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defeat for U.S. **POLITICS TEHRAN** – The fall d e ^{s k} of Daesh in Syria was

a defeat for the United States, Leader of the Islamic Revolution said in a meeting with large number of Basij members on Wednesday Speaking ahead of National Basij Week,

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei applauded the endeavors of the young men in nullifying U.S. plots and conspiracies in West Asia, saying, "In the region, the Islamic Republic and you, young individuals, managed to bring America to its knees and defeat it. All their efforts and plots were aimed at clearing up the ideologies of the Islamic Revolution or resistance from the region, but the exact opposite occurred."

"The real cause of the demise of the cancerous tumor of Daesh was the Basiji morale. Enemies tried to use this inhuman, Takfiri group to render an incident against the resistance current, but devout, zealous, and motivated youth entered the battlefield and brought the enemy to his knees." \rightarrow 2

Daesh defeat shows terror and its sponsors doomed to fail: statement

POLITICS TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Tuesday praising the eradication of the takfiri Daesh group from Iraq and Syria, saying the achievement demonstrated, once again, that terrorism and its sponsors are "doomed to failure." The ministry said the fall of Daesh was

the fruit of joint struggles and sacrifices by all regional resistance forces and nations, and opened a "new chapter" in the developments unfolding in West Asia.

Today, all delusions for the formation of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant have been destroyed, said the statement, $\rightarrow 2$

Hariri's resignation on hold after talks with Aoun

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri has temporarily put his resignation on hold following a request by President Michel Amount for him to reconsider the decision. "I presented my resignation to Pres-

ident Aoun today and he urged me to wait" for more dialogue and "I showed responsiveness to this hope," Hariri said following his meeting with Aoun in Beirut on Wednesday.

The premier also underlined his commitment to cooperation with President Aoun

Hariri stunned the entire nation on November 4, when he announced his resignation in a statement broadcast from Saudi Arabia and plunged his homeland into a new political crisis. →13

PERSPECTIVE **By Martin Love** American analyst

Illusion and disillusion with Trump

Let's make one thing clear right off the bat. I did not vote in the 2016 presidential election. I would have voted had Bernie Sanders won the Democratic Party nomination, but Hillary Clinton rigged the primaries to give herself the nomination to run against Trump. It's no secret what happened. I and many other observers have no doubt Sanders would have become President, beating Trump. But above all, in the past election, myself and others did not want Clinton to win. Her mendaci-

Iran, EU discussing technical co-op on environment

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran and Europee s k an Union have started rounds of consultative meetings on air pollution, industrial emissions, sand and dust storms, water and marine related issues, and circular economy. The 6-day meetings commenced here on November 21.

The sessions are the outgrowth of the Joint Statement by the High Representative of the European Union, Federica Mogherini, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Javad Zarif, made on April, 16, 2016.

In light of this joint statement the Directorate

General for the Environment of the European Commission and the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran intend to establish a technical cooperation on environment.

Parvin Farshchi, deputy head of the department of environment for marine affairs, explained that the consultative meetings are aiming to establish bilateral technical cooperation to address environmental issues, exchange experience, and working out a roadmap for future joint activities

As Farshchi has put it the first two days of the

days falling on Tuesday and Friday is dedicated to water and marine related issues and the last two days of the series of the meetings will be discussing circular economy and waste management.

The EU delegation comprising 26 world leading experts along with the Iranian officials will hopefully draw up a five-year plan including short-term and medium-term policies to tackle environmental challenges Iran is facing, Farshchi suggested.

"Since environmental challenges do not confine to one nation enhancing technical cooperation and leading joint projects with the European Union would certainly produce positive outcomes both for Iran and the region," she stated. \rightarrow 12

UN urges Iraq's Kurdistan to respect court ruling on secession vote

The United Nations has called on the Iraqi semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region (Kurdistan Regional Government/ KRG) to abide by a top court ruling that declared the recent secession referendum in northern Iraq unconstitutional.

On Monday, Iraq's Supreme Federal Court, which is responsible for settling disputes between the central government in Baghdad and the country's regions, announced it had made a "decision to consider the Kurdish region's referendum unconstitutional and this ruling is final."

It also decided to annul "all the con-

with the European Union.

meetings have focused on industrial emissions, air quality, and sand and dust storms. The next two

Human trafficking is both source and aftermath of conflict, Iran says

Iran's Ambassador to the UN. Gholamali Khoshroo, on Tuesday said that human trafficking is both source and aftermath of conflict and instability and should be addressed collectively.

I align myself with the statement made by the Bolivarian Republic Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Trafficking persons especially in conflict situ-

and protracted conflicts, political instability, terrorism, genocide and ethnic cleansing, create conditions under which millions of people become displaced in their own countries or seek

ty and her policies as Secretary of State were and remain abhorrent to millions of Americans.

Trump on the campaign trail made a lot of noise about revamping U.S. foreign policy, making it more benign. He even talked about friendly relations with Russia, not demonizing that country, and say what you want about Vladimir Putin, I admire him for going in to Syria and helping shore up the Assad government and Syria as an intact state against the mercenary terrorists sponsored by the Saudis and some of the Arab states on the Persian Gulf and, of course, the Zionist entity that calls itself "Israel".

In my view, and in the view of other sage Americans who really understand what America is now (more on that later), I believe Trump since last winter has largely betrayed many who voted for him even if many may refuse to believe it until the next economic downturn. Particularly the so-called "middle class", the many millions of voters in the "flyover" states between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. For one thing, he and the Republican Party have proposed a tax overhaul that benefits "the rich", really a small minority of oligarchs at the top of the U.S. food chain. Whether the proposed tax overhaul passes the U.S. Congress remains an open question. If it does, expect a widening of the fiscal deficit, already out of control.

Trump's foreign policies also don't look very positive so far. His administration has given tacit support to the Saudi war on Yemen, and many there face starvation, even cholera, and many innocents have been murdered. It's an abomination. Also, no question, Trump has thrown his hat into the ring with Netanyahu's Likud government in Israel. \rightarrow 7

"Human trafficking is both a source and aftermath of conflict and instability, particularly affecting most vulnerable populations. This phenomenon must be addressed both collectively and comprehensively, including by taking a close look at its root causes," he said in a statement read at the Security Council Open Debate themed "Trafficking of Persons in conflict situations".

Following is full text of the statement published by IRNA:

"At the outset, we would like to thank the Italian presidency for organizing this debate, as well as the Secretary-General, UNODC and Special Rapporteur for their valuable inputs to this debate.

ations is becoming a global challenge with arising numbers of victims, as such it requires a resolute response at national and international levels.

Human trafficking is both a source and aftermath of conflict and instability, particularly affecting most vulnerable populations. This phenomenon must be addressed both collectively and comprehensively, including by taking a close look at its root causes. This global and growing phenomenon and challenge, with its acute humanitarian emergencies usually is not the cause, it is just a symptom.

Underlying factors, particularly foreign aggression and intervention, occupation, war

refuge overseas in a quest for safety, stability, opportunity. These journeys can themselves put migrants at great risk of falling victim to human trafficking, forced labor and contemporary forms of slavery.

To deal with these original causes is the primary responsibility of this Council and when the Council chooses to focus instead on symptoms, it will certainly fail to address them in a proper manner. The current situation in Libya and the concerns over reported enslavement is an example of such issue. When will there be accountability for those states whose invasion created the current situation in Libva? \rightarrow 2



Fishing season

Iranian fishermen welcome the beginning of the fishing season on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

They have begun to catch Kapoor, Kafal and Caspian kutum (Mahi Sefid) in October.

The fishing season will last until spring. Caspian Sea is the world's largest enclosed body of water.

sequences and results" of the plebiscite which was held on September 25 in defiance of strong objection from both Baghdad and Iraq's neighbors, particularly Iran and Turkey.

On Tuesday, the UN Assistance Mis-sion for Iraq (UNAMI) urged the KRG authorities "to acknowledge and respect" the verdict and the Iraqi constitution.

The UN mission also demanded that Baghdad and Erbil engage in negotiations without delay within the framework of the constitution and discuss issues ranging from the control of borders and the reopening of airports to the federal budget, the payment of salaries and the management of oil exports.

Speaking on Monday, KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani called the top court ruling "unilateral" and claimed that it had been reached without the presence of KRG representatives.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, however, welcomed the verdict in a statement, saying, "We call upon everybody to ... avoid taking any step which violates the constitution and law.

On November 6, Iraq's Supreme Federal Court ruled that no region or province can break away from the mainland. The KRG said last week it would respect that order and expressed hope that the decision will set the stage for Baghdad-Erbil dialog.

The Iraqi government responded to the controversial Kurdish vote by conducting a military campaign to retake the areas overrun by the Kurdish militants in the course of the fight with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists. It also banned direct flights to the semi-autonomous Kurdish region and demanded control over border crossings. (Source: Press TV)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Nobel Peace Prize should go to General Soleimani, grand ayatollah says

POLITICS TEHRAN — Grand Ayatollah Naser Makarem Shirazi said on Wednesday that the Nobel Peace Prize should go to IRGC Quds Force Major General Qassem Soleimani for freeing the world of the Daesh terrorist group.

Makarem Shirazi said the United Nations should thank the commander and his comrades-in-arms for their sacrifices and bravery that led to the defeat of Daesh, ISNA reported.

It came a day after Soleimani declared the end of the terrorist group in Syria and Iraqi in a message to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.



Israel will vanish if it starts new war: IRGC chief

POLITICS TEHRAN — The commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Wednesday that Iran does not recognize the Zionist regime as a threat anymore, warning "the smallest mistake they make will be their last one.'

Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari said every new war in the region will be a step toward the total annihilation of Israel from the face of the earth.

The top general added that the fall of Daesh (ISIS). the failures of the Zionist regime and its reactionary Arab counterparts in the region are signs of the end of the hegemonic powers which are led by the U.S.



Defense minister says Iran able to counter all threats

POLITICS TEHRAN – Defense Minister Amir Hatami has said that the Islamic Republic is able to strongly counter all domestic and foreign threats, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

In a meeting with MPs sitting on the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, Hatami discussed Iran's defense capabilities, saying Tehran has "adopted a deterrence policy, and will not be pressured by any foreign threats or sanctions.

The brigadier general also denounced the U.S. for imposing sanctions on the IRGC, the country's defense capabilities and missile technology, saying the enemies are trying in vain to weaken Iran.

🛚 Larijani urges dialogue to resolve regional problems

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani called for dialogue among regional countries to resolve problems, warning against Washington and Tel Aviv's plots to create crises in the region.

Speaking in a meeting with Chairman of Pakistan's Senate Defense Committee Mushahid Hussain, Larijani advised regional countries to avoid playing into the hands of the U.S. and Zionist regime.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), which kicked off on Monday in Istanbul, Turkev

The parliament speaker underlined the importance of cooperation among Iran, Pakistan and Turkey to resolve regional issues.

Leader says fall of Daesh is a defeat for U.S.

1 → Citing the 1979 Islamic Revolution as an example on how victory can be achieved, Ayatollah Khamenei touched on extraordinary successes against terrorists in Syria and Iraq but other countries were doubtful and willing to submit to the enemy's plots. 'One of the enemy's known strategies

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is to disappoint our youth. Unfortunately, some act like mouthpieces for the enemy, spreading hopelessness, saying it's not possible to resist such enemies. And, why not? The Islamic Republic has stood up against the enemies' avarice and has defeated the enemy in all cases."

Speaking on the success of the mobilization forces and nullify the enemies' conspiracies, the Leader said, "You have witnessed that these consecutive conspiracies, which were created in this region by America, Zionists, Arab reactionaries and



Trilateral summit on Syria

Rouhani says Iran after cooperation, not competition

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday the Islamic Republic is seeking cooperation and not competition in the region.

Rouhani made the remarks in a trilateral meeting on Syria in Sochi, Russia, with his Russian and Turkish counterparts, Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Stressing international cooperation to fight terrorism, Rouhani said the ongoing fight against terrorism in Syria should be continued "until the last nuclei of terrorism in Syria are wiped out".

The president stressed that Iran's approach to regional issues is attaching importance to "the will of nations rather than that of foreign states, and love of peace, rather than war-mongering.

He said it is the cause of much felicity that one year after the launch of the Astana talks on Syria, the political efforts of Tehran, Moscow, and Ankara have borne fruit in the form of the defeat of Daesh in Syria.

He wrapped up his speech by noting three points regarding the future of Syria:



1. That war on terror is not over and the recent victory should not make the triad forget about the continuing threat of Takfirism.

2. That after long years, the people of Syria are now in a situation when they can decide their future, and that ethnic diversity and democracy should be upheld in order for the nation to decide free of the influence of foreigners. 3. That the international community should help Syrothers, were destroyed by the sovereignty of the Islamic Revolution. One of the conspiracies was the inhumane Takfiri group. Daesh, which was destroyed, thanks to the efforts of faithful men, with the help of those who supported the resistance force.'

Ayatollah Khamenei then mentioned how vast the manifestation of Islamic Revolution's ideals became in the midst of fight against the enemy, although some were doubtful.

"Even in some of our neighboring countries, sometimes, they did not believe that it was possible to accomplish this [defeat of Daesh]. But, they had to join the fight: they entered the battlefield; they succeeded and came to believe it was possible. This is how the message of the Islamic Republic, the message of the revolution, reaches other nations.'

ians achieve stability, rebuild their country, and their refugees should be provided with a peaceful environment to return to.

During the meeting, Putin, for his part, said the meeting came at a crucial moment in the Syrian armed conflict, when there is an opportunity to end it.

"The militants in Syria have suffered a decisive blow, and now there is a realistic chance to end the multiyear civil war," Putin said, according to RT.

This would require giving the Syrians a period of peace, during which they would be able to settle their differences, Putin added.

This will require compromise by all parties in Syria. both the government and the rebels, he stressed.

Erdogan, for his part, said the three nations had already helped in resolving the situation in Syria to a large degree through the Astana talks.

"But we don't consider this result sufficient and believe that all stakeholders must put effort into a political resolution of the conflict, which the Syrian people would accept," the Turkish leader added.

Putin reiterates support for nuclear

deal in phone talks with Trump

Iran has achieved its interests in Svria without being deceived: Shamkhani

POLITICS TEHRAN – Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said late on Tuesday that Iran has succeeded to meet its interests and help eradicate Daesh in Iraq and Syria without being deceived by any other country.

'Now that success has been achieved [in defeating Daesh], some believe that relations between Iran and Russia can turn into a negative rivalry and some inside the country has this mentality that Russians are deceiving Iran; however, we have reached our objectives and have never been deceived in achieving our interests," Shamkhani said in a televised interview

He said such analyses are in line with creating division between Iran and Russia.

Armed forces in Iraq and Syria, backed by popular mobilization forces and Iranian military advisors, have managed to flush Daesh militants out of their last strongholds in both countries, declaring full victory over the notorious

terror group. Shamkhani said that the Russians entered the scene of fighting terrorists in Syria in 2015, four years after start

of the conflict. "During those four years [2011-2015],



let terrorists achieve their objective in toppling the government of Assad [the Syrian president]," he noted.

Elsewhere, he said that a Middle East without conflicts runs contrary to interests of the Zionist regime of Israel. The former defense chief predicted

that the Daesh survivors will be used to cause crises in other countries.

"Some regional countries move on the path of the Western countries. These countries have factories of producing Daesh and terrorism. Their population is young and they have hereditary monarchy. Their youth grow with Wahhabi ideology and get used in line with strategy of a volatile Middle East. So, the threat of terrorists will remain if these countries do not close factory of creating Daesh," the top security

d e s k phone conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin insisted on Moscow's commitment to full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the formal name for the 2015 nuclear deal. "The situation surrounding the Irani-

POLITICS TEHRAN - In a

an nuclear program was also discussed. Russia's commitment to full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was noted, as it is an essential factor in ensuring regional stability and overcoming the challenge of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," Kremlin reported.

During a meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on November 1, Putin expressed Russia's strong support for the nuclear agreement.

The nuclear agreement 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. It took effect in January 2016.

The United States under the Donald Trump administration is the only party which has made repeated attacks against the nuclear deal. In his new Iran strategy



certified the nuclear deal and asked Congress to decide about the fate of the agreement.

The U.S. administration has called for a renegotiation of the nuclear agreement, a request vehemently rejected by all other parties

Helga Schmid, the European Union's deputy political director, said in a seminar in Isfahan on Tuesday that the nuclear deal is not renegotiable and all signatories are obliged to respect it.

"I say on behalf of Federica Mogherini [the EU's foreign policy chief] very clearly that it is not possible to renegotiate the JCPOA, and all sides are obliged to respect the JCPOA," she explained.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, has issued nine regular reports each time confirming Iran's adherence to the inter-

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EU recognizing Iran's peaceful nuclear program: Araqchi

TICS TEHRAN — Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi said on Wednesday that the meeting on nuclear cooperation between Iran and the European Union conveys the message that the EU has recognized Iran's peaceful nuclear technology

"Holding the meeting in Isfahan means the European Union has recognized Iran's right to use peaceful nuclear energy and demands expansion of ties with Iran," Araqchi said in a meeting with Isfahan's Governor Rasoul Zargarpour, IRNA reported.

He added the third high level seminar between Iran and the EU, which was held in Tehran and Isfahan on Monday and Tuesday respectively, will introduce Iran's capacities to the world.



MPs hail victory of resistance front over hegemonic powers

POLITICS TEHRAN – Iranian lawmakers in a letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday described the collapse of the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq and Syria as the victory of the resistance front against hegemonic powers

The lawmakers congratulated the Leader, the Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian and Lebanese nations, all supporters of the resistance front and Muslims across the world on the ultimate defeat of the Takfiri terrorists, Tasnim reported.

Undoubtedly, they said, this was not just a victory against the takfiri Deash terrorists but a victory against hegemonic powers and their regional puppets.

Iran, Syria and axis of resistance did not official remarked.

declared on October 13. President Trump de-

Takfirism is a tool to subjugate Muslims: Velayati

POLITICS TEHRAN — Top Iranian politician International Assembly, made the remarks in an ane s k Ali Akbar Velayati said on Wednesday that Takfirism is a tool for enemies to subjugate Muslim countries.

Velayati, a senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution and chairman of the Islamic Awakening ti-Takfirism forum in Tehran.

Velayati said Takfirism was employed to counter Islamic Awakening.

The ill-wishers are seeking to paint a dark picture of Islam based on the Wahhabi model by revitalizing the

pre-Islamic era ignorance, which allowed reprehensible atrocities such as beheading children, immolating men, and assaulting women, Velayati said.

However, parts of the Muslim world, he said, have witnessed heartening developments thanks to national resolve

Human trafficking is both source and aftermath of conflict, Iran says

 $1 \rightarrow$ At the same time, I would like to underscore the vital importance of impartial and reliable data on trafficking in persons at different levels. Member States whose destructive military options have left millions of peoples at the risk of exploitation and trafficking, are not in a position to produce politicized reports, labeling others and deny their own responsibilities.

We believe that addressing of root causes, prevention, protection of victims, prosecution of traffickers and partnership at the global level must be the pillars of any comprehensive approach in combating trafficking in persons and implementation of the Global Plan of

Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Islamic Republic of Iran is committed

to prevent and fight all forms of human trafficking and to counter this horrible crime. To this end, the Law on Combating Human Trafficking was adopted by our parliament in 2004 and has been revised to fill the gaps and strengthen the domestic legal regime.

There is an urgent need to scale up international cooperation, including capacity building as well as technical assistance to combat trafficking in persons. We support joint measures by Member States including through regional and sub-regional initia-

tives that will intensify implementation of the Global Plan of Action.

In fact, the complex synergy that exists between trafficking in person and certain organized crimes such as drug trafficking and smuggling of migrants requires better information sharing, technical assistance and enhanced capacity-building for law enforcement and justice departments.

Meanwhile, education and awareness-raising on human trafficking should form an integral part of our policies in countries of origin, transit and destination. People who knowingly or inadvertently use the services provided by trafficked persons are in as much need of training as those who are at the risk of being trafficked.

In conclusion, we recognize the important role of UNODC in the global fight against trafficking in persons due to the significant role it can play in promoting the partnership pillar of the global campaign against trafficking in persons as well as its function in collecting and analyzing the relevant information. Its biennial Global Report on Trafficking in Persons is important towards the implementation and follow up to the Global Plan of Action and ushering the international cooperation to combat this heinous phenomenon."

Daesh defeat shows terror and its sponsors doomed to fail: statement

 $1 \rightarrow$ adding this proved that "terrorism and the ideological, financial, political and military supporters of this seditious phenomenon are doomed to defeat."

The terrorists and their backers "should be held accountable for their crimes, massacres, destruction and displacement of millions of defenseless and innocent people before international tribunals and the wakeful conscience of world nations," it further said.

Elsewhere in its statement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry expressed its special gratitude to the Russian government for its role in the counter-terrorism fight in Syria, where Moscow has been providing air cover to the national army's



ground operations.

The statement further hailed all parties who have stood by the Syrian and Iraqi nations both on the battlefield and the diplomatic stage over the past seven years.

On the other hand, it added, those who spared no efforts to exploit the nations' resources and fuel the flames of "an unequal and shameful war" are still spending money on holding "fruitless gatherings" in a bid to cover up their errors and find partners in their crimes.

The statement also called on regional nations and governments to exercise "vigilance" in the face of the new "mischief and conspiracies."

Putin talks to Trump, regional leaders on Syria

Ahead of a trilateral summit with Iranian and Turkish presidents in Sochi, Russian President Vladimir Putin has discussed the Syria crisis with his United States counterpart and the leaders of the House of Saud regime, Israel and Egypt.

In a phone conversation with the U.S. president, Putin informed Donald Trump of "the main results" of his Monday meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Sochi "at which the Syrian leader confirmed his commitment to the political process, (and) conducting constitutional reform and presidential and parliamentary elections," the Kremlin said. Putin stressed the "need to keep Syria's sovereignty, in-

dependence and territorial integrity intact," noting that a political settlement in Syria should be reached in the process of an all-inclusive "internal negotiating process." The Kremlin press service described the talks as "busi-

nesslike and meaningful."

Trump described the one-hour talk with his Russian counterpart as a "great call."

According to a White House statement, both presidents also stressed the importance of implementing the U.S. resolutions on Syria and supporting the United Nations-led Geneva Process to "peacefully resolve the Syrian civil war, end the humanitarian crisis allow displaced Syrians to return home, and ensure the stability of a unified Syria free of malign intervention and terrorist safe havens.

The White House statement also stressed the need to ensure "the stability of a unified Syria."

During the phone call, the U.S. and Russian presidents also discussed the Iranian nuclear deal, the situation in Afghanistan and Ukraine as well as tensions on the Korean Peninsula. According to the Kremlin, the Russian side emphasized commitment "to a full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (on Iran's peaceful nuclear program) - a major factor in ensuring regional stability and settlement of the problem of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

The Russian president also discussed the Syrian crisis in separate phone conversations with the Saudi regime's King Salman, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

During the phone calls, Putin touted Moscow's recent initiative to bring the Syrian government and its opponents together for a Syrian "congress" in Sochi. According to the Kremlin, Assad's visit to Russia was

and and

meant to ensure that he agrees to possible peace initiatives with Russia, Iran and Turkey, ahead of the trilateral meeting of their presidents at Putin's official residence in Sochi on Wednesday.

The three-way summit comes as Tehran, Moscow and Turkey cooperate with increasing intensity to end the conflict in Syria, even though Ankara officially stands on the opposite side of the conflict. The three countries are sponsoring peace talks in the

Kazakh capital of Astana and also implementing a plan to establish de-escalation zones in key flashpoint areas of Syria.

The militant-held northwestern province of Idlib, the central province of Homs and the Eastern Ghouta area outside Damascus are the regions which the three countries want to establish as the de-escalation zones.

The talks in Astana have been going on in tandem with another series of talks held in Geneva and brokered by the UN. (Source: agencies)

'Butcher of Bosnia' gets life in war crimes case

The United Nations tribunal on war crimes in the former Yugoslavia has convicted ex-Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladic to life in prison for ordering the massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in 1995.

Initially looking relaxed, Mladic listened intently as presiding Judge Alphons Orie began reading the judgment on 11 charges during a court session at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on Wednesday. However, Mladic was later removed from the court for causing disruptions during the reading of the verdict.

The Srebrenica massacre was Europe's worst atrocity since World War Two. Mladic had pleaded not guilty to all of the 11 charges and is expected to appeal.

Prosecutors had demanded a life sentence for the 74-year-old former general, who was the Bosnian Serb army commander during Bosnia's 1992-95 conflict and was also charged with crimes against humanity over the siege of Sarajevo, during which 11,000 civilians were killed by shelling and sniper fire.

At the time, Srebrenica, which is located near Bosnia's eastern border with Serbia, had been designated a "safe area" by the United Nations and was defended by lightly-armed UN peacekeepers, who nevertheless surren-



dered when Mladic's forces stormed the area

on July 11, 1995. Dutch peacekeepers stood by helplessly as Serb forces separated Muslim men and boys from women, then transported the males

out of sight on buses or marched them away to be shot dead.

Mladic's lawyers argued that his responsibility for murder and the ethnic cleansing of civilians by Serb forces and allied paramilitaries was never proven beyond reasonable doubt and that he should not get any more than 15 years if convicted.

Nicknamed the "Butcher of Bosnia," Mladic is still viewed by some of his compatriots as a national hero for leading the rapid capture of 70 percent of Bosnia after its Serbs revolt-ed against a Muslim-Croat declaration of independence from Yugoslavia.

According to prosecutors, the ultimate scheme pursued by Mladic, Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic, and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic was to purge Bosnia of non-Serbs — a strategy that became known as "ethnic cleansing" — and carve out a "Greater Serbia" from the ashes of the old federal Yugoslavia.

Arguing for life imprisonment for Mladic, Prosecutor Alan Tieger said anything else would be an insult to victims and an affront to justice.'

Mladic was indicted along with Karadzic in 1995, shortly after the Srebrenica killings, but evaded capture until 2011.

The ICTY indicted a total of 161 people from Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo. It has convicted 83, more than 60 of them ethnic Serbs.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. warns citizens against travelling to Saudi Arabia

The United States State Department has cautioned its citizens "to carefully consider" travelling to Saudi Arabia, citing persisting "terrorist" threats and a spillover of violence from Yemen across the border. The travel warning, issued on Tuesday, warned of the threat of ballistic missiles fired by Yemen into the kingdom.

'In the past year, rebels have fired several long-range missiles into Saudi Arabia capable of reaching the vicinities of Riyadh and Jeddah, and they have publicly stated their intent to continue doing so," the State Department said.

The most recent missile fired into Saudi Arabia landed north of the capital, Riyadh, on November 4 and caused debris to fall near the King Khalid International Airport.

The House of Saud regime has been leading a coalition at war in Yemen since March 2015, when the oil-rich kingdom intervened to reinstate the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. The State Department also banned the U.S. government employees and their families from travelling to any area within 50 miles of the Saudi-Yemeni border, including the cities of Jazan and Najran. "Yemeni forces also routinely fire artillery at Saudi border towns and launch cross-border attacks against Saudi military personnel,' it said. "As a result, the U.S. Mission's ability to provide consular assistance in this region is limited, and U.S. citizens should not travel to this area.3

Furthermore, the warning restricted the U.S. citizens from going to several volatile areas, such as Qatif in the eastern province and the Al Ahsa region, where Saudi regime forces are in regular confrontation with the residents there.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Bahrain sentences rights campaigner to 2 years in jail

A prominent human rights activist in Bahrain has been sentenced to two years in prison for complaining about the human rights situation in the country. On Wednesday, Bahrain's High Court of Appeal handed down the sentence to Nabeel Rajab for "spreading false news" about the rights situation in comments to foreign media outlets. Rajab was first detained on June 13, 2016 for tweets critical of Manama's role in the ongoing House of Saud regime-led war on Yemen. On December 22, 2016, Bahraini authorities accused Rajab of making comments that "harm the interests" of the Manama regime and other Persian Gulf Arab states through an article attributed to him and published by French daily Le Monde. His trial came a day after a number of human rights campaigners

protested Manama's policies during rallies in front of Bahraini embassies in London and Washington.

Bahrain, which is a close ally of the Saudi regime and a regional partner of Britain and the United States, has been facing peaceful demonstrations against its abuse of its Shia-majority population's rights since February 2011. Bahraini officials have come down hard on the protests, killing scores of people, stripping many dissenters of their Bahraini nationality, and imprisoning hundreds of others.

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

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. Navy plane crashes in **Philippine Sea**

A United States Navy transport plane carrying 11 people crashed in the Philippine Sea south of Japan on Wednesday as it flew to the aircraft carrier the Ronald Reagan, the U.S. Seventh Fleet said.

Eight people had been rescued, with the remaining three unac-counted for, it said, adding that all of the rescued personnel were transferred to the Ronald Reagan for medical evaluation and were in good condition. "Search and rescue efforts for three personnel continue with U.S. Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) ships and aircraft on scene," the U.S. Seventh Fleet said in a news release. "The incident will be investigated."

The aircraft was conducting a routine transport flight carrying passengers and cargo from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to the carrier, which was operating in the Philippine Sea as part of an exercise with Japanese forces, it said. Japanese Minister of Defense Itsunori Onodera told reporters the U.S. Navy had informed him that the crash in the Philippine Sea may have been a result of engine trouble. The propeller powered transport plane, a C-2 Greyhound, carries personnel, mail and other cargo from mainland bases to carriers operating at sea. C-2 aircraft have been in operation for more than five decades and are due to be replaced by the long-range tilt-rotor Osprey aircraft.

on 13 North Korean and Chinese entities, accusing them of helping the North Korean government bypass restrictions that have already been in place and sustaining Pyongyang through trade.

The U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announced the new sanctions on Tuesday, a day after the U.S. President Donald Trump added North Korea to his administration's blacklist of "state sponsors of terrorism."

Mnuchin said, "This designation will impose further sanctions and penalties on North Korea and related persons and supports our maximum pressure campaign to isolate the murderous regime."

Three Chinese companies, namely Dandong Kehua Economy & Trade Co., Dandong Xianghe Trading Co., and Dandong Hongda Trade Co., faced sanctions as part of the new measures. The U.S. Treasury accused them of having done over \$750 million worth of combined trade with North Korea

The U.S. also blacklisted Chinese investor Sun Sidong and his company Dandong Dongyuan Industrial Co. The Washington-based think tank Center for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS) had claimed in June that Sun's firm was part of an interconnected network of Chinese companies responsible for a vast amount of trade with North Korea.

The fresh measures by Washington reflect the Trump administration's insistence on hindering trade between China and North Korea, which it has regarded as key to pressing



Pyongyang to end its weapons programs.

The new sanctions, according to the report, also target several North Korean companies that send workers to nations such as Russia, Poland, Cambodia, and China. The U.S. authorities have said that they intend to cut off the money North Korea earns from the export of labor.

Targeting ordinary trade

In addition to targeting sources of North Korea's

first time Washington sought to directly attack North Korea's daily consumer trade, said Peter Harrell, a sanctions expert at the Center for a New American Security as cited in the report.

weapons technology, the latest sanctions marked the

On Tuesday, and following the re-labeling of Pyongyang as a "state sponsor of terrorism" by Trump, China reiterated the need for dialog to resolve the tensions.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said on Tuesday that the latest sanctions were part of an effort to further isolate Pyongyang.

She said she did not believe the targeting of more Chinese firms would weaken Beijing's cooperation in resolving the North Korean issue.

"I don't think it jeopardizes anything. I think the world has come together on this issue," she claimed. "We have a ood relationship with China. That's not going to change.

China is North Korea's main ally.

Beijing has put forth a "double freeze" approach to resolving the crisis, calling for the U.S. to freeze its annual war games with South Korea in exchange for North Korea halting its weapons programs.

Reacting to the Tuesday U.S. move, China's Foreign Ministry said that Beijing opposed unilateral sanctions.

Ministry spokesman Lu Kang made the remarks during his daily press briefing on Wednesday.

(Source: agencies)

Zimbabwe's new president to be sworn in Friday

Former Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa will be sworn in as president on Friday, according to Zimbabwe's state broadcaster.

The report by the government-controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) said Mnangagwa will arrive in the capital Harare later on Wednesday.

Mnangagwa, 75, had not been in the country since November 6 when he was sacked by Robert Mugabe, his former ally.

Mugabe resigned as president on Tues-

day evening after a week of intense pressure following a military takeover.

Much of that pressure stemmed from Mugabe's decision to remove Mnangagwa, who is seen as close to the Zimbabwean armed forces.

At the airport where Mnangagwa was due to arrive, large crowds were gathering to welcome the former vice president.

Shortly after being sacked, the former vice president fled the country claiming that he and his family had been threatened by Mugabe.

The former president's wife, Grace Mugabe, called Mnangagwa a "coup plotter" and a "coward" in a speech shortly after his sacking. That incident was also said to have ruffled feathers within Zimbabwe's ruling establishment.

Mnangagwa, like Mugabe, is a veteran of the struggle for independence from Britain. He is considered by the military to be an appropriate replacement for the former president, who at 93 was Africa's oldest leader. Grace Mugabe's ambitions for the presidency were fiercely opposed by the armed forces, who warned that they would not allow someone who had not fought in the independence war to take helm of the country.

Despite their relationship taking a sharp turn in recent months, Mnangagwa and Mugabe had once been strong allies, even sharing a cell during their imprisonment.

Mnangagwa had been a member of Mugabe's cabinet since the country's independence and vice president since 2014.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

(Source: Reuters)

Pope to meet head of Myanmar army and **Rohingya refugees: Vatican**

Pope Francis will meet the head of Myanmar's army on a visit to the country and Rohingya refugees while he is in Bangladesh, both late additions to his tour of the two countries next week.

Vatican spokesman Greg Burke, briefing reporters on the trip, said that he would meet the head of the army, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, on the morning of Nov. 30 in a church residence in Yangon. Myanmar Cardinal Charles Maung Bo had talks with the pope in Rome on Saturday and suggested that he add a meeting with the general to the schedule. Both the pope and the general agreed.

Human rights monitors have accused Myanmar's military of atrocities, including mass rape, against the stateless Rohingya during so-called clearance operations following insurgent attacks on 30 police posts and an army base.

Myanmar's government has denied most of the claims, and the army last week said its own investigation found no evidence of wrongdoing by troops. The pope will separately meet the country's de-facto civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi in the capital Naypyitaw, on Nov. 28 in an encounter that was already on the schedule.

He gave no details of how they would be chosen.

Both events were not on the original schedule of the trip of the Nov. 26-Dec. 2 trip. Some 600,000 Rohingya refugees, most of them Muslim and from Myanmar's northern Rakhine state, have fled to Bangladesh.



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Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir	

CURRENCIES

USD	41,016 rials
EUR	48,326 rials
GBP	54,940 rials
AED	11,174 rials

Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

\$62.95/b
\$57.86/b
\$ 60.33/b
\$1,286.15/oz
\$17.03/oz
\$939.65/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

177 Iranian, foreign companies to attend ibex 2017 in Tehran

ECONOMY d e s k Bakery Industry Exhibition (ibex 2017) will start operation on Thursday with participation of 139 Iranian and 38 foreign companies, Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday.



The four-day exhibition, which is the biggest bakery show in the Middle East, will host representatives from 11 countries including France, Turkey, Germany, Poland, South Korea, Italy, Austria, Sweden, England, China, and the United Arab Emirates at Tehran International Permanent Fairgrounds.

Oil prices jump on Canadian pipeline disruption to United States

SINGAPORE (Reuters) — Oil prices jumped by 1 to 2 percent on Wednesday as ongoing cuts of piped Canadian crude to the United States added to falling U.S. crude inventories, while expectations of a prolonged OPEC-led production cut also offered support.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$57.96 a barrel at 0753 GMT, up \$1.13, or 2 percent from their last settlement.



Iran's monthly crude steel output up 24% yr/yr: WSA

ECONOMY d e s k of crude steel during October 2017, with a 24.2 percent rise from 1.597 million tons in the same month last year, according to the World Steel Association (WSA).

The WSA also announced that the country's crude steel production stood at 17.901 million tons during the first ten months of 2017, showing 20.9 percent growth from 14.804 million tons in the same period of time in the provide store up the properted

time in the previous year, IRIB reported. Meanwhile, Iran produced over two million tons of sponge iron in October this year, indicating 46 percent increase from October last year, and 16.4 million tons of the product during the first ten months of

2017 with 22 percent growth from the same time span in 2016.

The country's crude steel output stood at 18.466 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year 1395 (ended on March 20), showing 11 percent rise from 16.656 million tons in 1394.

Iran exported 5.5 million tons of crude steel in the past year, with 27 percent increase from the figure of its preceding year.

Iranian Steel Manufacturers Association's Secretary Rasoul Khalifeh-Soltan believes that while the country's steel industry's growth has been 5.7 percent on average in the recent years, the figure can reach 10 percent this year, given the promising condition the sector enjoys at present.



ICCIMA explores further avenues of co-op with Austria

ECONOMY description of bilateral economic ties, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, referring to Austria's ex-president's visit to Iran after implementation of Iran's nuclear deal in January 2016, the Austrian minister, Harald Mahrer, evaluated Iran-Austria relationship in the past decade as warm and positive.

Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, who led a 40-member delegation to Austria, for his turn, called Iran a good partner for Austria and emphasized that both sides are willing to increase mutual trade ties.

"Austria has had a warm relationship with Iran from the distant past and at time when Iran's relations were limited with other countries due to Western-led sanctions, the European country did not cut its ties with

us," ICCIMA head said.

During Iran's post-sanction era, Austria was the first country who dispatched a large delegation, headed by its president to Tehran. Iran, then, send its 120-member delegation to Austria. The two countries could consequently sign some good cooperation MOUs to secure common future economic bonds, he added.

The Iranian official named technical knowhow, new energies, environment, water resources management, urban management and traffic, pharmaceutical production, industrial machineries, and knowledge-based companies as proper fields for both countries to cooperate on.

However, Shafeie lamented about the existing banking and insurance barriers on the way of boosting economic bonds and noted that Austria has taken good steps to remove such difficulties. As he informed, in near future, an Iranian delegation will make a trip to Austria to discuss removal of banking barriers.

Iran luring its Asian oil buyers by discounts

E N E R G Y d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran is offering discounts to the Asian customers of its crude oil in a bid to retain them.

The country hopes that price reductions will boost the appeal of its crude compared with other Middle Eastern supply even as the potential threat of further U.S. sanctions on the country looms, Reuters reported on Wednesday.

The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has in the last few weeks offered spot cargoes, ranging from light to heavy grades, to its term buyers in Asia, after setting December prices at the lowest in years against comparable Saudi grades, three sources with knowledge of the matter said.

The sources declined to be identified as they were not authorized to speak with media, while NIOC was not immediately available for comment.

NIOC first cut the official selling price (OSP) of Iran puts the Ir



Heavy crude against Saudi's Arab Medium grade for October, before lowering it again for December. That puts the Iran Heavy price for December at the widest discount against Arab Medium in over a decade, data on Thomson Reuters Eikon showed.

Meanwhile, price cuts for Iranian Light placed the oil at its lowest premium in two years against Saudi Arabia's Arab Light.

The discounts were made to retain existing buyers of Iranian oil, which already have government-backed arrangements in place from when the original western sanctions hit Iran's oil exports in 2012-2014, the sources said.

Japanese and Indian buyers responded to the price cuts for October by increasing imports and are expected to keep volumes elevated due to competitive prices, trade sources said.

Iran's offers for December come weeks before the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and non-OPEC producers meet on Nov. 30 to decide whether to extend a deal to cut production and support prices.

Economic growth surges in Philippines despite political risk

While human rights campaigners are keeping a grim body count of Filipinos killed during Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs, economic managers in the populist president's government are trying to call the world's attention to another number: surging GDP growth.

The Philippine economy expanded at an annualized rate of 6.9 percent in the third quarter of this year. The figure was ahead of economists' consensus forecasts and made it one of Asia's best-performing economies for the period, just behind Vietnam but slightly ahead of China.

Government officials say the expanding economy reflects early results from the

nicknamed "Dutertenomics", which includes a massive \$180bn infrastructure program called "Build Build Build" aimed at pushing spending on building projects to 5 percent of gross domestic product.

"It was a pleasant surprise," Ernesto Pernia, secretary of socioeconomic planning, says of the third-quarter figure. "We had strong spending on infrastructure as well as public consumption spending: the government raised the salaries of the armed forces and national police force."

The Duterte government, he says, is approving infrastructure projects faster than its predecessors, including a subway system for traffic-clogged Manila, new rail the international airport at Clark, the former US military base due to become the country's main gateway to the world.

Exports, he says, rose faster than imports during the quarter, thanks to a weaker peso. And manufacturing and other industries grew faster than services — the call centers and other "offshoring" that have been a mainstay of the Philippine economy in recent years.

The Philippines is now on track to meet the government's full-year growth target of 6.5-7.5 percent. An expanding economy will be welcomed by Philippine businesses and foreign investors accustomed to vertiginous swings in the country's politics that can hit investor sentiment and cause companies to Southeast Asia's most populous countries.

"We like the Philippine macroeconomic story over the long term," says Medha Samant, investment director on the Philippines for Fidelity. "It's driven by a very strong demographic, household debt is still manageable and we think there's a boost that's likely to come from infrastructure spending."

However, some businesses are sitting on the sidelines and watching the Duterte administration's actions, reflected in flagging foreign direct investment inflows. Cumulative net FDI inflows fell 5 percent to \$5.1bn in the first eight months of this year, from \$5.4bn the previous year.

NOVEMBER 23, 2017

Brent crude futures, the international benchmark for oil prices, were at \$63.30 per barrel, up 73 cents, or 1.2 percent.

Traders said the firm price lift was due to drop in crude supplies from Canada to the United States.

TransCanada Corp said it will cut deliveries by at least 85 percent on its 590,000-barrel-per-day (bpd) Keystone crude pipeline through the end of November. The pipeline, which links Alberta's oil sands to U.S. refineries, was shut last week after a 5,000-barrel spill in South Dakota.

Traders said there was also some price support from a weekly report on Tuesday by the American Petroleum Institute which said U.S. crude inventories fell by 6.4 million barrels in the week to Nov. 17.

The latest official U.S. production and inventory data is due on Wednesday.

Outside North America, markets have been supported by an effort led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to restrain output to end a global supply overhang.

The deal to curb production is due to expire in March, but OPEC will meet on Nov. 30 in Vienna to discuss the outlook for the policy.

"There is growing consensus that OPEC will extend their production cut deal at the end of the month. This confidence along with the current geopolitical environment has kept ICE Brent trading firmly above \$60 per barrel," Dutch bank ING said on Wednesday.

"However, an outcome at the OPEC meeting which falls short of market expectations, will likely lead to a selloff, and given the large speculative long in Brent, this could be fairly severe," it added.

J.P. Morgan said in its 2018 commodities outlook, released late on Tuesday, that "oil markets in 2018 will be balanced on the back of extended ... production cuts," but added that without extended cuts markets would be in surplus.

"We expect Brent to trade at the top of the \$40 to \$60 per barrel range, with Brent averaging \$58 per barrel in 2018," the U.S. bank said. "WTI is expected to average \$54.6 per barrel.

president's 10-point economic plan, and road projects, and a refurbishment of put on hold their business plans for one of

(Source: The Financial Times)

China is pumping a lot of cash into its economy to calm investors

China has been pumping a lot of cash into its system to lift market sentiment, as the world's second-largest economy walks a thin line between curbing debt and keeping everything running smoothly.

rything running smoothly. Last week, the People's Bank of China injected cash totaling 810 billion Chinese yuan (\$122.4 billion) in five straight days of daily liquidity management operations. Those actions, which represented the largest weekly net increase since January, were in part a Beijing response to its 10-year sovereign bond yields spiking to multiyear highs, experts said.

"Surging Chinese government bond yields hit the nerve of policymakers, so in order to further prevent a greater surge, they injected liquidity into the system to improve market sentiment," said Ken Cheung, a foreign exchange strategist at Mizuho Bank who focuses on Chinese currencies and monetary policies.

Nomura analysts said last week in a note that the bond rout was due to fears of regulatory tightening from Beijing. Bond yields, which move inversely to prices, briefly hit 4 percent in China for the first time in three years.

A rise in the benchmark government bond yield threatens to drive up overall borrowing costs — and potentially worsen the country's debt situation.

On Monday and Tuesday of this week, the PBOC injected a net 30 billion yuan (\$4.5 billion), but it didn't expand that money supply on Wednesday. Analysts said that pause may have been due to market sentiment seemingly stabilizing, but it may be short-lived.

As Chinese 10-year yields are still near the psychologically important 4 percent level, Cheung told CNBC he expects more injec-



A citizen shows new 100 yuan notes she withdrew at a counter of China Construction Bank in the Hangzhou province of China.

tions ahead if necessary, as Beijing needs to "maintain liquidity to please the market."

The PBOC's daily cash injections is done through the issuance of reverse repurchase agreements, or reverse repos. That's a process by which the central bank buys securities from commercial banks with an agreement to sell them back in the future at a higher price.

Conducted through open-market operations — daily, in the case of China — repos are a common money market instrument used for short-term funding between banks around the world.

The PBOC relies on those operations to manage liquidity, but Mizuho's Cheung said the central bank will keep expanding its toolbox in the future.

Despite the recent moves, the PBOC will keep a cautious stance, analysts note, as authorities continue to balance growth and debt deleveraging. In fact, the PBOC highlighted in its thirdquarter monetary policy report the need for financial stability and reiterated prudent management of the economy.

"We read this as a sign that financial deleveraging will be a multi-year theme and that deepening financial reforms are underway," Nomura analysts said in last week's note, adding that the market is pricing in maintenance of a prudent monetary policy stance.

Indeed, the PBOC drained a net 465 billion yuan from the money markets through open-market operations from the beginning of the year until November 10, Reuters calculations show.

Beijing officials have been outspoken recently about financial risks in the country, which is beset by high levels of debt, and investors are worried about a domino credit event unfolding. That being the case, it makes sense for the central bank to want to avoid overheating the economy with too much cash. How Chinese liquidity can go very

wrong

Even though many investors believe the financial risks in China are controlled due to its strong top-down control, the world's second-largest economy is still subject to external risks that can cause a crisis.

One factor that's making China more susceptible is the fact that its money supply has been growing at a very rapid pace while its foreign exchange reserves stay basically static.

"With the foreign exchange reserve being relatively fixed, foreign exchange reserve as a share of money supply has fallen from 40 percent just five years ago to 10 percent today," Victor Shih, a professor and China expert at UC San Diego, told CNBC.

The foreign currency reserve is a primary tool for managing currency values — an important issue for China — and the increasing base of liquidity should continue to dilute its power, Shih added.

Over time, as the ratio declines, it will get harder for the FX regulator to counteract capital flight: Beijing keeps money in its system (and the yuan strong) by buying up its currency in international markets with its horde of foreign cash. So if there's more RMB to buy, then the reserves won't go as far. Shih suggested such a situation could eventually "wipe out" the reserves entirely.

That would leave Asia's largest economy exposed to outside shocks.

"That is a great weakness of China, it's something external, especially if we have things like multiple rate hikes in the Federal Reserve," Shih said. (Source: cnbc) **NOVEMBER 23, 2017**

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NOVEMBER 23, 2017

Macron is now de facto head of the EU – and that's bad news for Brexit

TEHRANTIMES

By Andreas Whittam Smith

Now that the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has run into political difficulties at home, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, may become, unofficially, the leader of the European Union.

French presidents played that role from the foundation of the EU in 1957 until 1990 when the two Germanys, East and West, were reunited. Then, by reason of their combined economic strength, far in excess of France's, the German Chancellor of the day became the go-to politician within the European Union. But if Merkel stumbles, Macron will assume that role.

What sort of person is Macron? He was born and brought up in Amiens, whose once important textile industry has all but disappeared and been replaced by car-parts factories. Macron was educated at a local Jesuit school until he was 16 years old. Then he went to the prestigious Henri IV in Paris.



But by then he had begun a friendship with Brigitte Auzière, a mother-of-three, who was a teacher in Amiens (she taught Emmanuel's younger brother and sister). According to a very good biography of Macron (The French Exception by Adam Plowright), at the age of 17, at school in Paris, Emmanuel told Brigitte that "whatever happens to you, I'll marry you". She later said: "We spoke all the time ... and little by little, he overcame my resistance." They duly married in 2007.

After school, Macron entered the elite École nationale d'administration (ENA), whose graduates, known as Enarques, form a network of influence spread across government, finance and business.

After that, he went to work at the French Rothschild bank. At the same time he acted as an economic adviser to François Hollande. When Hollande won the presidential election in 2012 and entered the Élysée, he became Hollande's deputy chief of staff – in other words, the President's Sherpa. In August 2014, Macron was appointed Hollande's economy minister. He was 36 years old.

In October 2015, in the utmost secrecy, Macron began planning the launch of a new party, to be called En Marche!. It would be designed to harness the anti-establishment, antielite movement that had fuelled Trump's election and Brexit and Nuits Debout, a French social movement.

It published a charter of values. Work should be something that liberates people. Liberty is at the same level of priority as equality. Be progressive rather than conservative, neither right not left. Kindness is a fundamental value. Macron commented: "We were all people who knew the political world and we all found that kindness and benevolence were completely absent. It had struck us all individually."

The movement would be self-organizing. According to Plowright's book, members would sign up and then each of them was then contacted by a local coordinator and invited to attend a meeting. Some of these new members would then be selected to start new committees in their area, meaning a network of even smaller groups gradually spread across the country. Each local committee would be encouraged to organize autonomously.

The next step

The next step was to send the first members doorto-door across the country with a simple questionnaire,

NATO blunder ignites Turkish calls to leave alliance

By Semih Idiz

A major blunder in NATO has brought bitter political rivals in Turkey into a rare demonstration of unity. Parties across the political spectrum are announcing their distrust of the international alliance.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke of the "major scandal," as it is being referred to in Turkey, during an address to officials from his Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Ankara Nov. 17.

Erdogan said he had been informed by Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar and EU Affairs Minister Omer Celik that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, and Erdogan had been depicted as NATO's enemies during a recent NATO military exercise in Norway.

He was referring to a military exercise held Nov. 8-17 in Stavanger, Norway, that, according to NATO, was "a Command Post/ Computer Assisted Exercise without troops on the ground."

Once Erdogan heard of the insult, he ordered the withdrawal of the 40 Turkish officers who were to participate in the military exercise. Speaking to the AKP, he said, "You cannot have such an alliance or such an ally." The value of Turkey's NATO membership

is being questioned now, with some officials calling for Ankara to ditch the alliance. There are experts, however, who say quitting NATO would leave Turkey weaker in terms of its security interests.

According to Turkish media reports, the blunder was double-pronged. First, Ataturk was depicted as an enemy of NATO in a poster. Then, a fake social media account was opened in Erdogan's name during the exercise containing anti-NATO messages.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg issued an immediate apology for the offense, saying both incidents "were the result of an individual's actions and do not reflect the views of NATO."

Turkey's NATO membership

The value of Turkey's NATO membership is being questioned now, with some officials calling for Ankara to ditch the alliance. He said, "Turkey is a valued NATO Ally,

which makes important contributions to allied security."

Turkey is the only predominantly Muslim member of NATO, with the second largest army in the alliance, and is participating in NATO operations against the Islamic State and in Afghanistan.

Stoltenberg also apologized to Erdogan personally over the phone.

Norway's Defense Minister Frank Bakke-Jensen said the two incidents involved an external contractor hired for the exercise, who was subsequently dismissed. He added that an investigation had also been opened.

Turkish media said the person involved was a Norwegian of Turkish origin, who was promptly blamed for being a supporter of Fethullah Gulen, the Islamic preacher who is accused of masterminding the July 2016 coup against Erdogan.

Still fuming, Erdogan told supporters in the Black Sea city of Rize Nov. 18 that the offense to Turkey in Stavanger was the "outward expression of a skewed attitude toward Turkey that we have been observing



In line with Ankara's growing quarrel with the West, there are also Western voices calling for Turkey to be "kicked out of NATO."

for some time."

Indicating that the reliability of NATO was in question, Erdogan added that the insult "could not be dismissed with a dry apology." Government spokesman Bekir Bozdag

referred to the matter as "one of the greatest scandals in NATO's history" and said they wanted the investigation to include the commanding officers at the exercise.

Erdogan political adviser Yalcin Topcu suggested that Turkey should quit NATO. He claimed the alliance had supported every military coup in Turkey and said it was time to question Turkey's NATO membership.

"This organization, which shows all forms of enmity toward its member, is not indispensable for us," Topcu said.

His sentiment was shared by Devlet Bahceli, the leader of the far-right Nationalist Action Party. Bahceli said Turkey was around long before NATO, adding, "It will not be the end of the world if we are not in this structure."

In a rare example of support for the government, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of the main opposition Republican People's Party, said that while everyone could criticize Turkey, no one had the right to insult its leaders and its history. "We strongly condemn this," Kilicdaroglu said. He added that the matter could not be dismissed with a simple apology.

To the surprise of many, the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party — which many Turks see as an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party — also condemned NATO, referring to its blunder as "unacceptable."

Retired Ambassador Suha Umar, who has served as Turkey's deputy head of mission at NATO, said this latest development showed where Turkey's prestige within the alliance stands today. "No one would have thought for one second to do such a thing in the past," Umar told Al-Monitor. "The question to be asked here is how Turkey could have been allowed to end up in this position."

Responding to the argument that NATO has always undermined Turkey, Umar said, "Why did it remain in NATO for so long then if that is the case?" He added that even if this claim was true, which he believes it is not, then Turkey is in a better position to prevent moves against it as a NATO member.

Turkey's already strained ties with key NATO members were further shaken after Heidi Grant, the U.S. deputy undersecretary of the Air Force for international affairs, told Defense News that the United States might consider restrictions to Turkey's purchase of F-35 fighter jets if Ankara finalized its deal with Moscow for S-400 air defense systems.

Ankara says existing restrictions on its military purchases from various NATO members — who cite the state of democracy in Turkey — is forcing it to look elsewhere for its military hardware requirements.

NATO's attempts

Grant's remark, and the incidents in Norway, are seen by pro-government Turkish commentators as the latest examples of NATO's attempts to undermine Erdogan and his achievements.

Conversely, NATO has been traditionally targeted as an enemy of Turkey by the Turkish left and right wings, as well as by Turkish Islamists. The left wing has always argued that NATO is the instrument of capitalist and imperialist powers, a claim that is shared by the nationalist right wing.

Erdogan's Islamist supporters, for their part, see NATO as a U.S.-led, anti-Islamic and pro-Israeli alliance that kills Muslims in Afghanistan and the Middle East, and would be happy to see Turkey leave the alliance.

In line with Ankara's growing quarrel with the West, there are also Western voices calling for Turkey to be "kicked out of NATO." Shared strategic security interests have nevertheless forced the sides to continue this relationship, despite tensions between Turkey and key NATO members.

Retired Brig. Gen. Naim Baburoglu said that talk about the need for Turkey to ditch NATO is unrealistic and mainly aimed at domestic consumption.

"If Turkey left, would it have the capacity to establish a national defense system like Israel without relying on others?" Baburoglu told Al-Monitor. "Global powers can change sides, but medium-sized powers cannot escape the consequences of doing so."

Veering toward Russia would not ensure Turkey's security needs given that Moscow and Ankara's regional interests do not overlap, Baburoglu said.

Baburoglu also indicated that quitting NATO would also deprive Turkey of its power of veto as a full member and leave it unable to block undesired developments, such as the inclusion of Cyprus in the alliance.

Umar believes that both sides have done what was necessary in this case and should let the case rest.

"Turkey objected as it had to, and NATO apologized at the highest level," Umar said "NATO also said it has taken the necessary steps, and also initiated an investigation. Continuing to ask for more heads to roll is only aimed at a domestic audience."

Turkey will obviously not quit NATO, but this latest affair has highlighted just how much distrust has developed between the sides. (Source: al Monitor)

available via a smartphone app. It would ask people what they felt worked in France and what didn't, what they were worried about, what gave them hope. Volunteers would fill in data about the location, age and profession of the respondents. The operation would be called La Grande Marche. Volunteers were sent into specifically targeted streets, villages or housing estates to survey a sample of people broadly representative of France as a whole, from far-right voters to communists.

The target was to pull in thousands of members – and it succeeded. En Marche! developed tremendous momentum and in May 2017 Macron became President, elected by a large majority and En Marche! candidates gained a majority of seats in the National Assembly.

What, then, do we know of Macron's attitude to the European Union? I don't think he has said that he wants to

see a United States of Europe, but his recommendations would fit into that blueprint.

He wants a common European defense policy with close coordination between Britain, France and Germany. He believes that there should be a common border protection force to check If Macron gets to put into place what he really wants, Britain will be begging for Angela Merkel back.

illegal immigration, with a system for dividing up refugees between member states once they arrived.

He would like to see further harmonization of social protection and business regulations. And most shocking of all to British thinking, Macron wants the eurozone itself (of which Britain is not a member) to have its own budget and borrowing capacity and to be able to transfer funds from rich members to weaker states.

In short, any British rejoicing that Merkel's weakness and the consequent ascendancy of Macron might prove favorable to Britain is misplaced. My guess is that Macron would like to see us out, make a clean break and leave the EU as quickly as possible. We're just a nuisance. So no Entente Cordiale, no "Vive la France". Come back, Angela.

(Source: Independent)

The end of an era in Zimbabwe

Robert Mugabe's removal from power on Tuesday was greeted as his ascension to it 37 years earlier had been: with jubilation. In Harare there was dancing and singing, honks and cheers, and tears of joy. Many of those celebrating have known no other ruler. Once he was a liberation hero to his people. When he lost their support he hung on by every means at his disposal. Now his brutal reign is over. But the hope is shaded this time by deep concern about what lies ahead.

Forcing his resignation was hardly simple: it took much maneuvering, a military intervention and the opening of impeachment proceedings before he had to bow to the inevitable. What comes next is murkier still, though Emmerson Mnangagwa, his recently fired vice-president, is expected to take over. There is not much exultation on that score, except among "the Crocodile's" relieved allies. They had attempted to brand a transition effected primarily by the military and factional interests in Zanu-PF, intent on preserving their own power and resources, as "a new era" – to understandable scorn. Mnangagwa understands that he is not a popular figure in the country, even if the military seem to like him. He does not share Mugabe's liberation aura, yet is branded by their terrible record in power. His role in removing Mugabe may lend him a degree of credibility, but his best hopes will rest on reviving the economy - and, perhaps, on deferring next summer's elections for as much as three years.

The opposition is weak and divided, and Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, in poor health. They were so badly damaged by power-sharing before that they are immensely suspicious of entering a transitional administration. But they may believe a deferral would help them, too; and the president's resignation has undercut their leverage.

Some in civil society fear they will negotiate harder for political positions than for commitments to the structural measures so desperately needed for free and fair elections, including a sorely needed overhaul of the register of voters, full independence for the electoral commission and reform of the repressive cyber-security regime. Those celebrating on Tuesday are hopeful, not naive. Some thanked the gener-



Zimbabweans cheered and sang as they learned that their president's 37-year rule was over. But they understand the dangers ahead.

als. But many of those toasting Mugabe's departure are not supporting a coup, but its result.

They know the part that Mnangagwa and the military played in his rule. They understand the dangers ahead. But they also know that a man they loathed has gone; that Zanu-PF has fractured; and that Zimbabwe has a great deal on its side: natural resources; plenty of young, well-educated, ambitious citizens (even if many have left the country in recent years); and historically strong infrastructure, even if political institutions desperately need to be rebuilt. To make the most of those assets, the people will need support. Theresa May described Britain as Zimbabwe's "oldest friend", an interesting gloss on its colonial history. Mugabe was initially backed by UK cash. That and much more gives Britain a special responsibility to support Zimbabweans; but also makes it all the more essential that it listens and responds to their wishes, without attempting to impose an agenda. When tens of thousands took to the streets at the weekend, they insisted on their stake and voice in these proceedings. Will they get it?

(Source: The Guardian)

Turkish top diplomat calls for effort to settle disputes in OIC geography

Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmet Yildiz on Tuesday called for efforts by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to carry out mediation efforts to settle disputes in "OIC geography".

Yildiz was speaking at the first OIC member states conference on mediation in Istanbul. "I hope the conference will contribute to the efforts to carry the mediation agenda forward in the OIC geography and to promote sustainable peace in the Islamic world," Yildiz told the participants.

Following is the text of his speech:

It is a distinct pleasure for me to welcome you all to the First OIC Member States Conference on Mediation. It is an honor for me to address such a representative and esteemed audience today. I also bring the greetings and best wishes of Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu.

I attach a lot of importance to this conference. I know about the OIC as I served as Consul General in Jeddah and also as a Turkish diplomat in Damascus and Mosul, where we witness the most devastating conflicts in the world. Hopefully, we will manage to find solutions to conflicts in our region.

Turkey assumed the Summit Chairmanship of the OIC in April 2016. Since then, Turkey's Chairmanship has been guided by one understanding: Our common problems can only be overcome through our commonly developed solutions.

It was with this understanding that we have decided to organize this conference.

I hope the conference will contribute to the efforts to carry the mediation agenda forward in the OIC geography and to promote sustainable peace in the Islamic world. Distinguished guests,

There is human suffering in different

forms all around the world. Unfortunately, Islamic World is no ex-

ception to this. Quite to the contrary. As indicated in the SESRIC Report of Feb-

ruary 2017, titled "Humanitarian Crises in OIC Countries": "In 2015, 20, of 50, conflicts recorded

"In 2015, 30 of 50 conflicts recorded worldwide occurred in OIC countries...As a direct outcome, today OIC countries account for 61.5% of all displaced population in the world....Moreover, 71% of people who globally require humanitarian assistance reside in OIC countries."

This is not inevitable. It is entirely manmade.

Throughout history there were various internal and external sources of instability, problems and difficulties.

Yet, one thing is clear: the challenges have never been as complex, multifaceted and contagious as they are today.

Against this backdrop, we have no other option but to act together in a true spirit of Islamic solidarity and cooperation.

Islam is a religion of peace. Our Prophet (S.A.V.) is a messenger of peace.

It is incumbent upon the OIC to spread the message of peace more effectively.

As H.E. President Erdoğan said in the 13th Islamic Summit in Istanbul, in order to achieve this:

"We need to be unitive, not divisive. We need to enhance alliances, not conflicts; enhance friendships, not animosities. Because those who suffer from conflicts, competitions and animosities is no one else but Moslems, Moslem countries."

"We need to make better use of the OIC for the sake of sustainable peace and stability in our own geography."

Mediation is the right tool to do this. It is a cost-effective instrument with extensive benefits.

Mediation is even enshrined in our Holy Book, al Qur'an al Karim. The Surah Al Hujurat reads as "If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them....The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers."

The Surah also calls on us to make mediation with justice.

In line with the call of the Holy al Qur'an al Karim and cognizant of the benefits of mediation, OIC Charter already has a reference to mediation as a way of peaceful settlement of disputes.

Accordingly, OIC has been taking significant steps for more effective and wider use of mediation in our geography, Islamic world.

Turkey strongly supports the work of the OIC to this end.

We need to make better use of the OIC for the sake of sustainable peace and stability in our own geography.

Distinguished Participants,

In order to sort out our own problems among ourselves, two issues have to be addressed, also in the Middle East. One is political will and the other is ca-

pacity. Political will is an issue that can be ad-

dressed at the Summit levels. The Honourable President of Turkey considers this to be a key emphasis during our Chairmanship. One solution we propose is to build po-

litical will by building capacity.

Turkey's efforts at global and regional levels is a case in point. We help raise awareness, help build capacity, help develop normative and methodological thinking and basis, and increasingly we will help practical application of mediation.

Let me explain.

Mediation is a particular methodology. It is listed in the Article 33 of the UN Charter as one of the methods of peaceful settlement Summit Chair, we strongly support strengthening these efforts.

We also support the development of an OIC capacity to rapidly provide analysis and mediation support to willing member states. If member states want it, the OIC should be able and ready to provide it.

Of course, this organization has several success stories. We can build on those to promote peace, security and prosperity.

Promoting more effective and wider use of mediation has been one of the principal objectives of Turkey's enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy, not just within this organization, but in international arena. Turkey has been striving hard for strength-

ening the role of mediation in the peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts - at the UN, the OSCE and other international fora. With this understanding, we launched

the "Mediation for Peace Initiative" at the UN and carried it on to the OSCE as well.

Turkey co-chairs two distinct Groups of Friends of Mediation in these two organizations.

The activities of these groups have been instrumental in raising the profile of mediation globally.

Since its inception, the Group at the UN has laid the groundwork and raised capacity for future initiatives on mediation. I had the privilege to co-chair some of the meetings of this Group. They were very useful and exemplary.

The Group promoted four General Assembly Resolutions so far. These resolutions establish a strong normative base and guide the international community for further mediation work.

The Group also contributed to the 2012 UN Guidance on Effective Mediation, which has been an essential reference document for people working in the field of mediation.

The Group today proudly has 56 members, including the OIC.

Yet, only 11 OIC member states (including Turkey) are members of this Group. I call on

These flagship events present a significant venue for intellectual exchange among leading practitioners and scholars in the field of mediation.

Taking stock of the experiences of the international community, they also create new opportunities for further progress in the field of mediation.

In June this year, we hosted the Fourth Istanbul Conference on Mediation.

The main finding of the conference was the need for a broader perspective and comprehensive approach in the use of mediation today.

This comprehensive approach calls for "mediation for sustaining peace", as opposed to a more limited understanding of "mediation for conflict-resolution".

Accordingly, mediation should be utilized at all stages of conflict continuum - not only at the conflict stage, but also in the pre-conflict and post-conflict phases as well.

Prevention of conflicts deserves our particular attention. We need more awareness-rising and capacity-building in mediation to improve our ability to act on potential conflicts.

We also need to sustain peace. This requires addressing the structural causes of conflicts and further investment in economic, political and social resilience and infrastructures.

One important outcome of the Fourth Istanbul Conference was the call for broader use of mediation, especially in unconventional type of conflicts and tensions driven by political, social and religious animosities, such as xenophobia and racism.

The OIC has been one of the leading organizations drawing attention to such conflicts and working hard to prevent and resolve them.

Among these efforts are the establishment of an OIC Contact Group on European Muslims at the Istanbul Summit upon the proposal of H.E. President Erdoğan.

As part of our Chairmanship, we co-hosted in Istanbul, in cooperation with IRCICA and the OIC General Secretariat, a symposium to invigorate Islamophobia Observatory on 4-5 April 2017.

We need to inscribe mediation into such work.

Firmly centered on mutual understanding and greater communication, mediation is a key instrument for our efforts.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

Conflicts and disputes do not end by themselves. Peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts require political will, but also a capacity and a method.

We, the diplomats, are the ones to help build this capacity in order to turn the will of our leaders into successes.

As Turkey and as the Chair of the OIC Summit, we call upon the OIC and all its Member States to play a more visible and active role in mediation efforts and help build awareness and capacity.

I hope that today's reflections will be beneficial for the whole Islamic World, and would contribute to peace and prosperity in our geography.

Personally, I will be here to get more insights on the issue and to turn these issues into concrete results.

In Islamic world, unfortunately, some simple disputes that can be averted or con-

End of ISIL's life in Iraq



By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Iraqi forces ended the occupation of Takfiris by conquering the city of Rawah, the last ISIL center in the west of Iraq. Thus the ISIL military case was closed down. In this article, first we look at the incidents of ISIL's 3 years of occupation of vast areas of Iraq. In 2014, large areas of Iraq were occupied by ISIL. This year, ISIL terrorists occupied Mosul and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the commander of ISIL, called himself the caliph of ISIL.

At that time, and in a situation where Americans were standing aside and didn't do anything, Ayatollah Sistani issued his historic fatwa. Following his Fatwa, al-Hashad al-Shaabi, or the popular mobilization forces, were established on June 15, 2014. These forces have played a significant role in defeating ISIL.

In August of 1993, the dam of Mosul, the largest dam in Iraq, fell to the hands of ISIL forces.. This dam, which is not stable due to structural weakness, constantly needs concrete injection for strength. With ISIL dominating the dam, fears of breaking it raised deeply among people. This could lead to a deadly flood. At the same time, ISIL attacked Sinjar, the city of Yazidis. Subsequently, reports of mass executions and rape to women were released. A group of refugees took shelter on a hill in the north of the city. ISIL terrorists started to mass murder civilians once again.

In December 2014, ISIL destroyed the ancient city of Nimrud. The historic city of Nimrud, known as the symbol of Assyrian civilization, was built on the margin of the Tigris River, about 30 km south-east of Mosul. Until the end of 2014 and even after that, Iraq was the scene of successive violence and expansion of ISIL's dominance. The political crisis in Iraq, and the dismemberment of the army, made it difficult to confront ISIL. It was impossible to fight the Takfiri forces in many areas.

March of 2015 was the time for the advancement of Iraqi forces towards Tikrit. On the eleventh of March this year, the Iraqi prime minister announced that ISIL has been driven from Saddam's birthplace. In this battle, Popular Mobilization forces played a significant role. The joy of freeing Tikrit still fresh when Ramadi in western Iraq was captured by ISIL. This city is the capital of Al Anbar province in western Iraq. In June of the same year, operations began to free the province of Anbar Hashad al-shaabi forces again played an important role in these operations. In January of 2016, Iraqi forces took control of Ramadi.

In July of the same year, the Iraqi Army drove away ISIL from Fallujah, which is not far from Baghdad. The clashes in the streets of the city continued for more than a week. The most important operation was the recapture of Mosul on October 2016.

In November, the Iraqi army entered the east of Mosul. The speed of military advance was beyond expectation. In December, Hashad al-Shaabi forces, the Iraqi mobilization forces, announced that they had cut off the way of ISIL's entry and exit to western Mosul, and that this group was actually surrounded by Iraqi forces. On March 2017, six months after the start of Mosul Operation, the Iraqi army announced that it has penetrated the old city of Mosul. The government announced the slowness of the operation was due to the civilian presence.

In June of this year, the Iraqi army began a new operation to capture the west of Mosul. The United Nations has announced that ISIL has held about 100,000 people as human shields. Shortly after that Iraqi security forces announced that ISIL blew up the historical mosque of t al-Nouri. This mosque was the place where Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi declared his caliphate

Excellencies,

OIC is the largest international organization after the UN in geographical outreach and population. It is and should be the voice of more than 1.6 billion people from 57 countries, in 4 continents.

Thanks to this representative nature, OIC has a huge potential and a genuine comparative advantage in the global search for peace and stability.

For this potential to come true, we need more sound initiatives in the context of global peacemaking agenda. of disputes.

The UN and a number of international organizations have established Mediation Support Units to develop in-house capacity to assist in mediation efforts. These units assist the chief mediators in developing a game plan and implementing these plans.

The OIC has also taken steps to institutionalize and enhance its mediation efforts. As

other OIC members, as well, to join the UN Group of Friends of Mediation.

This is the first step the OIC members can make in promoting mediation around the world.

Secondly, as a reflection of the importance attached to mediation, Turkey also hosts the annual events of the Istanbul Conferences on Mediation. tained at initial stages turn into the most violent conflicts. The suffering is extensive in Syria and Iraq.

My experiences in these countries still tell me that these conflicts could be averted. May be, we should have established this capacity before, but it is never too late.

I really value the opinion of all experts. Hopefully, at the closing session, we can draw some realistic conclusions regarding the role of the OIC in mediation.

I wish every success to the Conference. Thank you.

Illusion and disillusion with Trump

"Islam is a religion of peace. Our Prophet

is a messenger of peace."

 $1 \rightarrow$ People in his administration has threatened to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. His administration is attempting to force the long suffering Palestinians to reengage in "talks' with the Zionists towards some kind of "peace" deal, but we all know how that goes and has gone for decades. The U.S. has not been a fair arbiter, and Trump hasn't the courage, given political considerations at home, to force the Israelis to make a fair deal, and meanwhile the so-called "two state" solution is virtually impossible now. It's a mess like few others. Trump's support and alleged current "friendship" with Saudi prince Muhammad ibn Salman does not look promising, too, and I could go on about such postures which do not, by the way, point to benign actions or changes that promote peace in the Mideast and beyond. But there remains the matter of hope. Hope that somehow Trump wises up. But there is a much larger matter to consider, in my view, and that is the question of what the United States seems to have become in the last three or four decades.

But before trying to identify what the U.S. is now, let me say directly that even if the mainstream media in the U.S., and that includes the major newspapers and network broadcasters, has largely become a mouthpiece for the state, we here still enjoy press freedoms and freedoms of expression that have not yet been entirely curtailed, and as a journalist off and on for many years, I am not a "mainstream" voice in spirit even while, occasionally, I

have seen some work published in establishment journals. It can be difficult to tell the truth, in any case, as perhaps it is in some other countries. I rely on the shared views of intellectuals and other writers like myself who have at least attempted to get a grip on the American scene, such as it has become. One such intellectual, for example, is the now retired Princeton University political science professor Dr. Sheldon Wolin. In general, Wolin believes that the U.S. has become a state of what he terms "inverted totalitarianism". This is a state which does not rely on the existence of a political "strongman", but rather a state that on the surface maintains the institutions and norms of a "democracy" but really is no longer a true democracy where ALL the citizens have an equal voice in the formulation and conduct of policy. Democracy has become an illusion.

We have now the appearance-- the illusion -- only of two major political parties alleging to have different views and aspirations, but really both are beholding to the same special, narrow interests, and this is largely why we get the same old policies year after year, whether internal or foreign, no matter who wins an election. (This includes the same old, stale attitudes towards Iran.)

What, then, are these powerful "interests"? They are, by and large, major U.S. corporations and the oligarchs who run big business and the Wall Street banks, powerful lobbies like AIPAC, and even the U.S. mainstream media. Laws have been enacted to make these various interest groups the supreme arbiters of policy, even environmental policy. For this, in my opinion, the U.S. is struggling with outright decline and weaker influence worldwide. Struggling in such a way that makes attempted maintenance of influence and power and hegemony dangerous, as we see in the myriad U.S. military interventions overseas, perhaps starting with the Vietnam War. It's a game that cannot be played indefinitely, if for no other reason but that the U.S. national debt is beyond redemption, and money printing is no path to prosperity, or has never proven to be such historically.

Thus, many Americans wait in a state of suspense and suspicion. What, we wonder, is coming next, and yet there remain too many citizens, the relatively uneducated, who fervently want to believe that the government under Trump is working in their interests, and often vehemently refuse to believe otherwise, if only because it comforts them in a time of confusions and unease. If, for example, the economy cracks once again as it died in 2008-09, and it well may sometime ahead, then the country faces a day of reckoning – as many more citizens become more disillusioned and outraged. The wealth disparity in the U.S. has never been greater, and poverty is becoming rampant. And people always finally point to what bad policy has done to their living standards. there. Heydar Ebadi saw this ISIL act as an indication of the failure of this group.

In July, with the continuation of the Mosul operation, the ISIL siege rings was narrowed, and eventually in July 9, HeidarEbadi announced that ISIL had been driven away from Mosul. Following the liberation of Mosul, Tal Afar, and al-Hawijah in the southwest of Kirkuk and the remaining areas were one by one freed from the occupation of ISIL forces. In fact, the presence of ISIL in Iraq was terminated by freeing the city of Rawah in Western Al-Anbar. But now that ISIL has reached its militarily end, this question is raised whether Iraqis are eventually released of terrorism and extremist groups, or do these groups find other ways to continue their deadly missions?

Regarding the recent terrorist attacks, ISIL terrorists seem to have determined their future after military defeat and loss of occupied territories. They will take tactics of assassination and murder through explosions to create instability. In fact, they will continue the extreme line that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi began in 2004 with the killing and targeting of civilians and intensified the conflicts among Iraqis, which led to the creation of ISIL from al-Qaeda's core. In this way, they easily managed to occupy Iraqi cities in 2014.

In spite of their victory against ISIL forces, the Iraqis should know that military victory over extremists isn't the end of the work, and this is the radicalism and extremism root that must be dried up. The terrorists will blow up many bombs and assassinate and wait for the disagreements and conflicts among politicians so that these differences will affect people, and then the hidden corps will be activated.

It is true that ISIL is pushed away from Iraqi cities in military terms, but were all terrorists killed when Iraqi forces conquered the occupied cities? Or were they hidden among civilians in some way and moved to other areas? Naturally, the Iraqi forces did not have the opportunity to carefully examine the identity of all those who came with civilians out of the area. Although the Iraqi intelligence community has made the most of its endeavors, the problem has not been resolved and some are likely to be hidden. Undoubtedly, one of the great challenges of the Iraqi government after the liberation of the country from ISIL forces is with the families that one or some of Its members have been serving ISIL. These people will definitely be a threat to the future of this country.



Rohingya trapped in open-air prison of apartheid

Imagine that your son becomes critically ill, but he is not allowed into the nearest hospital for treatment. You need to travel to the market to earn enough money to put food on the table, but you cannot get the permit required to leave your village. You want to go to school to gain an education, but a government official tells you that people like you are not welcome there. These restrictions are not there for any other reason than because of who you are. Because of your race, your ethnicity and your religion.

This is the daily reality facing hundreds of thousands of people belonging to the Rohingya minority in Myanmar.

For months, the world has listened in horror to stories from the more than 600,000 mainly Rohingya who have fled into Bangladesh following the Myanmar security forces> vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing. Soldiers have killed people at random, torched whole villages and committed rape and other acts of sexual violence.

But these violations have not happened in a vacuum. Today, Amnesty International is publishing a ground-breaking investigation into the root causes of the current crisis. It reveals the full extent of the state-sponsored and dehumanizing system of discrimination facing Rohingya inside their own country.

We have spent the past two years gathering an extensive body of evidence and conducting a thorough legal analysis of the situation in Rakhine state, the western region of Myanmar which is home to the vast majority of Rohingya. Ultimately, we drew the obvious legal conclusion: what the Rohingya are subjected to is nothing short of the crime against humanity that is apartheid. This crime is clearly defined in international law, including in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Open-air prison

For the Rohingya still left in Myanmar, life inside Rakhine State resembles an open-air prison. They live under a system of repression that is upheld through an intricate web of laws, policies and practices, imposed by state officials at all levels - township, district, state and nation-wide.

At the heart of the discriminatory policies are extreme restrictions on the Rohingya>s> freedom of movement. Across the entire state, Rohingya need official permission to travel between townships. In some areas, they need special permits even to move between villages.

In others, they are essentially under lockdown in their homes every night, and at risk of arrest if they try to leave villages or neighborhoods without authorization or outside of curfew hours. There are even areas where Rohingya are not allowed to use roads but can only travel by waterways, and then only to other Muslim villages. For those who do obtain permission to travel, a network of checkpoints is a source of endless harassment, extortion and sometimes violence at the hands of the notorious Border Guard Police

in northern Rakhine State.

For Rohingya who need medical care, access to the main hospital in the state capital Sittwe is severely restricted, except in extreme emergency cases. Those who do get admitted are kept under police guard in separate «Muslim wards». Rohingya children are largely banned from government schools, while government teachers often refuse to travel to Muslim areas. The restrictions also mean that accessing food or livelihood opportunities is an enormous struggle. Malnutrition and poverty are extremely widespread.

Underpinning this discrimination is the fact that Rohingya have essentially been denied citizenship - and the rights associated with it - since the early 1980s when authorities enacted a law to this effect. But the repression has intensified alarmingly recently - in particular since 2012 when waves of violence between Muslims and Buddhist, who were often supported security officials, swept the region.

I have spent the past two years travelling back and forth to Rakhine state and the stories I have heard have been deeply moving. Over and over again, Rohingya and other Muslim communities described their lives in Rakhine State in terms such as living in a cage. I spoke to a 16-year-old girl who, just hours after sitting her school physics exam, told me she had abandoned her dream of becoming a doctor because as a Rohingva she was not allowed to access higher education. Countless people said they were struggling to survive, not the least because the government continues to deny aid groups access to Rakhine state.

What unites almost everyone I spoke to is a profound sense of hopelessness and despair about the future. Many have been trapped in this reality for as long as they can remember, and cannot see a way out. «There is no rule of law here. It is a lawless land ... there is no hope,» the father of a young man who was killed by border guard police told me. \rightarrow 13

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مالكين محترم ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آیارتمان، ویلا، مستغلات، اداری و تجاری) به ما بسیارید.

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت مالکین محترم املاک مبله و غیرمبله، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا و مستغلات شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شرکت های خارجی نیازمندیم.

مالكين محترم ویلاهای شما را جهت اجاره به منزل سفیر و مدیران شرکت های بین المللی در مناطق شمالی تهران نیازمندیم.



PERSIAN DRUGSTORE

Taking a healthy bath in

Iranian traditional style

Iranian bathhouse: A meeting place for cleaning up

In past time, bathhouses or 'hammams' in Iran were not only places for bathing and cleaning up. They had a social concept for people who gathered at these places weekly.

It was a place where people talked with each other about their daily life, and shared humors and news. There are still bathhouses in Iranian cities but they do not have their social function anymore since most people have bathrooms in their homes due to modern lifestyle.

Persian literature is full of proverbs, narrations and folk stories about bathhouses, which indicate the importance of the place in past time.

Bathhouses were also known as a gathering place for women, to meet with each other and chat for long hours.

What does Iranian bathhouse look like?

Hammams, mostly located near Bazaars, were considered as a public place. Lightened by rectangles on the roof and oil lamps, the bathhouses have a common architecture.

Entering a bathhouse through a corridor, there is a large room covered with tile and equipped with wooden benches, which is called 'rakhtkan'.

The room is covered with mats and carpets, and has a fountain in the middle. It is a place for costumers to undress and tie a gamucha around their waists.

It is also a place for drinking tea, smoking cigarette and chatting with others.



Some toilets are located before one enters the next part of the bathhouse, called ʻgarmkhaneh' or steam room.

The room, which floor is covered with marble or tiles, is mostly square or octagonal and the walls are decorated by pictures from Shahnameh heroes.

Khazineh

In ancient times, a large water-filled ba-

sin known as 'khazineh' was located in the middle of the place.

Khazineh was located on a large metaltopped stove under which a fire slowly burned. It accommodated ten persons simultaneously. However over the last decades, it was replaced by showers due to public hygiene precautions.

Dallak, a masseur who used a mitt to scrub Signs you are winning at life

and exfoliate a client's body, consistently threw water on hot tiles to wash the floor and make steam. Then placed a gamucha on the floor and made a pillow for the client with another. Afterwards the client lay down and received a massage.

Then the masseur smoothed his soles and palms with a sang-e paa (a Persian word for pumice).

Then came the 'sar-o rish tarashi' stage, during which, head and beard were shaved and nails were clipped. After drying, the client took his clothes and left the bathhouse.

Bathhouses for men and women Some cities had separate bathhouses for men and women. They were usually built next to each other.

However there were some bathhouses, which were used by men and women in different times of day.

There were also male and female public bathhouses; at daybreak, a long horn (booq-e javaz) was blown to announce that the bath was ready. Men came to the baths from daybreak until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Women could use the bathhouses since then to sunset. In some cases, five days were allocated to men and two days to women.

To announce that the bathhouse was open for men, two old gamuchas were hung from the entrance door.

The sign for women was a thick curtain hung in front of the door. The entrance for male baths was in the street itself, while for women it was at the end of a lane

is external) two studies that tracked 400 Americans who fell into two groups: high happiness/low meaning levels and low happiness/high meaning levels. Characteristics of the "happy" group included avoidance of taxing entanglements and selfdescribed as self-oriented. On the other hand, the "meaning" group spent more time helping others and focused on family or relationships. The study explains that comprehension is a pinnacle of meaning as one is able to understand life experiences and weave them into a coherent whole. In other words, they



E Most of us are used to take a shower in a few seconds and consider it as a way for relaxation. e s k Even if you are tired or have no time, that is good to take a longer bath to relax your body and mind.

Here are some tips for you to have a healthier bath which will refresh you

Taking hot showers is not recommended by the Iranian traditional medicine especially if it is short. Hot water leads to severe muscle and bone pain.

Don't stay in cold places after taking a bath. It may lead to skin allergy or respiratory diseases.

wash your hands and feet with cold water before and after taking a bath. This way, you control your body temperature.

Massage your body with essential oils with warming characteristics extracted from fennel flower, sesame and ginger after 15 to 20 minutes you enter the bathroom. Wait for 15 minutes and then wash your body thoroughly, so that it helps the skin to expel waste materials which harm the body.

Drinking a glass of barberry juice or pomegranate juice before taking a bath is a great help for those who suffer from respiratory disorders.

Surprising tips to cut household chores in half



It you feel like you're always doing chores, you're probably just doing them wrong. With a dash of time management and (gasp!) fun, get on the fast track to more free time and a more productive life.

With a few simple tweaks to the routine, you can buy back several of those hours for whatever else you want to do, be it work, exercise, or quality time with the kids. Some ideas:

Don't grocery shop right after work

That's when everyone does it, so the parking lot is more packed, the lines are longer, and it's harder to get the deli clerk's attention.

Unlike in sports there is no real scoreboard for life. We can't look up at any one moment and know, objectively, how well we are doing. Many times you may wonder how your life stacks up by comparing yourself to others. However, studies have shown that making these social comparisons may lead to negative emotions. The platform of social media has especially (link is external) been linked to depressive symptoms because the context is primed for people to compare their accomplishments to that of their friends.

Does money or financial success help us to feel like we are winning? No.

Gratitude

Gratitude as a life orientation goes beyond the appreciation that arises after help from others. Research has found that gratitude is strongly associated (link is external) with psychological well-being when it is practiced as a habitual focusing on and appreciating the positive in the world. When you make the decision to emphasize gratitude, there is little room left for

Colorful Iran: Hiloo Zarna in Bushehr



of meditation, "A flower does not think of comparing itself to the flower next to it. It just blooms.' Relationships The quality of our relationships do not just impact our

feelings of jealousy or envy. As quoted by the Zen Shin practice

daily lives, but also impact our long-term well-being. Robert Waldinger, Director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, supported this notion with findings from research (link is external) that began in 1938 with 268 Harvard sophomores, but has now expanded to include the their offspring and has amassed data from over 1300 participants. One critical finding was how the role of relationships played in our overall health. In fact, the people who were happiest in their relationships at age 50, were the healthiest at age 80. Furthermore, Waldinger went as far as to state, "Loneliness kills. It's as powerful as smoking or alcoholism.'

Pursuit of Meaning

The Journal of Positive Psychology recently published (link

practice gratitude for what they have. Notice how those in the high meaning group share characteristics with the aforementioned pillars above. Pursuit of meaning lends to a belief that one's life matters. That their life is of purpose and that their life is of worth. So when you're looking for a scorecard on your life, don't look at your salary, the size of your house, or the brand of your car. Instead, look inward towards your ability to enjoy your relationships and activities. That way, you'll always win. (Source: Psychology Today)

How to unclog a drain with baking soda and vinegar?



I F E When someone leaves d e s k hometown in the southern province of Bushehr to attend Hajj pilgrimage, family members perform Hiloo Zarna ritual until he/she comes back home.

According to the ritual, the family makes a swing and adorns it with colorful ornaments. Family members and relatives play on the swing accompanied by others praying and chanting.

It is believed that it wards off calamities and diseases from the one who is overseas when he/she performs hajj rituals like Tawaf (an Islamic ritual of pilgrimage, according to which, Muslims are to go around the Kaaba seven times), and Sa'y al-Safa wa l-Marwa, (an obligatory action in hajj consisting of 7 times of walking between the two mountains, al-Safa and al-Marwa).

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.

Like everything in life, cleaning with baking soda and vinegar comes with exceptions. And that exception is cleaning drains.

- Ingredients Needed:
- -Vinegar
- -Baking Soda
- Instructions:

Pour a pot of boiling hot water down your drain. Dump in about 1/2 c. baking soda. Let that sit for a few minutes.

Then, pour a mixture of 1 c. vinegar and 1. c very hot water down on top of the baking soda.

Cover with a drain plug (to keep the reaction down below the drain surface) if you have one and let it sit for 5-10 minutes.

Flush one more time with a pot of boiling water.

Why this works: The baking soda and hot water treatment will loosen up any grimy sludge that's hanging out at the bottom of your drain, and the explosive chemical reaction with the vinegar will jolt it all loose. Then one final super hot-water rinse will make all the bad stuff go bye-bye.

(Source: crunchybetty.com)



101 ITEMS FOR YOUR BUCKET LIST!

#6 Take part in a triathlon

A triathlon is a "multiple-stage competition involving the completion of 3 continuous and sequential endurance disciplines.' Modern-day triathlons are swim/bike/run events that are done in that order

If you think that a marathon is tough, wait till you try a triathlon - the ironman triathlon consists of 3.86 km swim, a 180.25 km bicycle ride and a 42.2 km run (that's a marathon-length race!), raced in that order and without a break!

But don't run in the opposite direction just yet - there are many triathlons of varying distances that are completely manageable. For example, a sprint triathlon is 750 m / 20 km / 5 km while an Olympic triathlon is 1.5 km / 40 km / 10 km.

Here we share 101 items to consider for your bucket list. Look through the list — any item that resonates with you? ?Take the items that resonate with you and use them for your own list! (Source: personalexcellence.co)

An old woman in traditional dress sits on stairs of her home in Eshkevarat village, northern Gilan province (Instagram/Siamak Omidi)



One Reader's Digest article on grocery shopping reported that only 4% of store trips occur between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m., even though many stores are open outside these hours.

Refuse to do chores on weekends. Chores expand to fill the available space

While this seems nuts-when else are you supposed to do them?-cutting chores out of the weekend saves you time in several ways. First, it forces you to seize small bits of time through the week to get whatever has to happen done. Second, it forces you to lower your standards. Chores expand to fill the available space.

If you have less time, chores will take less time. And finally, it encourages you to hire a pro for the real time sucks like mopping or window washing-which is probably something you should be doing anyway.

Create less laundry.

I'm not advocating bad hygiene. But playing offense on the laundry is often more smart than smelly. Towels can be re-used, jeans and pajamas can be re-worn, kids can wear sandals (without socks) in the summer. Exercise clothes may not smell proportionally worse after two workouts than after one, but re-wearing them during a solo jog will cut your laundry burden a lot.

Embrace kitchen simplicity.

Not only are simple foods generally healthier, the fewer pots you get dirty, the fewer you have to clean. Salmon cooked in the oven, plus broccoli cooked on the stove, and rice microwaved in a pouch produces a good dinner for the price of two dirty pans, total. Pasta cooked in one pot and veggies and shrimp sautéed in another likewise produces two dirty dishes. If people want additional sides, they can cut up fruits or veggies. Dessert equals pieces of chocolate. All you lose is Make emptying the dishwasher a game.

My best time for emptying a full load is 3 minutes and 30 seconds-a time I keep trying to beat, and which I hope my children will someday soon get excited about beating. What's yours?

Take the barn-raising approach.

While it may not actually save time to go help a friend clean his attic one night, and then have him come help with yours, humans are social creatures. Do chores with a friend and the time will seem to go faster-because you won't mind it as much.

(Source: fastcompany.com)



Tabas's copper work added to National Intangible **Cultural Heritage list**

HERITAGE TEHRAN – The centuries-old art of copper e s k work in Tabas, a city in east central Iran, has been registered on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The repousse or embossing approach of copper work traces its history back to at least 800 years ago in Tabas as pieces of excavated metalwork along with other local evidence suggest, Tasnim quoted Seyyed Ahmad Barabadi, a cultural heritage official, as saying on Tuesday.



Copper is malleable and readily worked by hammering, chasing, engraving, and cold-rolling though it's unsuited for casting. Copper work is usually bearing further ornamentations by gilding, enameling, or applying precious or semi-precious stones.

New York City expects more tourists, but fewer international visitors

Nothing, it seems, not even President Trump's "America first" rhetoric and insistence on banning travelers from certain countries, can stop the steadily rising flow of tourists to New York City.

The city's tourism promotion agency, NYC & Company, estimates that the number of visitors will increase again this year, to a record 61.8 million, from 60.5 million in 2016, an increase of slightly more than 2 percent. That would make 2017 the eighth straight year in which tourism hit a new high, NYC & Company said.

But the relentless influx has not stopped city officials from trying to dream up ways to attract even more tourists. Their latest global campaign, dubbed True York City, is scheduled to begin on Monday with ads appearing in airports, subways and at bus stops around the world, as well as on thousands of LinkNYC screens across the city.

The projected annual increase in tourism this year will come despite the first decline in the number of international visitors to the city since 2009, said Fred Dixon, NYC & Company's chief executive. Mr. Dixon said the agency now expects a decline of about 100,000 foreign visitors in 2017, compared with the decline of 300,000 it had feared earlier this year as a result of the "Trump effect."

Mr. Dixon said he believes that the strength of the American dollar, which has reduced the buying power of some foreign currencies, was an important factor in the decline in international travelers. But he said he remains concerned that the Trump administration has not welcomed foreign visitors.

"There's a real concern that this isolationism, this 'America first' rhetoric could lead to a decline in international travel," Mr. Dixon said. New York would suffer more than other American cities, he

said, because about 30 percent of all foreign tourists to the United States visit New York City, he said. New York also draws the largest number of visitors from countries on the Trump administration's (Source: The New York Times) revised travel ban, he said.



Monuments of Oviedo and the Kingdom of the Asturias

During the 9th century, the flame of Christianity was kept alive in the Iberian peninsula in the small Kingdom of the Asturias where an innovative Pre-Romanesque architectural style was created that was to play a significant role in the development of religious architecture of the peninsula.

Ali Sadr Cave: Stepping into Jurassic era!

TOURISM Each day tens of domestic and foreign sightseers set foot in Ali Sadr Cave, a gigantic water-filled cavern wieldy believed to date from Jurassic era.

Entrance to the lengthy cave is situated some 70km north of Hamadan in west central Iran, itself a hotspot for avid history buffs, day trippers and holidaymakers.

Ali Sadr embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers.

Sightseeing there is connected with traversing in welllit labyrinths of water ways via paddle boats, walking on subterranean islets, as well as observing rock carvings of hunting scenes, artifacts, paintings and vessels which are associated with prehistorical troglodytes.

Some tour operators and tourism marketers say that a standard tour proceeds visitors some 2,000 meters inside the cave, over 1,400 of which is covered by boats that makes it one of the longest underground boat trips in the world.

Ali Sadr can be reached after some one hour of riding from Hamadan through the countryside. There are usually shuttles and taxis as well.

The most recommended time to pay a visit is early in the morning, particularly on Fridays or holidays when it's likely to be more crowded.

Iran is geologically a part of the Alpine-Himalayan organic belt. The country features a variety of mountain ranges and hundreds of caves with Ali Sadr, Karaftu, Kataleh Khor, and Quri Qaleh amongst the most notables.

Under tourists' eyes

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the cave have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

"Something different! Just outside Hamadan" As you approach the site, your heart will sink. There is a mini fairground for kids, shops and stalls selling pretty much anything an Iranian would want - centered towards Iranian tourists rather than Western tourists... There are signs in English as you make your way

through the caves. There is a guide with you and he



People step towards an entrance to Ali Sadr cave.

Shiraz to resume holding Pars intl. tourism exhibit

TOURISM TEHRAN – After k a five-year halt, the southern Iranian city of Shiraz will host the 9th Pars international tourism exhibition from December 10 to 13.

Handicraft exhibitors and tourism marketers from six countries are planned to attend the event, IRNA quoted Alireza Dezhbod, secretary of the exhibit, as saying on Monday.

He didn't provide more details about the foreign attendees but expressed hope that several other countries would join



will be amongst arenas of contribution towards the event, Dezhbod added.



Families are sailing along with water-filled Ali Sadr cave in west central Iran.

Ali Sadr embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers.

made a point of translating things into English for us. After 15 mins or so you get off the boat train and walk along a route for about 1km - amazing lighting and rock formations. You then get another boat train back. Whole thing took about two hours but worth it! (Rdella fro<u>m</u> Princes Risborough, the UK; reviewed May 2017) "Sailing the underworld"

This cave is very different from the many caves I have seen. To experience it from a small boat, drawn by the Pedalo of the guide is much easier than the climbing on

foot in other caves and gives the trip something magic. And although there are some huge domes very often you pass through very narrow passages. The beautiful experience is only ruined sometimes by very dramatic and too colorful lighting. It has nothing romantic to see the colors of the Iranian flag on a wall with stalactites! Makes impressing nature just Disneyland! Less is more! (Gottfried Z. from Bremen, Germany; reviewed May 2017)

Great site, needs facility updates' The cave trip is awesome and takes a couple hours which includes both a guided boat portion and a walking portion. During the walking portion, we were lucky enough to talk with one of the guides ...

The cost for Iranians is 35,000 Toman for the longer tour. Unfortunately, they charge \$25USD or 70,000 Toman for foreigners. I don't understand this practice at all. (Travel A., California, the U.S.; reviewed October 2016)



An interior view of Ali Sadr cave with people aboard boats

Kalpourgan to celebrate becoming world village of pottery

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Kalpourgan, a village located in southeastern Iran, will be named a world village of pottery in a ceremony which is scheduled to be held on December 14.

The village is widely famous for being a living museum of potteries, where the in-house expertise has been passed down generations to generations over the course of history.

The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization has organized a celebration ceremony under the auspices



Potters carry their handicrafts in Kalpour-



The Churches of Santa Maria del Naranco, the Camara Santa of Oviedo Cathedral and San Julian de los Prados located in and around the capital city of Oviedo, are the most representative examples.



A view of the Oviedo Cathedral in Spain

The group also comprises the remarkable structure of hydraulic engineering known as the "Foncalada" that probably dates back to the first half of the 9th century. Historically, this group of buildings bears witness to cultural traditions relating to the Kingdom of the Asturias

The Foncalada is an outstanding example of hydraulic engineering of the late Middle Ages in working order, based on Roman models. The architecture of Santa Maria del Naranco takes its inspiration from Late Antiquity and Paleo-Byzantine, as is illustrated in its decorative motifs and iconography, and also in the design of its façades.

San Miguel de Lillo retains a decor that reflects a complete record of traditions, expressed in the first original sculpture of the Kingdom of the Asturias. The Camara Santa of Oviedo Cathedral is a two-storey building similar to the funeral structures of classical Rome. Indeed, the Camara Santa bears witness to these Roman models reproduced, by Paleo-Christian architecture for its martyr shrines. Finally, the Santa Cristina de Lena is a unique example of the pre-Romanesque architecture of the Asturias because of its interior distribution and layout.

(Source: UNESCO)

the participants as well.

Hospitality and hoteling, eco-lodge inns, marine and air sports, air traveling, online booking, free trade zones, recreational complexes as well as handicrafts

Shiraz is home to dozens of magnificent buildings, historical sites and scenic landscapes. It was literally the capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

of the World Crafts Council (WCC), CHTH quoted Behrouz Isazadehi, a provincial tourism official, as saying on Tuesday. Envoys from the WCC– Asia Pacific Region will attend the event as well,

gan village, southeast Iran.

Isazadeh added

Iran has a total of six cities and one village honored with the prestigious WCC tag.

The future of flying? You can see it now

In the not-too-distant future, a traveler's face will replace a boarding pass, and recognition software will replace the gate agent scanning each traveler's ticket.

Airline executives separated by distance will be able to use virtual reality eyewear to walk together through an airplane cabin and solve design problems.

In this same future, autonomous vehicles could help passengers check in and airplanes push back

The future is now as the aviation industry embraces new technology as enthusiastically as it does jumbo jets packed with well-behaved, premium-fare paying passengers.

According to a 2017 survey by the International Air Transport Association, air travelers are just as excited about this modernization. About three quarters of those interviewed by the association expect to be able to check their bag in three minutes (78 percent), pass through immigration in 10 minutes (74 percent) and browse the internet in flight (73 percent).

Another industry study reports that airlines and airports are consistently spending money to make technological advances happen because it is critical to meet ever-higher demands from passengers

"They've got expectations from shopping on Amazon," said Jim Peters, chief technology officer for the airline-owned technology company SITA. "They get information when they want it. They collaborate with friends and they expect that will be a natural way for them

to be interacting as they travel." **Virtual reality**

One of the newest developments in aviation evolved from consumer video games. As the visual product improved, virtual reality products using fine-tuned, realistic 3-D environments were incorporated for design, training and marketing in the air travel industry.

In a computer lab in Winston-Salem, N.C., interior systems designers at Rockwell Collins use virtual reality to test the airline cabins they create, inviting customers to sit in seats, open overhead bins and tug rolling suitcases down the aisle. This allows them to discover and fix mistakes before the design is finalized.

It would take "crazy-man money" to actually build a prototype and inspect it this way, said David Balfour, a visualization specialist with the company. Virtual reality allows airlines to "put a virtual-reality headset on and stand up and view an entire cabin."

In the virtual-reality environment, to err is actually a good thing, said Glenn Johnson, director of the design studio at Rockwell Collins. Designs "fail quicker and cheaper," he said,

which means improvements can come faster.

This ability to create large and complex environments also makes virtual reality promising for training airfield staff members who work in hazardous environments, servicing airliners in all kinds of weather and light conditions...

Biometric boarding

In December, Lufthansa passengers flying out of Los Angeles will be able to use what



A JetBlue crew member in Boston using facial recognition software to clear a passenger to board a flight to Aruba. (Credit Gretchen Ertl for The New York Times)

JetBlue customers in Boston are already using – boarding gates that let passengers onto the airplane with no paper ticket or electronic boarding pass, just a face that matches their passport photo.

On two JetBlue routes, from Boston to Aruba and the Dominican Republic, passengers stand in front of a camera that takes their picture and compares it to the traveler's image in the passport database of Customs and Border Protection.

"We're seeing about three seconds for the photograph to be taken, transmitted and a postive response back," said Joanna Geraghty, JetBlue's executive vice president of customer experience

Facial recognition will be expanded. Ms. Geraghty said this was the beginning of a new era for travelers.

"You can go into an airport and you won't need to show a boarding card, you won't need to pull out a passport," she said. "There will be no bag tag, no lines, you almost walk right onto an aircraft. That's the world I look forward to."

Intelligent machines

Ms. Geraghty is like many aviation technology specialists who look at developments in other industries and think about how they could improve air travel.

In a workshop in Geneva, SITA has several robots that travel to industry conferences around the world to start conversations about how autonomous vehicles might be used in aviation.

One robot, named Kate, is a self-directed check-in kiosk that moves to areas of congestion as needed. The other robot, Leo, takes bags from passengers and deposits them where they need to be to get routed to the proper destination.

Whether Kate or Leo end up at your local airport is not the point, said Mr. Peters, SITA's technology chief.

"The robots are also demonstrators to get people talking about what is the future of autonomous vehicles in the airport," Mr. Peters said. But for all that technology has to offer, one of the most important tests is how well the next new gadget plays with people.

"Some things can be prototyped and some things can't," he said. "Some things you have to have a physical interaction with to figure out what works.'

(Source: The New York Times)

Humanity's fertility decline could be driven by poor air quality: new research

We just aren't making babies like we used to. For many it's a choice, but fertility problems - particularly among men - also seems to be on the rise across the world.

New research suggests certain air particles less than 2.5 micrometers in size are impacting the development of human sperm. The effect is small, but for many couples it might make all the difference when it comes to conceiving a child.

For the roughly 48 million-odd couples across the globe who have difficulty producing a child, odds are the problem has more to do with the prospective father's side of the equation.

Research has pointed the finger at a variety of environmental factors potentially affecting sperm quality, including pollutants such as pesticides

Heavy metals

While ambient particulate matter (PM) made up of substances like heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons has been shown to affect the sperm of animals under laboratory conditions, the results of field studies on humans have been inconsistent.

A team of Chinese scientists has now ramped up the sample size on this kind of investigation, studying the influence of PM2.5 in the atmosphere on sperm donated by 6,475 test subjects living in Taiwan.

Donors were all taking part in a standard medical examination program between 2001 and 2014, which allowed the researchers to gather detailed information on their health and sperm samples.



The dates were then matched to records of air quality surrounding their address.

Since a typical sperm cycle is between 40 and 100 days, the researchers studied samples

taken three months apart over an average period of two years. They identified a significant match between

PM2.5 exposure and the size, shape, and level

Every increase of 5 micrograms of particulates per cubic meter (35 cubic feet) of air was associated with just over a 1 percent drop in the proportions of normal to abnormal sperm.

of activity of sperm within the samples.

Every increase of 5 micrograms of particulates per cubic meter (35 cubic feet) of air was associated with just over a 1 percent drop in the proportions of normal to abnormal sperm. Alcohol consumption

After ruling out other possible factors such as smoking and alcohol consumption, the researchers found coming home to higher levels of PM2.5 was more likely to put you in the bottom 10 percent of sperm concentration norms.

"Although the effect estimates are small and the significance might be negligible in a clinical setting, this is an important public health challenge," the researchers state in the study.

Unfortunately the study can only hint at a relationship, without spelling out the precise connection between pollutants and abnormal sperm.

They also didn't have information on fertility issues the subjects may or may not have dealt with, so 'poor sperm' may not necessarily directly equate with infertility.

Past studies on increasing rates of infertility have blamed reductions in overall sperm numbers

One study based on data gathered between 1973 and 2011 suggested men in the west now had half the number of sperm, with a continuing annual decline of 1.4 percent.

This study instead showed a positive correlation between PM2.5 concentrations and

sperm numbers. (Source: sciencealert.com)

Brain exercise could actually reduce your risk of dementia, new study says

A specific form of cognitive training – also known as brain training – could help protect people from dementia. But there are a few things to watch out for here among some pretty interesting results.

A new study by a group of researchers from several universities looked at whether certain brain exercises could reduce the risk of dementia. The study had a remarkably large number of participants-2,800 people over the age of 65. Participants were assigned different kinds of computer-based training programs to use over the course of a few weeks. Researchers checked back after six weeks, and then after one, two, three, five and 10 years to measure cognitive decline

The participants comprised four groups: one that was given no training, one given training for verbal memory, another given tips on reasoning and problem solving, and



processing. The speed training became more difficult as users progressed, Dr. Fredrick Unverzagt, a psychiatrist at

the Indiana University School of Medicine and co-author of the study, told Newsweek.

And that last training meant to increase speed of thinking, made quite a difference according to the researchers. They write that after they checked back in with participants at the 10 year mark, that group had a 29 percent lower risk of dementia.

Although a source of controversy and debate, the current standard cutoff in scientific research for a meaningful P value is .05. In the exact and awkward language of science, the P value in this study indicates the likelihood that there is no difference between the group that engaged in the exercise intended to speed up visual processing. In other words, given how many participants developed dementia, what is the chance that this outcome could have happened by chance? (Source: Newsweek)

NASA reinvents the wheel for future Mars rovers

A great deal of time and energy is put into designing the instruments and cameras that go to Mars on rovers, but none of those will do any good if the vehicle is dead in the sand after a few weeks. After all, it's a few million miles to the nearest mechanic. That's why NASA engineers are designing a new generation of rover wheels that can cope with the rugged terrain of the red planet. The newly unveiled shape memory tire uses innovative design and advanced material for increased survivability in harsh environments.

NASA's current Mars rover, the famed Curiosity, was designed with six aluminum wheels, each milled from a solid block of

metal. Engineers decided on that design to make sure the wheels didn't change shape over time. However, aluminum is inflexible, and the Martian surface is a bit more pointy than anyone expected. As a result, NASA began to notice punctures and dents in the wheels after just a year of operation on Mars.

Curiosity has been a real trooper on Mars, logging more distance than any other rover and far exceeding the expectations of NASA. That's thanks not only to solid engineering but an abundance of caution as well.

Mission operators take care to avoid obstacles that could damage the wheels further – even a single mistake could render a wheel useless. NASA knew it needed a new generation of rover wheel, and that's where the spring tire came in.

Prototype spring tire

NASA initially worked with Goodyear in the mid-2000s to develop a prototype spring tire. These tires were composed of a flexible mesh with hundreds of coiled steel wires. It gave the tires the ability to support heavy loads with good traction, but even the strongest steel springs deform. On Mars, rolling over rocks while carrying a heavy loadout of instruments would cause the steel to change shape over time.

The answer was a new material based on

a stoichiometric nickel-titanium alloy. Like regular spring tires, there's no air inside. It's just a lattice of coiled metal that flexes as it rolls over obstacles. That means it won't get punctured by sharp Martian rocks. The bonds in the nickel-titanium alloy can rearrange in response to stress instead of stretching, so the tire snaps back — no deformation.

NASA plans to use shape memory tires on future Mars rovers, possibly even on the upcoming 2020 rover that will take over for Curiosity in the next few years. It's even possible we could see this design on Earth-based tires one day.

(Source: extremetech.com)

Blue whales are mostly 'right-handed': study

Blue whales, the world's largest animals, usually favor their right side when they lunge to catch food - a preference similar to right-handedness in people, researchers said.

But on certain occasions, while moving upward in shallow water, these righties will almost always shift to their left to keep a good eye on their favored prey - tiny crustaceans known as krill.

The reason for this situation-specific choice is likely simple: to get as much food in their mouths as possible, said the report

published in Current Biology To the "best of our knowledge, this is the first example where animals show different lateralized behaviors depending on the context of the task that is being performed," said co-author James Herbert-Read of Stockholm University in Sweden.

The report was based on analysis of the movement of 63 blue whales (Balaenoptera musculus) off the coast of California.

These giant creatures are almost as long as three school buses and weigh as much as 25 elephants.

Scientists analyzed more than 2,800 feeding plunges, in which whales make sharp turns or rolls when passing a patch of krill, in order to eat as many as possible.

Most blue whales veer right in deep water, where it is dark and there are a lot of krill, so visual contact is not as important. But when the water is between 10 and 100 feet, most prefer to roll left at a steep angle.

Researchers think this happens because prey tend to be less plentiful at shallow depth, and moving left allows whales to keep their right eye on their target. (Source: The Hindu)

Marine life refuge program launches on Great Barrier Reef

A new program aiming to help protect the Great Barrier Reef from climate change damage is launching today on Queensland's Lady Elliot Island.

The project, developed over 10 years at a cost of \$14 million, will designate Lady Elliot Island, located on the Southern Great Barrier Reef, as a climate change 'ark,' which will act as a refuge for threatened marine life.



Great Barrier Reef Foundation Managing Director Anna Marsden said that an expert project team will be brought in to work with the island's Eco Resort team to develop a program aimed to boost the island's "resilience" by providing a sustainable habitat for its many marine species.

Monitoring technologies

Ms Marsden said the project includes piloting novel monitoring technologies such as acoustics, drones, under and above water automated vehicles and thermal imaging.

The program will also develop detailed resilience and habitat maps for the reef and climate change impact modelling, according to Ms Marsden.

"The project will be tailor-made to meet the unique needs of the island... On ground adaptation and restoration activities and carbon mitigation will also form part of the overall program," she said. "Lady Elliot Island is one of five Great Barrier Reef islands/ island groups we've prioritised for urgent action.'

Ms Marsden said the decision was made by assessing "biodiversity, conservation value, and threat level.'

"By working to restore and protect these island refuges, we're essentially creating a series of 'arks' to help our precious Reef wildlife and plants to survive in an increasingly challenging environment.' She said that the five islands which will form a network of

climate change refuges play a critical role in the life cycle of the various flora and fauna in the Great Barrier Reef's ecosystem.

the last given a program that worked on speed of visual

Bank Maskan CEO Elaborates on 7-Month Performance in Financing

Chief Executive of Bank Maskan Mohammad-Hashem Bot-Shekan expounded on seven-month activities and performance of his bank, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Speaking in a press briefing in the presence of members of the Board of Directors, he announced: "The sole specialized-development bank in the field of financing, Bank Maskan managed to pay purposeful facilities for moving this sector out of recession according to the market's demand."

Turning to the workbook of bank's financing in the field of payment of marriage facilities, he said: "Bank Maskan managed to pay 41,000 counts of marriage facilities, valued at 432 billion tomans, to the applicant couples in the seven months of the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (from March 21 to Oct. 22), he maintained.

With equipping resources equivalent to 16,500 billion tomans out of attraction of deposits and collection of claims, the bank managed, while observing interest

rate approved by the Money and Credit Council (MCC), to reduce the cost price of facilities as much as 5.1 percent as compared to the same period of last year (ended March 20, 2017).

Financing Mehr Housing projects is underway, he said, adding: "So far, 52,400 billion tomans worth of facilities and loans have been paid to Mehr Housing Project." In the end, Chief Executive of Bank Maskan Mohammad-Hashem Bot-Shekan said: "Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, the bank will take more giant



strides in the current year for materializing most of its objectives.

BIM Allocates \$741m to Production Sector in Fars Prov.: Report

\$741 million worth of facilities and loans to the industrial and production units in Fars Province, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

the country for sustainable development

Bank of Industry & Mine (BIM) earmarked and job creation in Fars Province, the bank has thus far paid \$294 million worth of loan to the steel production projects of this province.

Moreover, the bank has paid 43 million In line with supporting industries of euro worth of loans to cement production projects in Fars Province.

Of the other salient activities taken by the bank, 458 billion rials worth of loans have been paid to Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in this province. It should be noted that Bank of Industry

& Mine also paid 190 billion tomans worth of loans to various industrial and production

units of this province in the last Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017) in order to construct, develop and renovate working capital of these units.

Bank of Industry and Mine in Fars Province allocated the lion's share of facilities.

EDBI Determined to Back Nonoil Exports: CEO

Chief Executive of Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) Dr. Ali Salehabadi said: "EDBI is determined to support export of nonoil commodities in the country wholeheartedly.

Attraction of resources from the National Development Fund of Iran (NDFI) and credit lines indicate the national determination to support export of nonoil commodities, he maintained.

Speaking in a Nationwide Seminar (Special of EDBI's Managers), he said: "The policies taken in recent years, moreover attraction of resources from credit lines and National Development Fund of Iran (NDFI), have increased the capability of offering facilities to help export of nonoil commodities.



He pointed to the growth of liquidity of the bank from 2014 to 2017 and added: "Rials and foreign exchange

resources of the bank has improved in the current year as compared to the previous year and it is predicted that rials and foreign exchange resources of the bank will be strengthened in the coming year."

It is anticipated that export of goods will hit \$120 billion by 2025 i.e. up to the end of 6th Five-Year Socioeconomic and Cultural Development Plan, he said, adding: "Currently, the bank's total export volume stands as \$44 billion."

Exports growth should hit threefold by the end of 6th Five-Year Socioeconomic and Cultural Development Plan, he said, adding: "25 percent growth is taken into consideration by the end of current year (to end March 20, 2018)

Both global climate change and local threats are impacting Great Barrier Reef island," she said.

Critical climate refuges

These impacts are only projected to increase into the future, which is why we have to act now to ensure the most critical climate refuges are maintained."

Lady Elliot Island's Eco Resort Managing Director Peter Gash said the island has the second highest diversity of breeding seabirds of any island on the reef, as well as being a "renowned haven" for many other endangered species.

'We're excited to be able to take the initiatives that we and the island's previous custodians started to the next level and introduce new ones to ensure that Lady Elliot Island remains a biodiversity bright spot for the Reef into the future," he said.

(Source: Ten Eyewitness News)

Sugar, not fat, causes weight gain, professor finds

A professor at the Indiana University School of Medicine has explained that the real culprit behind getting fat is eating sugar and not fat.

Aaron Carroll, a pediatrics professor, has said that it is perfectly fine to eat avocados, nuts, cream, and butter.

Consuming fats does not make a person gain weight, rather it might actually help one to lose weight, the professor said.

The evidence reportedly can be found in research that has analyzed people on low-carb and high-fat diets as well as those on low-fat and high-carb diets. Studies have incessantly shown that people with restricted fatty food intake do not shed pounds.

On the other hand, it has been seen that people who consume a high-fat diet with low refined carbohydrate intakes, such as white rice and white bread, tend to shed weight and gain other health benefits.

The findings indicate that the actual culprit that makes a person gain weight is not fat but actually sugar and refined carbohydrates, which break down into sugar.

A review of diet and weight gain studies published in the journal Food and Nutrition Research suggested that the more refined grains a person consumed on average, the higher the weight gain was over the research period. In comparison, the more whole food grains a person consumed, such as brown rice and whole-wheat bread, the less weight they gained. (Source: Tech Times)



S Y Ε Τ Ι 0

NOVEMBER 23, 2017

Carburetor motorcycles cause 19% of air pollution in **Tehran: official**

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Carburetor motorcycles account for more than 19 percent of pollutants in the capital, head of the national center for air quality and climate change affiliated with the Department of Environment, said on Tuesday.

There are around 2 million motorcycles in Tehran and the carburetor ones are causing a great deal of pollution relatively speaking, Tasnim quoted Masoud Zandi as saying.



While only 30 days are reported as polluted or mildly polluted on average over the first 8 months of the year (starting on March 21), over the last four months of the year (falling on the last month of autumn and winter) the air quality index indicate high level of pollution as the number of the polluted days jump threefold or more in some years, Zandi regretted.

Although as per a law approved by the cabinet carbu-retor motorcycles are not being domestically produced since last September still they account for high amounts of pollutants, stated.

Moreover, Zandi said, while the sole purpose of adopting the aforesaid law was shifting

There are

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relatively

speaking

carburetor ones

to electric motorcycles, "lack of necessary infrastructure is what is holding us back."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zandi said that some 9 percent of the passenger cars in Tehran are clunkers and highly pollutant which also play a significant role in intensifying air pollution.

"Another challenge we are facing are clunker buses and diesel engine heavy vehicles that are highly responsible for the discharging hazardous pollutant," he added.

Once it comes to air pollution many believe that vehicles are causing 80% of the air pollution that we breathe. In order to eliminate this major sources of air pollution the government has come up with various plans

Scrapping some 500,000 clunkers annually, importing and manufacturing high standard vehicles and switching to greener alternatives in general are of the plans which are being partially implemented or are hoped to be fully implemented in the country.

LEARN ENGLISH Handling Technical Problems

Mr. Ford: Okay, so if we could **dim** the lights Jonathan, we can kick-off with the first TV advert. Please note that we are still in the early days with this advert, so it might seem a bit rough round the edges. Okay, so. Just need to click this

and the advert should pop up on the screen... Mr. Ford: Hmmmmm. Sorry about this. Bear with me a second. There seems to be a problem with the projector. Let me see. Could you **lend a hand** a second?

Jonathan: It looks like the projector is not **recognizing** the computer. Let me check the connection a second... Well the connection seems okay, and the computer is running normally. Mr. Ford: Okay. Sorry guys. Obviously a problem with the system. Let's just reboot and start over. Let's see if this resolves the issue. Jonathan: Right, let's try again. No, still nothing Michael. There might be a technical issue with the projector. I think maybe the projector has overheated. We might need to cool it down for ten minutes and start again. I'll call IT support to come over right now. Mr. Ford: Okay guys. Unfortunately technical problems do **crop up** from time to time, don't they? But it's not a huge problem. In the meantime while the IT guys get to work on that I can talk a little bit more about the advertising concept and what we are looking to achieve overall with this campaign.

Iran, EU discussing technical co-op on environment

 $1 \rightarrow She further noted that it is yet to be decided whether EU is funding the$ environmental projects or not, however, their support can "act as a catalyst for raising funds from other international entities.'

As per a document setting the 'framework for technical cooperation on the environment' published on EU official website in recognition of the importance of protecting and conserving the environment, of the role of resource efficiency in achieving green growth, and in acknowledgement of Iran>s pressing environmental challenges, the two sides intend to:

Establish bilateral technical cooperation to address issues of air, soil and water pollution, water resources management, conservation and sustainable use of nature, biodiversity, desertification, waste disposal management, climate change mitigation and adaptation in sectoral responses, exchange experience with a view to identifying appropriate responses, including projects to tackle cross-border environmental challenges, and pollution, and exchange experience on marine environment, integrated coastal management and issues related to marine litter.



The consultative meetings are aiming to establish bilateral technical cooperation to address environmental issues, exchange experience, and working out a roadmap for future joint activities with the European Union.

Hundreds of expat intellects return home

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Some 833 intellectual elite expats returned to Iran over the past twoand-a-half year, deputy director of the National Elites Foundation for international affairs has said.

The state-run foundation which was founded in 2005 launched an international center to exploit the potential of brilliant Iranian expatriates since 2013, ISNA news agency quoted Ali-Morteza Birang as saying.

Subsequently the center set up a 'reverse brain drain schemes' from February 2015 which resulted in the comeback of 833 gifted intellects up until September 2017, Birang explained

Many elite expatriates are concerned with their country's improvement, however, they have doubts about returning



to their home country, Birang said.

The long and time-consuming process of returning to Iran as well as finding a suitable career is usually very frustrating that force the elites to give up, he regretted.

"In case we manage to simplify and accelerate the process for these brilliant intellects and ensure their job security we may be able to convince them more easily to return to their homeland," he suggested.

Brain drain is a problem described as the process in which a country loses its most educated and talented workers to other countries through migration.

The occurrence of reverse brain drain mostly depends on the state of the country's development, and also strategies and planning over a long period of time to reverse the migration.

UK considers tax on single-use plastics to tackle ocean pollution

The chancellor, Philip Hammond, will announce in next week's budget a "call for evidence" on how taxes or other charges on single-use plastics such as takeaway cartons and packaging could reduce the impact of discarded waste on marine and bird life, the Treasury has said.

The commitment was welcomed by environmental and wildlife groups, though they stressed that any eventual measures would need to be ambitious and coordinated.

An estimated 12m tones of plastic enters the oceans each year, and residues are routinely found in fish, sea birds and marine mammals. This week it emerged that plastics had been discovered even in creatures living seven miles beneath the sea.

The introduction just over two years ago of a 5p charge on single-use plastic bags led to an 85% reduction in their use inside six months.

Separately, the environment department is seeking evidence on how to reduce the dumping of takeaway drinks containers such as coffee cups through measures such as a deposit return scheme. Announcing the move on plastics, the Treasury cited statistics saying more than a million birds and 100,000 sea mammals and turtles die each year from eating or getting tangled in plastic waste. The BBC series Blue Planet II has high-



lighted the scale of plastic debris in the how big those problems are" oceans. In the episode to be broadcast this Sunday, albatrosses try to feed plastic to their young, and a pilot whale carries her dead calf with her for days in mourning. cific. It's in whales, turtles and 90% of sea Scientists working with the program believed the mother's milk was made poisonous by birds, and it's been found in our salt, our pollution. tap water and even our beer.

The call for evidence will begin in the New Year and will take into account the findings of the consultation on drinks containers. Tisha Brown, an oceans campaigner for Greenpeace UK, said the decades-long use of almost indestructible materials to make single-use products "was bound to lead to problems, and we're starting to discover attention turned to the manmade threats the marine world faces".

He said: "Sadly our marine life is in trouble. Through the mismanagement of our waters with fishing, pollution and littering we are seeing declines in many important marine species as well as those that depend on them.

"A tax on single-use plastics is a welcome move, but we must also recognize more needs to be done to tackle the often less visible threats.

After the Brexit vote, Knott said, the UK had "a strong interest in demonstrating global leadership in tackling this international problem that impacts not just on our shores and our overseas territories but every coastline around the world. However, this must be part of a bigger package of measures that also looks at overfishing, lack of protection, climate change and pollution."

Mike Barrett, director of science and policy for the wildlife charity WWF, said: "Too often birds, fish, turtles and whales are found dead having eaten plastic. Plastic

Kev vocabularv

dim: if a light dims, or if you dim it, it becomes less bright **kick-off:** beginning of an event

rough round the edges: having a rough quality; not smooth or refined

bear with me: to be patient with me

lend a hand: to help someone do something, especially something that needs physical effort

recognize: identify

crop up: appears or happens unexpectedly

Supplementary vocabulary

kink: a flaw that hinders the success of an operation or plan unprepared: without adequate preparation, not ready **stall:** to intentionally delay screw-up: as a noun: a mess-up, can be used to refer to a person or thing; as a verb: to mess up

(Source: irlanguage.com)



Without water, everything withers

"The Treasury's announcement is only a statement of intent, but it recognizes the significance of the problem and the urgent need for a solution. There is a long way to go, but hopefully this is the beginning of the end for single-use plastic.

She said: "Ocean plastic pollution is a

global emergency, it is everywhere from

the Arctic Ocean at top of the world to the

Marianas trench at the bottom of the Pa-

Jeff Knott, head of nature policy for the RSPB, noted how Blue Planet was "seeing

is suffocating our seas.

"Any action to tackle single-use plastic is a good thing, but we must ensure any action is truly ambitious if we want to make the real difference needed to help save the planet.'

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Leopard trapped in snare released back to wild

A leopard which had been trapped in a snare and injured on May 12 in the Paband National Park, the northern Mazandaran province, was released back to wild last week, Iran Environment and Wildlife Watch website reported.

The five-year-old male leopard which was trapped and wounded was soon spotted by the rangers, put under anesthesia and transferred to Semeskandeh Wildlife Refuge in Sari for further treatment. After receiving proper care and being well-fed it was released back to its habitat as fit as a fiddle last Tuesday. To make sure of the leopard's state it is being observed by a satellite tracking device.

یلنگ گرفتار در تله سیمی در زیستگاه خود رهاسازی شد

به گزارش پایگاه خبری دیده بان محیط زیست و حیات وحش ایران پلنگی که روز ۲۲ اردیبهشت در حاشیه پارک ملی پابند مازندران در تله سیمی گرفتار شده بود هفته ی گذشته زیستگاه خود رهاسازی شد.

پلنـگ گرفتـار در تلـه كـه بـه لحـاظ جنسـيت نـر و حـدودا پنـج سـاله بـود بعـد از اينكـه توسـط نیروهای محیط زیست پیدا شد به پناهگاه حیات وحش سمسکنده منتقل شد تا به لحاظ آسیب های وارده تحت بررسی و درمان قرار گیرد.

پلنے مذکور کے بر اثر گرفتار شدن در تلے دچار جراحات و ضعف بدنی شدہ بود چنے روز مـورد تیمـار و تغذیـه قـرار گرفـت. ایـن پلنـگ روز سـه شـنبه هفتـه گذشـته پـس از نصـب گردنبنـد ردیـاب ماهـواره ای در زیسـتگاه اصلـی خـود رهاسـازی شـد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"afro-"

Meaning: Africa **For example:** The **Afro-**American Cultural Center and community come together to celebrate and support the centers exhibits.

PHRASAL VERB Drum something up

Meaning: to get support, interest, attention etc. from people by making an effort For example: He travelled throughout Latin America

drumming up support for the confederation.

ENGLISH IDIOM Birds of a feather

Explanation: to say that two people are birds of a feather means that they are very similar in many ways. **For example:** No wonder they get on well. They're birds of a feather!

WORLD IN FOCUS

Hariri's resignation on hold after talks with Aoun

 $1 \rightarrow$ Top Lebanese officials accused, the House of Saud regime of forcing his resignation and detaining him in the kingdom for days before letting him leave.

The premier finally returned home late on Tuesday after visits to France, Cyprus and Egypt.

Earlier today, Hariri along with President Aoun and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri attended a military parade to mark the country's Independence Day, which brought an end to the French mandate over the country 74 years ago.

After the parade, Hariri attended a meeting with Aoun and Berri.

Hariri is expected to meet with supporters at his residence in downtown Beirut at 1100 GMT upon the invitation of his Future Movement Party (Tayyar Al-Mustaqbal).

Before his return, Hariri had promised to explain his views on the crisis in the country. Hariri citied many reasons, including the

security situation in Lebanon, for his sudden

sold off in the war-torn country.

to get to Italy by boat.

Survivors of slave auctions in Libya have described a "total

hell" that they wouldn't wish on their "worst enemy" as

global outrage grows over footage showing refugees being

flew back to Ivory Coast from Libya this week after surviving

nothing but animals -- animals were treated better," said

Sanogo, who spent more than four months in Libya trying

regular beatings and forced labor in the fields.

"We were slaves," said Moussa Sanogo, a refugee who

"For the Arabs (Libyan jailers), black-skinned men are

decision. He also said that he sensed a plot being hatched against his life.

He accused Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement of meddling in Arab countries' affairs; an allegation the two have repeatedly denied.

Analysts say Hariri, a close Riyadh ally, was forced by his Saudi regime patron to resign as he refused to adopt a confrontational approach against Hezbollah, a powerful political party which is part of the Hariri-led coalition government.

After days of confusion about Hariri's situation in Saudi Arabia, the Lebanese premier and his wife arrived in the French capital, Paris, on Saturday, but two of his children stayed behind in Riyadh.

In Paris, Hariri held talks with Macron, who had invited the Lebanese politician to the European country in an attempt to lower the tensions that erupted after his abrupt resignation.

(Source: al Alam)



Refugees sold into slavery in Libya

The North African country has long been a major transit hub for refugees trying to reach Europe. The United Nations warns that thousands of Libyan

refugees are at risk of abuse on a shocking scale. He was just one of those who returned home with stories

similar to those aired last week by the United States TV network CNN, which showed an apparent slave auction where black men were presented to North African buyers as potential farmhands and sold off for as little as \$400 (340 euros).

'It was total hell in Libya," said Maxime Ndong,

one of 250 refugees flown back to Cameroon on Tuesday night.

The Cameroonians flew back to Yaounde on Tuesday aboard a plane charted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as part of a project to return and reintegrate some 850 people.

The United Nations said the slavery auctions should be investigated as possible crimes against humanity, and the issue will be on agenda at an African Union-European Union summit on November 29 to 30 in Abidjan. (Source: AFP)

Iraqi forces unearth another Izadi mass grave in Sinjar

Iraqi security officials say government forces have found a mass grave in the country's northern province of Nineveh, containing the bodies of dozens of members of Izadi minority, who are believed to have been executed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorists when they were in control of a terrain.

Local official Chokor Melhem Elias told AFP on Wednesday that "the mass grave contains the bodies of 73 people, men, women and children executed by Daesh (ISIL) terrorists when they controlled... Sinjar." He said Iraqi forces made the latest dis-

covery in the Rambussi area near the town of Qahtaniyah, located about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Mosul.

Back in August 2014, ISIL terrorists overran Sinjar, killing, raping, and enslaving large numbers of Izadi Kurds

The region was recaptured in November 2015, during an operation by Kurdish Pesh-

merga forces and Izadi fighters. The Office of Kidnapped Affairs in the northern Iraqi city of Dohuk said earlier this year that around 3,500 Izadi Kurds were still being held captive by ISIL extremists, adding that a large proportion of the abductees were women and children.

The Endowments and Religious Affairs Ministry of the Iraqi semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government announced in early August that ISIL's genocide against Izadis had forced nearly 360,000 members

of the minority to flee their hometowns, and another 90,000 had left Iraq and taken refuge in others countries.

It added that ISIL terrorists have kidnapped 6,417 Izadi Kurds, including 1,102 women and 1,655 children, since 2014.

Additionally, 2,645 children have lost their first line of protection, and the number includes 220 kids whose parents are still being held captive.

(Source: Press TV)

Turkey issues arrest warrant for 216 over suspicion of links with failed coup

Turkish authorities have issued arrest warrants for 216 individuals, including former Finance Ministry staff, on suspicion of having links to the 2016 failed coup in the country.

State-run Anadolu news agency reported on Wednesday that the authorities have already arrested 17 former finance ministry personnel and that they are after another 65 staff over their alleged links to the coup. Meanwhile, the Turkish officials launched operations in

40 provinces across the country, targeting "private imams" who are suspected of recruiting members to the network of United States-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, who Turkey blames for having engineered the coup d'etat.

On Monday, Turkey issued arrest warrants for a total of 107 teachers and detained 51 of them as part of its massive crackdown on the coup suspects.

Gulen runs an extensive network of international education and religious programs with branches in Turkey and several other countries. The cleric, a former ally of President



Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has denied any involvement in the coup that left more than 250 people dead.

He has said on several occasions that the post-coup crackdown, in which more than 50,000 people have been

jailed and around 150,000 others dismissed from their jobs, was an attempt to consolidate Erdogan's grip on power.

Rights groups and European governments have repeatedly criticized Ankara for the continued crackdown, saying it has mainly targeted dissent. They also censure a simultaneous push by Turkey against the country's Kurdish population.

Erdogan's government maintains that Gulen's network has deeply infiltrated Turkey's judiciary, army, schools and other institutions, saying the purges are the only way to neutralize what he calls the threat posed by coup plotters. Ankara also dismisses allegations of unjust treatment

of the Kurds, saying many of those arrested have had links to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) and have helped militants carry out attacks against civilians and security forces across the country over the past years.

U.S. terror list more symbolism than substance

As North Korea marches toward nuclear mastery, the United States President Donald Trump slaps the country back on an American blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism. But is it anything more than bluster?

After all, former President George W. Bush removed North Korea from that same list nearly a decade ago, also in an attempt to halt its march toward nuclear mastery.

Aside from a pretty good illustration of just how hopeless the decades-long effort to get North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions can seem, the contrasting approaches also show that the list has always been more about symbolism than substance.



The top U.S. diplomat, Rex Tillerson, acknowledged as much and undercut Trump's declaration that it was part of a "maximum pressure campaign" to isolate North Korea - when he called the decision a "very symbolic move" with limited practical effects.

After months of nuclear and missile tests that put North Korea ever closer to completing a viable long-range nuclear arsenal that can hit the U.S. mainland, the designation has the ring of a counterpunch that's more impressive to look at than painful to feel.

And since North Korea will see it as a yet another in a long list of provocations - even if symbolic - it likely pushes a negotiated end to the dangerous standoff on the Korean Peninsula further away. There will be angry words from Pyongyang, maybe more weapons tests, and then more angry words from Washington, and maybe more sanctions.

The listing will raise animosity and speed up North Korea's nuclear development, said Hong Min, an analyst at Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification.

North Korea will also see the move as proof that the Trump administration has no genuine interest in diplomacy, considering the shame and global stigma the designation still brings, Hong said.

One problem for Trump is that while North Korea cared very much about the terror list a decade ago, it may not worry as much about it now.

When North Korea was taken off the list in 2008 - part of a pledge Bush made in a 2007 nuclear disarmament deal that blew up within a year- North Korea chafed at what it saw as an impediment to doing international business and pursuing large multilateral financial loans, analysts at the time said.

But 2017's North Korea is very different from the nation that did a deal with Bush.

The dictator now in charge - the young Kim Jong Un, who took over after his father, Kim Jong Il, died in 2011 - has so far seen little benefit to the interminable diplomatic wrangling his father dove into between so-called provocations.

Kim Jong Un, instead, has pursued with breakneck speed the building of an arsenal of nuclear-tipped missiles. Granted, the messages from Washington - where Trump has swung between threats of "fire and fury" and offers to talk - have been mixed, but when there has been the U.S. outreach, North Korea has seemed uninterested.

The move by Trump will also fit neatly, from North Korea's perspective, into its long-running claim that Washington harbors hostile intentions" that make the nuclear program a crucial part of national defense.

How you see the respective moves by Bush and Trump may depend on how you define terrorism.

Those who thought North Korea shouldn't be on the list a decade ago argued that it had not been tied directly to terrorism since its agents planted a bomb on a South Korean commercial jetliner in 1987. The other side saw North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, and its alleged assassinations of North Koreans who fled to South Korea, as clear evidence of terrorism.

Trump, in announcing the listing this week, mentioned an American student imprisoned in North Korea who died of injuries suffered there, and also "assassinations on foreign soil," a reference to the killing of Kim Jong Un's half-brother with nerve agent at the Kuala Lumpur airport in February.

Some in South Korea believe that, regardless of Washington's actions, North Korea has no intention of negotiating over its weapons until it successfully builds a working long-range nuclear arsenal, something that may happen in the next couple of years. Evidence for this could be seen when a senior Chinese envoy, Song Tao, apparently failed to meet Kim Jong Un during a four-day visit that ended on Monday, according to Cheong Seong-Chang, an analyst at South Korea's Sejong Institute. The terror list designation, Cheong said, won't hurt North Korea economically as it's already so highly sanctioned. But, he said, it would have one concrete result: "A dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang is virtually impossible now.' (Source: AP)

Kushner's Mideast gambles worry U.S. political pros

Jared Kushner, who is the United States President Donald Trump's son-in-law and who entered the White House largely because of that relation, has been causing unease among professionals in the U.S. politics with his reckless forays into Middle Eastern politics.

Kushner, 36, has been President Trump's "senior adviser" and in charge of "peace" efforts in the Middle East. He has had no prior career in diplomacy or governance and, like his father-in-law, was in real estate before Trump won an upset victory in the U.S. presidential election in November 2016.

Lately, Kushner has been in substantial contact with officials in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), reportedly forging a close relationship with young but powerful leaders in those countries.

Both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi have adopted an aggressive regional policy, waging military aggression on Yemen, targeting Qatar with a diplomatic and economic war, and attempting to fracture Lebanon's government by having its prime minister resign.

The House of Saud regime officials have had quite a few stories to tell recently. Is what we're hearing well-crafted?

According to a Monday report by Al-Monitor, Saudi and Emirati officials have been relying on "at least tacit approval" from Kushner for their hard-line policies.

Those policies and the reliance on Kushner, however, have unnerved "veteran U.S. diplomats, policymakers and lobbyists" and caused unease within the U.S. administration, according to the report.

U.S. prepared to trade anything

The worried parties have been "urging regional players to be cautious about basing their foreign policy on any perceived green light, real or not, from the Kushner faction at the White House," the report said. "They warn the mixed messages could cause Persian Gulf allies to miscalculate and take actions that harm U.S. interests.³

The Saudi regime and the UAE's perception that they have "carte blanche" from the White House is strengthened by a Trump administration desire to get them on board with a plan to negotiate a deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians, a former senior U.S. administration official said.

The Trump White House has vigorously attempted to accommodate the Saudi regime. Trump picked the Arab state as his first foreign destination as president. There, the businessman-turned-U.S. president secured arms sales to Riyadh worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

In his own capacity, Kushner has cultivated a relationship with the Saudi regime Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Emirati Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef al-Otaiba. In one recent unannounced trip to Riyadh, Kushner and Mohammed bin Salman stayed up until 4 am "swapping stories and planning strategy.

The Saudi regime-led aggression against Yemen and the standoff with Qatar are both believed to have been the brainchild of Mohammed bin Salman. So is Saad Hariri's resignation as Lebanon's prime minister. Kushner is believed to have had an influence in the resignation of Hariri, too.

The Al-Monitor report suggested that the U.S. State Department and the Pentagon have been alarmed by the consequences of the Saudi regime and the UAE's "provocative" actions and differ from the White House on how Middle East policy has to be formulated.

"The State and Defense departments have urged Rivadh and Abu Dhabi to ease their pressure campaigns on Oatar and Lebanon and improve aid access in Yemen to avert catastrophic famine," the report said.

The House of Saud regime and Emirati officials, however, "have suggested to U.S. diplomatic interlocutors" that Trump and Kushner have their backs.

Both Trump and Kushner face the likelihood of entanglement in a probe into potential collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia to help get him elected back in the 2016 election.

Kushner worried Special Counsel Mueller will 'get' Trump: report Elsewhere, Kushner is reportedly worried that Special Counsel Robert Mueller will eventually "get" the U.S. president as part of his ongoing investigation into possible collusion between Russia and the 2016 presidential campaign.

Kushner is especially concerned about the reach of the Russia inquiry following the indictment of Trump's former campaign manager Paul Manafort and his associate Rick Gates, according to a report by the Vanity Fair magazine.

"Do you think they'll get the president?" Kushner asked a friend, the report said, citing a source familiar with the conversation.

The U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that Russia tried to help Trump win the election by hacking and releasing emails damaging to his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton. Mueller is looking into whether there were any links between the Trump campaign and Russian operatives.

Trump and Russia have denied the allegations.

It emerged earlier this year that Manafort, along with Trump Jr. and Kushner, met with a Russian lawyer at Trump Tower last summer, after being promised damaging information on Clinton.

The former campaign manager for Trump, Paul Manafort, has been charged with conspiracy against the U.S. as part of the Russia inquiry.

That meeting is now at the center of the Mueller investigation. Kushner is also accused of failing to disclose emails he received about "a Russian backdoor overture" in 2016.

Mueller's team has questioned witnesses about some of Kushner's conversations and meetings with foreign leaders during Trump's transition, during which Kushner hosted then-Russian ambassador Sergei Kislyak at Trump Tower, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Investigators are also looking into Kushner's role in efforts to block a December United Nations resolution that condemned Israel for building settlements in occupied Palestinian territories.

Trump, who was president-elect at the time, urged the U.S. to veto the resolution, denouncing it as being "extremely unfair to all Israelis.

The Security Council passed the resolution days later with the U.S. abstaining from vetoing it.

Israeli officials reportedly reached out to several people in Trump's transition, including Kushner and former chief strategist Stephen Bannon, according to the Journal. Mueller's investigators are asking questions about those overtures

(Source: agencies)

Rohingya trapped in open-air prison of apartheid

1 → The only way forward is for the Myanmar government to act immediately to dismantle this appalling regime. A very first step must be to develop a comprehensive action plan to dismantle the system of apartheid, which must include repealing or amending all discriminatory laws and radically changing policies and practices.

Crimes against humanity are being committed in Rakhine State on a daily basis. The evidence documented by Amnesty International indicates that these crimes are committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination of a racial group and thus constitute the crime of apartheid.

This cannot be ignored and swept under the carpet. A climate of impunity where human rights violations and crimes go unpunished only serves to perpetuate the cycle of abuse. There must be accountability and those responsible - regardless of rank or position - must be brought to justice. If the government is unwilling and unable to take up this task, which it so far has been, the international community must step in.

States must use every diplomatic tool at their disposal to pressure the Myanmar authorities to act now. Donor countries, in particular, must be careful to ensure that development aid is not spent in a way that props up this nightmarish system. The world can no longer stand idle in the face of this 21st century apartheid. (Source: Aljazeera)



IOC bans four Russian skeleton athletes for life over Sochi doping

Four Russian skeleton athletes, including Olympic champion Alexander Tretyakov, have been banned for life from the Olympics after being found guilty of doping at the 2014 Sochi Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Wednesday.

Tretvakov, Sochi bronze-medal winner Elena Nikitina, Maria Orlova and Olga Potylitsyna have been "found to have committed anti-doping rule violations," the IOC said in a statement.

"The four athletes are declared ineligible to be accredited in any capacity for all editions of the Games of the Olympiad and the Olympic Winter Games subsequent to the Olympic Winter

Games Sochi 2014," the IOC said. The IOC added it had disqualified the athletes from Sochi, effectively stripping Tretyakov and Nikitina of their Olympic medals. Orlova and Potylitsyna did not win medals in Sochi.

The IOC did not disclose the nature of the doping violations. Earlier this month, the IOC banned six cross-country skiers from the Olympics for violating anti-doping rules as part of an investigation into allegations of widespread doping among Russians and sample tampering by laboratory and security officials at the Sochi Games. The IOC has been re-testing all Russian athletes' samples from the 2014 Games following revelations by Grigory Rodchenkov, the former head of Moscow's suspended anti-doping laboratory, of a scheme to cover up home competitors' positive samples. The IOC is set to decide next month on the participation of Russian competitors at the Pyeongchang winter Olympics in South Korea in February.

(Source: Fox Sports)

Griezmann says Manchester United transfer is 'a possibility'

Atletico Madrid forward Griezmann has described a potential move to Manchester United as "a possibility."

The 26-year-old previously hinted at a move to Old Trafford in the summer, but chose to stay at Atletico Madrid following their transfer ban, and has since signed a new contract.

However, he has failed to perform to his usual standards this season, and has been linked with a move to both United and Barcelona. In his new biography, 'Behind a smile, the life of the Little Prince told by himself', he writes: "In June, I extended my contract. I'm linked to the club until 2022. Although I might be missing out on titles, I have everything here to be happy but that does not mean to say I won't go one day.

"I haven't made that decision. It all depends on various factors. "I have nothing against England except for the weather. Man-chester United is a possibility."

Griezmann has just three goals so far this season, and praised his current club despite not ruling out a move in the future. "As much as I repeat that I am delighted at Atletico, I have a great coach and great team-mates, they regularly ask me about my future," he added. "I do not exclude anything."

(Source: Eurosport)

Trump reignites feud with father of UCLA player accused of shoplifting

President Donald Trump on Wednesday reignited a feud with the father of one of the three UCLA basketball players who was detained in China on suspicion of shoplifting, calling him an "ungrateful fool" in a series of early morning tweets

LaVar Ball, the father of LiAngelo Ball, has played down Trump's involvement in the three athletes' release from after they admitted to stealing items from three stores during a team trip to China earlier this month.

...LaVar, you could have spent the next 5 to 10 years during Thanksgiving with your son in China, but no NBA contract to support you. But remember LaVar, shoplifting is NOT a little thing. It's a really big deal, especially in China. Ungrateful fool!, Trump tweeted. In another tweet, Trump took sole credit for getting LiAngelo Ball out of a long term prison sentence and not the White House, the State Department or LaVar Ball's associates in China. "IT WAS ME. Too bad! LaVar is just a poor man's version of Don King, but without the hair. Just think..," Trump tweeted, referring to boxing promoter Don King. The three players apologised 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.

Liverpool investigating claims that police at Sevilla assaulted supporters

Liverpool fans were subjected to "heavy-hand ed" treatment by police and stewards in Seville on Tuesday, supporters' group Spirit of Shankly (SOS) has said, with the Premier League club launching its own investigation into the claims and UEFA confirming it is aware of the situation.

SOS alleged that some away fans were refused entry to the Champions League match and were assaulted by police and stewards at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan Stadium.

"We became aware of issues affecting supporters during the first half of the match,' SOS chair Jay McKenna said in a statement to ESPN FC.

"A couple of our committee members reported problems getting into the ground, being refused access as the flag they had [which featured a Liver bird and the word "defiance"] was accused of having a political message.

What is more concerning is the reports of heavy-handed treatment of supporters, including physical assaults, with one com-mittee member reporting she was punched as she was pushed out of the ground. "Similar experiences have been shared

with us from other supporters last night, and we've asked people to come forward so we can raise this issue with the club.

"We've already flagged it up to them and we're aware they are looking for more information.

"Clearly, though, what happened last night isn't acceptable and we will be asking both clubs and UEFA what they plan to do

about it.' UEFA, European football's governing body and the organizer of the Champions League, told ESPN FC: "We are aware that there were some issues at the away supporters' entrances in regards to fans accessing the

stadium" and said it had no further comment. Liverpool released a statement later on

Wednesday which read: "Following detailed and troubling accounts given by Liverpool

supporters attending the match against Sevilla last night, the club is seeking to establish the facts regarding their treatment at the hands of the host stewards and local police force. "The safety and security of our supporters

is our paramount concern and we intend to gather all the relevant information before responding further.'

A police spokesman told ESPN FC: "Having spoken to Sevilla FC security coordinator (a police chief), there were no incidents or police charges made in the two days prior to the game or during the day of the game.

Real Madrid dominate UEFA Team of the Year candidates



Cristiano Ronaldo has been named in the 50-strong list. UEFA's Team of the Year nominees for a record 14th time as part of an 11-strong also includes fellow usual suspects Lionel Messi and Neymar. Madrid dominated on the domestic and European front last season, clinching a first LaLiga title since 2012 and becoming the first team to defend the Champions League. Portugal superstar Ronaldo was typically at the forefront of their success, scoring 25 league goals and a further 12 in Europe's premier competition. Madrid team-mates Karim Benzema, Marco Asensio, Casemiro, Isco, Toni Kroos, Luka Modric, Dani Carvajal, Marcelo, Keylor Navas and Sergio Ramos who earned the highest percentage of votes in last year's poll – also made the cut. Barcelona great Messi was prolific despite the Catalans having been mainly overshadowed by their fierce Clasico rivals, while Nevmar - who departed Camp Nou for a record-breaking move to Paris Saint-Germain in the last window - is also part of

Juventus, who won a Serie A and Coppa Italia double while also reaching the nampions Le representation. Legendary goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon is joined by Argentina star Paulo Dybala, Alex Sandro, Giorgio Chiellini and Miralem Pjanic, while Leonardo Bonucci - who left Juve for AC Milan - is also included. Chelsea coasted to the Premier League title last term, but Eden Hazard is the Blues' only representative.



"With respect to the flags, norms request that banners and flags that are more than 3x2metres in size, must have an accredited sticker and that the pole is flexible.

"The police received a file of the official Liverpool flags that complied with the requirements and if one did not, then it wouldn't have been allowed to be taken in.

"Moreover, if a flag or banner has a message that incites violence, then it would not be allowed in but not just yesterday, in any other game whether in La Liga or European competition."

Article 6, section b, of Spain's law against violence in sports, which was updated earlier this year, states that it's prohibited to "enter, show or make banners, flags symbols and other signs with message that incite violence.' (Source: Soccernet)

Lukaku to compensate Los Angeles police for repeated party call-outs



Manchester United striker Romelu Lukaku will avoid the prospect of jail time by compensating police in Los Angeles for er repeated call-outs over loud parties in the summer. Police said they arrested the 24-year-old after responding to five noise complaints in as many days at a Beverly Hills residence where he was staying.

to a disturbance of the peace infraction, which carries a 100 dollar (\pounds 76) fine plus other costs and penalties, she said.



On Sunday, Trump tweeted that he "should have left them in jail!"

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. Olympic gold medalist says doctor sexually abused her

Three-times Olympic gold medalist Gabby Douglas said on Tuesday she was sexually abused by former USA Gymnastics team physician Larry Nassar, the latest in a list of female athletes to accuse the doctor of misconduct.

Douglas, who last week was criticized for placing some of the onus on women to avoid sexual harassment, apologized again for her remarks while adding that she too was abused by Nassar, who is in jail awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to federal child pornography charges. In an Instagram post on Tuesday addressing last week's comments that were viewed by some as victim shaming, Douglas wrote: "It would be like saying that because of the leotards we wore, it was our fault that we were abused by Larry Nassar. "I didn't publicly share my experiences as well as many other things because for years we were conditioned to stay silent and honestly some things were extremely painful.'

Jeff Raymond, a publicist for Douglas, confirmed in an email that the gymnast was in fact "confirming that she too was a victim of Larry Nassar." Nassar's attorney, Matt Newburg, was not immediately available for comment but has previously said that due to a gag order imposed he had no comment.

(Source: Reuters)

Manchester City's creative king Kevin De Bruyne is nominated alongside teammate Sergio Aguero, as are Spurs quarter Harry Kane, Christian Eriksen, Dele Alli, and Davinson Sanchez - who spent the first half of 2017 with Europa League finalists Ajax. Manchester United, who beat Ajax in

the Europa League final, are represented by Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Paul Pogba, Antonio Valencia and David De Gea.

The Team of the Year is voted for by fans on UEFA's official website.

(Source: Soccerway)

The parties were held while Lukaku was on the verge of a £75million transfer to the Old Trafford club from Everton.

The Belgium front man will pay 450 US dollars (£340) to reimburse the force as part of a deal that will see the charge reduced from a misdemeanor which could have carried six months in jail, a Los Angeles court was told on Tuesday.

Commissioner Jane Godfrey, overseeing the case, said: "They are reaching a disposition in this case that the first thing that must happen is the defendant must pay Beverly Hills Police Department 450 dollars for multiple response calls."

The city will then reduce the charge

As a misdemeanor, the charge would have carried the maximum sentences of six months in county jail or a 1,000 dollar (£760) fine, the commissioner added.

James Eckart, for the city, and Lukaku's lawyer Robert Humphreys accepted the arrangement.

The striker's signing by Manchester United was completed around eight days after his arrest by the force at around 8pm on July 2.

Days after the incident, he shared on Instagram a picture of himself in an apartment in the city with United midfielder Paul Pogba.

The case will return to Los Angeles Airport Courthouse on December 18 when Lukaku's lawyer is expected to pay the 550 dollars (£416) in fines and compensation, a 40 dollar (£30) fee as well as other undecided penalties.

(Source: Eurosport)

Sevilla coach Eduardo Berizzo diagnosed with prostate cancer

Sevilla coach Eduardo Berizzo has been diagnosed with prostate cancer, the club announced on Wednesday.

The Spanish side said further tests are needed to know if the Argentinian boss will have to undergo surgery.

Berizzo, 48, joined Sevilla from Celta Vigo in June as a successor to Jorge Sampaoli and is under contract with the Andalusian club until June 2019.

A club statement read: "Sevilla FC's medical team report that our first team coach, Eduardo Berizzo, has been diagnosed with an adenocarcinoma of the prostate. Future exams will allow us to decide what the next steps will be regarding treatment. Sevilla FC wishes to show its maximum support to their coach at this time and wishes him a prompt recovery.' Berizzo watched from the bench as Sevilla hit back from 3-0 down to draw 3-3 with Liverpool in Tuesday's Champions League clash at the Sanchez Pizjuan stadium.

Guido Pizarro struck the equaliser in stoppage time and



the Sevilla players and staff celebrated by running towards the bench and hugging coach Berizzo. Berizzo's Argentinian

compatriot, Ever Banega, hailed his manager after the game. The Sevilla midfielder said, as reported in Marca: "We had a terrible first half and we knew we had to come out after the restart with another attitude, for the fans that are always there for us and also for our coach that has reverted the situation.

"He is the maximum leader of all of us, he guides us on the right path and we are completely behind him.'

Reports in Spain claimed that Berizzo told his players of his medical condition at half-time. Berizzo said in his postmatch news conference: "I told them that we had a great opportunity ahead of us that doesn't happen often. That we had five minutes to go out and correct the mistakes, that we could turn around a bad night ... I thank my players for their conviction, they made it an unforgettable night.

Sevilla, fifth in La Liga and on course to qualify for the next round of the Champions League, play at Villarreal on Sunday. (Source: ESPN)

Ivankovic wants to evolve Iran's style of football

SPORTS Persepolis football coach Brank Ivankovic says he e s k is going to transfer his knowledge to Iran football.

"I came to Iran to change your style of play and improve your game. Iran teams were playing English style of football and it's normal because the sport had been brought to the country by Englishmen. I want to change your traditional game into the modern football, that's why I am here," Ivankovic said in an interview with Mehr news agency.

"At the moment, I am Persepolis coach and I am very satisfied with the results we've achieved during the previous years. I am happy to be in the Iran's most popular team. In 2006, I led Team Melli at the World Cup but I was under pressure at that moment, however I do not want to go back to the past," he added.

Persepolis have been banned from signing players for the next two transfer windows after their striker Mehdi Taremi breached his contract with Turkey's football club Caykur Rizespor.

Taremi is also staying out of fields for four-month after FIFA found him guilty.

The Iranian giants also have so many financial problems but Branko believes there is no excuse not to challenge for Iran Professional League title.

"The number of the football clubs are suffering from financial difficulties and I believe that it's normal. For example AC Milan face financial issues but they play in the Italian league. Iranian clubs Sepahan and Foolad have no financial problems but they face some other big challenges," he added.

Ivankovic was a nominee to take charge of Croatia football team but Zlatko Dalic replaced Ante Cacic in the European team.

"I was a candidate for the post but it's not a new story. I wish all the best for Croatia in the World Cup. Iran have also a great future in the World Cup because Team Melli have been prepared very well," the 63-year-old coach concluded.

> Five candidates to replace Ange Postecoglou as Socceroos coach at the 2018 World Cup will be a lure too big to resist for many. But who is in the box seat to take over the Socceroos reins? Here are five candidates that immediately stand out: **1. Graham Arnold, Sydney FC.**

With two A-League championships, two premierships and now an FFA Cup trophy in his locker, the Sydney FC coach is the front runner to replace Ange Postecoglou. It's understood he is the most seriously considered Australian candidate, but concerns over his playing style being in contrast to the curriculum could count against him.

2. Ante Milicic, Socceroos assistant.

Popular with the players and highly regarded by his peers, Postecoglou's right-hand man could present the smoothest continuation of the national team through to the World Cup and Asian Cup. While he's never held a senior coaching job, there's a strong track record of national teams promoting from within.

3. Kevin Muscat, Melbourne Victory.

Former assistant to Postecoglou at Melbourne, Muscat's attacking style is closely aligned with the national team.

Smart, motivational and passionate, he could make the Australian team feared in Russia. However, a poor track record as a player and frosty relationship with some in the game could count against him in a job description that's highly ambassadorial.

4. John Aloisi, Brisbane Roar.

Of the local options, Aloisi understands the broader landscape of the game well and is perhaps the best fit in terms of image, publicity and community work. However, he is less experienced than other candidates and yet to win a trophy as a coach.

5. Carlos Queiroz, Iran.

Team Melli has experienced a rapid transformation under Queiroz to become Asia's top-ranked team, qualifying for Russia undefeated and playing intelligent football. The former Manchester United assistant has a poor relationship with the Iran FA and is understood to be eager to coach Australia, but not likely before the World Cup. His pragmatic coaching philosophy is not in line with FFA's curriculum. (Source: Brisbane Times)

Barcelona wanted RB Leipzig's Naby Keita before Liverpool deal - Mintzlaff

RB Leipzig CEO Oliver Mintzlaff has said Liverpool beat Barcelona to the signing of Naby Keita, adding that Barca "didn't try as hard" to get him.

take over the Socceroos helm.

With Ange Postecoglou sensationally quitting his job as

head coach of Australia on Wednesday, a raft of candidates

from both home and abroad will no doubt be lining up to

The chance to manage reigning Asian champions Australia

Guinea international Keita, 22, will join Liverpool at the end of this season, with Leipzig having blocked an immediate move as they prepared for their first Champions League season.

Speaking to Sport Bild, Mintzlaff said the persistence of Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp had helped secure the deal.

Asked whether Klopp's determination had been key, he added: "That's right, even more so because Barcelona were also interested in Naby Keita.

"This was confirmed to us b

was linked with a move to AC Milan in the last transfer window, while Germany forward Timo Werner is expected to be in demand next summer.

Mintzlaff admitted that Leipzig might not be able to hang on to those stars, adding that they would have to consider big offers. But he added: "Fundamentally, we don't

want to sell any player.' Following their 4-1 Champions League win at Monaco on Tuesday, Leipzig are still in with a chance of reaching the knockout stages

In their last group match against Besiktas, they must better Porto's result against Monaco because the Portuguese side have won the head-to-head

Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo slams media: 'When I talk I'm not understood'

Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo accused the media of twisting his words and declined to be interviewed after scoring twice to set yet another record in Tuesday's 6-0 Champions League Group H win at APOEL Nicosia.

Luka Modric, Karim Benzema [two] and Nacho were also on the scoresheet as the defending champions progressed to the round of 16 behind Tottenham, who secured top spot in the group with a 2-1 win at Borussia Dortmund.

Ronaldo's brace took him to 18 Champions League goals in 2017, breaking his own record for most strikes in the competition in any calendar year, and also to 100 goals with Madrid in UEFA competitions.

However the Portugal captai wasnot to discuss the achievement afterwards, seemingly upset at how his comments about Madrid's weakened squad (made after early November's 3-1 defeat at Tottenham) led to a public disagreement with club captain Sergio Ramos. "I'm not talking, as when I talk I'm not understood," Ronaldo said without stopping in the stadium mixed zone. "And then you [media] talk about something I did not say." Benzema's goals against APOEL also made him France's all-time top scorer in the Champions League on 53, two more than former Arsenal forward Thierry Henry, and came after he had failed to score in the competition in eight games going

back 279 days. The 29-year-old now has 184 goals for Madrid, two more than club legend Paco Gento, and sits sixth in Los Blancos' goal scoring charts.

"I've been a long time waiting for this goal... I will never forget it," he tweeted afterwards. "I am proud to outdo legends like Thierry Henry in the Champions League and Gento in Real Madrid's history.'

"It's not important how many minutes had passed since I scored," Benzema told BeIN sports. "There are times when you don't score, other times you score every week. I don't listen to what is said, just do my job. Whoever is not happy, that is their problem.'

Manager Zinedine Zidane told his postatch news conference he was happy for the

Iran women's futsal team to play Italy

S P O R T S d e s k Iranian women's national futsal team are scheduled to play two friendly matches against Italy in Tehran on Thursday and Friday. Iran are preparing for the 2018 AFC Women's Futsal Championship which will be held in May in Thailand.



Team Melli claimed the title of the first edition which was held in Malaysia in 2015.

The friendly matches will give our players experience and knowledge of modern futsal since Italy are one of the world's strong teams. Our players need to get more experience for the AFC Futsal Championship," head coach of Iran futsal team Shahrzad Mozaffar said

The Iranian and Italian football federations signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) as part of efforts to boost cooperation between the two countries in October, 2014.

UEFA to investigate Dani Carvajal booking in Real Madrid's Nicosia win

UEFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against Real Madrid's Dani Carvajal over his yellow card for timewasting against Apoel Nicosia, meaning he could be banned for the round-of-16 first leg in February.

Carvajal was booked by referee Artur Dias for taking too long over a 90th-minute throw in the 6-0 win, bringing an automatic one-match ban that could be served in a group game at home to Borussia Dortmund on Dec. 6.

That would mean the Spain international right-back being free of suspension when the knockout phase starts.

But UEFA confirmed that Carvajal has been charged with breaching Article 15 of its Disciplinary Regulations by "receiving a yellow card on purpose" -- an offence that carries a two-game ban.

Madrid have run into trouble over alleged deliberate yellow cards in the past, with Sergio Ramos, Xabi Alonso and coach Jose Mourinho punished in the 2010-11 group

All three escaped any further sanction after another incident late in the quarterfinal first leg win over Galatasaray in 2012-13.

Also on Tuesday, Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne was booked late in the 1-0 Group F win over Feyenoord, meaning he misses the final fixture at Shakhtar Donetsk with a top seeding already secured.

(Source: ESPN)

Australia boss resigns six days after World Cup qualification

Ange Postecoglou has resigned as Australia boss six days after the team qualified for the World Cup, saying the job has "taken a toll on me".

but obviously they didn't try as hard as Liverpool.'

Keita will move to Anfield for more than his €55 million release clause, with Mintzlaff saying the deal not only "gave the player more security, but also left us with a significantly higher transfer fee."

He added: "He wanted the transfer this summer. But [Leipzig sporting director] Ralf Rangnick told the team that we will not sell any players [at that time]," he said.

"This was not lip service -- it was set in stone. Had we released Keita, other players might have come up with a similar idea." Sweden international Emil Forsberg

"We wanted to go into the Istanbul match with a small chance," Werner told reporters. "We've achieved that now.

"We want to give our supporters a good match -- and if we get the cherry on the cake and advance, that would be perfect."

Coach Ralph Hasenhuttl, meanwhile, said: "It could happen that we are relegated [to the Europa League] with 10 points. That's madness.

"Even though it's no longer in our hands, we can at least try to win our last match. We'd have played a very good first ever Champions League campaign then." (Source: Soccernet) two forwards to be back on the scoresheet, after media criticism following the weekend's o-o La Liga draw at Atletico Madrid had included Marca saying the pair's La Liga record of one goal each after 12 games was among the worst in Europe this season and in Madrid's club history.

"It's good to see Cristiano and Benzema getting amongst the goals," added Marcelo. "During our poor run we've created the chances, but the results didn't go our way. We created a lot of chances [tonight] and have regained the confidence which had had supposedly deserted us.

(Source: Soccernet)

The 52-year-old Greek-born Australian guided the Socceroos to their fourth straight World Cup with a 3-1 aggregate victory over Honduras in the play-offs.



He was offered the chance to discuss a new deal beyond next year's tournament in Russia, but decided to leave.

'This has been a very tough decision for me," he said.

"All this has taken a toll on me both personally and professionally. I have invested all I can knowing how important a period it was for Australian football. It is with a heavy heart that I must now end the journey.

'To coach your own country is the greatest privilege but it also has enormous responsibility.

"I feel now is the right time to pass on that responsibility to someone who will have the energy it requires. I owe this to the football association, the players and the fans."

Postecoglou took over from Holger Osieck in 2013 and led the country to the Asian Cup two years later. He won 22 of his 49 matches in charge.

The draw for the World Cup takes place at Moscow's State Kremlin Palace concert hall on Friday, 1 December at 15:00 GMT.

You can watch it live on BBC Two and the BBC Sport website and app, and listen on BBC Radio 5 live.

The tournament begins on Thursday, 14 June at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, where the final will also take place on Sunday, 15 July.

Eleven new sports and disciplines apply for Paris 2024

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has con-firmed that eight new sports and three sport disciplines have expressed an interest in applying for inclusion in the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games sport programme.

As part of a 14-month exercise by the IPC to determine the final sports programme for Paris 2024, recognised international federations of summer sports not yet on the Paralympic programme had until 21 November to notify the IPC whether they wanted to be considered for inclusion.

Eight international federations - International Federation of CP Football, International Federation of Powerchair Football, International Golf Federation, International Surfing Association, World Armwrestling Federation, World Karate Federation, World Para Dance Sport and World Sailing - all expressed an interest to be included.

By 21 November, existing international federations with sports and disciplines on the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games sports programme were also free to suggest additional sports and disciplines for inclusion in the 2024 Games.

The International Wheelchair Basketball Federation has put forward the 3x3 discipline of the sport, World Taekwondo has expressed an interest in including the Poomsae discipline of Para taekwondo and World Shooting Para Sport has proposed the inclusion of Para trap shooting.



Andrew Parsons, IPC President, said: "We truly believe that the application process to be included in the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games sport programme will be the most competitive yet and this is reflected with the number of sports and disciplines expressing an interest for inclusion.

"No sport is guaranteed a place at Paris 2024 and the IPC will now analyse these applications to determine which sports and disciplines go forward to the next phase. In the second phase of this exercise the level of competition will increase dramatically as sports already on the Paralympic programme will enter the race."

On 27 January 2018, the IPC Governing Board will meet in Bonn, Germany, to decide which new sports and disciplines from those who have expressed an interest are eligible to enter Phase 2 of the application process.

From February 2018, the 22 established Paralympic sports, plus those additional sports and disciplines approved by the Governing Board, will be invited to complete a comprehensive application pack by July 2018. The pack features a series of questions that aims to give the IPC detailed information regarding each sport's governance, rules and regulations, associated costs, anti-doping programme compliance and activities, worldwide reach, quadrennial competition programme and procedures to ensure athlete welfare.

Following a thorough review of all applications, including full agreement from the IOC and Paris 2024, the IPC Governing Board will announce its final decision on the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games sport programme in early 2019.

The first Paralympic Games took place in Rome, Italy, in 1960 and featured 400 athletes from 23 countries who competed in eight sports - archery, athletics, dartchery, snooker, swimming, table tennis, wheelchair fencing and wheelchair basketball.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

(Source: BBC)

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Zinebi festival director **Ernesto del Rio invited** to Cinema Verite

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – The director of the Zinebi-Inter-national Festival of Documentary and Short Films of Bilbao, Ernesto del Rio, has been invited to attend the 11th edition of Cinema Verite, the Iranian international festival for documentary films, the organizers announced on Wednesday.



"Khordad" by Monir Farmanfarmaian.

Vanesa Fernandez, a member of the selection committee of the Zinebi festival, will accompany Del Rio on the trip to Tehran.

The Zinebi, which is currently underway in the Spanish city of Bilbao, is an Academy Award Qualifying festival.

The Experimental and Documentary Film Center is the organizer of the Cinema Verite festival, whose 11th edition will be neld in Tehran from December 10 to 17.

Iranian cultural festival opens in Uruguay

RTeskTEHRAN — The University of the Republic
(Universidad de la Republica) in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, is playing host to an Iranian cultural festival. Exhibitions displaying hand-



A lineup of movies from Iranian directors is slated to poster for Iranian cultur be screened during the event. festival in Uruguay. Several Iranian scholars are in Montevideo to deliver speeches on Persian history and civilization.

Sunrise: 6:49 (tomorrow)

NOVEMBER 23, 2017 ART & CULTURE

Actor Hamid Jebelli to returns to the stage with "Sweet Nightmares"

CULTURE TEHRAN — Actor s k Hamid Jebelli who promised his fans and friends last year that he would return to the stage seems to be in the limelight next week not with his acting but with paintings from his collection "Sweet Nightmares"

My generation knows Hamid Jebelli by his voice and face but now it can be familiar with another of his abilities at this exhibit," Kian Vatan, the 41-year-old painter who will curate Jebelli's exhibition, told the Persian service of Honaronline on Wednesday.

About 40 paintings created over the past two years will be put on display at Tehran's Atbin Gallery during the exhibition, which will open on Friday.

"I'm really pleased that my efforts have produced such favorable results as these artworks, which have rarely been seen before and will now be showcased for the public," he added.

"The paintings cannot be categorized in any specific theme and Mr. Jebelli has

drawn whatever he wanted," Vatan noted. He said that he knows Jebelli as a painter and sculptor rather than an actor, and added "Jebelli has also created collections of drawings and sculptures." Vatan expressed his hope that he can

convince Jebelli to let him organize an exhibition of his sculptures in the near future.

The exhibition will run until December 12 at Atbin Gallery located at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave near Parkway Intersection.

Iranian ensembles to raise funds for child victims of Kermanshah quake



This combination photo shows vocalists Parvaz Homay (L) and Vahid Taj.

R T TEHRAN – Iranian e s k ensembles Mastan and Mehrabani have pledged that they will dedicate part of the funds raised during their upcoming concerts to relief efforts for children affected by the devastating earthquake in the Kermanshah region in western Iran.

Mastan, which is led by its vocalist Parvz Homa, will perform at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry in Tehran on November

28 and 29. Mehrabani along with its vocalist Vahid Taj will give a performance at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on December 17.

Following the devastating earthquake, numerous Iranian artists have announced that they would organize various programs to help the victims of the natural disaster.

The massive earthquake killed hundreds and injured thousands last week.

Art enthusiasts attend the opening ceremony of the "Rituals through the Lens of a Camera" exhibition at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia in Tbilisi November 21, 2017. (IRNA)

ARTdesktion of photos on Iranian and Georgian rituals several photographers from both countries is underway at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia in Tbilisi. Over 120 photos have been put on view in the exhibit titled "Rituals through the Lens of

a Camera", Iranian Cultural Attaché Mojtaba Kamranfard announced in a press release on Wednesday.

The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia is organizing the exhibit in collaboration with Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization

Vatican, China swap art in bid to mend strained ties

VATICAN CITY (Reuters) - The Vatican and China will exchange paintings, vases and sculptures in a bid to mend often strained ties through "the diplomacy of art", officials said on Tuesday.

Forty works from the Vatican will go on show in Beijing's Forbidden City and 40 from China in the Vatican Museums in unprecedented simultaneous exhibitions in March, art chiefs from both countries told a news conference.

"It will be an event that overcomes borders and time and that unites different cultures and civilizations," Zhu Jiancheng, the head of the government-backed China Culture Investment Fund, said.

"It will strengthen the friendship between China and the atican and it will favor the normaliza



"With no fear and no barriers, beauty and art are truly a vehicle of dialogue," said Barbara Jatta, the director of the Vatican Museums.

"This is the key of the success that we, at the Vatican Museums, love to call the 'diplomacy of art'," said Jatta, the first woman to head the museums, which receive about six million visitors a year.

The simultaneous shows reminiscent of the "pingbong diplomacy" of the early 1970s, when China and the United States each hosted national teams of the sport as a prelude to President Richard Nixon's historic trip to Beijing in 1972.

Jatta told Reuters that for the Beijing exhibition, ex-

A poster for the "Sweet Nightmares" exhibition.

Georgian, Iranian rituals in focus at Tbilisi photo exhibit

NIGHTMA



Jebelli is also an old hand at photography of theater. The Association of Iranian Theater Photographers honored him for his lifetime achievements in the field in May 2016 at a special ceremony, during

which his friends Fatemeh Motamed-Arya and Reza Kianian asked him to return to the stage after his lengthy hiatus from working in Iranian cinema since 2012 when he played a role in "Kolah-Qermezi and Mama's Boy", the third sequel to director Iraj Tahmasb's comedy drama.

"Forbidden Planet" robot sets price record for movie prop sold at auction

NEW YORK (Reuters) – "Robby the Robot", the seven-foot tall creature featured in the 1956 science fiction film "Forbidden Planet", sold at auction for \$5.375 million, a record for a movie prop, a New York auction house said on Tuesday.



Bonhams, which conducted the auction, said the price beat the previous prop record of \$4 million for the 12-inch falcon statue in the Humphrey Bogart classic "The Maltese Falcon" and topped the \$4.6 million for the white dress worn by Marilyn Monroe in "The Seven Year Itch.

icrafts, traditional costumes,

carpets and miniature paintings from Iran have been arranged

at the Faculty of Information

photos of some natural attrac-

tions of Iran are on view in an

Darvag, an Iranian traditional

music ensemble, is scheduled to

give several performances during the festival, which opened on

Monday and will close on Friday.

In addition, a collection of

and Communication.

exhibition.

"Robby the Robot is one of those symbols of American culture that is embedded in our DNA." Catherine Williamson. director of entertainment memorabilia at Bonhams, said in a statement.

Robbie the Robot, the prop robot used in the 1956 science fiction head and functioning limbs movie Forbidden Planet, is that included legs that look pictured in this undated handout like stacked bowling balls, is photo obtained by Reuters a devoted servant to Profes-November 21, 2017. (Bonhams/ Handout via Reuters)

Robby, with a glass dome sor Morbius. The robot stole scenes in the movie "Forbidden

Planet" with his dry sense of humor and body parts that light up when he speaks.

The three-piece prop was built at a cost of about \$100.000. which, adjusted for inflation, would be nearly \$1 million today.

The name of the buyer was not released.

relations," he said of the project, in which each side will loan art works to the other.

Relations between the Vatican and Beijing have been strained for decades.

Chinese Catholics are divided between those loyal to the pope - the so-called "underground Church" - and those who belong to state-backed Church known as The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.

The main dispute blocking diplomatic ties is the Vatican's insistence that the pope - and not the government

Disney-Pixar animation executive Lasseter takes leave after 'missteps': memo

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Walt Disney Co executive John Lasseter, who heads animation at both Disnev and Pixar. told company staff on Tuesday he was taking a six-month leave of absence following what he called "missteps" including unwanted hugs that made employees uncomfortable, according to a memo seen by Reuters.

"It's never easy to face your missteps, but it's the only way to learn from them, Lasseter said in the memo, in which he apologized to employees who felt "disrespected or uncomfortable.

John Lasseter, Chief Creative Officer of "I especially want to apologize to anyone who has ever been on the receiving end of an unwanted hug or any other gesture they felt crossed the line in any way, shape, or form," he added. "No matter how benign my intent, everyone has the right to set their own boundaries and have them respected."

A pioneer in computer animation, Lasseter has been the driving creative force behind Disney's success in animated films over the past decade. He is an Oscar winner and chief creative officer of Pixar Animation Studios and Walt Disney An-



Tourists visit the Forbidden City in central Beijing, China, on China's 68th National Day October 1, 2017. (Reuters/ Jason Lee)

be responsible for appointing bishops.

Pope Francis and his predecessors Benedict and John Paul have tried to improve relations with Beijing, whose communist party severed relations in 1951. But efforts at agreement have often stalled.

erts would select 39 works of art that originated and are now in the Vatican's Anima Mundi (Soul of the World) ethnological collection, which numbers 80,000 pieces, 20,000 of them Chinese.

"In a sense, 39 of them will be going back home," she said. The 40th piece would be an object of Western European Christian art, a painting which has not yet been selected.

The Chinese art works displayed in the Vatican will be 10 paintings by contemporary Chinese artist Zhang Yan and 30 works of art from China's state collections representing various periods of Chinese history.

Smithsonian, Christo stole credit from top photographer, lawsuit says

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The Smithsonian Institution and the artist Christo were sued on Tuesday by a New York photographer who accused them of stealing credit for his photos of "Running Fence, a 1976 installation that remains one of Christo's best-known works.

Gianfranco Gorgoni said he never gave permission to use his copyrighted photos of the 24-mile (39 km) nylon-and-steel installation for a 2010 book, "Remembering the Running Fence," and film accompanying a Smithsonian exhibition.

Gorgoni said his photos had been used in a 1978 book "Christo: Running Fence,' which called him the copyright owner.

But according to the complaint filed in the U.S. District Court in Manhattan, Christo sold the photos to the Smithsonian in 2007, and he and his wife Jeanne-Claude falsely told the institution that they held the copyrights.

Gorgoni, who retained the negatives, said he later tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a licensing arrangement with the defendants, whose websites name Christo as the copyright holder.

"This action is brought by Gorgoni to



Bulgarian-born artist Christo Vladimirov Javacheff known as Christo attends a news conference during the presentation of the installation 'The Floating Piers', on the Lake Iseo, northern Italy June 16, 2016. (Reuters/Stefano Rellandini)

vindicate his rights as an artist in response to the wrongful actions taken by Christo and the Smithsonian to erase Gorgoni's artistic contributions from the historical record," the complaint said.

Chris LaRocco, a lawyer for Christo, declined to comment. The Smithsonian did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Gorgoni is seeking a declaration that he holds the copyrights plus unspecified damages.



Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios, speaks during the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan, U.S. on January 8, 2017. REUTERS/ Brendan McDermid/File Photo imation Studios.

Disney said in a statement that it appreciated Lasseter's "candor and sincere apology" and supported his leave of absence.

"We are committed to maintaining an environment in which all employees are respected and empowered to do their best work," the company said.