3 magnitude earthquake, and inspected the damaged buildings and talked to the locals.

He then went among the bereaved families in Sarpol-e-Zahab to console them on the deadly earthquake.

The Kurdish-populated city is 15 kilometers away from the Iraqi border.

The quake happened on November 12. The epicenter of the quake was near Ezgeleh, Kermanshah Province.

Addressing the people, Ayatollah Khamenei said, “I would have very much liked to travel to the city of you kind and loyal people at the time of merriment of hearts and vivacity of life, not in a situation where you are suffering from sorrow, misfortune and such a major catastrophe.”

The quake left at least 440 dead and more than 90,000 injured. It also left about 130,000 homeless.

Expressing sympathy with each and every bereaved soul in the devastated cities and villages, the Leader said, “Your grief has filled our hearts with sorrow and afflicted



our thoughts.”

He pointed to the acts of resistance, resilience and sacrifice by the people of Kermanshah Province during the Iraqi war against Iran in the 1980s, saying, “This is not the first time that the city of you kind and patient people and its surrounding towns have been hit by such woes; you proved your mettle,

perseverance and valor in the face of pain and suffering during the imposed war and will also display them today.”

Ayatollah Khamenei added, “Great and brave people stand against disasters and overcome those calamities with their resolve; therefore, although an earthquake is a great misfortune and catastrophe which devastates

and grieves everyone with its destruction, this same earthquake can turn into a blessing as a result of the resistance of the people and their struggles for revitalization, construction and development.”

Highlighting the possibility of overcoming natural and imposed disasters through resistance by utilizing the great potential of the nation, the Leader said, “This incident mobilized the Iranian nation and people all over the country, who, feeling that their hearts are with Kermanshah and that they are indebted to Kermanshah, to carry out their responsibility of providing aid to the best of their ability.”

Ayatollah Khamenei also headed an emergency meeting with officials whose organizations or ministries are tasked to rebuild the quake-hit regions, insisting that constructing houses for the quake victims should be of “highest priority”.

“In this disaster, officials, particularly in certain sectors, shone very well and struggled and endeavored, and from the early hours of the incident and with an effective contribution, the Army in cities and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps in villages rushed to the aid of people trapped under the rubble, but I am not content with this level of effort; therefore, the officials of various sectors must redouble their efforts and endeavors.”

Iran says Arab League statement is ‘all lies and distortions’

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** —The Iranian Foreign Ministry has slammed Saudi Arabia for walking on the footsteps of the Zionist regime and called the Arab League’s anti-Iran statement “worthless” which is full of “lies and distortions”.

Pointing to the Sunday session of the Arab League in Cairo, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said issuing “worthless statements” is not the solution to current regional problems, for the majority of which, he said, Riyadh is responsible.

He pointed out that Saudi Arabia is exacerbating regional disputes, and by its anti-Iran agenda, the kingdom is distracting Muslim nations from the important issue of Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The Arab League on Sunday held an emergency meeting which was convened at the request of Saudi Arabia with support from the UAE and Bahrain to discuss ways to confront what they called Iranian interference in the region.

In a statement after the meeting, the Arab League accused Iran of arming the Houthis in Yemen and de-

nounced the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement for “supporting terrorism and extremist groups in Arab countries with advanced weapons and ballistic missiles.”

The spokesman said the statement was “all lies and distortions”.

He said the Islamic Republic wants Saudi officials to immediately put an end to their aggression against Yemeni people.

Saudi Arabia and its allies launched a military campaign against Yemen in March 2015 in an attempt to defeat Houthi fighters and to reinstate the former Yemeni president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, Riyadh’s close ally.

As a result of the Saudi-led coalition’s ceaseless bombardment of Yemen, so far more than 12,000 Yemenis have been killed and thousands more sustained injuries. The war-torn Middle-Eastern country is suffering one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises as described by rights groups.

On Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Twitter that he had submitted a letter

to the UN in which he urged the implementation of a previous four-point plan to resolve what he described as the “tragic situation in Yemen”.

Riyadh’s regional policies have also impacted other countries, including Syria, which is suffering a foreign-backed militancy since 2011, Bahrain, Qatar and last but not least, Lebanon, whose prime minister announced his resignation weeks ago while on an official visit to Saudi Arabia.

Qassemi called on Riyadh to stop putting pressure on Lebanese and Qatari people and put an end to its intervention in Bahrain, so that the people of that country can “find a solution to their problems through dialogue.”

He emphasized that Iran’s foreign policy is based on friendly relations with regional countries.

Pointing to the Astana peace initiative which was brokered by Iran, Russia and turkey, the spokesman said Tehran strives to end the region’s conflicts, but its efforts is hampered by Saudi Arabia’s incendiary actions that fuel the flames of regional conflicts.

Iran, EU hold high level talks in Tehran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union held their third round of high level talks in Tehran on Monday.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi and Helga Schmid, the EU’s deputy political director, headed the meeting.

Iran and the EU have already held two rounds of talks in Tehran and Brussels since the implementation of the nuclear deal in January 2016.

The Iran-EU talks focus on issues such as economy, environment, human rights, transportation, energy and latest developments in the Middle East.

The Iran-EU talks are scheduled to be continued in Isfahan on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said on Monday that the Iranian and EU officials plan to discuss nuclear cooperation on Tuesday and Wednesday.

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



In his new Iran strategy declared on October 13, U.S. President Donald Trump decertified the nuclear deal and asked Congress to decide about the fate of the agreement.

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

The EU has expressed support for the nuclear deal.

Federica Mogherini, the EU’s foreign policy chief, said on November 10 that the European Union will make sure that the nuclear deal “will continue to be fully implemented by all, in all its parts”.

Iran in Syria to fight ‘terror,’ says Russia’s Israel envoy

Iran’s military presence in Syria is solely dedicated to the “war on terrorism,” Russia’s ambassador to Israel said Monday.

“The aim of this presence is confined to war on terrorism. To this end, Russia cooperates with Iran in Syria,” Shein wrote, Times of Israel reported.

Shein, who has been Russia’s ambassador to Tel Aviv since 2015, said he was surprised by the Israeli media’s reaction to the U.S.-Russian agreement on Syria, and to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s assertion of the legitimacy of Iran’s presence there.

“Russia consistently acts in conformity with norms and principles of international law that legitimates the Iranian presence in Syria,” he wrote.

“In the post-conflict period it is for the Syrians themselves to agree upon foreign presence in their country within the scope of inclusive national dialogue. In other words, settling of this issue will be contingent on both the government in Damascus and political opposition forces. At the present time Russia spares no effort to launch such a dialogue,”



Shein added.

The Russian ambassador also addressed Israeli misgivings about the November 8 agreement Washington and Moscow signed in Amman to create a “de-escalation zone” in southern Syria.

The document is confidential and “of technical and operational nature defining measures needed to establish the Southern de-escalation zone,” Shein wrote. He added that there was no reason to “overestimate the significance” of the agreement.

“Russia respects the Israeli concerns in the field of national security,” he concluded.

Iranian media delegation visits China

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian media delegation paid a six-day visit to China starting on November 13. The visit is aiming at expanding media cooperation between the two countries.

The delegation includes directors from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and news agencies.

The delegation held a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to China Ali Asghar Khaji as well.

On Wednesday, the delegation visited the China Radio International.

Mohammad Jafar Safi, director general of the Foreign Media Department at Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, praised efforts being made by Persian service of the China Radio International which plays an important role



Iran wants France to adopt policies based on Mideast changes

**1 →** Macron has said that a new series of criteria and a new treaty should be negotiated with Iran to

stop their ballistic activities in the region.

“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,” Bloomberg quoted him as saying at a press conference in Gothenburg, Sweden.

in introducing the Iranian culture to the Chinese people.

An official at the radio said that the U.S. and some other Western countries should not have the dominant power in media.

He added that Iran and China should cooperate to counter the dominance of the Western media outlets.

He also noted that the Western media have “biased” views toward the Chinese media and avoid cooperation with China.

The China Radio International cooperate with a number of the Iranian media including IRNA, he added.

The Iranian media delegation also visited China Global Television Network on Wednesday.

On November 14, the delegation paid a visit to Guang Ming Daily and talked with a number of its reporters.



# Russia warns against coddling terrorists to achieve short-term goals: Lavrov

Moscow has called for avoiding the practice of employing terrorists active in Syria as a quick fix to achieve short-term goals, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said addressing the students of Azerbaijan’s Diplomatic Academy.

According to him, the fight against international terrorism requires joint efforts by the global community. “Both Russia and Azerbaijan stand for fighting the war on terror without any double standards, so that no one could use terrorists as quick fixes in achieving some short-term goals, as we see happening in Syria and some other countries in the Middle East,” the Russian top-diplomat stressed.

“We know how terror groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIL [the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Daesh] were created,” Lavrov pointed out. “It is a huge miscalculation to believe that any of these groups may be used in order to overthrow a regime and then remain loyal to its sponsors. History shows that it happens the other way around,” the Russian foreign minister said.

## ■ NATO’s allegations

Elsewhere, NATO’s (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allegations about the Zapad-2017 Russian-Belarusian joint military drills being aggressive have turned out to be false, while the alliance still hasn’t pulled its troops out of the Baltic States, Lavrov said

“They [NATO] deployed troops to the Eastern Europe citing the so-called Russian threat, they even said that the Zapad-2017 Russian-Belarusian exercises had been aimed at preparing an aggression against the Baltic States, and that Russia wanted to conquer Belarus as well,” the Russian top diplomat said.

“But none of those allegations proved to be true, they all turned out false. Nevertheless, the troops they sent to the Baltic States in order to counter the threat that, they believed, the Zapad-2017 drills posed, still remain there,” Lavrov pointed out.

The Russian foreign minister went on to say that security in the Eurasian and the Euro-Atlantic region should be seen as “security in the region stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and all countries should be equal.” “Equality means that there should be no one provided with legal guarantees, while others make do with promises that are not going to be fulfilled,” Lavrov concluded.

## ■ Countries queuing up for Eurasian Economic Union

A multitude of countries are queuing up for making a free trade zone agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Lavrov said.

“There is a multitude of countries willing to make agreements on a free trade zone,” he said, adding that the European Union (EU) “feels embarrassed to establish ties with the EAEU.” “They punish themselves, but we do not benefit



from it either,” Russia’s top diplomat said.

According to Lavrov, “it is important not to create private clubs and to try and compete with others,” as it will “increase fragmentation of trade relations.”

## ■ Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Many areas that may lead to settlement of the situation in Nagorno Karabakh have been outlined already, and no one wants to continue the conflict, Russian Foreign Minister said after negotiations with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov on Monday.

“No one is satisfied with the conflict, and a solution should be sought for, all the more so because many areas that are expected to bring results have already been outlined,” he said.

“Being one of the three OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Minsk Group co-chairmen, we will continue looking for mutually acceptable ways of peaceful settlement with regard to the developments that emerged during the recent meeting of the three co-chairmen - Russian, American and French - with the Azerbaijani

and Armenian foreign ministers in Moscow,” the Russian foreign minister added.

Lavrov also said that the Minsk Group of the OSCE on Nagorno-Karabakh includes all the countries that can contribute to the settlement of the conflict, so, there is no need to extend its format.

“We have an agreed format,” he said. “There are three co-chairs (Russian, United States, and French). They are not existing in vacuum, they are co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group where all the countries concerned that can have any influence on that process are present.”

The Russian top diplomat confessed he had heard the idea of extending this format from journalists only as this topic had never been raised. “I think that in this situation, like in many other conflict situations, any new initiatives may be used, intentionally or not, as tools to spoil what is already being done in the format that has already proved its worth for both parties,” Lavrov stressed.

(Source: TASS)

## German coalition talks fail after FDP walks out

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has announced that her efforts to form a three-way coalition failed after liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) withdrew from the talks.

“Now we have to deal with the facts. And the fact is that we were unable to finish the coalition talks with success,” Merkel said in a press conference on Monday.

“It is a day of deep reflection on how to go forward in Germany. As chancellor, I will do everything to ensure that this country is well managed in the difficult weeks to come.”

Merkel’s center-right Christian democratic political alliance (CDU/CSU) secured 33 percent of the general election that took place in September, losing about nine percent of the votes compared with the last election in 2013 and failing to form a single-party government.

The chancellor was holding talks with the FDP, which secured 10.7 percent of the votes in September, and the Greens, which scored 8.4 percent in the vote, to form a coalition government.

## ■ FDP: We made compromises

Meantime, FDP Leader Christian

Lindner said that his party made various compromise offers during the talks that ended unsuccessfully.

He said that tax policies, European policies, questions of migration and education were among the compromises his party was willing to make.

“We know that politics lives from balancing and with just 11 percent one cannot dictate the course of an entire republic,” he told reporters in Berlin.

Immigration levels, climate change and the future of the European Union were reportedly among the areas of contention in the failed coalition talks.

Merkel is due to meet the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who could call for new elections.

She can also form a minority government if she can secure enough support from other parties in individual policies.

Merkel has been the chancellor of Germany for the last 12 years.

A government vacuum in Europe’s largest and strongest economy might affect many issues such as the Eurozone’s stability and discussed reforms backed by France.

(Source: AL Jazeera)

## Millions in Yemen face death due to Saudi blockade: WFP

The World Food Program says the House of Saud regime’s continued blockade threatens the lives of millions in Yemen as aid deliveries cannot get to the needy.

Stephen Anderson, the head of the World Food Program, on Monday described as “heartbreaking” the fact that millions in Yemen depend on sustained access to humanitarian assistance.

Of a population of 26 million, some 17 million Yemenis do not know where their next meal is coming from and seven million are totally dependent on food aid.

On November 6, the House of Saud regime announced that it was shutting down Yemen’s air, sea, and land borders, after Yemeni fighters targeted an international airport near the Saudi regime capital with a missile.

The United Nations made a plea for the Saudi regime war machine to remove its blockade, warning that without aid shipments “untold thousands of innocent victims, among them many children, will die” and that its partial lifting was not enough.

Anderson said from Sana’a that humanitarian flights to the northern Ansarullah

(Houthi) movement-held part of Yemen have been grounded amid the siege.

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

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

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Friday that the Saudi regime blockade had left three cities in Yemen running out of clean water due to a halt in the import of fuel needed for pumping and sanitation, warning of “a renewed cholera outbreak.”

Some 2,100 people have died of cholera since April as hospitals struggle to secure basic supplies across the country. The epidemic had been on the wane for weeks in Yemen, although new cases are still running at around 2,600 per day.

(Source: Press TV)

## Zimbabwe’s ZANU-PF sets Mugabe impeachment ball rolling



Zimbabwe’s ruling ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front) will discuss the impeachment of President Robert Mugabe on Monday, its chief whip said, after a noon deadline expired for the 93-year-old to end his nearly four decades in power by resigning.

Impeachment could see Mugabe kicked out by a vote in parliament in under a day and would represent an ignominious end to the career of the “Grand Old Man” of African politics, who was once lauded across the continent as an anti-colonial hero.

ZANU-PF chief whip Lovemore Matuke told Reuters the party’s members of parliament would meet at 1230 GMT (7.30 a.m. ET) to start mapping out Mugabe’s impeachment.

On paper, the process is relatively long-winded, involving a joint sitting of the Senate and National Assembly, then a nine-member committee of senators, then another joint sitting to confirm his dismissal with a two-thirds majority.

However, constitutional experts said ZANU-PF had the numbers and could push it through in as little as 24 hours.

“They can fast-track it. It can be done in a matter of a day,” said John Makamure, executive director of the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust, an NGO (Non-governmental organizations) that works with the parliament in Harare.

Mugabe’s demise, now almost inevitable, 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 step aside.

Mugabe was once admired, even in the West, as the “Thinking Man’s Guerrilla”, a world away from his image in his latter years as the stereotypical African dictator proudly declaring he held a “degree in violence”.

As the economy crumbled and opposition to his rule grew in the late 1990s, Mugabe tightened his grip around the southern African country, seizing white-owned farms, unleashing security forces to crush dissent and speaking of ruling until he was 100.

## ■ Sanitized coup

ZANU-PF’s action follows a weekend of high drama in Harare, culminating in reports that Mugabe had agreed on Sunday to stand down -- only for him to dash the hopes of millions of his countrymen in a bizarre and rambling national address.

Flanked by the generals who sent in tanks and troops last week to seize the state broadcaster, Mugabe spoke of the need for national unity and farming reform, but made no mention of his fate, leaving the nation of 16 million people dumbstruck.

“I am baffled. It’s not just me, it’s the whole nation,” shocked opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai told Reuters. “He’s playing a game.”

Two senior government sources told Reuters Mugabe had agreed on Sunday to step aside and CNN said on Monday his resignation letter had been drawn up, with terms that included immunity for him and his hot-headed and unpopular 52-year-old wife Grace.

It was her tilt at power via the purging of former vice-president Emmerson Mnangagwa this month that forced the army to send in the troops.

Two other political sources told Reuters on Monday Mugabe had indeed agreed to resign but ZANU-PF did not want him to quit in front of the military, an act that would have made its mid-week intervention look like a coup.

“It would have looked extremely bad if he had resigned in front of those generals. It would have created a huge amount of mess,” one senior source within ZANU-PF said.

Another political source said the speech was meant to “sanitize” the military’s action, which has paved the way for Mnangagwa, a former security chief known as The Crocodile, to take over.

Moments after his address, war veterans’ leader Chris Mutsvanga, who has spearheaded an 18 month campaign to unseat Zimbabwe’s only leader, called for protests suggesting a potential popular uprising if Mugabe refused to go.

## ■ Deep state

On Saturday, hundreds of thousands took to the streets of Harare to celebrate Mugabe’s expected downfall and hail a new era for their country, whose economy has imploded under the weight of economic mismanagement, including 500 billion percent hyperinflation in 2008.

An estimated 3 million Zimbabweans emigrated to neighboring South Africa in search of a better life.

The huge crowds in Harare have given a quasi-democratic veneer to the army’s intervention, backing its assertion that it was merely effecting a constitutional transfer of power, rather than an old-style coup, which would risk a diplomatic backlash.

Behind the euphoria, some Zimbabweans have misgiving, not least because of the prominent role played by the military in removing Mugabe.

“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.

Others worry about Mnangagwa’s past, particularly as state security chief in the early 1980s, when an estimated 20,000 people were killed in the so-called Gukurahundi crackdown by the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade in Matabeleland.

He has denied any wrong-doing but critics say Zimbabwe risks swapping one army-backed autocrat for another.

(Source: Reuters)

## EU’s top diplomat ‘encouraged’ by Rohingya talks with Suu Kyi

The European Union’s foreign policy chief on Monday hailed “extremely encouraging” talks with Myanmar’s Leader Aung San Suu Kyi on the Rohingya crisis, welcoming steps towards the repatriation of Muslims driven into Bangladesh.

Federica Mogherini joined a stream of diplomats to meet Suu Kyi in recent days as efforts intensify to resolve a crisis that has pushed 620,000 members of the Muslim minority into Bangladesh.

China has made a “three-phrase” proposal to resolve the crisis - involving a cease-fire, refugee repatriation and poverty alleviation - with a Beijing foreign ministry spokesman on Monday saying its plan had won approval of leaders in both Bangladesh and Myanmar.

China has pumped billions of dollars into both countries as it widens its regional infrastructure and trade networks.

But the increasing expressions of optimism appeared sharply at odds with the realities on the ground.

Deadly attacks by Rohingya militants in Myanmar’s Rakhine state on August 25 sparked a massive backlash from security forces which the United Nations said may amount to “ethnic cleansing.”

Rohingya refugees now in Bangladesh have described a campaign of rape, murder and arson by the army and militias.

Large numbers of Rohingya are still fleeing violence, fear and hunger in mainly Buddhist Myanmar every day.

Myanmar denies any abuse, saying it is ready and willing to take back refugees if they can “verify” they belong in Rakhine.

But rights groups say a speedy and safe repatriation of significant numbers is highly unlikely.



The EU’s Mogherini, who visited refugee camps in Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar over the weekend, emerged from Monday’s talks with Suu Kyi in a positive mood.

“I found it [the talks] extremely encouraging,” she told reporters in Myanmar’s capital Naypyidaw at a meeting of Asian and European foreign ministers.

“I am very much encouraged by the possibility - that I believe is real and concrete - of Myanmar and Bangladesh” reaching an agreement for the repatriation of refugees.

The two countries have agreed in principle to repatriate the refugees but have yet to strike a binding deal.

Nobel winner Aung San Suu Kyi has faced intense



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	88261.2
IFX	1009.87

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	40,900 rials
EUR	48,550 rials
GBP	55,1000 rials
AED	11,2700 rials

Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.89/b
WTI	\$56.23/b
OPEC Basket	\$59.98/b
Gold	\$1,288.45/oz
Silver	\$17.11/oz
Platinum	\$938.25/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



6th Iran-Ghana Joint Economic Committee meeting held

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The 6th Iran-Ghana Joint Economic Committee meeting was held in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, with participation of a 60-member Iranian delegation, the website of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) reported on Monday.

As reported, on the sidelines of the two countries' joint economic committee, Iran-Ghana trade and investment opportunities forum was also held at the place of Ghana Export Promotion Authority, where the Iranian delegation comprised of representatives from 33 Iranian companies attended.

As discussed during the forum, Iran can expand its cooperation with Ghana in various fields including medicine, industrial machineries, and exports of petchem products, building materials, and food industry.

Ghana is capable of exporting cacao and tropical fruits to Iran.



TCCIMA to host Iran-Singapore business forum

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Singaporean economic delegation will arrive in Tehran on Saturday to take part in Iran-Singapore business forum on Sunday, the portal of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) reported on Monday.

The Singaporean delegation which seeks expansion of trade ties and economic cooperation with Iranian private sector is active in the fields of agricultural products, chemical fertilizers, foodstuff, cigarettes, investing on and implementing joint projects, and etc.



Iran Solo Exhibition running in Tatar capital

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Under the direct supervision of Iranian Industry Ministry, Iran Solo Exhibition started operation in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan Republic in Russia, on Monday, the website of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran reported.

Iranian companies are showcasing their latest products during the four-day event in various sectors such as construction materials, technical, telecommunication and engineering services, energy, transportation, mining, decoration, home-appliances, medical services, healthcare products, and etc.

Most OPEC members back extending output cuts: Zanganeh

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Monday that most of OPEC members support extending output cuts however the final decision will be made at the next OPEC meeting on November 30.

“The majority of members support the

extension of the plan, but the final decision should be taken at the next OPEC meeting,” Zanganeh was quoted by ISNA.

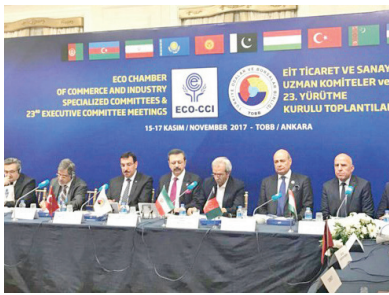
The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries together with a group of non-OPEC producers led by Russia has reduced output since January 1 under an

Tehran to host ECO CCI’s next executive committee meeting, general assembly

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran is chosen to host 24th Executive Committee meeting and the 16th General Assembly of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (IC-CIMA) announced.

The decision was made during ECO CCI’s 23rd Executive Committee meeting which was hosted by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) in Ankara on November 17.

The event was attended by chamber of commerce officials from Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan.



ICCIMA’s head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie who is also head of Iran’s committee in ECO CCI represented Iran in the organization’s 23rd Executive Committee meeting of CCI.

Boeing representatives due in Tehran next week to discuss deal: official

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Representatives of the U.S. aircraft maker Boeing are due to visit Tehran next week to finalize financial parameters of their deal with Iran, Shargh Daily quoted Iranian Deputy Transport Minister Asghar Fakhrieh Kashan on Monday.

“Last week, Iran Air’s Managing Director Farzaneh Sharafbafi had a meeting with Boeing representatives in Dubai and next week they will come to Tehran to finalize matters related to financing of the purchases,” the official said.

Asked about the effect of possible new U.S. sanctions on deal with French aircraft maker Airbus, Fakhrieh Kashan said, “We are definitely taking all necessary measures to



Beijing opened the door to international investors, domestic sector may be the big winner

China shocked the world last week when it suddenly announced it would finally make some moves to open up its financial sector to more ownership from international investors.

But it’s not just overseas companies that stand to benefit: One important Chinese sector will grow stronger, experts said.

Like many parts of China’s financial industry, insurance is under scrutiny by Beijing for firms’ outsized risk appetite, including the issuance of high-yield, short-term life insurance and other investment products. But those same insurers now stand to be the biggest beneficiary of the new investment rules.

That is, with the expectation of more competition and emphasis on best practices, the industry will likely see better products and standards, analysts said. In fact, the management in China should begin adopting better strategies for risk management — a persistent issue in the world second-largest economy.

“The Chinese insurance sector’s risk management remains in the developing stage, and thus would benefit from a greater influx of overseas practices and professional personnel,” said Eunice Tan, an analyst at Standard & Poor’s Global Ratings.

“We expect the increased foreign-insurer participation will promote the development of more sophisticated products with higher margins and more recurring premiums such as pensions, retirement planning and healthcare insurance, areas undeserved by domestic insurers,” said Moody’s Investors Service in a note this week.

Chinese authorities have been sounding warnings and taking decisive steps to crack down on excessive risks in the financial system this year.

Just on Thursday, a senior official at the China Insurance Regulatory Commission said the country will tighten regulations on the use of insurance funds to curb “financial chaos,” Reuters reported.

In July, a senior Chinese insurance regulator warned of multiple risks in the industry, including liquidity, state news agency Xinhua reported. And a month earlier, authorities detained the chairman of insurer Anbang — best known for its 2015 purchase of New York’s landmark Waldorf Astoria hotel — in what industry experts called a “house-cleaning” of those associated with high-yield insurance products.

■ Opportunity for foreign insurers

Overall, observers are positive on the move to relax ownership rules for foreign investors.

“The new regime is credit positive for foreign life insurers operating in China because it will allow greater management autonomy,” said Frank Yuen, a Moody’s analyst.

Foreign insurers have been hampered by stiff competition in China from giants such as Ping An and China Life, particularly as they’d been stuck with minority stakes in joint ventures, missing out on rapid growth opportunities in the world second-largest economy.

The life insurance market in China is “significantly underserved” and presents a compound annual growth rate of 22 percent from 2012 to 2016 for premiums, according to Moody’s.

Even so, constraints on ownership have affected business expansion for the 28 foreign-invested life insurance companies in China. Those firms accounted for just 6.5 percent of gross premiums in August this year, barely growing from 6.3 percent in the same month last year, noted S&P analysts.

Monetary chief says ECB cash to drive incomes



of the ECB’s policies, which — he believes — have not yet completely worn off.

“With well-anchored inflation expectations, the effects of past low inflation in wage formation should not be persistent,” Mario Draghi said at a conference of bankers and policymakers in Frankfurt, where the ECB is situated. “As the labor market tightens and uncertainty falls, the relationship between slack and wage growth should begin reasserting itself. But we have to remain patient.”

Draghi downplayed any expectations of possible policy normalization in the form of lower asset purchases (even though the ECB cut its monthly bond purchases from 60 billion euros to 40 billion several weeks ago) or interest rate hikes, as he sees his

policies as bringing improvements to the Eurozone’s productive forces.

“A key motor of the recovery remains the very favorable financing conditions facing firms and households, which are in turn heavily contingent on our policy measures,” Draghi said.

Business leaders disagree, saying the ECB policies do not correspond to the economic reality in some Eurozone member states — in Ireland, for example. They say Ireland’s rise in property prices demands quicker gains in salaries and wages, and patience and trust in the ECB is not enough to give people their own homes.

“Employers have to manage on the cost side and cannot meet the expectations when it comes to accommodation,” Neil McDonnell of industry group Irish Small and Medium Enterprises (ISME), said.

Draghi’s ECB will buy an additional \$3 trillion worth of bonds through September 2018, and will continue doing so “if needed.” He says this policy helps the ECB’s broader approach to monetary regulation.

“Asset purchases matter also for the signals they entail about the path of future policy rates: the so-called ‘signaling effect,’” Draghi told a banking conference. “The signaling

effect of asset purchases has therefore naturally increased in prominence relative to the duration effect.”

Addressing the ISME’s concerns, Draghi said salaries and wages would eventually pick up as a result of his six-year-old policy course.

This is, however, uncertain.

“The good news for the ECB is that compensation per employee is trending upward again; the bad news is that the growth rate remains too weak to be confident about inflation returning to target,” Maxime Sbahi of Bloomberg notes.

Ireland needs either higher wages or an increase in infrastructure and home construction investment — neither appears to be a very likely perspective. The migrant crisis makes things worse, as more people need more homes. Germany — the booming exports machine of the Eurozone — also wants an increase in pay for similar reasons.

IG Metall, the biggest German trade union, is seeking a 6 percent pay increase, which is not realistically possible with the current Eurozone inflation way below the ECB’s 2 percent target.

Draghi has called for patience, though has yet to propose a feasible solution.

(Source: Sputnik)



agreement set to run until next March.

Iran has been exempted from the output cuts to help it recover market share lost while under West-imposed sanctions.

According to Zanganeh, in case of a production cut extension, the exemption

for Iran will also be extended.

OPEC and non-OPEC producers are curbing their output in hopes of supporting prices and reducing inventories.

OPEC will meet at the end of the month to discuss the policy.

Iran Economic & Investment Opportunities Forum slated for Nov. 25

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — An international forum on Iran’s economic and investment opportunities is due to be held on November 25-28 at IRIB International Conference Center in Tehran.

According to the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), 100 foreign companies, interested in investment in Iran, along with about 300 Iranian companies will be participating in this event.

Active in a variety of areas including tourism, renewable energies, agriculture, oil, gas and petrochemicals, auto industry, mining and etc., the foreign participants will have the chance to hold meetings with



Iranian counterparts during this four-day forum.

China, Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Russia, Japan, Serbia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, UAE, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom are among the countries which have representatives to attend the event.

prevent any probable risk.”

“All ambiguities must be cleared before signing any final contract,” he added.

According to the official, Airbus is completely adhering to the deal so far, because if something happens “That would be them who suffer financial damage.”

Iran Air inked a deal with Boeing on December 11, 2016 to buy 80 aircrafts valued at \$16.6 billion. It is Iran’s biggest deal with an American company since the 1979 revolution and the U.S. embassy takeover.

The national flag carrier also signed a deal with the French giant plane maker Airbus on January 28, 2016 for the purchase of 118 Airbus jets worth \$27 billion.



Hong Kong-listed insurance giant AIA — which traces its roots to China — is the only 100 percent foreign-owned life insurer in China. Shares in the company reacted positively to Beijing’s announcement, with the Hong Kong-listed stock jumping over 7.5 percent from last Friday.

However, with the caps on foreign ownership lifted, that likely means AIA China will face more competition, Nomura analysts said.

However, the Chinese insurers with their home-ground advantage are still better positioned for the growth opportunities in China.

“Chinese financial institutions have a large lead and will continue to enjoy a home-field advantage. Foreign entrants will still rely on domestic franchise for access to customers and local knowledge. Moreover, domestic partners in existing joint ventures with international firms may be unwilling to dilute their stakes,” said S&P’s Tan.

(Source: CNBC)

European markets jarred by German coalition collapse

European stocks slipped and safe haven government bonds were in demand early on Monday as the collapse of coalition talks in Germany served as a reminder of political risk that still runs as an undercurrent in Europe. Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Monday her efforts to form a three-way coalition government had failed, thrusting Germany into a political crisis and pushing Europe’s largest economy closer to a possible new election.

German stocks led the move downward, with the country’s main index down by over 0.2 percent, pulling the main pan-European broader Euro STOXX 600 index lower by a similar amount.

Investors instead preferred safe haven government bonds: the yield on Germany’s 10-year government bond, the benchmark for the bloc, edged lower to a 1-1/2 week low of 0.35 percent at one stage.

“The collapse of the talks was a surprise and there is little clarity on how things will unfold from here. It adds to uncertainty which is weighing on risk sentiment in world markets,” said Rainer Guntermann, rates strategist at Commerzbank.

Other analysts said however, that the overall sentiment towards the euro zone remains positive, reflected in the resilience of the euro on Monday.

“The Eurozone political story is an outlier at the moment in the G10 currency trading space. The German political news over the weekend is not a game changer in our view,” said Viraj Patel, a currency strategist at ING in London. “The broader story still remains of a recovering Eurozone with improving fundamentals.” (Source: Reuters)



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## Angela Merkel has few options left to govern Germany

By Rick Noack

Only a couple of months ago, German Chancellor Angela Merkel was Europe’s most powerful leader. Some even claimed that she had become the leader of the Western world and filled the void left by President Trump.

Yet at the moment, she’s not even the most powerful person in Germany.

Late Sunday night, the Free Democrats walked out of coalition talks with Merkel’s Christian Democrats (CDU), their Bavarian sister party CSU and the Green party. It is now up to German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier — and not Merkel — to decide about how to proceed. Steinmeier’s position is largely ceremonial, but he has a crucial role in times of governmental crises. Merkel herself acknowledged early Monday morning that the nation previously perceived as Europe’s politically most stable power was facing an uncertain political future for the first time in years.

“This is a night of deep reflections about what’s next for Germany,” said a visibly exhausted Merkel at around 1 a.m. local time on Monday morning.



For now, her government will continue to operate as a caretaker administration and all ministers who were in place prior to the September election will maintain their positions. There are a number of possible scenarios for what could happen next but none of them appear to be stable, long-term options.

### ■ A grand coalition

During her 12 years in power, the Social Democrats — Germany’s second mainstream party which is to the left of the CDU — were part of the government for eight years.

But when the Social Democrats suffered a major setback in elections last September they partially blamed the defeat on Merkel. In response, the party leadership immediately ruled out forming another grand coalition with the CDU, even though a majority of Germans remained in favor.

To some, however, the Social Democrats have become too indistinguishable from their more conservative mainstream competitor. Core issues usually believed to play into the hands of the Social Democrats, such as social justice and fair wages, have become less of a concern over the last four years.

Critics argue that the party should develop a clear profile again as an opposition movement, but forcing the country into new elections by refusing to form a coalition may turn out to be an even bigger mistake. Social Democratic leader Martin Schulz is widely considered to have failed as a candidate. New elections could result in an even more disastrous electoral outcome than in September.

### ■ The FDP comes back to the negotiating table

After the Social Democrats rejected another grand coalition, Merkel was only left with one alternative: a coalition with the pro-business Free Democrats and the Green Party.

The Free Democrats had only just reentered the Bundestag, Germany’s lower house of parliament, after suffering a major defeat four years ago. Like the Social Democrats’ setback, that defeat was largely blamed on the previous coalition with Merkel, in which the Free Democrats were largely unsuccessful at achieving their own goals.

This may partially explain the party’s new reluctance to form another coalition with Merkel.

Regardless, the Free Democrats were widely accused of opportunism on Monday morning. Both the Green Party and Merkel’s CDU and the CSU argued that a compromise was within reach, and observers pointed out that the Free Democrats had largely been given their key campaign promises. Hence, the Free Democrats may still be pressured into returning to the negotiating table.

Ultimately, though, the Jamaica coalition — named after the yellow, green and black colors of the possible coalition partners — never appeared to be a stable option given the parties’ vast policy differences. The abrupt walking-out of the Free Democrats on Sunday night has likely destroyed the remaining trust among those partners needed to form a government.

### ■ A minority government

Given that both options for a viable coalition are unlikely, the new Bundestag will probably go through a weeks-long voting process instead. MPs will try to agree on a chancellor proposed by the German president. That proposed candidate will likely still be Merkel.

In the first ballot, an absolute majority is needed for a chancellor to be elected. If MPs cannot agree on a new leader, that procedure will be repeated several times. In a final step, parties can then propose their own candidates. The candidate with the most votes will become chancellor without having to reach an absolute majority.

Theoretically, Merkel — or another leader — could then rule in a minority government. For instance, the Green Party, the CDU and the CSU could form a coalition and rely on the voluntary support of either the Social Democrats, the Left party, the right-wing Alternative for Germany or the Free Democrats.

A minority coalition government on a national level would be unprecedented in Germany, however.

### ■ New elections

It would be up to Steinmeier, the president, to call new elections to avoid such an unstable scenario. In the past, both parties and presidents have gone to great lengths to avoid election reruns, given the country’s consensus-based constitution which pressures parties into finding common ground.

Germany is Europe’s leading economy and a key negotiating partner in the ongoing Brexit talks. New elections would prolong a state which has now lasted for more than five weeks and has turned the German government into an empty shell without long-term policy objectives.

Whether a rerun would substantially change the Bundestag’s current composition, which has thrown the country into political turmoil, is also far from certain.

(Source: The Washington Post)

# Saudi political explosions risk collateral damage

By David Ignatius

Nearly two weeks after the double political explosion that rocked Riyadh, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman appears to be doing damage control in ways that may help stabilize Saudi Arabia and the region. The first bombshell was the Nov. 4 arrest on corruption charges of 201 prominent Saudis, including princes and government ministers. Now MBS, as the 32-year-old crown prince is known, is beginning a resolution process that may settle many of these cases out of court.

A senior Saudi official told me Thursday that the kingdom’s anti-corruption commission would follow the standard “plea-bargain process” that is “usually conducted by the public prosecutor prior to transferring a case to the relevant court.” The commission’s overall aim, he said, was to “send a strong message” that corruption won’t be allowed, “irrespective of rank or status.”

The crackdown may have consolidated support for MBS among younger Saudis who resent older, wealthy princes and palace insiders. But his power play risked a backlash within the royal family because it violated the kingdom’s traditional consensual politics. Resolution of corruption cases out of court may dampen such high-level dissension.

### ■ Hariri’s resignation

The second Nov. 4 explosion was Saad Hariri’s announcement from Riyadh that he was quitting as Lebanon’s prime minister. Hariri’s resignation, which Lebanese sources told me came under pressure from MBS, risked causing instability in Lebanon that would have enhanced Hezbollah’s power



## MBS’ sweeping arrests sent shock waves through the kingdom and the region, and surprised even some Saudis who are close to the crown prince.

there, the opposite of what the Saudis wanted. Thursday, the Saudis agreed to allow Hariri to travel to France; Lebanese sources said he will then return to Lebanon.

The Hariri episode appears to have convinced Washington and Riyadh that their interests are better served by stability in Lebanon than instability, even though that approach requires some cooperation with Hezbollah, the dominant political faction.

A Saudi official told me that the kingdom plans to work with the U.S. to support Lebanese institutions, such as the army, that can gradually reduce the power of Hezbollah. MBS seems to have recognized that combating Hezbollah is a long game, not a short one.

Hariri’s resignation and seeming house arrest made him a hero in Lebanon and a symbol of the country’s yearning for sovereignty. This may give him some new leverage when he returns to Beirut.

Hariri will also campaign anew for international support for Lebanon’s economy and military.

MBS’ sweeping arrests sent shock waves through the kingdom and the region, and surprised even some Saudis who are close to the crown prince.

But the warning signals were there: King Salman said back on March 10, 2015, in his first major speech after taking the throne, that he had “directed the government to review its processes to help eradicate cor-

ruption,” according to a Reuters report at the time.

MBS had a reputation as a freewheeling businessman himself before joining the royal court. But he underlined the anti-corruption theme in a May 2017 interview with Al-Arabiya television: “If fighting corruption is not on the top of the agenda, it means the [king’s] fight is not succeeding ... I reiterate that anyone who is involved in corruption will not be spared.”

As examples of the corrupt deals that led to the Nov. 4 arrests, a senior Saudi official cited a land purchase in Jeddah where the government paid roughly double the market price, to provide a big kickback to a prominent official. Another instance was the purchase by the Education Ministry of vastly overpriced airline tickets for the hundreds of thousands of Saudis studying abroad, with payoffs for officials.

Corruption has been so endemic in Saudi Arabia that many observers assumed it was part of how the House of Saud governed. After first visiting the kingdom in 1981, I wrote a series of articles for The Wall Street Journal about how payoffs were undermining the defense and oil sectors. In subsequent decades, the shakedowns became less visible, but corruption continued.

MBS’ purge looked to many outsiders like a high-risk political move. But a senior prince cautioned me the country isn’t as fragile as it may look. One of MBS’ key backers put it this way: “Corruption can’t keep the country stable. Having a corruption-free country will keep us stable.”

That’s a worthy ambition, but as MBS detonates his bombs, he must avoid blowing himself up.

(Source: The Daily Star)

## Zimbabwe after Mugabe

to perpetuate his rule through his spouse or other family members, the nation faces rule by the military, its puppet or at least its chosen candidate, likely Mnangagwa, who previously headed the secret police and is implicated in ethnic massacres in the nation’s early years. The short-term prospects for Zimbabwe look dismal.

Yet it remains a nation rich in resources. Its agricultural output has long been in decline but its soil remains productive. Many Zimbabweans have fled from its stunning hyperinflation but retain ties to their home country and are well educated

## Post Mugabe, Zimbabwe is likely to get renewed and substantial assistance from China, which invests heavily in Africa but in recent years soured a bit on Zimbabwe as its leader grew older but no wiser.

— a result of a good system of grammar schools and higher education, one of Mugabe’s few successful contributions. It has good roads. Its legal and judicial systems aren’t the region’s best, but neither are they the worst.

But it needs competence in banking and financial management, and expertise to manage farmlands that were wrested from white ownership and awarded to Mugabe supporters who lacked farming know-how. Above all, it needs a government that focuses on freedom and economic recovery rather than on clinging to power by oppressing opponents.

Post Mugabe, Zimbabwe is likely to get renewed and substantial assistance from China, which invests heavily in Africa but in recent years soured a bit on Zimbabwe as its leader grew older but no wiser. Success will require broader buy-in — from Zimbabwean expatriates, who have expertise to contribute along with remittances and a devotion to their homeland — and from Western powers, including the United States, which would be wise to leverage aid to encourage free and fair elections and a political infrastructure that discourages either family rule or military intervention.

(Source: LAT)

## To place hope in defiant Suu Kyi seems futile




When will Myanmar’s de facto leader finally step up to the responsibilities her role entails?

In what might be considered the understatement of the year, what is happening to the Rohingya population in Myanmar, in the words of U.S. secretary of state Rex Tillerson, is “just horrific”. On a visit to the capital Naypyidaw on Wednesday, he called for an independent investigation into “credible reports of widespread atrocities” against the Rohingya in Rakhine state, as international abomination continues to grow over their treatment at the hands of Myanmar’s military. Yet Tillerson held back from calling for sanctions or punitive measures to force the country’s leadership to address the sectarian divides which have resulted in such violence. The acknowledgement from Washington that the Rohingya are being persecuted comes as Aung San Suu Kyi, the de facto leader of Myanmar, continues to repeatedly deny allegations of ethnic cleansing.


Her silence over the treatment of the Rohingya has been rivalled only by her failure to publicly criticize the army ever since it launched its offensive on the Rohingya in August. The defense she advanced on Wednesday, arguing that her objective was not to “set people against each other”, is impossible to reconcile with her dehumanizing talk about the Rohingya, whom she has variously described as “terrorists” and “Bengalis”, a term intended to negate their right to live in Rakhine province. More than 600,000 Rohingya have fled threats of rape, arson and murder to live in squalid refugee camps in neighboring Bangladesh and Ms Suu Kyi cannot bring herself to construct a phrase that radiates either compassion or concern. Her visit to Rakhine earlier this month increasingly looks like a photo opportunity organized by her public relations personnel, not a tour motivated by any genuine humanitarian intentions.

(Source: The National)

Second Announcement



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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 Iranian 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



# NATO ‘a paper tiger for member states’ divisions, Putin acts: expert

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By Payman Yazdani

**TEHRAN** — Since the crisis in east of Ukraine began, Russian officials accuse NATO of a series of provocations, threats and hostile actions stretching back over 25 years. Under some pretexts The NATO tries to get closer to Russia's borders and have stationed hundreds of troops and equipment in East Europe.

Moscow accuses NATO of violating an important part of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act related to new permanent stationing of forces. It's called the "Substantial Combat Forces" pledge. That pledge stated that in the "current and foreseeable security environment" NATO would "carry out its collective defense by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces."

Recently, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance will remain in the area "as long as necessary" to protect its allies.

Mr. Stoltenberg said: "We are stepping up, we are increasing the readiness of our forces. We are deploying for the first time in our history forces in the eastern part of the alliance. We are also strengthening our ability to move forces across Europe, but also across the North Atlantic."

The recent remarks by the NATO chief risks angering Russia, while from the other side there are reports about differences between NATO key member states like differences between Germany and U.S. after Trump took office and between the U.S. and Turkey and so on.

About the NATO capabilities and abilities to defend the member states, the issue was discussed with Filip Kovacevic, professor of geopolitics, University of San Francisco, California

Here is the text of the interview:

■ German magazine Der Spiegel has recently cited a confidential NATO report questioning the alliance's ability to defend against a Russian attack; however, NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu declined to comment on the issue. What is your opinion about NATO's real ability and readiness?

A: In my opinion, at this particular time, NATO is a paper tiger. There are so many disagreements among NATO governments, which are carefully hidden from the public eye, that it is very difficult to see how they could get their act together in the moment of crisis. However, NATO has had tremendous support from the mainstream media, academic think tanks, NGOs, and covert intelligence networks in Europe and the U.S. and so the public perception has been created that NATO is a durable, efficient and



**Filip Kovacevic, professor of geopolitics says at this particular time NATO is a paper tiger because of member states' internal divisions and Putin's acts to end Russia's geopolitical humiliation.**

even invincible military alliance. Nothing is further from truth. NATO has been bogged down in one of the poorest countries on earth, Afghanistan, for more than 15 years and made no progress whatsoever. They can't even come up with anything else to do now except to send in a few thousand soldiers. As if that will make any difference on the ground! The only difference it will make will be in the bank accounts of those who own the military-industrial corporations in the U.S. and Europe.

■ Shall we think of the report as an effort to spread Russophobia or a warning that Mr. Trump should be cautious about weakening NATO?

A: From its founding in 1949, NATO has been the last refuge of the most aggressive Cold War hawks and Russia-haters. It should not be forgotten that its leadership in the 1950s and 1960s included former Nazi officers. Just like any other NATO produced report in the last seventy years, this report reflects the same cast of mind, the same stereotypical group think, and the same Kremlinioia (my term: it means paranoia about the Kremlin). NATO amplifies the Russian threat in order to get more funding for its war-mongering projects. In fact, I think that this was not a bona-fide leak, but something purposefully passed on to the media by the NATO leadership to get the attention of the U.S. and

European ruling circles.

■ The report includes the NATO's command structure since the end of the Cold War, the NATO Response Force and of course the alliance's weak points. In your opinion, what are the most important NATO's setbacks?

A: The expansion of NATO seriously destabilized Europe. It destroyed the fragile balance of power that kept the continent at peace for a long time. NATO never took seriously the Russian offer of long-term cooperation which the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev called "Europe – our common home." No, NATO wanted to capitalize on the Soviet masochistic self-destruction. Well, the Russian president Vladimir Putin put an end to Russia's geopolitical humiliation and now, faced with a firm resistance, the NATO leadership lost its collective head. They do not know what to do except of course to create the atmosphere of fear and anxiety in Eastern Europe by falsely amplifying the Russian threat. NATO is also trying to subvert Russia from within using the mass media and agents of influence in various spheres of social life. In addition, it wants to drag Russia directly into the Ukrainian civil war and instigate a catastrophic inter-Slavic conflict. The private email correspondence of the former NATO Supreme Commander Europe Philip Breedlove leaked in July 2016 testifies to that. Now that was a real leak and

not this latest report!

■ Is NATO basically capable of responding to the threats such as the new world terrorism?

A: NATO is a military alliance and dealing with the terrorist threat is something that the police and domestic intelligence agencies are trained and equipped to do, not the military. As far as the fight against global terrorism goes, it has to be coordinated at the level of the United Nations. All states must be involved in this effort and all veto-holding members of the U.N. Security Council have to be on the same side. Without cooperating and sharing Intel with Russia and China, extremely destructive, rogue terrorist groups cannot be stopped. The recently established U.N. Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) led by the experienced Russian diplomat Vladimir Voronkov is a step in the right direction.

■ With regard to NATO's expansion to the east, how do you evaluate the future of NATO-Russia relationship?

A: The positive qualities of this relationship do not exist anymore. NATO expansion destroyed the potential for peace and prosperity in Eastern Europe. However, the NATO-friendly political elites in many Eastern European countries are increasingly losing public trust and legitimacy. The change of elites is imminent. The Atlanticist elites will rapidly be replaced by those who are geo-strategically oriented toward Eurasia. The Chinese influence is also being felt through various infrastructure projects in Eastern Europe. The Chinese initiatives bring the promise of employment and a better life, whereas NATO relies on deception and brute force to push its agenda forward. The critics of NATO have been openly discriminated against in various East European states.

■ Will the recent tensions between Ankara and the U.S. and some Turkey's NATO allies over a wide range of issues from the US and some Turkey's NATO partners support to SDF and PKK to the purchase of Russian made S400 missile system affect the Turkey and NATO cooperation?

A: These disagreements have already radically transformed the relations between Turkey on one side and the U.S. and various EU member states on the other. There is no return to the previous cozy relations while Recep Tayyip Erdogan remains the president of Turkey. That is why we are witnessing a well-financed media and intelligence effort to demonize Erdogan in the West as much as possible. I would not be surprised to hear that some academic and NGO circles tied to the Atlanticist political interests are preparing an indictment against Erdogan for war crimes. We will see what happens, but I am concerned that those who oppose the present Turkish Eurasianist geopolitical orientation will push Turkey into a serious political and economic crisis and try to turn it into a failed state.

## Hard days for British Johnson

1 → many people who believed that he would be a good successor to Theresa May, have now discarded this idea. In such a situation, Johnson should throw out the thought of being the next UK's Prime Minister! Many media in Britain now agree that Johnson is a man of great mistakes in the political arena.

The fact is that Johnson has not been able to appear as a different politician since his presence in the British Foreign Office. This has reduced hopes for his effective role in other political and executive positions. Interestingly, Boris Johnson was born in the United States of America (in New York) and has two American and English nationalities. Yet Johnson has renounced his American nationality in 2016.

Boris Johnson, in the aftermath of Donald Trump's presence at the White House, just like other foreign ministers in his country, has adapted himself to the policies of the U.S. government. Most of Johnson's remarks were endorsed by Donald Trump's remarks. Even on issues such as the JCPOA, this approach is quite evident. For example, Boris Johnson, in his latest remarks, has emphasized the need to maintain a nuclear deal with Iran. This is while the English authorities, following the president of the United States, welcome the change in the content of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Johnson recently stated that the British government will continue to support foreign investment in Iran:

The central core of the deal, which is a bargain on Iran's good behavior in relation to its nuclear program and its economic development, has not changed, and the President of the United States has not canceled or torn off the nuclear deal with Iran. As long as Iran is committed to the JCPOA, we should be witnessing economic interactions and progress. It is important for the Iranian people to be able to touch the interests of the JCPOA, and it is very important that we continue to work on trade and investment between the two countries."


Johnson's approach towards "the JCPOA" and also "Brexit" reflects his absolute agreement with the policies of the current U.S. government. Like Donald Trump and other American politicians, he is thinking about changing the content of the nuclear deal and incorporating issues such as Iran's missile power into the new agreement.

Not long ago, just before the United Nations General Assembly's New York Summit in September, Western media reported that the British government (Britain's Foreign Office) had agreed to redefine the nuclear deal, based on the U.S. objectives. Obviously, Johnson played a significant role in this process, and he will be an opponent of Trump's Theories towards the JCPOA in the future.

Another point that needs to be taken into consideration is that there is some kind of harmony between the positions taken by Trump and those by Johnson over the issue of Brexit. As noted, the current foreign secretary has been a fan of the withdrawal of his country from the European Union among the conservative party. That's while Donald Trump, the U.S. President, announced his support from the Brexit during the 2016 presidential elections.


After Trump's victory in the presidential election last year, he again stated his support for the British withdrawal from Europe, and even asked other European countries to join this process. Following this position by Trump, many European politicians responded to the US-led anti-European approach. However, Boris Johnson, as the British Foreign Secretary, didn't object Trump in this regard. In other words, the British Foreign Secretary has silently shown that he agrees with Trump's stances on the undermining of the United Europe.

Boris Johnson is now extremely worried about his political future. If he resigns, he will be far removed from his main desire which is to be appointed as the British prime minister. This has deeply affected the mind of Boris Johnson. Meanwhile, some analysts have already announced the expiry date of the current UK foreign secretary.



**ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER**  
**AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY**

**19531/96/55**  
**21/11/2017**



Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, affiliated to Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad of I.R of Iran, is considering the purchase of the below 8 items of emulsifiers and technicals, through one step international tender:

- 1- **40000 Kgs SIPERNATE 22S (SILICON DIOXIDE) (Dehumidifier Powder)**
- 2- **3500 Kgs EMULSIFIER PAP**
- 3- **8724 Kgs PROPARGITE TECH 98 PCT**
- 4- **2551 Kgs DELTAMETHRIN TECH 98 PCT**
- 5- **5102 Kgs PERMETHRIN TECH 98 PCT**
- 6- **782 Kgs EMULSIFIER FF<sub>4</sub>**
- 7- **2126 Kgs EMULSIFIER FF<sub>6</sub>**
- 8- **600 Kgs EMULSIFIER TERMUL**

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Tuesday November 21, 2017 untill Wednesday November 29, 2017 (seven working days) from our purchasing committee (9<sup>th</sup> floor, no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of Iranian Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with Sheba no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of Satna or Paya with the 30 character identification code no. 358039782263500650000000000006 will be possible.


The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Saturday December 30, 2017 (untill the end of the official hours) to our security office located on 8<sup>th</sup> floor. meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelops will be on Sunday December 31, 2017 at 10:00 AM with the presence of bidder's representatives in our purchasing committee (9<sup>th</sup> floor, no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the bid bond amount should be in cash or bank guarantee as follows:


- A- € 3500 for Sipernate 22S (Silicon Dioxide) equivalent of Iranian Rials **144007000.**
- B- € 354 for Emulsifier pap equivalent of Iranian Rials **14553000.**
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- D- € 10696 for Deltamethrin tech 98 pct. equivalent of Iranian Rials **440073000.**
- E- € 4607 for Permethrin tech 98 pct. equivalent of Iranian Rials **189570000.**
- F- € 133 for Emulsifier FF<sub>4</sub> equivalent equivalent of Iranian Rials **5470000.**
- G- € 383 for Emulsifier FF<sub>6</sub> equivalent of Iranian Rials **15750000.**
- H- € 90 for Emulsifier Termul equivalent of Iranian Rials **3703100.**

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**Public & International Relations Department**  
**Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)**



**N.I.O.C**  
**1396.3759**



**National Iranian Drilling Company**

**Public Renewed Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tenderers**

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	DESCRIPTION	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
22,605	920,000,000	18,409,000,000	Tree Cone Bits	1480561	Tender No.PFP/AZD/95/002 Indent No :48-22-9522017	1

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

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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:  
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Receiving of documents:  
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum 2week after the date of second publication in person at the following address: A) Hall No.:316, 3thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept.(DRILLING PROJECTS), National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN  
B) jomhour street, yaghma alley nioc 8th building floor no : 04 room no 428 –tehran -iran .

Note 01: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurment department in due date will be known as tenderer from tender committee.

Note 02:the tender would be held in a tight period so the participants. Should hand over all prequalification documents along with all envelopes (A,B,C)before closing date.

C) Delivery of call quality evaluating including prequalification documents and envelopes (A,B,C) should be submitted before closing date :  
Tenderers shall submit the completed documents including qualificaion worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 45 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.  
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More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. [WWW.NIDC.IR](http://WWW.NIDC.IR)

**Foreign Procurement Dept**  
**National Iranian Drilling Company**

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



# It is time for Gerry Adams to go, but will his grip on Sinn Féin remain?

By Malachi O'Doherty

The maxim that all political careers end in failure will not apply to Gerry Adams. He has managed his departure in such a way as to avert any demand from the party that he go.

No one in Sinn Féin was thought likely to step forward as a challenger; this is not a party that caters for the dissenting voice. One of the embarrassments of recent times has been the number of councilors resigning and claiming that they have been bullied by the party hierarchy.

As for Adams himself, he was seen as having stayed on too long and lost his focus on his brief. His performance on economic issues during the last general election in the Republic was sloppy. The prospects of the party governing in coalition were undermined by his leadership, with potential

partners fearful of yet another scandal emerging. He was being muttered against. But it says much that none of those muttering had the courage to break cover and present a challenge to him.

So all sides understood it was time for Adams to go. But this had to be managed in such a way that the party could be assured he really was stepping down without it appearing to turn against him.

## Stepping back in recent months

Adams has been stepping back in recent months. In Donegal, near his Gortahork retreat, people tell stories of bumping into Adams, now a noticeably fit 69, and his dog at the top of Mount Errigal. But he has also been politically busy in the North, where he pretty much pulled down the institutions and stirred the party into action.

Ostensibly, it was the decision of Martin McGuinness, in the last weeks of his life, to crash devolution by resigning and forcing an election. Weeks before this, the satirists were calling him "Marlene" (a fusion of Martin and Arlene Foster), an indication of how solid the relationship between Sinn Féin and the DUP then seemed.

But Foster refused McGuinness's demand that she step aside to allow an investigation into her management of a renewable heating subsidy scheme that was run without cost controls.

When Adams came North in the midst of all that to embolden the party, the issue suddenly became much deeper and wider. It became about the DUP's inability to accord equality to republicans, to Irish-language speakers, to victims of the security forces, as well as its record on gay and lesbian rights. Battles long lost, or paused,

were resumed.

## Unionist majority

And the electorate in the North liked that. An election in March brought it almost level with the DUP in Stormont and ended the Unionist majority. Despite this being the greatest ever advance in republican politics in the North, Adams chose not to capitalize on it but to prolong negotiations to force a DUP humiliation.

The Ard Comhairle of Sinn Féin, its ruling executive, had by then appointed Michelle O'Neill to the new post of northern leader. She was no new voice. She was the representative of Gerry Adams on Earth, delivering his message, often with him standing at her shoulder.

She was appointed without a vote by the Assembly party that she is to lead, and that inevitably raises

questions about how democratic the appointment of Adams's successor will be.

This is a party that was fostered by the IRA and which for most of its history took instructions from the IRA. But now there is to be a procedure for replacing Adams as president, we will be able to see how transparent that process is, or if it really is so unnaturally coherent as a political party that no alternative vision exists within it.

It could be that Adams going might entice Fianna Fáil to seek a coalition with Sinn Féin. He is the one they find most off-putting. But a leader seen as an appointee would not be an attractive partner. Adams's ultimate achievement may be to have shaped Sinn Féin in his image so firmly that his departure will make no difference.

(Source: *Then Guardian*)

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# Test your green thumb at kitchen countertop!

**L I F E** Most of us dream for a cozy garden in which we could spend our time after retirement, and sadly enough, the dream does not come true in many cases! Here is a practical suggestion, which may motivate you to test your green thumb in your apartment right now! What is your idea about a little garden in your apartment in which you grow edible vegetables? And the good news is that, you should not buy seeds for this green paradise. All you need is not to throw away leftover herbs and vegetables.

Some vegetables such as onion and garlic enhance the flavor of the food and are widely used in different meals. You can regrow them on your kitchen counter without any trouble. Here are some vegetables and herbs that you don't need to buy daily even if you use it in your foods.

■ **Garlic**  
If you used to throw away your garlic with little green shoots on it, don't do it anymore! All you need is a glass of water. Put them in it with a little water and wait until it grows!

In this way, you always have fresh garlic sprouts right on your kitchen counter. They have milder taste than garlic cloves and can be used in pasta and salad.

● According to Iranian traditional medicine, garlic has drying and warming characteristics and is beneficial for people suffering from hair loss, cardiovascular disease, sexual frigidity and high blood pressure.

■ **Onion**  
Put the root end of an onion in the soil in a pot to regrow. You can use the green stem of onion or wait until it fully grow to a bulb.



● According to Iranian traditional medicine, onion has drying and warming characteristics; it lowers blood sugar and cholesterol, is diuretic, and a natural expectorant.

■ **Basil and cilantro**  
Put the stems of basil or cilantro in a glass

of water. Plant them in a pot when the stems reach five centimeter. You can enjoy fresh basil in your kitchen after some weeks!

● According to Iranian traditional medicine, cilantro has drying and cooling characteristics. Its carminative properties help

**You can regrow some vegetables such as onion and garlic, which enhance the flavor of the food on your kitchen counter without any trouble. All you need is not to throw away leftover herbs and vegetables!**

to reduce flatulence and bloating. It is also beneficial for sleep disorder.

● Basil has warming and drying characteristics. It strengthens digestive system and is anti-Diarrhea. It relieves headaches caused by migraine.

■ **Mint**  
If you find a mint with roots in vegetables you buy, don't hesitate to put it in a glass of water!

While the mints begin to spring, it is the time to plant it in a pot.

But be careful where you plant that mint. Since its runners will take over all nearby.

● According to Iranian traditional medicine, mint has warming and drying characteristics. It improves the cardiovascular system and is a great appetizer.

■ **Lettuce**  
Place an intact head of lettuce in a bowl with little water in front of your window. In two weeks, you will have a fresh green lettuce at your window!

● According to Iranian traditional medicine, lettuce has cooling characteristics and contains water. Hence, it provides natural moisture for body organs, purifies your blood, and promotes your health.

■ **Scallions**  
You can have a full-grown scallion in five days!

Put the scallions with roots in a small glass with a little water and you will enjoy fresh scallions in coming days!

● According to Iranian traditional medicine, onion has drying and warming characteristics and lowers blood sugar and cholesterol as well as high blood pressure.

## Get your child to eat vegetables without a battle!

How to get your child to eat vegetables easily without the stress. Find some of the best strategies and get vegetable recipes to inspire you and your child!

Kids taste buds are actually different than ours. Veggies often taste bitter, very bitter to them, and the texture is unusual. It is easy to understand why kids aren't interested once you start to think about it.

The important thing is that we need to get them comfort-

able with vegetables, because honestly they're fairly foreign to them. As with any food that they don't prefer, what they really need is a chance to explore it when the pressure to eat it is off.

■ 1. Serve veggies raw (carrots, zucchini, green beans, celery, etc.) with a preferred dip like ranch, peanut butter, sour cream, etc. Obviously, there are some choking hazards with the toddler crowd, so be careful of raw car-

rot and celery.

■ 2. Serve frozen vegetables frozen. I know that sounds crazy, but it really changes the taste. A lot of kids think it is silly and are likely to give it a go. Peas work really well for this one and I would try it as a snack.

■ 3. (I can't say this one enough,) cook with your kid. In particular, have them prepare the veggies.

(Source: yourkidstable.com)

## Colorful Iran: Marzavan ritual in Kordestan



**L I F E** Marzavan is a healing ritual, which is still being held in Havar village, near Kamyaran city in western Kordestan province.

According to folktales, the origin of Marzavan ritual dates back to a long time ago when a young man in the village was suffering from an unknown and incurable illness. Then women in the village performed the Marzavan ritual and he regained his health.

The ritual should be observed by the opposite sex of the patient, i.e. if the patient is male, women of the village will hold the Marzavan ritual for him.

In the morning, a group of women and girls play daf (a large Middle Eastern frame drum used in popular and classical music)

and some others hold dishes or jugs in their hands to gather all women in the village.

The women head to a mountainous pond, which is believed to contain healing water. The daf players encourage women with energetic musical rhymes.

They fill their dishes with water and return to the village while a group of young men welcome them on their way back.

They pour the water in a big pot, which is later used for bathing the patient. At night, all women go on the roofs chanting prayers for the patient while playing daf.

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

## How to keep plants alive in your apartment?



■ Indoor plants have to have the right consistency when it comes to humidity. As such, you will need to know what type of plants work best in your place, as well as seasonal changes.

■ The roots of your plants will start to rot if they are over-watered or not properly drained from time to time. Rocks and other drainage products can help you keep the right balance of wet versus dry.

■ Water is crucial, but light is also very important to a plant's lifespan. Look around your apartment. If you don't see a lot of natural light, indoor plants might not be the best decorating scheme for you.

■ Putting a lot of fertilizer in your

plants will create impressive growth, but too much will require you to re-pot them, and it will definitely attract a lot of insects in the summertime.

■ You might be tempted to rearrange your plants, but just like your pets, plants like to stay put in one home. Once you've found the right amount of sunlight for your plant, leave it be. Moving it around too much can send it into a state of shock.

It's doesn't take a remarkable green thumb to give your plants a happy home. With a little bit of watering smarts and research on what your plants need, your ferns, flowers, and cacti can thrive.

(Source: thespruce.com)

## PERSIAN STYLE

### Men's costumes in Qashqai tribe



**L I F E** The outfit of nomadic Qashqai men in southern d e s k Fars province has faced many changes during history.

In the 19th century, the ethnic costume of ordinary Qashqai men consisted of a wide-legged trouser (tonban), a collarless shirt (keynak), and a long cloak (arkhaloq) tied with a wide cummerbund (shal or shawl). They wore a felt cloak on their outfit, which is known as Kapanak.

They covered their head with rounded black hat made of felt known as berk. Their costume was always adorned with guns, knives, daggers or swords.

However the costume of a Qashqai khan (a title given to rulers and officials) was different from ordinary men.

Their clothing was composed of a collarless white shirt and a long cloak, which was overlapped in front and a shawl on the waist to keep the cloak tight.

Since mid-19th century, Qashqai men have used a kind of hat known as 'Dogushi', which literally means 'two-eared'.

The hat is made of felt in beige, tan or gray color. The rounded hat has two raised flaps above the ears.

According to Iranica encyclopedia, after the revive of ethnic dresses, which was outlawed by the Reza Shah from 1928 to 1941, the hat became the symbol of revived Qashqai power, autonomy and identity used by all Qashqai men.

Iranians in different parts of the country were used to wear ethnic costumes in the past. In some regions, people still use traditional dresses. The clothes reveal facts about lifestyle, history and beliefs of the locals.

## The best houseplant for your archetype



What does your plant say about you? As it turns out, quite a bit!

You may love the look of a rangy aspidistra or jaunty ficus in the corner (or you may just be saying, "Huh?"), but did you know it's also protecting your health? A NASA study found houseplants help remove pollutants, like formaldehyde, from the air. So dust off that spider plant and give it the love (and water) it deserves. With thousands to choose from, we suggest the houseplant that's right for you:

■ **Bonsai**  
The Japanese art of using small containers and precise pruning to create miniature specimens of trees, bonsai dates back over a thousand years. It seeks to express the concept of wabi-sabi, a sense of beauty mixed with melancholy, longing, and transience.

While classical bonsai is done outdoors, tropical species, like ficus benjamina, can thrive indoors, rewarding your study of this ancient art form.

■ **Jade plant**  
If you want to give your grand plans their best chance to succeed, feng shui wisdom says place a jade plant, also known as a "money tree," by your front door.

In Chinese culture, the plant supposedly brings prosperity, thanks to its similarity to the valued jade stone.

Crassula ovata, a clean-lined succulent with stout trunks and thick leaves that look inflatable, is very easy to care for, as long as you've got some bright lights in your big city.

■ **Snake plant**  
As a Tastemaker, you probably like to update your décor on a regular basis. Consider the versatile Snake Plant, which goes with everything.

With its sharp, variegated green upright leaves (its other nicknames are "Mother-in-Law's Tongue" and "St. George's Sword"), this West African native looks stylish in any color pot.

Consider it the LBD of houseplants, and just don't overwater.

■ **Boston fern**  
Ubiquitous in the 1970s, the Boston Fern (in its macramé holder, naturally) fell out of favor, but it, in fact, remains the ideal houseplant.

Easy to care for, this native of Florida and Central America grows well in hanging pots and enjoys a light misting during drier months. Free the Fern!

(Source: archetypes.com)



## 101 ITEMS FOR YOUR BUCKET LIST!

### #5 Run a marathon

Touted as one of the most important aspects of endurance training programs, the long run is non-negotiable when it comes to preparing for a marathon. Oftentimes it is the main element that sets you apart from someone training for a 10K. What's more, it is the long run that can convince even a novice that a marathon is within reach.

A marathon is a long-distance race of 42.2 km (26.2 miles) long — definitely not an easy feat that requires training and hard work! Training and completing a marathon will not only develop you in your physical strength and endurance, but also your mental persistence, will, and attitude.

The marathon can be one long mind game. You have to put in the work, do the training, and plan for the day. Having a strong mind when your body starts to feel weak can benefit you greatly as you run your way through 42.2 km. Make your mind run your body.

(Source: personalexcellence.co)



## #IRANIANLIFESTYLE



A little girl is joyfully smiling alongside a tent and belongings of her family retrieved after a massive earthquake hit the western province of Kermanshah on November 12. (Instagram/mizanphoto)



## Iran’s quake-stricken historical sites undergo urgent restoration

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Emergency projects commenced on Monday aiming to protect several historical and heritage sites which suffered damages during an earthquake that jolted the western province of Kermanshah on November 12.



CHTHO Deputy Director Mohammad-Hassan Talebian (2nd L) talks to cultural heritage officials of Kermanshah province on November 19, 2017.

A comprehensive restoration program should be implemented after gaining approval from technical committee of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, CHTHO Deputy Director Mohammad-Hassan Talebian was quoted as saying by CHTN.

Talebian made the remarks during an inspection of damaged heritage sites across Kermanshah province on Sunday.

“These historical monuments are very important in terms of regional identity. Some of them are faced with problems that may get into worse situations if not addressed urgently.”

The powerful 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck western Iran and eastern Iraq. It slightly damaged some historical sites including a Safavid-era caravanserai, and a Sassanid-era fortress in the counties of Qasr-e Shirin, Sarpol-e Zahab and Dalahu in Kermanshah province.

Based on earlier reports, UNESCO-registered sites of Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan went unhurt.

## China pledges another three years of ‘toilet revolution’ to boost tourism

**BEIJING (Reuters)** — China announced on Sunday plans to build and upgrade 64,000 public toilets between 2018 to 2020 as part of its “toilet revolution” aimed at boosting tourism and lifting the sector’s contribution to economic growth.

China has been keen to develop and expand services industries to move away from debt-fueled and investment-driven growth, while offsetting the impact of persistently weak global demand for its exports.

Particularly, it has been looking at the emerging tourism industry, pledging late last year 2 trillion yuan (\$290 billion) in investment which it hopes will help lift the sector’s contribution to annual economic growth.

While three years of “toilet revolution” have led to “significant achievements”, according to the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), the booming industry’s prospects are clouded by wide-spread complaints about toilet hygiene levels at China’s tourist sites.

Since 2015, China has poured 1.04 billion yuan into building and renovating 68,000 toilets, far exceeding its three-year goal of 57,000, state news agency Xinhua said.

“The toilet revolution ... is an urgent and necessary measure to transform and upgrade our tourism industry,” CNTA director Li Jinzao was quoted by Xinhua as saying.



### ROUND THE GLOBE

#### Sinharaja Forest Reserve

Located in south-west Sri Lanka, the Sinharaja Forest Reserve is the country’s last viable area of primary tropical rainforest. More than 60% of the trees are endemic and many of them are considered rare. T

There is much endemic wildlife, especially birds, but the reserve is also home to over 50% of Sri Lanka’s endemic species of mammals and butterflies, as well as many kinds of insects, reptiles and rare amphibians.

Covering an area of 8,864 ha and ranging from an altitude of 300 – 1,170 meters, it consists of 6,092 ha of Forest Reserve and 2,772 ha of Proposed Forest Reserve.



People are trekking in the dense Sinharaja Forest Reserve, a UNESCO Heritage site and biodiversity hotspot in Sri Lanka

This narrow strip of undulating terrain encompasses a series of ridges and valleys that are crisscrossed by an intricate network of streams. Draining to both the south and north, this detailed matrix of waterways flow into the Gin River on the southern boundary of the property and Kalu River via the Napola Dola, Koskulana Ganga and Kudawa Ganga on its northern boundary. Annual rainfall over the last 60 years has ranged from 3614 - 5006 mm with most of the precipitation during the south-west monsoon (May-July) and the north-east monsoon (November- January).

Sri Lanka is home to 830 endemic species, of which 217 trees and woody climbers are found in the low land wet zone. Of these, 139 (64%) have been recorded in the reserve including 16 rare species.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Iran sets sights on expats to boost tourism



Tourists visit a Zoroastrian tower of silence and its adjacent fire temple in Yazd, central Iran.

**1 →** He made the remarks in a meeting with several Foreign Ministry officials and travel activists on November 15.

“The Foreign Ministry is aimed to develop a database for influential Iranian expats and elites,” said Ali Asghar Mohammadi who presides over expatriates division at the ministry, adding that over five million Iranians are scattered across the globe.

It is vital to form a specialized team to reveal possible hurdles with the plan over the whole span of traveling time that commences upon arrival in the country, Mohammadi explained.

Back in May, First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri described Iranians living abroad as “precious opportunities” for Iran, saying, “In terms of knowledge, they have occupied lofty ranks in the world. Also, in terms of money, they are very powerful and can help most sectors in the country.”

A total of 360,200 of expatriate Iranians visited home as sightseers during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21–June 21), CHTHO announced.

Filled from corner to corner with ancient bazaars, museums, mosques, monuments, gardens, historical sites, rich natural and rural landscapes, Iran hosts some of the world’s oldest cultural monuments, including 22 UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

## Iran seeks UNESCO recognition for ancient windmills

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Iran has put forward its cluster of Asbads - ancient vertical-axis windmills - as a candidate for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) has proposed Asbads for possible inclusion in the prestigious list, CHTN quoted Mohammad-Ali Bozorgmehr, an official with the CHTHO, as saying on Monday.

Dotted in Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan and Khorasan Razavi provinces, such windmills are fueled with strong northern winds blow throughout the year in the eastern parts of the country.



Foreign travelers visit well-preserved windmills in Nashtifan, northeastern Iran.

## Iran emerges as health tourism destination

The project consists of four phases and is estimated to cost \$260 million. The first phase became operational in late October, offering services such as beauty treatments and traditional medicine. In the northwest, the private sector is constructing a hospital in the city of Urmia in which nearly \$260 million has been invested so far, and almost the same amount is still needed to complete the project, which will become Iran’s first smart hospital capable of being connected with similar hospitals in the world.

This is while infrastructure projects in border areas mainly involve the construction of medical centers. In this regard, free zones have been paid special attention as they enjoy competitive factors such as sharing borders with neighboring countries, easier transit and lack of visa-related issues.

The Persian Gulf island of Kish has made progress in medical tourism by offering visa-free medical services and possessing well-equipped medical centers and proper accommodations. Although other free economic zones such as Aras in the northwest and Arvand in the southwest are not as advanced as Kish, measures have been taken in these regions as well. On Oct. 28, Esmail Zamani, head of the Arvand

Free Zone, said the region will soon make its first visa-free health tourism center operational. “[The neighboring Iraqi city of] Basra with a population of 5 million is of special importance. Citizens of Basra would be able to travel to the [Arvand] free zone by land and receive medical services or other services available and then return home,” Zamani was quoted as saying by local media.

According to Zamani, more than \$230 million has been invested to develop infrastructure in Arvand Free Zone over the past three years, while foreign and Iranian private sectors have also made a \$1.3 billion investment in the same period.

Speaking to Al-Monitor, Mohammad Nasri, the CEO of one of the licensed travel agencies active in health tourism, said, “The majority of our patients are from the UK, Australia, Iraq, Canada, Pakistan, Jordan, Bahrain, Germany, Qatar, [the United States] and India.” He added, “Rhinoplasty, IVF, hair transplants, weight-loss surgeries, dental treatments and eye care are the top inquiries of our patients, in order.”

According to the Health Ministry, 105,000 inbound tourists visited Iran for medical purposes during the last Iranian

“Asbad is a smart technique to grind grains, a technique which goes back to ancient times when the people living in the eastern parts of Iran, in an attempt to adapt themselves with the nature and transform environmental obstacles into opportunities, managed to invent it,” according to UNESCO’s website.

“The earliest-known references to windmills are to a Persian millwright in 644 CE and to windmills in Seistan [Sistan], Iran, in 915 CE,” the Encyclopedia Britannica says.

Currently, avid visitors and researchers can see the subtle yet simple mechanism in person as several windmills have been restored and brought back to life.

year (which ended March 2017), bringing \$588 million in revenue to the country — up from \$350 million in 2012. This is while earlier in the year, Mohammad Panahi, vice president of the Association for Development of Medical Tourism Services, said the country’s revenues from health tourism were around \$1.2 billion in 2016 without mentioning the number of medical tourists who had visited Iran.

One reason behind the contradicting figures is the country’s visa procedure. Although Iran issues visas on arrival to citizens of over 180 countries, it requires health tourists to apply for a special visa. Since a great number of medical tourists travel to Iran independently or through unauthorized agents, they’re not counted as medical tourists in official data.

Based on Iran’s Sixth Economic Development Plan (2017-22), the number of health tourists must increase to up to 600,000 every year. Also, by 2025, Iran plans to increase revenue from health tourism to \$2.5 billion. Despite all the advancements in recent years, the set targets seem difficult to reach, as there are challenges that need to be addressed.

To help better manage health tourism affairs, the Health Tourism Council was formed two years ago. However, as Cooperatives Minister Ali Rabie stated back in August, lack of integrated management along with insufficient advertisement is still hampering activities in the health and medical tourism sectors. In the meantime, Health Minister Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi believes that the nonmedical sectors are the main challenge. “Medical society currently enjoys required skills and scientific capabilities,” he told the IRNA news agency Oct. 14, adding, “The medical industry is not the problem now. Other issues must be addressed such as hotels, passenger transportation, flights and particularly visa-related affairs.”

An insufficient number of approved travel agencies and hospital and medical centers to accept foreign patients along with unauthorized agencies and middleman is also among existing problems. If the country is to meet its planned targets in health and medical tourism, it is widely believed among officials and experts alike that more needs to be done. Such a necessity becomes more highlighted when rivals like neighboring Turkey plan to become the world’s second hub for health tourism by 2023 — and Turkey has already taken measures to advertise its health tourism and thermal tourism in at least 40 countries.

(Source: al-Monitor)



**Geographical proximity along with high-quality medical services at low cost in comparison with developed and regional countries have also contributed to reasons behind the government’s decision to bolster medical and health tourism.**



# Secrets of succulents’ water-wise ways revealed

Plant scientists at the University of Liverpool have revealed new insights into the mechanisms that allow certain plants to conserve water and tolerate drought.

The research, which is published in The Plant Cell, could be used to help produce new crops that can thrive in previously inhospitable, hot and dry regions across the world.

Drought resistant plants, such as cacti, agaves and succulents, make use of an enhanced form of photosynthesis known as crassulacean acid metabolism, or CAM, to minimize water loss.

Photosynthesis involves taking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to convert into sugars using sunlight. Unlike other plants, CAM plants are able to take up CO<sub>2</sub> during the cooler night, which reduces water loss, and store captured CO<sub>2</sub> as malic acid inside the cell, allowing its use for photosynthesis without water loss during the next day.

## ■ Circadian clock

CAM photosynthesis is regulated by the plant’s internal circadian clock, which allows plants to differentiate and pre-empt day and night and adjust their metabolism accordingly. However, relatively little is known about the exact molecular processes that underpin the optimal timing of CO<sub>2</sub> being stored and released in this unique way.

A team of researchers at the University’s Institute of Integrative Biology looked at an enzyme of interest called PPCK that is involved in controlling the conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> to its overnight stored form (malic acid; the fruit



acid that makes apples taste sharp) and back again. They wanted to know whether PPCK is a necessary component for engineering CAM

photosynthesis and tested this by switching the PPCK gene off in the succulent CAM plant Kalanchoë fedtschenkoi.

**CAM photosynthesis is regulated by the plant’s internal circadian clock, which allows plants to differentiate and pre-empt day and night and adjust their metabolism accordingly.**

## Rapid extinction of passenger pigeon may be due to lack of genetic diversity

The unfortunate demise of billions of passenger pigeons, which led to its extinction, may be due to its loss of genetic diversity.

Passenger pigeons used to dominate the skies of North America, with an estimated population reaching about 5 billion. Also known as Ectopistes migratorius, these birds nested in flocks to drive off predators and keep their numbers growing.

Their effort to maintain their huge population eventually caused their extinction. With the birds banding together, they were easy target for hunters who catch and shoot the bird to trade in the market. Aside from commercialization, rapid extinction of passenger pigeons may be due to the loss of genetic diversity.

Through the analysis of DNAs of preserved birds, evolutionary biologists from University of California, Santa Cruz were able to compare the specimens of passenger pigeons coming from varied geographic regions with two band-tailed pigeons.

## ■ Passenger pigeons

They found that passenger pigeons showed evidence of natural selection. High genetic diversity was present in genomes that underwent mutations between generations, while regions that did not rearrange or mutate have low diversity. When this happens, harmful DNA will adjust with the good

genes and result to the suppression of genetic variation.

“When we looked at rates of adaptive evolution and purifying selection in both species, we found evidence that natural selection had resulted in both a faster rate of adaptive evolution in passenger pigeons and a faster purging of deleterious mutations,” said coauthor Gemma Murray. “That is exactly what you would expect to see if selection is causing the differences in genetic diversity.”

Scientists deduced that while the pigeons adapted well to living in large flocks, they were not able to cope well when their numbers started to diminish.

Beth Shapiro, a coauthor of the study, said it was possible to avoid the extinction of passenger pigeons if it wasn’t for overhunting and overexploitation. A constant reminder of poor legislation laws is Martha, the last known passenger pigeon that died on Sept. 1, 1914. The bird was the subject of genetic engineering to bring the extinct birds back to life.

## ■ Adopted species

“Perhaps we should step back and think more holistically about how species have adapted and evolved as we try to come up with ways to protect them,” said Shapiro. “We think now of restoring them by creating patches of protected habitat, but we don’t know if the way they’ve evolved through their entire history means that they’re not fit for living in small populations.”



National Museum of Natural History curator of birds Helen James suggests that there should be more intense conservation efforts focused on birds with rare population.

“We have to understand what’s going on in populations, what’s going on in the ecosystem at large,” said James. “Because if a major factor that allows the species to survive suddenly changes, you absolutely can have sudden disappearances of species that are ecologically playing a really large role. And that can have cascading effects.”

(Source: Tech Times)

## Planet with lava oceans also has an atmosphere, says new study

The super-Earth 55 Cancri e (aka. Janssen) is somewhat famous, as exoplanet go. Originally discovered in 2004, this world was one of the few whose discovery predated the Kepler mission. By 2016, it was also the first exoplanet to have its atmosphere successfully characterized. Over the years, several studies have been conducted on this planet that revealed some rather interesting things about its composition and structure.

For example, scientists believed at one time that 55 Cancri e was a “diamond planet”, whereas more recent work based on data from the Spitzer Space Telescope concluded that its surface was covered in lakes of hot lava. However, a new study conducted by scientists from NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory indi-

cates that despite its intense surface heat, 55 Cancri e has an atmosphere that is comparable to Earth’s, only much hotter!

The study, titled “A Case for an Atmosphere on Super-Earth 55 Cancri e”, recently appeared in The Astrophysical Journal. Led by Isabel Angelo (a physics major with UC Berkeley) with the assistance of Renyu Hu – a astronomer and Hubble Fellow with JPL and Caltech – the pair conducted a more detailed analysis of the Spitzer data to determine the likelihood and composition of an atmosphere around 55 Cancri e.

## ■ Previous studies

Previous studies of the planet noted that this super-Earth (which is twice as large as our planet), orbits very close to its star. As a

result, it has a very short orbital period of about 17 hours and 40 minutes and is tidally locked (with one side constantly facing towards the star). Between June and July of 2013, Spitzer observed 55 Cancri e and obtained temperature data using its special infrared camera.

Initially, the temperature data was seen as being an indication that large deposits of lava existed on the surface. However, after re-analyzing this data and combining it with a new model previously develop by Hu, the team began to doubt this explanation.

According to their findings, the planet must have a thick atmosphere, since lava lakes exposed to space would create hot spots of high temperatures.

What’s more, they also noted that the

temperature differences between the day and night side were not as significant as previously thought – another indication of an atmosphere. By comparing changes in the planet’s brightness to energy flow models, the team concluded that an atmosphere with volatile materials was the best explanation for the high temperatures.

“If there is lava on this planet, it would need to cover the entire surface. But the lava would be hidden from our view by the thick atmosphere. Scientists have been debating whether this planet has an atmosphere like Earth and Venus, or just a rocky core and no atmosphere, like Mercury. The case for an atmosphere is now stronger than ever.”

(Source: Universe Today)

## ■ Stretch of land

For comparison, a typical stretch of land in the United States gets about 40 to 60 milliwatts per square meter of geothermal heat, and Yellowstone gets about 200 milliwatts per square meter.

This magma plume isn’t an alternative possible cause of recent upticks in melting along the West Antarctic Ice Sheet attributed to human-generated climate change. The plume is far older than the recent period of atmospheric warming; indeed, at 50 million to 110 million years old, it’s older than our species and the West Antarctic Ice Sheet itself.

The plume has been a factor in the ice sheet’s behavior throughout its history, and recent surges in melting are the result of all the additional heat humans have pumped into it.

(Source: Scientific American)



pushes against the crust in those parts of the world, causing it to bulge and pumping heat up through the ground.

## ■ Alive with motion

Despite its apparent icy stillness, Antarctica is alive with motion.

## Iranian Engineering Society, Proud of Iranian Capability, Talent and Management

Iranian high capability, talent and wise management in outside borders of Islamic Iran could play a leading role in hoisting the scared flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Public Relations Dept. of Mahab Ghodss Consulting Engineering Company reported.

Given the above issue, Iranian Engineering Society could undertake its powerful rivals in various parts of the world victoriously

Attaining triumph over powerful and strong countries including U.S., Canada, UK, Germany, Italy, India, Switzerland, Norway and South Africa in tenders held in countries such as Uganda, Zimbabwe and Armenia in the field of water industry is a solid evidence behind excellent performance of Mahab Ghodss Consulting Engineering Company.

As merited representative of Iranian En-

gineering Society, Mahab Ghodss Consulting Engineering Company won support of world’s most prestigious financial organizations such as World Bank (WB), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), African Development Bank, etc. and could surpass its globally renowned rivals in the field of export of technical and engineering services.

In a nutshell, Mahab Ghodss Consulting

Engineering Company could stand among world’s top 10 consulting engineering companies.

The management of this prestigious Iranian company congratulates this success to the noble nation of Islamic Iran and all enthusiasts seeking technical and engineering progresses of the country in global arena wholeheartedly.

## Why stress leads us to make bad decisions and do stupid things

If you’ve ever found yourself making an impulsively risky decision, ask yourself, were you stressed about anything at the time? Maybe you got fired or got sick or had a conflict with your partner?

Well, that stressful experience may have affected your brain, which in turn may have made it harder for you to be rational, new research suggests.

Researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) wanted to understand what can influence people (and mice) to make risky decisions.

In one option, they could go through a maze with reasonable lighting and diluted chocolate milk at the end. Alternatively, they could go through another maze that had harsh, annoying lights and concentrated chocolate milk at the end.



The more concentrated the milk, the happier the mouse. However, in order to get to that concentrated chocolate milk, they had to make a sacrifice: going through an unpleasant maze, according to MIT News.

Stressful experiences may affect your brain, which in turn may make it harder for you to be rational. If you’ve ever found yourself making an impulsively risky decision, ask yourself, were you stressed about anything at the time?

They took two groups of mice and subjected one group to daily stress. They let each set of mice choose which maze they preferred and found that the stressed mice were far more likely to choose the high-risk, high-reward maze. The effect lasted for months.

This study lends insights into how neurological disorders affect people. People who suffer from addiction, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder sometimes experience impulsiveness and difficulty making rational decisions. It could be the stress of dealing with inabilities to function properly and staving off cravings, compounded with the chemical effects on the brain, that are influencing people’s uninhibited behavior.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Squirrels could hold secret to preventing brain damage for stroke patients

Squirrels could hold the key to helping stroke patients avoid brain damage, scientists believe.

Researchers in the U.S. have discovered that when squirrels hibernate a protective process occurs in their cells which allows their brain to function with reduced blood flow and oxygen.

When they awaken the animals suffer no ill-effects despite being deprived of essential nutrients.

During an ischemic stroke the blood supply, containing sugar and oxygen, is cut off to the brain, causing cells to die, which often leads to paralysis and speech problems.

Scientists from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) believe that creating a drug which could trigger the same cellular changes of hibernating squirrels could prevent that brain damage.

“If we could only turn on the process hibernators appear to use to protect their brains, we could help protect the brain during a stroke and ultimately help people recover,” said first author Joshua Bernstock, a graduate student at NINDS.



Around 100,000 people have strokes each year in Britain, and 85 percent will suffer ischemic strokes, with almost two thirds of the survivors leaving hospital with a disability. There 1.2 million people currently living in the UK with the after-effects from a stroke.

But if a treatment could be quickly administered which helped the brain survive without blood and oxygen, outcomes for patients could be radically improved, experts believe.

Researchers found that a cellular process called SUMOylation goes into overdrive when squirrels hibernate, protecting their cells. They found that process could be boosted by the enzyme ebselen.

When ebselen was injected into animal brain cells, they stayed alive, even when deprived of blood and oxygen.

Further experiments also showed that ebselen boosted SUMOylation in the brains of healthy mice.

“For decades scientists have been searching for an effective brain-protecting stroke therapy to no avail. said Dr. Francesca Bosetti, program director at NINDS.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## Correction

In a report titled “Iran becomes resourceful in thermowood production” published on this page on November 20, the name of the Finnish ambassador to Tehran was wrongly printed. The current ambassador is Keijo Norvanto. The mistake is regretted.



## Iranian woman delivers under hypnosis

**W O M E N** **TEHRAN** — For the third time in Iran, hypnosis was used for childbirth operation at a hospital in the city of Mashhad, northeast of the country.

The first-time mom gave birth to a 3.150-kilogram girl under hypnosis on Saturday, IRNA news agency reported.

The hypnobirthing was pain-free and quicker than usual, Dr. Mehdi Fat'hi, the secretary of Iranian Scientific Society of Clinical Hypnosis, said.

Fortunately, the mother and the infant are in full health, he added. Hypnosis for childbirth has been one of the pain-free techniques of delivery for the last 30 years in many countries and it has many advantages, Fat'hi said.

It decreases the pain of normal delivery by 80 to 100 percent. Hypnosis for childbirth can help women have a gentle, enjoyable, pain-free birth by not taking medicine during the delivery and it has no side effects, Fat'hi explained.

The Iranian Society of Clinical Hypnosis was founded in 1990 with the aim of promoting the use of hypnosis in different areas of medicine.

It has joined the International Society of Hypnosis in line with the goal of increasing relations of Iranian therapists with the world.

## RECIPE OF THE WEEK

### Baked quince with cinnamon

“This is a very easy and flavorful autumn dessert. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.”

#### Ingredients:

3 quince, unpeeled, washed, halved and cored  
18 whole cloves  
1 1/2 cups water  
3 cinnamon sticks  
1/3 cup white sugar  
1/3 cup heavy cream, whipped (optional)

#### Directions:

Preheat an oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).  
Press three cloves into each quince half. Place the fruit in a roasting pan cut-side down. Add the water, and cinnamon sticks to the pan; sprinkle the sugar over the quince.

Bake the fruit in the preheated oven until lightly browned, about 35 to 40 minutes. Turn the quince right-side up and bake until tender, about 10 more minutes.

Remove the pan from the oven and let the quince cool slightly. Transfer each quince half to a plate and drizzle with a tablespoon of juices from the roasting pan and a dollop of whipped cream.

#### Tip:

Aluminum foil can be used to keep food moist, cook it evenly, and make clean-up easier.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Nationalities

A: Hey! How was your first day of class? I'm in level two and I'm loving my class this **semester!** It's great being in a class of international students!

B: Mine was ok, except that no one in my class speaks English. I guess it will force me to **converse** in Chinese more in class so at least I should improve a lot this semester.

A: That's both fortunate and unfortunate. It's the **United Nations** in my class! We have people from all over the world! There are three Germans, a Pole, a Scottish, two French, an American, a Brazilian, a Chilean, a New Zealander, though he prefers to call himself a **Kiwi**. Who else do we have? Oh, we also have a Moroccan, a Togolese, a Pakistani, and two Indonesians!

B: That's quite the **array** of nationalities. Everyone in my class is from Asia, except me. There are a few South Koreans, several Japanese, Malaysian, Thai, Singaporean, Filipino, Kazakhstani, and one Russian.

A: Well, I think you're pretty lucky actually. You'll have the **opportunity** to learn so much about Asian culture.

B: I guess so, but I think it's going to be hard to **relate** to my classmates, especially with the **language barrier**. I think I might change classes.

A: Don't! **Stay the course!** Your spoken Chinese will be eternally grateful. I bet you it will even **surpass** mine with all that practice.

B: I highly doubt it. Your fiancé is Chinese.

A: Well, there is that, yes.

#### Key vocabulary

**semester:** one of the two periods of time that a year at high schools and universities is divided into, especially in the U.S.

**converse:** to have a conversation with someone

**United Nations:** an international political organization

**Kiwi:** someone from New Zealand

**array:** a large group or quantity of people or things

**opportunity:** chance

**relate to someone:** to feel that you understand someone's problem, situation etc.

**language barrier:** trouble communicating because speak different languages

**stay the course:** remain or persevere to the end; to finish something in spite of difficulties

**surpass:** to be even better or greater than someone or something else

#### Supplementary vocabulary

**Dutch:** relating to the people of Netherlands

**Finn:** a person from Finland

**Dane:** a person from Denmark

**naturalize:** process by which a person becomes a citizen of another country

**ethnic:** relating to groups of people that have common racial, tribal or religious traits

(Source: irlanguage.com)



Be kind to me!

# Mastoureh Ardalan, a rarity of her time

By Naghmeh Mizanian

Born in 1805 in the western city of Sanandaj, Kordestan province, Mah Sharaf Khanoum Mastoureh Ardalan was a noble woman of her time and the first Iranian female historian.

She was a Kurdish poet, historian and writer at the time when many women were illiterate and were never permitted to go to maktabkhaneh (old schools of Iran).

She studied Kurdish, Arabic and Persian literature under the supervision of her farther, Abolhassan Beig Qadiri.

At the age of 17, Mastoureh was married to Khasraw Khan Ardalan, the ruler of the Ardalan territory centered in Senna (present-day Sanandaj).

Mastoureh was the second wife of Khasraw Khan. His first wife was Hoseinjan Khanoum, a daughter of Fath'ali Shah of Qajar dynasty. The marriage was politically-motivated in order to empower Kurds' power in the area.

Khasraw Khan was also interested in poets and poetry that made them to be in love.

The good manner and talent of Mastoureh made her husband a favorite and tolerant ruler.

However, their marriage didn't last long and Khasraw Khan died at the age of 29.

The loss of her husband and then her

young brother made Mastoureh really depressed. She began to study religious books and it led her to write her book on Islamic jurisprudence. It was the first time that a woman was writing a book on this issue.

Mastoureh, also a calligrapher, was a member of the feudal aristocracy in the court of the Ardalan territory.

A 4.5-meter statue of Mastoureh, built by the great contemporary Kurdish sculptor, Hadi Ziauddin, has been installed near Khasraw Bagh (Khasraw Garden) in the city of Sanandaj.

She has written two poetry books, one was published in Iran in Persian language and the other was published in Kurdish language. The latter was found in Germany three years ago.

One of the relatives of Mastoureh is collecting her poems, being kept in European museums.

She was a modest, sedate, and pious woman, and was unknown for 200 years. Now one of her poems is included in 8th grade school curriculum of the country.

When Qajars conquered the Ardalan territory in the 19th century, she and her family left Sanandaj for Sulaymaniyah, a city in present-day Iraqi Kurdistan. Her son, Reza Qolikhani, the successor to Khasraw Khan, was imprisoned by the Qajars.

Mastoureh stayed in Sulaymaniyah until her death in 1848.



The statue of Mastoureh, built by the great contemporary Kurdish sculptor, Hadi Ziauddin, near Khasraw Bagh in the city of Sanandaj.

## Iran plans on increasing breast milk banks

**W O M E N** **TEHRAN** — Iran is planning on setting up more breast milk banks nationwide.

The first breast milk bank was established in the city of Tabriz, northwestern Iran, in 2016.

Many factors affect the survival of infants; the most important one is nutrition. Alireza Marandi, the head of the Iranian Society of Neonatology, made the remarks in the 4th Congress of Infants' Health.

Breastfeeding the infants at the first hours of the birth will decrease infants' mortality rate by one fourth, the former Health Minister noted.

More than 50 percent of mortality rate of children under 5 years of age depends, directly or indirectly, on their nutrition, Marandi added.

Today donation of breast milk is common and the preterm infants are nourished with breast milk, said the pediatrician, adding, universities of medical sciences in other Iranian cities are making attempts to establish breast milk banks as well.



Although the donated breast milk has less nutritional value compared to the milk of the biological mother, it is more valuable than condensed milk, Marandi said.

## Muslim woman in India denied job for wearing hijab

An Indian social worker says she was denied a job at an orphanage based in the Indian capital of New Delhi because her recruiter felt that her hijab made her look "like a Muslim lady".

"Everything was going smooth, we exchanged many emails," Nedal Zoya, a graduate from Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, told Al Jazeera.

"But a few days ago, I got an email stating that 'I am sorry to inform you that even [from] a distance of one kilometer you look like a Muslim lady due to your external Muslim gears'." This comment was referring to her hijab, a headscarf worn by many Muslim women who feel it is part of their religion.

After being short-listed by the Delhi Orphanage for Girls in October for the post of social worker, Zoya was asked, by Harish Varma, the president and CEO of the orphanage, to give an online test and send a picture of herself to.

Varma suggested Zoya remove her hijab as one of the pre-conditions to proceed with the recruitment process.

#### Muslim girl with 'modern thoughts'

After Zoya refused to do as she was asked, Varma sent her an email expressing that he was "shocked" to know that "conservative Islam was her priority, not humanity", and that all her "higher education has gone down drain".



Zoya believes it was an example of Islamophobia in India

In the email exchange between Varma and Zoya, obtained by Al Jazeera, Varma expressed that he would not allow any kind of religious activities inside the orphanage.

Zoya was later informed that another Muslim girl with "modern thoughts" and a "religion free mindset" was hired for the same post.

"I don't take it as a rejection. I don't consider myself a victim," the 27-year-old said.

"My motive was to create [an] awareness as I am not the only one who has faced such discrimination. People at least need to discuss this matter so that such discrimination on the basis of religion and appearance can be questioned," she said.

Local media reported that Saurabh Bharradwaj, Member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly from the ruling Aam Aadmi Party said that his government will take action against Varma if Zoya will officially lodge a

complaint, adding that the Indian constitution did not allow anyone to discriminate on the basis of someone's faith.

#### 'Secular' appearance

Varma told Al Jazeera that the decision was taken based on her eligibility for the job and that the candidate he was looking for should be "secular".

"We are a secular country, we are not giving preference to people based on their religion, which is why I want my orphanage to be religion-free," Varma told Al Jazeera.

"My religion is humanity and yes I don't want any influence of any religion in my organization."

India's constitution guarantees right to freely profess, practice, and propagate one's religion.

Zoya believes it was an example of how Islamophobia in India is growing and how it can affect the future of India's Muslim population, some 14 percent of the country's 1.3 billion people.

"[My] scarf adds to my boldness and confidence. And it's completely my choice to cover my head," she said.

In 2015, a 22-year-old Masters in Business Administration graduate was denied a job in Mumbai as the company said it only hired "non-Muslim candidates".

#### 'Growing trend of Islamophobia'

Rights groups and many studies say Muslims, along with Dalits and other

marginalized groups, face discrimination in jobs and the housing sector. Sachar Committee instituted by the previous UPA government submitted its report in 2006, which painted a negative picture of Muslims' economic and educational status.

Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, there has been an increase in attacks on Muslims by Hindu far-right groups. More than a dozen Muslims have been killed by cow vigilantes since then.

In April, Amnesty International released a report urging authorities to ensure that there was no impunity for those responsible for public lynchings and other hate crimes against Muslims in several states.

"This growing trend of Islamophobia needs to be stopped in its tracks. State police departments must ensure that those responsible are brought to justice," the report said. Zoya feels Islamophobia needs to be tackled at its roots.

"I believe that Islamophobia can be significantly reduced if not totally eradicated if the parents/guardians/families shape their children's idea about religion, peace, love and harmony in a way that they are not influenced by what they see or hear but rather by their own logical reasoning and non-judgemental approach.

"For any kind of change to take place, the mindsets must change."

(Source: Aljazeera)

## Online abuse silences women and girls, fuels violence, survey shows

Pervasive online abuse and harassment pressure women and girls into censoring themselves on social media and fuel gender-based discrimination and violence, rights groups said on Monday.

About one in four women in Britain, the United States and six other countries said in a survey they had experienced online abuse or harassment.

More than 40 percent said the online abuse made them fear for their physical safety and more than half reported trouble sleeping, loss of self-esteem and panic attacks after the incidents, according to rights group Amnesty International.

About a third stopped expressing their opinions online or withdrew from public conversations as a result, Amnesty said.

"It's no secret that misogyny and abuse are thriving on social media platforms, but this poll shows just how damaging the consequences of online abuse are," said Amnesty

researcher Azmina Dhrodia.

"This is not something that goes away when you log off."

Online harassment starts at a young age and may be more common for girls and teenagers than adults, according to UK-based child rights group Plan International.

Nearly half of girls aged 11-18 in the UK said they had experienced abuse or harassment on social media, Plan found in a survey earlier this year.

Like women, most of the girls said they stopped sharing opinions or otherwise changed their online behavior out of fear, according to Plan. "Very young girls are learning that they need to take responsibility for harassment and abuse," Kerry Smith of Plan told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"What they are saying is that they are holding themselves back."

Parents, teachers and police often respond to online

abuse by taking away girls' phones or telling them to go offline, which teaches victims that they are responsible for the problem, Smith said.

Online harassment, including crude comments on pictures or sexual references, teaches boys that it is okay to treat girls as sexual objects and to exercise power over them, which can lead to physical abuse and rape, she added.

Social media attacks are so common for female politicians that they deter women from running for office around the world, advocates and female lawmakers have said.

Companies and governments need to step up to make the internet a safe space for girls and women, campaigners said.

"Social media companies have a responsibility... to ensure that women using their platforms are able to do so freely and without fear," said Amnesty's Dhrodia.

(Source: Thomson Reuters Foundation)



# Lebanon, Palestinian groups rap Arab League for labeling Hezbollah

The Lebanese government and Palestinian resistance forces have strongly condemned a decision by the Arab League (AL) to designate the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement as a terrorist organization.

Lebanon's Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil said in a statement that he had refused to list Hezbollah as a terrorist group as it was a "fundamental component of the Lebanese state."

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmad Aboul Gheit announced at a media conference in Cairo that Arab states agreed to designate Hezbollah a terrorist organization, adding that he would not "rule out going to the United Nations Security Council as a next step."

Lebanon's representative to the Arab League, Antoine Azzam, rejected the statement, saying Hezbollah represents a large part of the Lebanese people. He said the resistance group has representatives in the Lebanese parliament.

Lebanon abstained from Sunday's communiqué that labeled Hezbollah as a terrorist group. Iraq also expressed reservations about the designation. The details of the resolution were not made public. However, media reports said the only concrete measure from the meeting was for Arab telecommunications satellites to ban Iranian-financed stations for allegedly posing a threat to Arab states security.

Palestinian resistance groups also denounced the Arab League's decision, saying it serves the interests of Israel and the United States and aims to satisfy the House of Saud regime.

The alliance of the Palestinian resistance forces described the decision as "danger-



ous", stressing that "Hezbollah represents the most important resistance force against Israel and terrorism."

The decision was issued during an emergency Arab League summit, which the Saudi regime called to discuss "confronting" Iran and Hezbollah.

Riyadh associates Hezbollah with Tehran, and has been trying to weaken the resistance movement which is Lebanon's de facto deterrent force against any Israeli aggression.

Hezbollah, both a military force and a political movement, is part of a Lebanese government.

The Saudi regime request for the Arab League meeting "was based on a missile it says its air defenses intercepted near Riyadh after being fired from Yemen on November 4," according to a document seen by AFP last week.

The House of Saud regime has claimed that the missile had been manufactured in Iran but Tehran has vehemently rejected the allegation.

**■ Lebanon's president defends Hezbollah, reject terrorism suggestion**

Meantime, the Lebanese president ap-

peared to defend Hezbollah as necessary to resist Israel on Monday, after an Arab League statement accused the group of terrorism and noted it is part of Lebanon's coalition government.

"Israeli targeting still continues and it is the right of the Lebanese to resist it and foil its plans by all available means," President Michel Aoun's office quoted him as saying in a Tweet.

Aoun said that Lebanon could not accept suggestions that its government was a partner in acts of terrorism, another Tweet quoted him as saying after meeting Aboul Gheit in Beirut.

Aboul Gheit said in Beirut that nobody was accusing Lebanon's government of terrorism or wanted to harm Lebanon.

Lebanon faces a political crisis after its Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri suddenly resigned on Nov. 4 in a statement broadcast from Saudi Arabia.

On Wednesday, Aoun accused the House of Saud regime of holding Hariri against his will.

On Friday, Lebanon's Foreign Minister, during a visit to Russia, criticized groups for attempting to "dislodge the Lebanese head of state", without naming them.

The suspicions are not limited to Lebanese politicians.

Earlier this week, the Saudi regime recalled its ambassador to Germany after its foreign minister, Sigmar Gabriel, condemned the House of Saud regime's interference in Lebanon's internal politics.

(Source: agencies)

## U.S. troops in Japan banned from alcohol use after deadly car crash

All American military forces in Japan have been banned from buying and consuming alcohol following a deadly road crash caused by a drunk United States Marine in Okinawa, a tropical island prefecture rife with deep anti-U.S. sentiments.

Nicholas James-McLean, 20, was driving a U.S. military truck under influence of alcohol in Naha, the main city on the southern Japanese island, late on Sunday, when he crashed into another vehicle, resulting in the death of its driver Hidemasa Taira, 61, said Kazuhiko Miyagi of the Okinawa police.

Miyagi confirmed that a breath test indicated James-McLean had an alcohol level that was three times the legal limit.

The U.S. Marine, who was reportedly driving on the wrong side of the road, sustained light injuries in the crash.

The Japanese government, for its part, expressed regret over the deadly incident.

It called on U.S. military leadership to take measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

"The Defense and Foreign Ministries have lodged a stern representation to the U.S. forces in Japan and the U.S. embassy in Japan, asking for the enforcement of discipline, prevention of recurrence and sincere response to the bereaved," Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a regular news conference on Monday.

The U.S. Ambassador to Japan William Hagerty had expressed his condolences and offered an apology, Suga added.

The U.S. military said "alcohol may have been a factor" in the crash and banned U.S. military personnel all over Japan from buying and consuming it for the time being.

In addition, U.S. military forces on Okinawa Island were restricted to base or home until further notice.

The Japanese island hosts around 26,000 U.S. military personnel, about half of the total complement of the United States Forces Japan, spread among 32 bases and 48 training sites.

The U.S. military further said commanders across Japan had been instructed to immediately lead mandatory training on responsible alcohol use and acceptable behavior.

"When our service members fail to live up to the high standards we set for them, it damages the bonds between bases and local communities and makes it harder for us to accomplish our mission," the U.S. Forces Japan said in a statement posted on its website.

The U.S. forces have a long history of unruly behavior and criminal acts in Japan, prompting a large part of the Japanese population to demand their withdrawal from the country.

Numerous anti-U.S. protests have been held in the country over the past years.

In April 2016, an American at the Okinawa air base was



charged with the murder of a 20-year-old Japanese woman.

Back in 2013, two American sailors admitted to raping a woman in Okinawa a year earlier in a case that sparked huge anti-U.S. sentiments in Japan.

In 1995, the abduction and rape of a 12-year-old girl by three U.S. servicemen triggered massive protests, prompting Washington to pledge efforts to strengthen troop discipline to prevent such crimes and reduce the U.S. footprint on the island

(Source: agencies)

## Yemen's ballistic missiles came from North Korea: report

On November 4, a ballistic missile exploded above the House of Saud regime's King Khalid Airport near Riyadh after being intercepted by Saudi regime Patriot missiles. The attack, launched by the Yemeni Ansarullah (Houthi) movement forces, led the House of Saud regime government to blame Iran for supporting the Ansarullah, escalating tensions across the Middle East.

Curiously, however, many of Yemen's ballistic missiles came from North Korea—a design that North Korea, in turn, had acquired from Egypt.

The campaign of ballistic missile attacks has been raging since 2015 when the Saudi regime forces, backed up by a coalition of Persian Gulf Arab states, invaded Yemen on behalf of the deposed government of President Hadi. The Yemeni Army's sizeable ballistic-missile forces sided with the Ansarullah movement.

While dozens of missiles aimed at Saudi Arabia have been intercepted by Patriot air-defense missiles, three missile strikes on Saudi regime coalition forces within Yemen or near its border, in 2015 and 2016, resulted in well over three hundred deaths and major losses in equipment.

Yemen's ballistic-missile arsenal dates back to the long war between the Saudi regime-backed North Yemen, and the Communist-aligned South Yemen—whose last president happened to be Ali Abdullah Saleh.



Ballistic missiles offered a way for the warring states to terrorize the civilian populations of their enemies without having to win the war by conventional military means.

But for precisely that reason—as well as their great complexity—long-range missiles are difficult to obtain from international sellers. Of course, states often find their own reasons for disregarding the risks of proliferating dangerous weapons; this is where our story takes us to Egypt and North Korea.

**■ The Cairo-Pyongyang Connection**

From the 1950s to the early 1970s, the Soviet Union was a major supporter of Egypt and Syria in their recurring wars with Israel.

These conflicts allowed Soviet leaders to test the effectiveness of their military technology against Tel Aviv's Western hardware. Among the vast arsenals transferred to the Arab states, which included 240-millimeter super-heavy mortars, PT-76 amphibious tanks, BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles and MiG-21 jet fighters, the Soviets dispatched eighteen R-17 tactical ballistic missiles, known popularly as the Scud (their NATO codename), as well as nine mobile transporter-erector-launcher (TEL) units.

In 2002, the Spanish Navy boarded the North Korean cargo ship Sosan and found it was carrying fifteen Hwasong-5 missiles

bound for Yemen. The shipment was eventually allowed to go through after protest from Sana'a, and it is estimated that Yemen received additional shipments of up to forty-five missiles, including Hwasong-6s. Therefore, the Hwasongs were very likely amongst the various Scud derivatives fired at Saudi regime and its allied targets starting in 2015. The same report posits that longer-range strikes in Saudi territory were undertaken by Hwasong-6s; though unmodified, the missile does not have the range to have carried out attacks that took place on Riyadh or Mecca.

However, the Hwasongs and the Scuds are far from the only ballistic missiles being used by the Ansarullah. Tochka missiles likely inflicted more damage than the Scuds due to their greater precision. The Ansarullah movement also converted another Soviet weapon, dated S-75 surface-to-air missiles (SA-2 Guideline), into a ballistic missile known as the Qaher-1 and 2 with claimed ranges of 155 and 250 miles, respectively. By one count, the Ansarullah had around one hundred Scuds, sixty Tochkas and nearly a thousand eligible SA-2 missiles available to them in 2015.

More recently, the Ansarullah have been launching missiles they claim to be domestic clones of Scuds, called the Burqan-1 and 2. These are believed to be modified Scuds with extended range.

(Source: The National Interest)

## Erdogan aide: Turkey should review NATO membership

Turkish media reports are quoting an adviser to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as saying it's time for Turkey to review its membership in the NATO military alliance.

Yalcin Topcu's comments, reported by Cumhuriyet and other media on Monday, came days after Turkey withdrew some 40 troops from a NATO drill in Norway after the country's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, and Erdogan himself were depicted as enemies.

NATO's secretary-general and Norway's government apologized to Turkey over the incident, which Turkish officials have described as one of the "greatest scandals" in

the alliance's history.

Topcu said: "This organization, which is engaged in all kinds of hostile attitudes toward a member, is not a must for us. Our presence in this institution must be addressed urgently by Parliament."

Topcu spoke in Astana, Kazakhstan.

On Friday, Ankara withdrew dozens of Turkish soldiers from a drill in Norway after a number of Turkey's former and current leaders were depicted as the "enemies."

In response, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg apologized for the incident, adding that it was the

result of an individual's action and did not reflect the NATO policies.

On Saturday, Erdogan said, "You have witnessed the impudence at NATO exercises in Norway. There are some mistakes that cannot be committed by fools but only by vile people."

He noted that the incident is "a reflection of a distorted point of view that we have observed in NATO for a while." "This matter cannot be covered over with a simple apology."

(Source: Reuters)

## Notorious killer Charles Manson dead at 83

Charles Manson, the hippie cult leader who became the hypnotic-eyed face of evil across America after orchestrating the gruesome murders of pregnant actress Sharon Tate and six others in Los Angeles during the summer of 1969, died on Sunday after nearly a half-century in prison. He was 83.

Manson, whose name to this day is synonymous with unspeakable violence and madness, died of natural causes at a Kern County hospital, according to a California Department of Corrections statement.

Michele Hanisee, president of the Association of Deputy District Attorneys, reacted to the death by quoting the late Vincent Bugliosi, the Los Angeles prosecutor who put Manson behind bars. Bugliosi said: "Manson was an evil, sophisticated con man with twisted and warped moral values."

"Today, Manson's victims are the ones who should be remembered and mourned on the occasion of his death," Hanisee said.

California Corrections spokeswoman Vicky Waters said it's "to be determined" what happens to Manson's body. Prison officials previously said Manson had no known next of kin and state law says that if no relative or legal representative surfaces within 10 days, then it's up to the department to determine whether the body is cremated or buried.

It's not known if Manson requested funeral services of any sort. It's also unclear what happens to his property, which is said to include artwork and at least two guitars. State law says the department must maintain his property for up to a year in anticipation there might be legal battles over who can make a legitimate claim to it.

A petty criminal who had been in and out of jail since childhood, the charismatic, guru-like Manson surrounded himself in the 1960s with runaways and other lost souls and then sent his disciples to butcher some of L.A.'s rich and famous in what prosecutors said was a bid to trigger a race war — an idea he got from a twisted reading of the Beatles song "Helter Skelter."

The slayings horrified the world and, together with the deadly violence that erupted later in 1969 during a Rolling Stones concert at California's Altamont Speedway, exposed the dangerous, drugged-out underside of the counterculture movement and seemed to mark the death of the era of peace and love.

(Source: AP)

## Nasrallah: U.S. did what it could to help ISIL in Syria's al-Bukamal

**1→** "[al-Bukamal was] the last town in Iraq which was held by Daesh and was recaptured. What remains of Daesh fled to deserts or other areas. Daesh is essentially done. Iraqi forces have made their way to the Syrian-Iraqi border. But we are waiting for the final victory. It is not far off that this will be announced or completed" Nasrallah said.

(Source: Daily Star)

## Carl Schmitt's blueprint for Saudi MbS

**1→** against the chiefs of the Saudi National Guard and Saudi Royal Navy. In addition, sources confirmed that several of the royals were tortured to an extent that they were admitted to the hospital's intensive care unit.

According to Saudi authorities they were detained in a new anti-corruption probe headed by the kingdom's powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who was also named to oversee a new committee with the same name. This was the biggest political purge in the history of Saudi Arabia and its ruling dynasty. As part of a widening crackdown, authorities detained about two dozen military officials and several businessmen later this week.

Before Salman bin Abdulaziz assumed the throne of Saudi Arabia in January 2015, few people outside the kingdom had heard of Prince Mohammed. Nevertheless, in less than two years, the brash, 32-year-old Prince has emerged as the most powerful royal. He managed to bring all centers of power under his control in the country by adopting a series of exceptional measures and creating a state of emergency in the country.

An analysis of bin Salman's policies and actions shows that he is seeking to establish a totalitarian regime by employing oppressive and repressive tactics. Perhaps the crown prince is a reformer but the formula for political success that he's following is similar to what's been applied by other dictators in modern history using the same ingredients to tighten their grip on power.

For years, respect for seniority and power-sharing among branches of royal family were a time-honored tradition. However, the rise of Prince Mohammed shattered that tradition. Never before in Saudi history has so much power been wielded by a crown prince and that centralization of authority has angered many of his relatives.

That's why by extra-judicial and ad-hoc measures, bin Salman targeted rival centers of influence whose wealth and power posed a threat to his rule. The latest reports that the regime is demanding up to 70% of rich detainees' wealth in return for their freedom, further reinforce this view. MbS is clearly seeking to consolidate his position as he is expected to take his father's place as king sometime soon.

Schmitt's second big idea is that politics is fundamentally about the distinction between friends and enemies. This concept of politics is not determined by economics and ethical categories. Rather, the state needs to create enemies to constitute itself and to ensure its own survival.

Following Schmitt's blueprint, bin Salman sought to expand militarism by interfering in other countries' affairs and create tensions in Saudi Arabia's periphery. The war in Yemen that has turned into a disaster, the diplomatic crisis with Qatar, and latest episode of forcing Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri to resign as well as repeated accusations against Iran, are part of a scenario to divert the public's attention from what's going on domestically and help the ambitious prince consolidate his position.

**■ The prince's playground**

Mohammed bin Salaman has introduced ambitious plans for the development of Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, it is hard to predict how the kingdom is going to emerge out of backstabbing and purges, conducted at the highest level. In the absence of credible organized opposition and independent judiciary, one thing is clear: There is no one who can undermine prince's control over the country. With unconfirmed reports of an assassination attempt by members of Saudi National Guard this week, one can expect more violence in the kingdom. Mohammed bin Salman has truly made the country and the region his playground.



## Pulis sacked as West Brom head coach

Tony Pulis has been sacked as West Bromwich Albion manager after a sequence of poor results, the Premier League club said on Monday.

The 59-year-old Pulis, one of the League’s most experienced managers, has paid the price after nearly three years at Albion with the Midlands club struggling just a point above the Premier League relegation zone.

Pulis’s assistant Gary Megson, the club’s former manager between 2000 and 2004, will take over as caretaker manager.

West Brom’s 4-0 hammering at home by Chelsea on Saturday proved the final straw for the Chinese owner of the Midlands club, Guochuan Lai, who was growing impatient with its poor form.

Albion had won their first three games of the season but had not managed a victory in any competition since late August when they beat League Two Accrington Stanley 3-1 in the Carabao Cup.

They subsequently failed to earn a win with even the pragmatic Pulis, whose prosaic sides have usually been mainly notable for being difficult to beat. Pulis said he would not be surprised if he was dismissed.

West Brom are in 17th position in the league with 10 points from 12 league games, recording six losses in the process.

“We are in a results business and over the back end of last season and this season to date, ours have been very disappointing,” West Brom chairman John Williams said.

“These decisions are never taken lightly but always in the interests of the club.

Pulis is the fifth English top-flight manager to lose his job during the 2017-18 season after Crystal Palace’s Frank de Boer, Leicester City’s Craig Shakespeare, Everton’s Ronald Koeman and West Ham United’s Slaven Bilic.

(Source: Guardian)

## Italy football boss resigns after World Cup elimination

Italian football federation (FIGC) president Carlo Tavecchio resigned on Monday, a week after the national team failed to qualify for the World Cup finals.

Referees association president Marcello Nicchi told reporters that Tavecchio had quit during a meeting at FIGC headquarters in Rome.

Tavecchio, 74, had been under pressure to step down after a goalless draw at home to Sweden meant Italy failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1958.

Coach Gian Piero Ventura was sacked last Wednesday.

In a television interview on Sunday, a tearful Tavecchio blamed Ventura for the World Cup fiasco.

“The debacle was technical, the coach made the wrong technical choices,” he said.

Tavecchio was first elected to the FIGC post in August 2014 to replace Giancarlo Abete, who had resigned immediately after Italy were knocked out in the first round of the World Cup in Brazil. He was re-elected as head of the federation in March when he said that he had restored Italy’s credibility.

During the 2014 FIGC campaign, Tavecchio caused an outcry when he made a comment about a fictitious African player he named Opti Poba “eating bananas”.

He was subsequently banned from holding any position with world governing body FIFA for six months while European body UEFA imposed a similar sanction. The FIGC, however, cleared him of any wrongdoing.

(Source: Mirror)

## Qatar urges neighbors to let nationals attend 2022 World Cup

Qatar is urging the four countries imposing a diplomatic and trade boycott against it to allow their nationals to attend the World Cup in Doha in 2022, a senior Qatari organizer said on Monday.

“We separate politics from sports,” Hassan Al Thawadi, secretary general at Qatar’s Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, told reporters in Doha.

The committee is responsible for planning and operations for the tournament.

“We hope that the blockading nations see reason in this matter and allow for their people to be able to participate in this once in a lifetime opportunity.”

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt cut diplomatic, transport and trade ties with Qatar in June, accusing it of financing terrorism. Doha denies the charges.

Doha has had to find new suppliers of construction materials for its World Cup projects since the boycott was imposed, but the timeline for those projects has not changed, said Thawadi.

“Our plans are put in place, alternative supply chains are put in place and the projects are continuing on schedule and on cost,” he said.

(Source: Fox Sports)

## Buffon: No rush over future

Juventus veteran Gianluigi Buffon says he will take his time before deciding which route to take after football. “I don’t want to look like a fool.”

Buffon will hang up his gloves at the end of the season after Italy’s failure to qualify for the World Cup, and the 39-year-old was asked whether he saw himself in an executive position, following in the footsteps of Francesco Totti at Roma.

“Do I see myself as a director in the future? I don’t want to look like a fool, so I’ll only do whatever I end up doing in the future once I’ve prepared for it properly,” he told UEFA’s official website.

“I played as a midfielder until I was 12, and then came the brainwave of watching the 1990 World Cup and sympathizing with Cameroon,

“It was there that I admired Thomas N’Kono and I wanted to emulate him.

“After that, whenever I went in goal, my dad would sometimes tell me that I wasn’t really that bad.

“How do I imagine my last game? Like my first, with great enthusiasm and pride.”

(Source: Football-Italia)

# Mohamed Salah: Egypt striker carries hopes of a nation at World Cup

As he lined up to take the pressure-laden 95th-minute penalty that could take Egypt to their first World Cup since 1990, Mohamed Salah knew that life was about to change.

What followed was surely far more than he ever expected.

As he slammed home to seal a 2-1 win over Congo in October, the 25-year-old was propelled from football star to national hero.

Large photos of Salah headlined every newspaper in a country with a population of 80 million, his hometown school was renamed after him, and there were discounts in some Egyptian restaurants for anyone sharing his name. Born in 1992, the Liverpool forward has never even seen Egypt play at a World Cup, but he has changed that - almost single-handedly.

“Salah is the man behind our qualification to the World Cup,” Hazem Emam, who won the 1998 Nations Cup and 87 caps for Egypt, tells BBC Sport. “When we qualified in 1990, it was more of a team effort. This time, Salah was the leader of the whole campaign.”

Salah had a hand in all seven of the goals that took the Pharaohs to Russia, scoring five and assisting two, as Egypt finally ended one of African football’s biggest mysteries.

How could a team that dominates Africa and boasts a record seven continental titles consistently fail to qualify for the World Cup?

The irony was that the puzzle was solved in the wake of Egypt’s 2011 political revolution, which turned the years of plenty - three Africa Cup of Nations titles between 2006 and 2010, to ones of famine - no qualifications from 2012 to 2015.

But the pendulum swung back earlier this year as Salah had a hand in four of the five goals that helped Egypt finish runners-up in the Nations Cup.

Under Argentine coach Hector Cuper, who is known for his strict defensive approach, Salah has become Egypt’s primary goal scoring option, to the extent that fans have dubbed



Egypt the ‘Pass to Salah’ team.

Emam says Salah’s exploits for Egypt and at the highest level in Europe make him his nation’s greatest ever player - above legendary figures as Hossam Hassan, Mohamed Aboutreika and Mahmoud El Khatib.

“Nobody in the history of Egypt has reached such a level in world football and been so successful with the national team,” said Emam.

Salah is revered by all Egyptians, no mean feat given the country’s support tends to be dictated by which of the two local giants a player represents - Al Ahly or Zamalek.

Hailing from the small town of Basyoun, more than 100km from Cairo, Salah had limited chance to join either of Africa’s two most successful clubs and instead signed for Arab Contractors at 18, making his debut in 2010.

“When I first worked with him, I told him that his ambition should have no limit because he had such great pace and, more importantly, he was highly committed to developing his abilities,” former Egypt Under-20 coach Diaa El-Sayed tells BBC Sport.

“He listened carefully to instructions and has dedicated his whole life off the pitch to

becoming a world-class footballer.”

Salah has made light of his hefty price tag at Liverpool, where he has made a flying start, scoring nine goals in his first 12 league games.

In Russia next year, the diminutive Salah, who boasts 32 goals from 56 internationals, will have to shoulder even vaster expectations.

One thing is for certain: the whole country will be behind him, especially the millions of young Egyptians who - like Salah himself - have never heard their national anthem ring out at football’s greatest event.

(Source: BBC)

## Dimitrov comes of age to win ATP Finals title



Grigor Dimitrov claimed the biggest title of his career and sent out a huge statement of intent as the stylish Bulgarian beat David Goffin 7-5 4-6 6-3 to win the ATP Finals on Sunday. The 26-year-old recovered from losing his opening two service games to finally get the better of the willowy Belgian player, but it was fiercely-fought two-and-a-half hour duel with Goffin saving four match points before finally succumbing.

Dimitrov’s unbeaten run this week in London earned him \$2.5 million while the 1,500 ranking points have catapulted him to end an impressive year ranked third in the world — behind only all-time greats Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

More significantly perhaps, landing the unofficial “fifth” grand slam appears to be proof that the former junior Wimbledon champion, once dubbed ‘Baby Federer’ because of his easy-on-the-eye style, has finally come of age. “It’s been an amazing week for me,” Dimitrov said on court after becoming the first player to win the elite eight-man tournament on his first appearance in the event since Spaniard Alex Corretja beat countryman Carlos Moya in 1998.

“It’s such an honor to be here and this

week has been one of the best weeks I’ve ever had.” He was still on court nearly an hour after the match ended, signing autographs for the sizeable Bulgarian contingent who had roared their man to victory.

Yet it was tough on Goffin who, like Dimitrov, was his country’s first qualifier for the ATP Finals. His substantial consolation, though, was to end the year at a career-high seventh, having become only the sixth man to beat Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer in the same tournament. He will need to recover fast from the two hour 30 minute final — the longest since the event adopted a three-set format — as a Davis Cup final looms in France next weekend.

Many of the capacity crowd in the O2 Arena had doubtless booked their tickets in anticipation of watching the top two seeds Federer and Nadal go head-to-head but the two newcomers provided a fitting end to an extraordinary ATP season.

Goffin managed only two games against Dimitrov when they met on Wednesday in group play but recovered to beat Dominic Thiem to reach the semis where he stunned six-times champion Federer.

(Source: Reuters)

## Wimbledon champion Novotna dies after battle with cancer



Former Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna has died at the age of 49 after a long battle with cancer, the Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) has announced.

In a statement on its website, the WTA said the former world No.2 died peacefully “surrounded by her family in her native Czech Republic.”

Novotna captured the hearts of fans when she burst into tears after losing to Steffi Graf in the 1993 Wimbledon final and was consoled by the Duchess of Kent. It continues to be one of the most memorable moments in the tournament’s history.

She also lost the 1997 Wimbledon final before going on to win the title in 1998, beating Nathalie Tauziat in the final.

During an illustrious career, Novotna won 17 Grand Slam titles, including 12 in doubles and four in mixed doubles — and was a member of the Czech Republic’s victorious 1998 Fed Cup team.

She also won two Olympic silver medals in doubles, in 1988 and 1996, and a singles bronze at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

Novotna, renowned for her serve and volley, was inducted into the Tennis Hall of Fame in 2005.

Steve Simon, chief executive of the WTA, said: “Jana was an inspiration both on and off court to anyone who had the opportunity to know her. Her star will always shine brightly in the history of the WTA. Our condolences and our thoughts are with Jana’s family.”

■ **‘I believe you will do it’**

During her first Wimbledon final, Novotna, then aged 24, had led 4-1 in the deciding set and seemed on course to cause an upset against the great Graf only to fall to a 7-6 (8-6) 1-6 6-4 defeat after losing five games in a row.

When presented with the runner’s-up trophy, Novotna started to cry and the Duchess of Kent comforted her on Centre Court in a touching moment.

Novotna said the Duchess had told her “I believe you will do it” and, indeed, she did, winning Wimbledon, aged 29 and nine months, to become the oldest first-time Grand Slam singles winner in the Open era.

(Source: CNN)

# Trump says he should have left UCLA players in jail in China

U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday upbraided the father of one of the three UCLA basketball players who had been detained in China on suspicion of shoplifting, tweeting he “should have left them in jail!”

Trump’s comments on Twitter came the day after LaVar Ball, the father of LiAngelo Ball, downplayed Trump’s involvement in the three athletes’ release.

“Now that the three basketball players are out of China and saved from years in jail, LaVar Ball, the father of LiAngelo, is unaccepting of what I did for his son and that shoplifting is no big deal. I should have left them in jail!” the president tweeted. Hours after the first tweet, Trump posted again on Twitter, saying Chinese officials told the students why they had been released. “Shoplifting is a very big deal in China, as it should be (5-10 years in jail), but not to father LaVar. Should have gotten his son out during my next trip to China instead. China told them why they were released. Very ungrateful!” Trump wrote in the second tweet.

The three players from the University of California, Los Angeles, apologized last week and thanked Trump for helping secure their release by raising the issue with Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit.



All three players have been suspended indefinitely from the UCLA basketball team. But LaVar Ball told the ESPN TV network on Saturday: “Don’t tell me nothing. Everybody wants to make it seem like he helped me out,” referring to Trump. The White House declined to comment on Sunday on the president’s tweet. Attempts to reach LaVar Ball for comment were unsuccessful. Ball has stirred controversy with comments promoting the careers of his three basketball-playing sons, including Los Angeles Lakers rookie and

former UCLA star Lonzo Ball.

The Republican president, while finishing up a 12-day, five-nation trip to Asia, said he had sought the help of the Chinese president in the case.

“What they did was unfortunate,” Trump told reporters in Manila last week, while describing Xi’s response as “terrific.”

The three players - Ball, Cody Riley and Jalen Hill - admitted to stealing items from three stores during a team trip to China. Before they thanked Trump on Wednesday for intervening with Xi, Trump had wondered whether they would express gratitude to him.

“Do you think the three UCLA Basketball Players will say thank you President Trump? They were headed for 10 years in jail!,” Trump tweeted on Wednesday.

Trump’s remarks on Sunday provoked strong reactions on Twitter, including from one Democratic lawmaker who accused the president of personal pettiness.

“The President would have left American students in a foreign jail because their families didn’t lavish sufficient praise on him. How can someone in such a big office be so small?” U.S. Representative Adam Schiff wrote on Twitter.

(Source: Reuters)



# Iranian referee Alireza Faghani dreaming of World Cup final

## INTERVIEW

By Masoud Hossein

Alireza Faghani, Iranian international referee, says he will never give up on his dreams of officiating the 2018 World Cup final.

The 39-year-old referee is among the officials who have been chosen to officiate at the 2018 World Cup.

Faghani has officiated the 2015 FIFA Club World Cup final between Barcelona and River Plate and 2015 AFC Asian Cup final between Australia and South Korea.

He made history in 2016 by becoming the first Asian referee to officiate the final of the Men's Olympic Football Tournament between Brazil and Germany in Rio de Janeiro.

Now, he is determined to make his dream come true by officiating the final match of the 2018 World Cup.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Faghani opened up on his dreams.

● **Tehran Times:** Iranian people are proud of you as an international referee who has officiated the 2015 AFC Asian Cup final, the 2015 FIFA Club World Cup final and the 2016 Olympic final. Without a doubt you are a role model for those who want to step into your shoes. Please reveal secrets of your success.

To achieve my goals in life, I set them the right way, especially in being a football referee. My dream is to officiate the final match in the World Cup, however, at first, when I shared my dreams with other people, some of them laughed at me, but I did not care what they said about me. I sacrificed so many years of my life to reach my goals. I used to train and learn laws of the game more than usual.

Learning English was my daily program. To officiate too many matches in all divisions as a referee or an assistant referee, made me an experienced official. To be nominated for the referee of the year 2008, was also a turning point in my life. It made me more motivated to reach my dreams.

My assistants and I have achieved unbelievable success in recent years. We showed People to officiate the World Cup final is accessible.

● As you have heard the Syrian football federation is not content with the way you officiated their first match against Australia in the 2018 World Cup play-off. It's while you awarded the west Asian team a penalty in the last minutes.



According to the regulations of FIFA and AFC, we are not allowed to talk about our games and decisions.

● You've officiated three major finals in the last two years. We know that you are one of the referees who has been chosen to officiate in the 2018 World Cup. Have you received the official invitation for the prestigious event?

Yes, we received invitation for FIFA World Cup Referee seminar, but I've learnt the list is open until the last day and there is no guarantee that we will officiate at the World Cup. So, we have to work hard and do our best until the last day to remain in the final list.

● Officiating in the professional leagues and international competitions will be more interesting as far I know. As an international referee, explain how is getting involved with the professional players?

In our preparation courses, our instructors teach us regarding all aspects. For example, our knowledge of laws must be up to date, we must maintain our bodies in peak physical condition, and we must have good knowledge of team tactics and tactical approaches. So, to face with all kinds of situations or professional players, cannot surprise us, we are ready to deal with them as well.

## Bayern Munich play down interest in Atletico Madrid's Griezmann

Bayern Munich sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic has said Bayern Munich are unlikely to make an attempt to sign Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann.

Sky reported the German champions have tried to sign Griezmann twice in the past and there was fresh speculation at the weekend linking the France international with a €100 million move.

However, Salihamidzic, 40, rubbished these reports, telling Sky before the Bunde-

sliga game against Augsburg at the weekend: "We haven't even talked about Griezmann."

The 2001 Champions League winner stressed that Bayern were unwilling to pay such astronomical fees.

He said: "We won't be joining in the craziness -- the sums involved are not worth discussing. If something is sensible and suits Bayern, we will do it."

Bayern beat Augsburg 3-0 in the Bavarian derby on Saturday to move six points clear

at the top of the table from RB Leipzig, and coach Jupp Heynckes confirmed talks are in progress with Hoffenheim over the transfer of Germany international Sandro Wagner.

"We still have time, we have decided a few things in the last few months, but the transfer window opens on Jan. 1," Salihamidzic said.

Meanwhile, both Arjen Robben and Frank Ribery's contracts are up for renewal next summer.

Asked about the club's plans for the vet-

eran wing duo, Salihamidzic said: "They are two experienced and revered players. We know what we have in them and will deal with that early in the New Year."

Robben is currently the club captain in the absence of goalkeeper Manuel Neuer through injury.

And Salihamidzic added: "Arjen Robben is in top form and the best example there is that age is not important."

(Source: Soccer.net)



## Persepolis, Esteghlal held in Iran Professional League

**S P O R T S** Persepolis and Esteghlal football teams were held by Padideh and Siahjamegan respectively.

Persepolis missed chance to go back to the top of the Iran Professional League (IPL) table after a 0-0 draw against Padideh in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

The Iranian giant were the better team but failed to find the back of the net, they seemingly lacked a cutting edge up front.

Persepolis sit second in the table with 24 points, one point behind IPL leader Pars Jonoubi Jam.

Earlier in the day, Esteghlal were held to a 0-0 draw by Siahjamegan in Mashhad.

The Blues are 11th in the table after 12 weeks.

Pars Jonoubi suffered their first defeat, losing to Foolad 1-0 in Ahvaz.

Elsewhere, Sepahan defeated Tractor Sazi 3-0, Saipa edged past Naft Tehran 1-0 and Sepidrood Rasht suffered a 2-1 home defeat to Zob Ahan.

Pars Jonoubi remain top, followed by Persepolis, Paykan, Foolad and Padideh.

## Maria Komandnaya thrilled to be chosen to conduct World Cup final draw

Russian sports journalist Maria Komandnaya says that to conduct the 2018 World Cup Final Draw is an incredible experience for her.

Komandnaya will present the Draw alongside former England forward Gary Lineker, a long-standing critic of FIFA, at the State Kremlin Palace in Moscow on Dec. 1.

They will be joined by eight draw assistants, one of whom is Russian football legend Nikita Simonyan. The remaining seven and the presenters of the show will be revealed in the coming days.

Komandnaya has worked for Fox Sports for more than a decade as one of Russia's best known sports journalists.

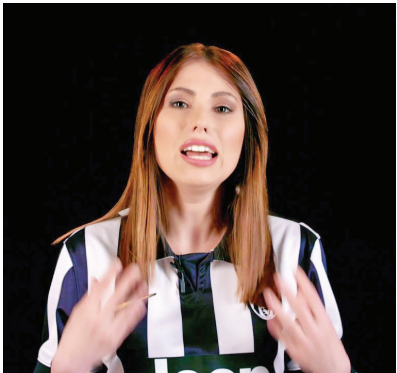
In an exclusive interview with Tasnim news agency, Komandnaya says that she was thrilled to learn that she has been chosen to present the 2018 World Cup Draw.

■ First of all, how did you feel when you first found out you were chosen to conduct the Draw?

When FIFA told me they were considering me as a host for The Final Draw, I was thrilled. It is such a great honor for me! So, I had the interview with FIFA. They needed to check my English skills and to understand my level of football awareness. Then the email showed up in my inbox, informing me of the incredible news. I have been ecstatic ever since.

■ Will the World Cup leave a positive legacy in Russia?

For sure. The 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia is a great chance for Russians to show the whole world how beautiful our



country is, and how great and hospitable our people are. Millions and millions of the fans will be watching The Draw. And it's a great chance for everyone to make new friends, no matter where are you from. Football unites. It's a universal language and everyone can speak.

■ It will be an amazing experience to conduct the ceremony along with football stars.

Of course. It will be an incredible experience to be on the same stage with Gary Lineker and other amazing football stars. I have been working in sports journalism since I was 17. To be a sports journalist is a great journey, the most exciting in my life.

■ Anything to say?

Thank you again to FIFA and the Local Russian Organizing Committee. This will be a truly extraordinary event! Before the Draw there will be some media opportunities for the accredited journalists. So I will be happy to answer your questions.

## Arsenal hire Dortmund chief scout Sven Mislintat in backroom shake-up

Arsenal have hired Borussia Dortmund's highly respected chief scout Sven Mislintat as the club's new head of recruitment, the biggest overhaul yet of Arsene Wenger's backroom staff in the wake of last season's disappointing league campaign.

Mislintat has become one of the most sought-after talent spotters in Europe after helping Dortmund sign the likes of Robert Lewandowski, Shinji Kagawa, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Raphael Guerreiro and Ousmane Dembele in recent years.

He had been pursued by Bayern Munich earlier this year but last week, sources told ESPN FC that Arsenal were in talks with Mislintat and he is set to start his new job in December after Arsenal confirmed his appointment.

"We are delighted that Sven is joining us," Wenger told the club website. "Identifying and developing talent is a core part of our philosophy and Sven has an outstanding track record over many years. We look forward to him taking our existing recruitment approach forwards."

"We would like to thank Steve Rowley for all his hard work over many years for the club. He has been a key figure in our recruitment of so many top players and has travelled thousands and thousands of miles, watching hundreds of games for us during his time at the club. We wish him well for the future."

Rowley, who has been Arsenal's chief scout since Arsene Wenger took over in 1996, "has stood down from his role but will continue to maintain his relationship and support us with ad hoc scouting on a



consultancy basis" after 35 years at the club.

The hiring of Mislintat is the clearest proof yet that Arsenal CEO Ivan Gazidis is serious about making big changes behind the scenes, as he promised after Wenger was handed a new two-year contract this summer.

Plans to appoint a director of football appear to be on hold after Wenger publicly balked at the idea, while chief transfer negotiator Dick Law had yet to be replaced after stepping down in September.

As the head of Arsenal's recruitment department, Mislintat's role could well encompass some of the duties handled by both Rowley and Law previously.

Mislintat has enjoyed a close relationship with Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc, but had a highly publicised falling out with former manager Tomas Tuchel last year after a January move for Atletico Madrid midfielder Oliver Torres collapsed.

(Source: ESPN)

## Climber Reza Alipour claims gold medal at China Open

**TASNIM** — Iranian speed climber Reza Alipour won a gold medal in the China Open on Sunday.

Alipour, nicknamed the 'Persian Cheetah', won the title with a time of 5.67 seconds in the competition held in Guangzhou.



Russian Vladislav Deulin came in second place with a time of 5.89 seconds. Meantime, Alipour dedicated his gold medal to the victims of the Iran's earthquake.

Last Sunday, a 7.3 magnitude occurred in the western region of Iran and caused numerous human victims, mutilation and large scale destructions.

## Mahjoub earns bronze at IJF Grand Prix

**Press TV** — Iranian judoka Javad Mahjoub won a bronze medal at the International Judo Federation (IJF) Grand Prix in The Hague on Sunday.

Mahjoub defeated Austrian Daniel Allerstorfer in the +100kg weight class and claimed the bronze medal.

Mahjoub looks a new man at the heavier weight and came in at 117kg which suited him as he threw the heavier man twice with a seoi-nage for waza-ari scores having already led by one waza-ari.

The Netherlands' charismatic heavyweight Roy Meyer defeated Poland's Maciej Sarnacki in the final match.

On Saturday, Iran's Saeid Mollaei had won a bronze medal in the competition in the -81kg class.

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

## Lech Poznan eye Iran's Karim Ansarifard

**TASNIM** — Polish football club Lech Poznan are reportedly eying a move for Olympiacos star Karim Ansarifard.

The Polish outfit sent scouts to watch Olympiacos striker Ansarifard in action against Levadiakos on Saturday, according to SDNA.gr. AEK Athens, French Ligue 1 side Olympique Marseille and Feyenoord Rotterdam had also shown interest in signing the Iranian striker.

Ansarifard, who has scored 15 goals in 58 caps for Iran national football team, is a key member of Olympiacos at the moment.

He started his playing career in Iranian football club Saipa in 2007 and joined Persepolis after five years.

Ansarifard signed a two-year deal with Segunda División's CA Osasuna in 2014 but left the team for Greek top-flight team Panionios after one year. He joined Olympiacos in January 2017.

## Guardiola will 'kill' City stars if they get complacent

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola warned his team he would "kill" anyone who got complacent after their flying start to the season.

City continued their Premier League dominance with a 2-0 win at Leicester City on Saturday seeing them maintain their eight-point lead at the top.

Guardiola's men have won 11 of 12 league games, scoring 40 goals and conceding just seven.

The Spaniard said there was no chance of his team becoming complacent despite their stunning form.

"That is not going to happen because I am their manager," Guardiola said. "The team, that is not going to happen. I'll kill them. Complacency doesn't happen in my teams."

"They can play bad, teams are going to beat us, that happens. "But if you see the team, they have the desire to have the ball and play. We are not a team that speculates about absolutely anything. That's not going to happen."

City host Feyenoord in the Champions League on Tuesday, having already sealed a spot in the last 16.

(Source: Goal)

## Suspended AIBA president Wu to step down from post

The International Boxing Association's (AIBA) suspended president Wu Ching-kuo announced on Monday that he would step down from his post to "resolve the management issues" within the Olympic sport's governing body.

Wu, who will be replaced by interim chief Franco Falcinelli, said in a joint statement with the Swiss-based organization that he would withdraw and terminate related pending procedures before civil courts and the AIBA disciplinary commission.

"I step down in the best interests of both AIBA and boxing but I remain committed to ensure a smooth handover to the new leadership," the 70-year-old Wu, who has been at the helm for 11 years, said. The AIBA would convene an extraordinary congress with its national member federations on Jan. 27 in Dubai to consider proposed changes to its governance, the statement added.

Wu was provisionally suspended by a disciplinary commission last month after a complaint from 11 AIBA executive committee members who alleged he had "violated and continues to violate various provisions of AIBA's Statutes and Codes".

AIBA has been riven with in-fighting for months, with Taiwan's Wu pitted against most of the executive committee who failed to remove him through a vote of no confidence in July.

(Source: Reuters)



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## “Mermaid” nominated for Mediterranean Film Festival Cannes Special Award

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — Iranian director Amir-Masud Aqababaian’s movie “Mermaid” has been nominated for the best film award at the Mediterranean Film Festival Cannes in the Special Award category, Iran’s Art Bureau announced on Monday.



Amir Aqai acts in a scene from “Mermaid” by Amirmasud Aqababaian.

The film is about Yunes, a survivor of a diving team from the Iran-Iraq war, who lives beside the Persian Gulf and tries to prove the oil companies are responsible for the water pollution in the gulf.

The Special Award is organized in collaboration with the Cineport International Media, an Iranian film distribution company.

The award is presented in the categories of best film, best short, best screenplay, best short screenplay and best documentary by filmmakers from the Middle East.

The festival will be held in the French town from November 25 to 30 and the winners of the Special Award will be announced during a ceremony on November 28.

## Filmgoers impressed by “Yeva” at Toronto Pomegranate Film Festival

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — Iranian-Armenian filmmaker Anahid Abad’s drama “Yeva” has won the audience award at the 12th Pomegranate Film Festival, which was held in Toronto, Canada, Iran’s Parabi Cinema Foundation announced on Monday.



A scene from “Yeva”.

Produced by the Foundation and the National Cinema Center of Armenia, the film tells the story of Yeva, a young woman who escapes her influential in-laws with her daughter Nareh after her husband’s tragic death, and takes refuge in one of the villages of Karabakh, Armenia.

“Apricot Groves”, an Iranian-Armenian production by director Purya Heidari-Ureh, also went on screen at the festival.

The festival, which aims to promote Armenian culture and cinema, ran from November 15 to 19.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### Artists to raise funds for Kermanshah quake victims

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — A group of artists will auction a collection of their artworks at the Art Bureau in Tehran today to raise funds for the victims of the devastating earthquake that hit Kermanshah region in western Iran last week.

The artworks have been created during a workshop held at the bureau over the past week.

# Artists to celebrate 30 years of relations between Iran, WFP

**C U L T U R E d e s k** TEHRAN — A large number of Iranian artists are scheduled to come together at the Tehran office of the World Food Program (WFP) on Thursday to celebrate 30 years of relations between the WFP and Iran, WFP Representative Negar Gerami announced in a press conference on Monday.

A collection of 30 paintings by Afghan children from some refugee camps in Iran will be showcased in an exhibition on the sidelines of the celebration to raise funds for the children and their families.

Iranian pop star Alireza Assar is also scheduled to give a performance during the event.

Assar and Iranian actresses Vishka Asayesh, Leili Rashidi, and Sahar Dolatshahi, who are collaborating with the WFP,



WFP Representative Negar Gerami (L), actress Vishka Asayesh (C) and singer Alireza Assar attend a press conference in Tehran on November 20, 2017 to brief media on a celebration being organized by the WFP to observe 30 years of relations with Iran.

were also in attendance at the press conference.

WFP is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations

and the world’s largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.

## Seven Views expo to open on Friday



Art enthusiasts visit the 9th edition of Seven Views at Niavaran Cultural Center December 24, 2016. (Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — The

10th edition of Seven Views, an art expo organized by seven major galleries in Tehran, will open at the Niavaran Cultural Center on Friday.

A collection of paintings, calligraphic paintings and sculptures created by 200 artists have been selected to go on sale,

the organizers have announced.

The works will be offered at reasonable prices to help boost the art economy.

The expo aims to introduce young artists, while also offering works by veterans including Aidin Aghdashlu, Ebrahim Jafari, Farideh Lashai, Jazeh Tabatabai, Sohrab Sepehri and Parviz Kalantari.

## “Retouch” named best short at Stockholm festival

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — Iranian director Kaveh Mazheri’s acclaimed movie “Retouch” won the Aluminum Horse for best short at the Stockholm International Film Festival in the Swedish capital on Sunday.

Since Mazheri could not attend the closing ceremony of the festival, the film’s co-sponsor Gilnaz Mirmoshtaqi received the award on his behalf, the publicist of the film announced on Monday.

In a video sent to the ceremony, Mazheri dedicated the award to the victims of the earthquake in Kermanshah in western Iran.

The film depicts Maryam’s husband doing weightlifting in the corner of the home. Suddenly, the weight falls on his



A scene from “Retouch”

## Male artists win big but female singers dominate American Music Awards stage

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Pink, Lady Gaga and Christina Aguilera led female artists of pop music dominating the American Music Awards stage on Sunday with powerful performances, despite being edged out by male artists in most award categories this year.

Bruno Mars won Artist of the Year, former One Direction member Niall Horan won New Artist of the Year and Puerto Rican singer Luis Fonsi, Justin Bieber and Daddy Yankee won Collaboration of the Year for the catchy “Despacito.”

The women of pop delivered the night’s biggest moments.

Pink and Kelly Clarkson sang REM’s “Everybody Hurts”, dedicated to first responders and victims of the recent hurricanes and wildfires that have ravaged parts of the United States.

Pink later performed aerial acrobatics from a high-rise building while singing “Beautiful Trauma”.

Lady Gaga performed “The Cure” from the Washington D.C. stop of her tour, playing on a Perspex piano and then dancing as sparks rained down on stage. She won favorite female pop/rock artist.

“Just remember that if you feel different or not understood, don’t you dare give up on who you are, fight like hell for what you believe in,” Lady Gaga said.

Motown superstar Diana Ross received this year’s lifetime achievement award with video tributes from Barack and Michelle Obama and Taylor Swift. Ross performed a medley of her hits including “I’m Coming Out”, “Take Me Higher” and “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough”.

“I feel so humbled by this,” Ross



Niall Horan accepts the award for New Artist of the Year 2017 at the American Music Awards Show in Los Angeles, California, November 19, 2017. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

said, surrounded by her family on stage.

The fan-voted American Music Awards show, televised on ABC, features performances from pop music’s biggest names.

Actress Viola Davis paid tribute to the late Whitney Houston and the 25th anniversary of Houston’s film “The Bodyguard”, as Christina Aguilera belted a medley of hits from the film. Houston died in 2012 aged 48 after drowning in a hotel bathtub.

Korean boy band BTS garnered some of the loudest screams from the audience as they performed “DNA” on a neon-lit stage.

Linkin Park was named best alternative rock artist, a bittersweet win for the band after the July suicide of frontman Chester Bennington.

The band dedicated the win to Bennington and “his memory, his talent, his sense of humor, to his joy.”

## Mel Tillis, country music star known as “Stutterin’ Boy”, dead at 85

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Mel Tillis, who embraced his own speech impediment to become one of Nashville’s most celebrated singer-songwriters during a six-decade career in country music, has died at age 85, his publicist said on Sunday.

Tillis died early on Sunday in an Ocala, Florida, hospital, a statement posted on Absolute Publicity’s website said. Respiratory failure was the suspected cause, but the singer had suffered from intestinal issues since early 2016.

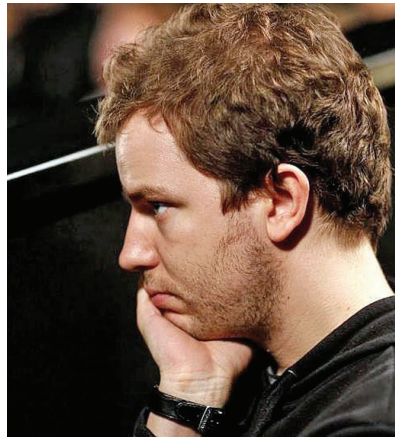
A member of the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Grand Ole Opry, Tillis recorded more than 60 albums and penned a string of hits for stars such as Kenny Rogers, George Strait and Ricky Skaggs. Under his own name, he cut six singles that topped the country charts, including “I Ain’t Never”, “Coca-Cola Cowboy” and “Southern Rains”.

Born Lonnie Melvin Tillis in Florida, he became one of the most sought-after Nashville songwriters of the 1960s and 1970s. His catalog contains an estimated 1,000 songs, 600 of which were recorded by other artists.

Perhaps his best-known crossover hit was “Ruby, Don’t Take Your Love to Town”, narrated by a military veteran paralyzed during “a crazy Asian war.” Kenny Rogers and the First Edition scored a Billboard top 10 hit with the song in 1969, during the height of the Vietnam War.

“Mel Tillis was a special friend, great artist, and constant inspiration to me—Heaven’s choir just got sweeter,” tweeted Randy Travis, who in 1986 had a No. 1 country hit with “Diggin Up Bones”, a tune recorded by Tillis the previous year.

Tillis, known for his rich baritone and the smooth sincerity of his vocal performances,



French critic Matthieu Darras in an undated photo

Film Center is the organizer of the Cinema Verite festival, whose 11th edition will be held in Tehran from December 10 to 17.

throat and puts him between life and death. Maryam tries to save him, but she just decides to stop helping and stand and watch her husband’s death.

“A Gentle Night” by Chinese director Qui Yang, the winner of the Cannes Palme d’Or for best short film Director, was also among the shorts contending for the Aluminum Horse.

“Retouch” has been screened at numerous international events around the world and received supreme accolades such as the award for the Best Narrative Short at the 16th Tribeca Film Festival in New York City and the Best Live Action Short over 15 Minutes award at the 23rd Palm Springs International ShortFest.



Country music legend Mel Tillis is pictured with his National Medal of Arts after being presented with the award by U.S. President Barack Obama during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House in Washington, February 13, 2012. (Reuters/Jason Reed)

spoke with a stutter since he was a toddler, according to online biographers.

Rather than attempt to disguise it, Tillis used the speech impediment as one of the trademarks of his act. His ability to poke fun at himself on stage assured him a loyal following among country music fans.

He even entitled his 1984 autobiography, “Stutterin’ Boy,” a nickname conferred on him early in his career.

“My stutter has been a blessing in a lot of ways. It’s helped me to try harder and to be somebody that helps other people,” Tillis told Idaho’s inland360.com in a 2015 interview. “After the show, I’ll spend a little time with children who stutter, let them know it’s OK.”

Among the many honors bestowed on Tillis, President Barack Obama awarded him the National Medal of Arts in 2012.

His daughter Pam Tillis, a country music singer-songwriter in her own right, is among the six children who survive him.