NTERNATIONAL

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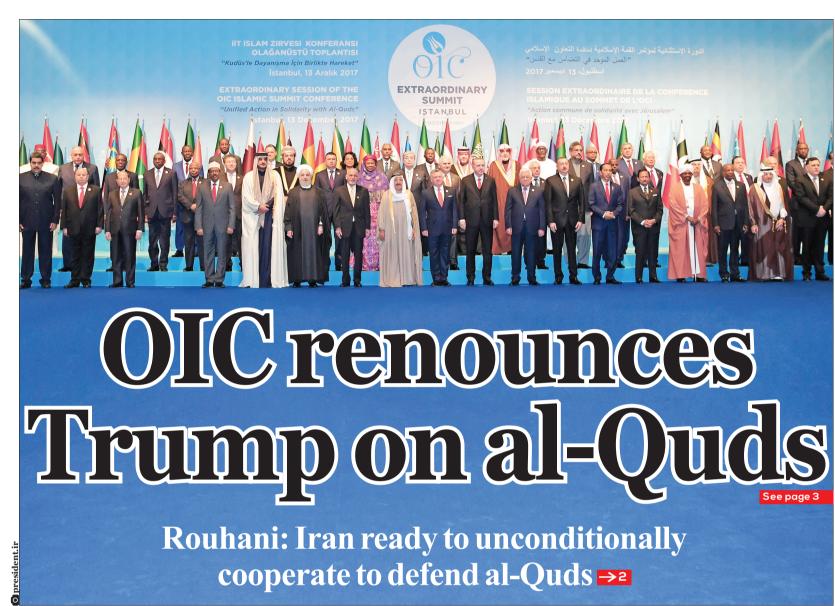


Gazprom inks agreement on Iran's \$4b gas project 🔼



Carlos Queiroz 7th on World's Best National Coach list 15





Cinéma du Reel rep at Cinema Verite seeking Iranian docs

TEHRAN - Seeking Iranian documentary films, Cinéma du Réel's new director assigned board member Carine Bernasconi on a mission to go to the Cinema Verite festival in Tehran to select works by Ira-

nian filmmakers for the French event. "Before I came, the artistic director Andréa Picard] said that she would really like to screen Iranian movies, so I hope to find good ones for the festival," Bernasconi told the Tehran Times on Tuesday.

She is in Tehran to attend the Cinema Verite, Iran's documentary film festival, which is currently underway at the Charsu Cineplex on Sunday. This is the second time she has attended the event to select films from Iranian filmmakers to screen at the Parisian event.

"I am back again to see the films selected for the national competition and I also have plans to meet some Iranian filmmakers and producers," she said. \rightarrow 16

Explore a microcosm of Sufism while traversing Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN - Arrays of harmonious sunscorched domes, well-preserved and richly-ornamented facades and interiors and, above all, an atmosphere of peace and tranquility have all made the Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble a must-see stopover

for travelers to the city of Ardabil in northwest Iran.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, the city is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people and its silk and carpet trade tradition. Its weather is pleasantly cool in summer but can turn somewhat nasty in winter. \rightarrow 10

Saudi warplanes keep pounding Yemen, kill 51

More than 50 people have been killed and over 80 others wounded as Saudi fighter jets step up airstrikes against the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, and other

Early on Wednesday, Saudi jets targeted the headquarters of Yemen's military police in the Shu'aub district of Sana'a, killing 39 people and injuring 80 others, according to reports by Reuters and the Yemeni al-Masirah TV.

The al-Masirah report said the aircraft had carried out seven rounds of bombings against the facility. It identified some of the casualties as prisoners held as part of criminal investigations. \rightarrow 13



Trump's shock to compromise advocates

ver the decades, the domestic and foreign policy of the United States has been full of phenomena and events that their dark side has never been disclosed to public opinion or even to American citizens. An implausible point is that even the American media are committed to the invisible red lines designed by their security agencies, including the CIA and the federal police so that such cases are never to be covered.

One of these cases occurred precisely during the 2016 presidential campaigns in the United States. Even now, for many who follow the U.S. election analyzes, the issue of "change in support" by AIPAC lobby from Ted Cruz to Donald Trump is questionable. Indeed, what happened when Netanyahu, the prime minister of the Zionist regime, and the leaders of the two parties of Likud and Yisrael-Beiteinu, preferred to disregard Texas CED Senator Ted Cruz's service and chose Trump as the president of the United States? Everybody knows that Ted Cruz had tougher positions than Trump towards the JCPOA.

It was Ted Cruz, the 46-year-old Republican senator, who for the first time in the last year's presidential campaigns, raised the issue of tearing up the JCPOA. He had even promised to the AIPAC lobby to cancel the nuclear deal quickly and without any hesitation if he entered the White House. Therefore, in order to understand Tel Aviv's support for Trump in the last year's elections, it's necessary to look for more important factors than the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action".

The fact is that Jared Kushner, the 36-year-old Jewish son in law of Donald Trump, who played a very active role in his electoral team, decided to use "Jerusalem as the capital of Israel" as Trump's last chance to win against Ted Cruz. In the midst of Republican rivalries, Kushner had several meetings with the Zionist regime authorities and the leaders of the AIPAC lobby. He and Donald Trump told Tel Aviv that they would accept the risk incurred by the announcement of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. →7

Many wrongly believe Palestinians sold land to Israelis, says Islamic Jihad rep.

TEHRAN - Many people, even Iranians, have assumed that Palestinians sold out their lands to Israelis, representative of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Tehran said on Tuesday.

In a conference, dubbed "It's Time for Quds", held at the University of Tehran, Naser Abu Shareef stressed his objective as an envoy of the organization to Iran is to "describe" the issue of Palestine for Iranians.

"With widespread propaganda, the Zionist regime has succeeded at diverting public opinion from the Palestinian issues to an extent that even some Iranians wrongly believe that it was Palestinians who sold their



own lands to Jews, and the false information

was publicized from the Israeli embassy in

Tehran [in Shah's time.]" Organized by the university's Basij students to bring awareness of the latest Palestinian crises to college students, the conference came in the wake of the U.S. president's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

On December 6, Donald Trump declared al-Quds as the capital of Israel and ordered relocation of the U.S. embassy to there. His unprecedented move triggered unrest in the Islamic world and invited immediate reactions and condemnation.

Trump's decision, upending seven decades of U.S. foreign policy, has unsettled the prospects for peace in the occupied territories. \rightarrow 7

Amano cannot afford to alienate himself from U.S.: ex-senior CIA official

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

TEHRAN — Professor Paul Pillar, who was CIA intelligence analyst for 28 years, tells the Tehran Times that "much of the opposition to the JCPOA in the United States attempts to confuse people with vague references to "anywhere, anytime" inspections, and the Trump administration has joined in some of this confusion, the U.S. statement at the IAEA meeting appears to be within the bounds of what was agreed to in the JCPOA."

Pillar also says, "The PMD issue always has been one of the issues opponents have liked to raise. With the Iranians complying with the agreement, according to repeated declarations a popular opposition argument."

'The IAEA director general is in a delicate position. He cannot afford to alienate himself from the United States, but he also must maintain the integrity of his own organization and the integrity of its inspections," Pillar tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview: U.S. delegation in IAEA after recent session in IAEA announced that "We welcome the Director General's statement that the IAEA continues to evaluate Iran's declarations under the Additional Protocol, and to conduct complementary access inspections to sites and locations in Iran. Any new and credible concerns of undeclared nuclear activities, including any potential weaponization-related

by the IAEA, the PMD issue will continue to be issues, can and must be pursued by the IAEA. According to this, what means "complementary access inspections to sites and locations in Iran"?

> Is this access beyond the Additional Protocol? A: The reference is to inspections under the terms of the Additional Protocol. The surrounding portion of the U.S. statement refers specifically to the Additional Protocol and the standards observed by other nations that have accepted it. Although much of the opposition to the JCPOA in the United States attempts to confuse people with vague references to "anywhere, anytime" inspections, and the Trump administration has joined in some of this confusion, the U.S. statement at the IAEA meeting appears to be within the bounds of what was agreed to in the JCPOA. \rightarrow 7



Qashqai wedding celebrated in Shiraz

Two couples from Qashqai tribe tied the knot on the sidelines of the 9th Pars Tourism Festival in the southern city of Shiraz, Fars Province.

 $Dressed\,in\,beautiful\,costumes, Qashqai$ men danced to their traditional music and celebrated the wedding.

The Qashqai are a Turkish-speaking tribe of pastoral nomads in southern Iran. They migrate between winter pastures near the Persian Gulf and summer pastures on the Iranian Plateau.

Started on December 10, the Pars Tourism Festival wrapped up on De-



Iran as the nuclear 'other'

ver wonder why U.S. President Donald Trump called the Iran nuclear deal the "worst deal ever" for America? It would be a remote proposition to say that the deal has not met its claim to being a good non-proliferation agreement. The thing about the deal that stings Trump and his fellows may be that it came across the idea they wanted Iran to represent.

To make my point, let's have a detour to the postcolonial field of study and the process called 'othering' as a mechanism of imperialism to sustain its domination. The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through notions such as blackness, primitivism, etc., to help establish the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized, wherefore to assert the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view, as well as to create the right for the colonizer to change - under such pretexts as education, economic development, or containment of threat - what it wishes about the subject.

The term 'other' in postcolonial studies derives from French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's notion of the other which the child realizes when it looks in the mirror and recognizes itself as a separate being. For the child, its image becomes the source of hope for, as Lacan says, an "anticipated mastery," which lays ground for the formation of the ego.

In postcolonial terms, the 'other' has come to be used for the colonized subjects who are marginalized by imperial discourse, identified by their difference from the center and existing as subjects of mastery to the imperial ego.

Indian scholar Gayatri Spivak took the notion of the other to introduce the verb "othering" to denote the process by which imperial discourse creates its others. Here again the other is the excluded or mastered subject created by the discourse of power. The otherness of the other, in fact, owes its existence to the colonial discourse.

Now, back to Trump's track, the Iran deal can be seen as running across the discourse that was trying to cast Iran out of the 'civilized', 'educated', 'peaceful' category of nations. \rightarrow 2

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran: Entire Islamic world on side of **Palestinians**

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif of Iran has hailed the presence of the Islamic states in Turkey to express support for the Palestinians in protest to the recognition of al-Quds as the capital of Israel by U.S. President Donald Trump, saying the entire Muslim world is on the side of Palestinians.

"Inspired by very high level participation at extraordinary OIC summit, despite handful of telling exceptions. The entire Muslim world stands in solidarity with Palestinians and rejects Trump's gifting of what he does not own to those who have no right to it," Zarif said on his Tweeter account.



Zarif renews Iran's calls for ceasefire in Yemen

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday reiterated Iran's support for any efforts to reduce the sufferings of the Yemeni people and immediately stop the war in the country.

"Ending the nightmare that is the war in Yemen is our collective responsibility. We welcome the growing recognition that there is no military solution, and we are ready to contribute to any effort towards an immediate ceasefire, humanitarian assistance and intra-Yemeni dialogue," Zarif tweeted.

More than 12,000 people have been killed since the onset of the Saudi-led military campaign against Yemen more than two and a half years ago. About ten millions are also suffering from starvation.



Velayati says U.S. after new turmoil in Iraq

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, warned on Wednesday that the United States is again pursuing plots to foment insecurity in Syria and Iraq again.

"The U.S. is after turmoil again in Syria and Iraq, especially in Raqqa," Velayati said, emphasizing that there's no need for the U.S. presence in the region, Fars news agency reported.

"Certainly, the Syrian government and people and the resistance front will force the Americans to leave those regions in Syria which have been occupied by them,"



Washington cannot decide for others: lawmaker

POLITICS TEHRAN — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Wednesday that only the Syrian people can decide their future, criticizing the United States for interfering in the internal affairs of other countries.

Boroujerdi criticized Washington for acting as the world's sheriff, saying this is a "modern dictatorship" which has caused the Americans' consecutive failures in the region.

He also denied claims that Iran, Turkey and Russia have agreed that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad must go, saying Syria is an independent country which will decide its own fate, ISNA reported.



Iran, Russia form joint working group to boost ties

TEHRAN — Chairman of the Iran-Russia parliamentary friendship group, Ramezanali Sobhanifard, said on Wednesday that a joint working group has been formed to enhance the relations between Tehran and Moscow in the wake of the recent visit by Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani to Moscow.

"From Iran, the members of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, the Iran-Russia friendship group and the Majlis Research Center are present in the joint Iran-Russia working group," Sobhanifard was quoted by Fars as saying.

The lawmaker reiterated that the working group will gather every two months.



Khatam-al Anbiya active in 10 major fields

TICS TEHRAN — Brigadier General Ebadollah Abdollahi, the commander of the Khatam-al Anbiya Construction Unit, said on Wednesday that the firm is helping the government in 10 major fields.

General Abdollahi said the fields include oil, gas, petrochemical industry, water, power plants, transportation and mining industry, ISNA reported.

According to the commander, the government owes nearly \$10 billion to the Khatam-al Anbiya Construction Unit. He also said the construction unit played a very important role during the Iran-Iraq war and after the war it helped different administrations to develop the country.

Rouhani: Iran ready to unconditionally cooperate to defend Quds

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that Iran is ready to cooperate unconditionally with all Muslim nations to defend al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Rouhani made the remarks in a speech to the leaders of the 57 Islamic nations who have gathered in Istanbul, Turkey, to decide about the recognition of al-Quds as the capital of Israel by U.S. President Donald Trump.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to cooperate with each one of the Muslim countries to defend the holy Quds without any reservation or pre-condition," Rouhani told the emergency summit of the Islamic Cooperation Organization.

Following is full text of his speech published by president.ir:

I would like to begin with appreciating the efforts of my dear brother His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan for organizing this very significant meeting. We have gathered here to exchange views on the appalling tragedy and the old wound of the Muslim Ummah in the last one hundred years which began with the Balfour conspiracy and is now experiencing a new chapter with the incorrect and unlawful promise of the U.S. President to move the American Embassy to the holy city of Quds.

Today we speak about Quds which is the first Qiblah of Muslims and the third holiest Islamic shrine and is used to recognize the identity and credibility of Palestine. The uprising of the tireless people of Palestine during the past several days against the United States and the Zionist occupiers once again demonstrated that Palestinians would not pin their hope on empty plans and instead are insisting on their righteous demands.

The Muslim states fortunately were quick in reacting to the approach of the U.S. administration towards the Quds City. And the formation of this summit indicates the correct interpretation by Muslims of the incorrect act of the U.S. President.

Distinguished brothers and sisters,

Through every possible means, we should join hands to prevent the enforcement of such an unintelligent U.S. act. However, we should also investigate what elements and reasons emboldened the U.S. President to

take such a rude and sacrilegious decision. I believe that other than any other reason,



If we suffer from differences amongst ourselves over some issues, we should not be divided on defending the holy Quds and the Palestinian cause.

the efforts of some countries to establish relations and even consultation and coordination with the Zionist regime have incited such a decision.

Instead of countering the threats of the Zionists, some countries in our region are aligned with the U.S. and Zionists to prescribe the fate of Palestine. If such prescriptions are taken, the Zionists would permanently dominate the Palestinians.

Today it is no secret that the biggest enemy of the Jews are not the Muslims and Arabs but the dangerous project of Zionism. We Muslims, Christians and the Jews are the historical owners of this region. The Zionists however are stranger here and have imposed themselves on this region. The Zionists have in fact planted the seeds of terrorism and violence in this region since the beginning years of the past century.

During the past several decades, the Zionist regime has been responsible for the killing and displacement of Palestinians while disrespecting Islamic sanctity in Palestine. In committing all such crimes and murders, the United States has been supporting the Zionists with its veto power in the Security Council of the United Nations and has spared no effort in supplying all kinds of destructive weapons to the Zionist regime. Unfortunately, the United States was chosen as an arbitrator for years in negotiations. Or they sought the support of the U.S. and relied on it for mediation.

The United States has never been an honest mediator. And it will never be. The recent act by the U.S. administration made it clear for the people who wished a positive role by the U.S. in resolving the issue of Palestine that the U.S. is only seeking to secure the maximum interests of the Zionists and consider no respect for the legitimate demands of Palestinians.

Mr Chair,

In order to counter such oppressive and low-minded measures, it is necessary to take lessons from the past. Therefore, I take the opportunity to propose the following actions:

1- It is necessary for this summit to strongly condemn the recent decision by the U.S.

administration to recognize al-Quds as the capital of the Zionist regime and move its embassy to the holy Quds.

2- Under the present circumstances, it is necessary for the Muslim world to get united against the Zionist regime. If we suffer from differences amongst ourselves over some issues, we should not be divided on defending the holy Quds and the Palestinian cause. All the problems of the Muslim world can be resolved through dialogue. It is only through Islamic unity that we can better support the rights of the Islamic Ummah

and the holy Quds. 3- The U.S. administration should be $aware\ of\ the\ reality\ that\ the\ world\ of\ Islam$ does not remain indifferent towards the fate of Palestine and the holy Quds. And that ridiculing international approvals and ideas of nearly all the international community on the issue of Palestine would have political repercussions and costs.

4- It is imperative on the Muslim states to harmonize their protest to the recent U.S. decision in their talks with America's partners especially European countries and emphasize on the necessity to stand against such a decision.

5- The issue of Palestine should once again be placed top on the agenda of the Muslim world. With the defeat of Daesh in Iraq and Syria and the necessity of continuing the fight against other terrorist groups, we should not forget the dangers of the Zionist regime including its nuclear warheads which is a threat to the whole world.

6-The United Nations and particularly the Security Council and its General Assembly can and should play a key role under such circumstances to express their opposition to the recent U.S. decision. It is necessary that diplomatic missions of Muslim states in the United Nations actively participate in the discussions.

 $7\text{-}\,\text{The}\,\text{movements}$ of the Zionist regime should be constantly monitored and the OIC should hold sessions wherever appropriate to take necessary decisions at the ministerial or heads of state level.

In conclusion, the Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to cooperate with each one of the Muslim countries to defend the holy Quds without any reservation or pre-condition.

Thank you

5+1 protests Washington's lack of commitment to JCPOA

POLITICS TEHRAN — A high-level meeting of e s k the JCPOA joint commission was held in the Austrian capital of Vienna on Wednesday.

The commission is tasked with monitoring commitments to the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and six

Representatives from Iran, the 5+1 group (Russia, China, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany) and the European Union gathered in Vienna to address various issues regarding the implementation of the nuclear deal, known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). After the meeting, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi told reporters that all members of the 5+1 group protested Washington's lack of commitment to the JCPOA and emphasized that the United States needs to carry out its duties under the deal.

"I think this time the commission dealt more assertively with America's non-compliance," Araqchi was quoted by IRNA as saying. Despite all their pretensions, he said, the American

delegation said they will remain committed to the JCPOA. The Iranian diplomat also said what happens inside

the United States is "completely irrelevant" to the implementation of the deal.

nuclear deal) back and forth between Congress and the White House, but they must adhere to their commitments in any case," he said, adding as long as the U.S. is committed to the JCPOA, the deal will remain

"They can send Barjam (a Persian acronym for the

He also categorically ruled out any possibility of renegotiation on the terms of the JCPOA, saying the nuclear pact was aimed to resolve the nuclear issue and other issues must not be linked to it.

No other issues should be mixed with the JCPOA, except those that are mentioned in the text of the deal, he said.

'Iran fully ready if U.S. violates JCPOA'

e s k an Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has said that Iran is "fully ready" if the U.S. violates the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA.

Iran is fully ready for any situation and has prepared various appropriate options and scenarios if the U.S. refrains from fulfilling its obligations," he told IRIB in an interview published on Wednesday.

Iran, the European Union and other countries, especially signatories to the nuclear deal, expect the U.S. to meet its commitments under the agreement, he noted.

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

In a speech on October 13, Trump decertified Iran's compliance to the nuclear deal and asked Congress to decide about the fate of the agreement within 60 days. Trump said if Congress does nothing he himself will terminate the deal.

According to Reuters, Congress will allow a deadline on reimposing sanctions

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranion on Iran to pass this week, congressional and White House aides said on Tuesday, leaving a pact between world powers and Tehran intact at least temporarily.

Ali Khorram, a senior expert on international affairs, says the nuclear deal which has been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, has been drafted in a way in which no body or person, who is aware of international law, can take a stance against it.

Khorram, who represented Iran at the UN bodies in Vienna, says Congress will put itself under question if it violates the JCPOA, the official name for the nuclear agreement.

In an article published on IRNA website on Wednesday, Kharram also said Congress has fully realized that except Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu the entire world support the nuclear agreement and that the JCPOA has advocates within the United States.

The senior analyst says if Trump himself orders sanctions in violation of the JCPOA he will be "internationally responsible" for all consequences which will be a "heavy responsibility in line with protecting international security".

Iran as the nuclear 'other'

The outcasting was surely not technical in terms of nuclear science, i.e. attempt was not here to get away the knowhow from Iran, which is practically impossible. The attempt was rather to create a notion of Iran as a country that cannot have this or any other technology on the grounds that it is the 'other', the 'primitive' in imperial discourse that just is not entitled to mingling in with the 'us', the 'center'.

This is the reason why the International Atomic Energy Agency's official reports that Iran is complying with the deal, as well as the European Union's repeated emphasis that the deal is working and should be preserved, are nonsense to the United States. Washington's expansionism cannot have Iran as a neutralized state. But why?

How and why imperial discourse creates its others is well shown in "Waiting for the Barbarians", a novel by the South African novelist John Maxwell Coetzee. The magistrate who tells the story is situated at one of the contact zones of the empire running the business of the outpost town in a mostly tranquil atmosphere. The turn of the story comes when Colonel Joll of the Third Bureau (i.e. the secret police) is commissioned there to beat out of the

'barbarians' any information that can be gathered. It is not hard to imagine that there has been no threat and therefore no information to draw from the nomadic people before the arrival of Colonel Joll. However, the Colonel is in the business of creating the enemy, of patching up some opposition that must exist so that the empire is able to define itself on grounds of difference with the other, and then to justify its workings against it.

Now, no matter how much the Old Continent prefers peace and quiet with a neutralized Iran, the American empire cannot miss having a nemesis. A neutralized Iran would mean less legitimacy for America as the serving soldier of the "global community" deployed anywhere a threat peeks.

A more pessimistic view of the situation nonetheless, can be one of the old good cop/ bad cop as an attempt to nullify, in practice, Iran's military threat, if any, while keeping the idea of its threat alive. This view may be justified by the fact that after they stroke the nuclear pact with Iran, Western powers are stoking the furnace with claiming fresh concern over Iran's missile program, the status of human rights in the country, or economic transparency.

EU's Mogherini: Preserving nuclear deal is 'an absolute must'

POLITICS European Union foreign policy chief e s k Federica Mogherini said on Tuesday that preserving and implementing the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran is "an absolute must".

"We cannot afford to undermine the credibility of a multilateral agreement, endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution, and we cannot afford to dismantle a deal that works and delivers on its promises," she said during her speech at the European Parliament plenary session.

Following is an excerpt of her speech published by the EU website:

It took us twelve years of extremely difficult negotiations, led by the European Union, to achieve these results. Renegotiating the deal or part of it is simply not an option - no one can possibly in good faith believe that this is a credible way to follow. After President Trump's announcement on a new U.S. strategy

towards Iran, we Europeans have made our position very clear. Preserving the deal is our shared security interest, and the best way for the United States to address their security concerns which are also ours, is in close cooperation with us, Europeans.

Dismantling a nuclear agreement that is working would not put us in a better position to discuss all the rest – the

contrary would happen. In fact, this is what we always do in our contacts with Iran. Discussing all the issues we have on the table, from cooperation to the difficult ones, including regional issues. On November 20th we held the latest EU-Iran High Level Dialogue, and as $you\,know, I\,meet\,regularly\,with\,Foreign\,Minister\,[Mohammad$ Javad] Zarif. For more than two years now, we have built a very frank relationship with Iran: we are always open about our disagreements, and there are many, and we always try to find the best way to address them.

Since we reached the nuclear deal, our engagement with Iran has entered into a new phase.

Trade between Iran and Europe increased 94 percent in the first half of 2017, compared to the first half of 2016. Oil exports have reached pre-sanctions level, and billions of outstanding oil debts have been paid back. Foreign Direct Investment is increasing, and the Iranian government reported a growth of

55 percent compared to the previous year. Progress in the financial and banking sector has been slower due to a number of factors. But important work is being carried out to improve the situation - also including

on the Iranian side. Civil nuclear cooperation is also integral part of the deal and let me stress here, as the debate refers to the Iran nuclear $\,$ deal, I am focusing here on the implementation of the deal and all the nuclear related parts of it.

OIC leaders renounce Trump's al-Quds decision

Erdogan: Israel is an 'occupying' and 'terror' state

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has sharply criticized Israel at the opening of a summit of Islamic nations in Islambul, calling it a "terror state.

Turkey is hosting the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Wednesday in the wake of the U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as its capital — a move widely criticized across the world but hailed by Israel. The summit is expected to forge a unified position of Arab and Muslim countries.

Erdogan said in his speech to the gathering that Jerusalem is a "red line" for Muslims who will not accept any aggression on its Islamic sanctuaries. He said East Jerusalem is the capital of a future Palestinian state and called on states that have not recognized a Palestinian state to do so.

Erdogan said the "process to include Palestine in international agreements and institutions should be sped up". "Israel is an occupying state (and) Israel is a terror state," he said.

OIC leaders renounce Trump's al-Quds decision

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) convenes an urgent summit in Istanbul on Washington's contentious declaration on Jerusalem al-Quds, with the Turkish foreign minister urging Muslim nations to respond by pressing the world for the recognition of the city as the capital of a Palestinian state.

Representatives from 57 OIC members are attending the summit, which is meant to coordinate a response to a U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's

Firstly the Palestinian state must be recognized by all other countries. We must all strive together for this," the top Turkish diplomat, Mevlut Cavusoglu, said. "We must encourage other countries to recognize the Palestinian state on the basis of its 1967 borders with East Jerusalem [al-Quds] as

al-Quds 'red line for Muslims'

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose country holds the rotating presidency of the OIC, was the first head of state to address the event.

He told OIC leaders that Israel's expansionism is "skyrocketing," describing the entity as "a state of occupation." "Besides this, Israel is a state of terror."

The Turkish leader further urged the international community to recognize East

Jerusalem as the "capital of Palestine." Erdogan described Washington's decision as a reward for Israeli "terror acts" and said the city was a red line for Muslims.

Al-Quds will forever be Palestine's capital'

Meanwhile, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas decried the Trump administration's decision as the "greatest crime" and



said Washington was giving away Jerusalem al-Quds a "gift" to the "Zionist movement" as if it were an American city, adding, "It crosses all the red lines.

"Jerusalem [al-Quds] is and will forever be the capital of the Palestinian state... There will be no peace, no stability without that,

Abbas rejected any future role for the United States in the so-called Middle East peace process, noting that Washington is biased in favor of Israel.

He called on the UN to assume the mediating role in the Mideast peace process and revive it with a new mechanism as the U.S. is no longer "fit" for the task.

The Palestinian president pointed to the unanimous international opposition to Trump's decision, calling it a "provocation"

to Muslim and Christian sentiments. **■ 'Al-Quds status quo must not**

Jordanian King Abdullah II rejected any attempt to change the status quo of East Jerusalem al-Quds and its holy sites.

He stressed that the Middle East cannot witness peace until the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved. "All violence... is a result of a failure to find a peaceful solution to the Palestinian issue.

Earlier this month, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that the U.S. was recognizing Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's with making preparations for the relocation of Washington's embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied Palestinian city.

The dramatic shift in Washington's Jerusalem al-Quds policy drew fierce criticism from the international community, including the United States' Western allies, and triggered demonstrations against the U.S. and Israel worldwide.

On Tuesday, the EU's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, reaffirmed the position of the European Union, saying East Jerusalem, which hosts the al-Aqa Mosque compound, shall become the capital of a Palestinian state and the western part of the city shall go to Israel as part of a so-called two state solution.

"We have made it clear that we will continue to respect the international consensus on Jerusalem [al-Quds], as Europeans, including the relocation of our embassies until the final status of Jerusalem [al-Quds] is resolved through direct negotiations between the parties," she added.

On Saturday, Arab League foreign ministers held an emergency meeting in Cairo. The meeting urged Washington to rescind its decision and called on the international community to recognize the Palestinian state.

Jerusalem al-Quds is under Israel's control. The international community views the regime's grip on the eastern part of the city, which came after the talks to decide the fate of the entire city in any future peace deal.

Kremlin does not share Erdogan's stance on Israel

The Kremlin is aware of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's stance on Israel but does not share it, Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

When commenting on Erdogan's statement, in which he called Israel a terrorist state and suggested that East Jerusalem should be declared the capital of Palestine, Peskov said that "we know what the position of the Turkish president is.

"We are aware of it but it is not in line with our position. Russia's position on Jerusalem and the Middle Eastern settlement is well known," he added.

At the same time, Peskov declined to answer the question as to how Erdogan's view could affect efforts to resolve the Palestine-Israel conflict. "I have nothing more to say," he noted.

On Wednesday, while addressing a summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Israel was an occupying and a terrorist state.

On December 6, U.S. President Donald Trump said that "it is time to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel." He added that his administration would begin a process of moving the U.S. embassy from

"capital" and tasked the State Department Six-Day War of 1967, as illegal, and urges Democrat Jones wins U.S. Senate seat in Alabama in blow to Trump

crat Doug Jones won a bitter fight for a U.S. Senate seat in deeply conservative Alabama on Tuesday, dealing a political blow to President Donald Trump in a race defined by sexual misconduct accusations against Republican candidate Roy Moore.

The stunning upset makes Jones the first Democrat elected to the U.S. Senate from Alabama in a quarter-century and will trim the Republicans' already narrow Senate majority to 51-49, opening the door for Democrats to possibly retake the chamber in next year's congressional elections.

Jones, who cast himself on the campaign trail as the candidate who could reach across the aisle and get things done in Washington, is expected to take office early in January, after the results are certified.

His election was not expected to affect pending votes in Congress on funding the government or overhauling the U.S. tax code, as Republican congressional leaders have vowed action on those bills before Christmas.

With 99 percent of the vote counted, Jones led by 1.5 percentage points over Moore, who refused to concede.

Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill said it was "highly unlikely" the outcome would change. "The people of Alabama have spoken," he told CNN.

The ugly campaign drew national attention and split the Republican Party following accusations by several women that Moore sexually assaulted or pursued them when they were teens and he was in his 30s.

Moore, 70, a Christian conservative twice removed from the state Supreme Court in Alabama for ignoring federal law, denied the allegations and said he did not know any of the women involved.

Trump endorsed Moore even as other party leaders in Washington walked away. Jones, 63, a former federal prosecutor, portrayed the campaign as a referendum on decency and promised the state's voters he would not embarrass them in Washington.

"I have always believed that the people of Alabama have more in common than divides us," Jones told cheering supporters at his Birmingham victory party.

Trump, who congratulated Jones in a tweet late Tuesday night, on Wednesday tried to cast the win in a different light.

The president had joined establishment Republicans in the primary by backing Luther Strange, who filled the seat



when Jeff Sessions left to serve as Trump's attorney general. After Moore won the Republican nomination, Trump wholeheartedly endorsed Moore.

'The reason I originally endorsed Luther Strange (and his numbers went up mightily), is that I said Roy Moore will not be able to win the General Election. I was right! Roy worked hard but the deck was stacked against him!' Trump said on Twitter.

Network exit polls, however, showed Trump was not a factor in the decision for about half of Alabama voters.

"It had zero to do with Donald Trump," Republican U.S. Representative Bradley Byrne of Alabama told MSNBC on Wednesday. The race was "a purely weird, unique election" not a harbinger of the 2018 midterm elections.

But U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, who heads the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, called the victory in one of the most conservative states in the nation "a political

"You see voters who are fed up, and they want to send the message that they don't like Trumpism," Van Hollen

said on MSNBC on Wednesday. "This was a big rejection of the ugly, divisive politics that Donald Trump has brought to the country.

Former President Barack Obama, a Democrat, recorded robo-calls for Jones to help turn out African-Americans, who, according to network exit polls, constituted about 30 percent of those voting on Tuesday.

As a U.S. attorney Jones helped win the convictions in 2001 and 2002 of members of the Ku Klux Klan for the 1963 bombing of a Birmingham church that killed four little girls.

The sexual misconduct allegations against Moore came at a time when many powerful men, including Trump, have faced similar accusations.

John Laine, 65, a retired book editor from Birmingham who backed Jones, said he thought many Republicans crossed

over and voted for a Democrat for the first time in their lives. "The reason is that people just couldn't stomach any more of Roy Moore," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

Israel continues airstrikes on Gaza amid al-Quds tensions



The Israeli air force continues raids against the Gaza Strip amid simmering tensions in the occupied Palestinian territories following the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's "capital."

The Israeli army said on Wednesday that it targeted a Hamas military compound in the southern Gaza Strip in response to what it claimed to be an undefined "projectile' fired from Gaza towards the southern parts of the occupied

An Israeli army spokeswoman said earlier that the army does not know where the projectiles hit.

According to Gaza security officials, the Israeli aircraft targeted a Hamas naval base west of the city of Khan Yunis and a nearby open land.

There were no reports of casualties on either side.

On Tuesday, an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle carried out an attack in the besieged Gaza Strip, killing at least two people along a road in Um al-Nasser village. The two slain Palestinians were reportedly members of the engineering unit of al-Quds Brigades, which is the military wing of the Islamic Jihad resistance movement.

Earlier on Monday, Israeli forces targeted several positions belonging to the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in the Gaza Strip with land and air attacks. The Israeli army claimed that the attacks were in response to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into an unpopulated area in the occupied territories without causing any injuries.

The Gaza Strip, home to 1.8 million, has been under an Israeli siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

The Tel Aviv regime has also waged several wars on Gaza since 2008, killing and maiming thousands of Gazans.

The new series of Israeli attacks on Gaza come amid the ongoing tensions across the Palestinian territories after U.S. President Donald Trump announced on December 6 that the U.S. was recognizing Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's "capital' and tasked the State Department with making preparations for the relocation of Washington's embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied Palestinian city.

The dramatic shift in Washington's Jerusalem al-Quds policy drew fierce criticism from the international community, including the United States' Western allies, and triggered demonstrations against the U.S. and Israel worldwide.

Jerusalem al-Quds remains at the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with Palestinians hoping that the eastern part of the city would eventually serve as the capital of a future independent Palestinian state.

Mass arrests

Israeli forces raided several Palestinian homes in the West Bank towns and cities of Jerusalem al-Quds, Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin and al-Khalil early Wednesday, arresting 32 people, including 20 Hamas officials. The Palestinian Ministry of Health said on Tuesday that at

least four protesters have lost their lives and more than 1,778 injured in angry anti-U.S. demonstrations around the occupied Palestinian lands. The statement added that 1,366 Palestinians were injured in the West Bank. A total of 33 people were struck with live

bullets, while 323 others were hit with rubber-coated steel A total of 998 Palestinians suffered from tear gas inhalation

Elsewhere in the besieged Gaza Strip, the number of casualties stood at 382. A total of 85 Palestinian protesters were struck with live bullets, and 14 others with rubber bullets.

Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has convened an urgent summit in Istanbul on Washington's contentious declaration on Jerusalem al-Quds. Representatives from 57 OIC members, including 30 heads of state, are attending the summit, which is meant to coordinate a response to the U.S. decision on al-Quds.

(Source: Press TV)

Palestinians will go to Security Council over full UN membership: Abbas

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said the Palestinians will "go to the United Nations Security Council" over full UN membership after the US decided to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Abbas, who spoke at an extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul, did not elaborate on

how the Palestinians intended to become a full member state. U.S. Jerusalem decision 'greatest crime'

Mahmoud Abbas said the Trump administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was the "greatest crime" and a flagrant violation of international law.

"Jerusalem is and always will be the capital of Palestine," he told an emergency meeting of Muslim leaders in Turkey. He said the United States was giving away Jerusalem as if it were an American city.

"It crosses all the red lines," he said.

Abbas said it was unacceptable for the United States to have a role in the Middle East peace process because it was biased in favor of Israel.

(Source: Daily Star)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	93283.7
IFX	1042.26

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42010 rials
EUR	50200 rials
GBP	57500 rials
AED	11,620 rials

Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$63.90/b
WTI	\$57.67/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.94/b
Gold	\$1,241.15/oz
Silver	\$15.74/oz
Platinium	\$877.20/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Gazprom inks agreement on Iran's \$4b gas project

ENERGY TEHRAN — Russia's energy giant Gazprom signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Iranian Oil Company to cooperate in the Iran LNG project which is estimated to cost \$4 billion.

Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller and NIOC Managing Director Ali Kardor signed the agreement in Tehran on Wednesday.



On the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the method of cooperation will be specified in coming months, Shana reported.

As per the agreement, Gazprom should conduct financial and technical studies over the course of six months and finalize its offer for holding a stake in the project.

Miller said for his part that the Russian company will present results of study on four Iranian gas fields, namely Farzad A, Farzad B, North Pars, and Kish in the first quarter of 2018 to the Iranian Oil Ministry.

IN BRIEF



French company signs deal on Iran gas field study

G Y TEHRAN — French oil and gas consulting d e s k company Beicip-Franlab S.A. signed an agreement with Iran's Research Institute of Petroleum Industry, also known as RIPI, for conducting studies to develop Homa gas field in southern Iran.

Based on the agreement, the French company will prepare a development plan and also share knowledge on advanced upstream processes, Shana reported on Wednesday quoting Touraj Behrouz, an official with RIPI.

The project aims to come up with a mechanism for controlling



Intl. printing, packing expo kicks off in **Tehran**

MY TEHRAN – The 24th international exhibition of printing, packing and related machinery kicked off on Wednesday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairground.

More than 650 companies from Iran and 12 other countries including Italy, Sweden, England, Switzerland, Spain, Austria and Japan will showcase their latest products and services during the four-day event, IRNA reported.

A conference and four specialized workshops in various fields of printing and packaging industry are also scheduled to be held on the sidelines of the exhibition.



Iran, Oman to launch new shipping route

ECONOMY TEHRAN – A new shipping route between Iran and Oman will be launched in late De-

It will connect Iran's port city of Khorramshahr to the Omani port of Sohar, Trade Promotion Organization of Iran reported, citing Abbas Abdolkhani the Iranian commercial attaché in Oman.

The first shipping route between the two countries was put into operation in March 2015 between Iran's Bandar Abbas and Oman's Sohar.

"Operated by an Iranian privately-owned company, the service

will run every two weeks for one year and will be increased in the future," the official said.

In December 2016, Iran and Oman inaugurated direct shipping routes from two Omani ports to the Iranian port of Shahid

Chinese private sector interested in Iran's energy resources

ENERGY d e s k private sector is eager to meet its energy needs through Iranian energy resources, Shana quoted the head of China International Chamber of Commerce

for the Private Sector as saying on Tuesday. Wang Yanguo made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh in Tehran.

tries have the potential to boost cooperation in private investments as well as oil and pet-

"China has a shortage of energy resources, while Iran, our old friend, has rich oil and gas reserves, which can help expand relations between the two countries," Yanguo said.

Zanganeh, for his part, said the two coun-



Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (R) receives a gift from Wang Yanguo, head of China International Chamber of Commerce for the Private Sector, on the sidelines of a meeting in Tehran on Tuesday.

Oil up on U.S. crude stocks draw,

rochemical projects.

China is the main buyer of Iranian crude oil. Chinese imports from Iran in September rose nearly 60 percent from a year ago to

Oil prices rose on Wednesday as industry data

showed a larger-than-expected drawdown

in U.S. crude stockpiles, while expectations

for an extended shutdown of a major North

Sea crude pipeline also continued to bolster

a barrel by 1122 GMT. It had settled down

\$1.35, or 2.1 percent, on Tuesday on a wave

of profit-taking after the North Sea pipe-

line shutdown helped to send the global

benchmark above \$65 for the first time

Brent crude was up 42 cents at \$63.76

about 784,000 barrels per day, down from August when China imported the highest monthly amount since 2006, according to

Gold holds near five-month low ahead of Fed meeting outcome

Gold steadied near its weakest level in almost five months on Wednesday amid expectations the Federal Reserve would raise interest rates again at the conclusion of its last policy meeting this year.

The Fed has increased rates twice in 2017 and is still expected to push through three more hikes next year.

Spot gold was down 0.1 percent at \$1,242.18 an ounce at 0755 GMT. That was not far above Tuesday's trough of \$1,235.92, which was gold's lowest level since July 20.

U.S. gold futures were up 0.2 percent at \$1,243.90 an ounce.

U.S. stock futures, Treasury yields and the dollar fell as Democrat Doug Jones beat Republican Roy Moore in a bitter U.S. Senate race in Alabama, dealing a political blow to Trump in a race marked by accusations of sexual misconduct against Moore.

The win by Jones could be bullish for gold and bearish for the dollar, a Hong Kong-based trader said, adding that the recent dollar strength could lead to some profit-taking on the greenback, in turn helping gold.

Strong U.S. producer price data had helped lift the dollar to a four-week high on Tuesday, suggesting improving inflation ahead of the outcome of the Fed meeting on Wednesday.

"It's just consolidating here at the moment until the Federal Open Market Committee statement is out. We're expecting a rate hike," the trader said, on gold's behavior in Asian trading.



Investors will also be focused on the U.S. central bank's statement for clues on further rate increases in 2018.

Higher U.S. rates tend to boost the dollar, making greenback-denominated gold more expensive for holders of other

"If the Fed comes out of the gate with more hawkish views on the economy and see inflation improving, it could impact the dollar index. Any further strength in the dollar index would push the gold price lower," said Naeem Aslam, London-based chief market analyst at Think Markets.

Reuters technicals analyst Wang Tao said spot gold may bounce towards \$1,250 before falling again, as it has stabilized around the support level of \$1,239.

In other precious metals, silver fell 0.3 percent at \$15.67 an ounce, trading close to a five-month low of \$15.61 hit overnight.

Platinum was unchanged at \$876.30 an ounce, after touching its lowest since February 2016 at \$868.80 on Tuesday.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was up 41 cents at \$57.55 a barrel.

since mid-2015.

Britain's biggest pipeline from its North Sea oil and gas fields is likely to be shut for several weeks for repairs. On Wednesday morning, its operator said it was still considering repair options and reiterated that any repairs would take several weeks.

The pipeline, which carries about 450,000 barrels per day (bpd) of Forties crude, was shut after a crack was found. It has particular significance to global markets because Forties is the largest out of the five crude oil streams that underpin the dated Brent benchmark.

A number of producers, including BP and Royal Dutch Shell, said they had closed down oil fields in response.

While the Forties shutdown has provided a price floor, flat price gains quickly evaporated in a global market that is still oversupplied and with output rising in the United States.

"The strength earlier this morning (on Brent) was mainly a reaction to U.S. API data. The fact that the market sold off so



much after the Forties outage shows that the market struggles to trend higher. Now, we're basically where we were a month ago, Olivier Jakob of Petromatrix consultancy said

After settlement on Tuesday, industry group the American Petroleum Institute said crude stocks in the United States fell by 7.4 million barrels last week. That is almost twice the decline of analysts' expectations for a drop of 3.8 million barrels.

Gasoline stocks rose by 2.3 million barrels, compared with analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll for a 2.5 million-barrel gain. Distillate fuels stockpiles, which include diesel and heating oil, rose by 1.5 million barrels, compared with expectations for a 902,000-barrel gain, the API data showed.

The U.S. government's Energy Information Administration releases its weekly oil report on Wednesday.

Selling had gained pace on Tuesday after the U.S. Energy Information Administration said in its monthly short-term energy outlook that U.S. crude oil output will rise by 780,000 barrels per day (bpd) to a recordhigh of 10.02 million bpd in 2018.

ECB set to lift its growth outlook as massive bond-buying slowly winds down

The European Central Bank (ECB) is likely to raise its growth forecasts when it meets today, as the fragile economic recovery in the region slowly gathers pace.
This will be President Mario Draghi's

last press conference before the holiday season, but the Italian economist has given away most of his presents early this year.

At the last meeting, he revealed the big roadmap for the ECB's monetary policy until September 2018. This week, he'll likely speak on an upward revision of the ECB's growth outlook. But more details on how the ECB plans to unwind its QE (quantitative easing) program will likely be scarce, and won't be expected in full until June or July.

"We expect Draghi to reconfirm the main messages from the October meeting," said Carsten Brzeski chief economist for Germany and Austria with ING Diba, in a research note.

"With some upward revision for euro



zone growth for this year and next, the ECB should join the growing choir of euro zone optimists," he added.

Draghi's main messages are that a) policy rates will remain at current levels "well past" the horizon of its current net asset purchases, b) QE could continue beyond September 2018 if a "sustained adjustment in the path of inflation consistent with its

inflation aim" is not achieved and c) the ECB could still do more QE if the macro outlook "becomes less favorable" or financial conditions "become inconsistent with further progress towards a sustained adjustment in the path of inflation."

There are no changes expected to the above working, as the somewhat dovish bias has still a majority in the ECB's Governing Council. Despite that, the majority of economists polled by Reuters expect the ECB to reduce its asset purchase program to zero by December 2018, which would allow the ECB to lift rates sometime in 2019. This means that rate hikes will only come after the end of the program, reinvestments though — where the central bank reinvests the proceeds it gets from buying bonds will continue.

Bumper year ahead

In the meantime, the fragile economic recovery in the region will likely gather

pace with recent economic data suggesting a strong 2018.

"No-one would be overly surprised if we would again slightly revise upwards our projections for growth," Governing Council Member Yves Mersch said in an interview with CNBC last month.

He added that the inflation drop, projected for the end of this year and the beginning of next year, would be "less pronounced" as first feared. Meaning, the euro zone economy could well enjoy a bumper year while ECB's policy remains very accommodative.

"We see risks to the ECB's cautiousness, not necessarily from higher inflation, but from getting the timing wrong in terms of boosting asset prices at a late stage of the economic cycle and depleting its ammunition." Societe Generale's ECB watcher Anatoli Annenkov said in a note.

(Source: CNBC)

Traders see no end to the dollar's pain in 2018

Despite a recent bounce back, analysts and investors say the greenback could lose more ground against the euro and yen as the prospect of strong economic growth and tighter monetary policy outside the U.S. more than offsets higher interest rates at home. The dollar is down more than 7 percent versus the world's major currencies this year, the most in over a decade.

The economic growth "we're seeing in Europe, emerging markets and the rest of the world will likely cause the dollar to sell off again," said Erin Browne, the head of asset allocation at UBS Asset Management, which oversees about \$770 billion. When it comes to what central banks in Europe and Japan might do, "there's very little priced in."

Browne says the euro could reach \$1.30 in 2018, representing a 10.7 percent advance against the dollar. That would be on top of a rally of about 12 percent this year. She also expects further gains in the yen. The dollar was at \$1.1743 per euro and 113.33 yen.

It wasn't supposed to turn out like this. At the start of the year, strategists were almost uniformly bullish on the dollar as traders embraced President Donald Trump's election and his pro-growth promises of lower taxes and higher infrastructure spending. The Federal Reserve was also set to raise rates, providing more support for the currency.

Yet, much of that optimism soon unraveled. Yes, the Fed has raised rates twice (and another is expected on Wednesday), but the rally never materialized as lackluster inflation and pessimism over the ability of Trump and his fellow Republicans to make good on their legislative promises took their toll.



Currency traders sold dollars this year despite a surge in forward interest-rate swaps, which essentially reflects a bet on more tightening by the Fed. Instead, they bought euros and ven.

Now, many see the Fed closer to the end of its tightening cycle, which has the \$5.1 trillion-a-day foreign-exchange market more focused on the European Central Bank and the Bank of Japan. The shift comes as global growth is expected to strengthen to 3.7 percent next year, the most in seven vears.

For the euro, any sign of an economic pickup that prompts $\,$ the ECB to wind down its bond-buying stimulus could fuel further gains against the dollar.

Substantially weaker'

"Most of the people that we talk to wouldn't be terribly surprised if, by the end of next year, the dollar was substantially weaker," especially against the euro, said Daniel Katzive, head of FX strategy in North America at BNP Paribas.

It's not just talk. In the futures market, hedge funds and money managers have piled into bullish bets on the euro, pushing them close to a six-year high on a net basis.

Speculators are less convinced about the yen, but to Deutsche Bank's Alan Ruskin, that just means that there's greater potential for a bigger move if the BOJ does retreat from its policy of targeting bond-yield levels. The ven has weakened since the measure, which acts as a form of monetary easing, was introduced in September 2016.

'The yen is actually extremely cheap, so when it turns it could turn fairly sharply," said Ruskin, the firm's global co-head of foreign-exchange research.

Of course, even dollar bears acknowledge there's a good chance that Trump's tax cuts could give the greenback a fillip in the first half of the new year. But few see it lasting into the second half -- even if the Fed keeps raising rates. Analysts see the greenback losing ground to 13 of the world's 16 most-widely traded currencies through the end of next year.

"The Fed can be hawkish and hike, and hike, and hike -- and the dollar goes up a little bit," said BNP's Katzive. With all eyes on the ECB and BOJ, "dollar vulnerability versus currencies is always there, and the minute you push the needle a little bit in one direction, you could see an outsized reaction."

(Source: Bloomberg)



Panthère de Cartier



Condemning Trump's Jerusalem decision is not enough. We must recognize Palestine

U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has rightly been met with condemnation

Indeed, it is difficult to recall a U.S. foreign policy intervention being received with such uniform antipathy from the international community.

Illegal gains

Much of this condemnation has focused on the potential of this move to inflame tensions in the region and on President Trump's political ineptitude. True though these points are, they fail to address the root causes of the conflict and therefore constitute little more than cosmetic concern.

For those who desire a political solution in Israel-Palestine, it is not enough to condemn President Trump as irresponsible and decry the damage to the "Middle East peace-process"

Abhorrent as the decision is, there is a degree of truth to Trump's claim that he simply recognized the fact that Israel already treats Jerusalem as its capital. However, in doing so he has emboldened the Israeli right with a reassurance that the world will eventually recognize its illegal gains.

Under international law, East Jerusalem remains illegally occupied and the UN continues to recognize that Jerusalem is

The outrage of the international community ought to be directed at the fact that the future capital of a Palestinian state has been tightly controlled and systematically strangled as part of Israel's de-facto capital, in defiance of the city's indigenous inhabitants who have been stripped of their political and human rights.

The legitimization of this is scandalous, but the true outrage is the decades-long failure to prevent these crimes rather than Trump's symbolic support.

Managing injustice

Increased violence is an inevitable result of the decision, and it is right that we should be concerned: Palestinians experience constant Israeli violence, and any violent acts perpetrated by Palestinians as a result of tensions and frustrations will be met with a brutal response from Israel's security forces

Dozens or hundreds of lives might be needlessly lost. That the overriding concern of many is to prevent tensions from reaching boiling point, whilst saying or doing nothing of substance to address the cruel and dehumanizing oppression experienced by Palestinians on a daily basis, suggests an interest only in managing injustice rather than seeking to end it through upholding

For Palestinians, warnings that the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital will endanger the "Middle East peace process must seem a cruel joke. The "Middle East peace process" is to all intents and purposes dead in the water and has been for a long time.

It exists as a convenient cover, allowing establishment politicians around the world to sit idly by and pay lip service to supporting peace whilst maintaining a status quo that allows Israel's flouting of international law and human rights, its settlement expansion and its war crimes to continue without consequence.

Each transgression is met with statements of mealy-mouthed concern over the impact on the non-existent peace process that lack insight into why peace-building efforts have failed, or plans

for what can be done.

Any response that stops short of addressing the root causes of the conflict – namely the illegal occupation of Palestine, the 600,000 Israeli settlers and the ongoing denial of basic human rights – is little more than gesture politics.

A lack of accountability and justice for these crimes is why peace-building efforts continue to have little impact or fail entirely.

A combination of the power imbalance between the occupied Palestinian population and their Israeli jailers, along with the inaction of the international community, has resulted in a climate wherein Israel is free to achieve its illegal aims – the prevention of a Palestinian state and the colonization of the West Bank and East Jerusalem - through brute force.

Both through its actions and its words, the Israeli government $\,$ has made it clear that it has no intention of ending its theft of Palestinian land and its oppression of the Palestinians.

This is because there is no incentive for Israel to comply with international law and genuinely engage in meaningful actions to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The decades of impunity afforded by the international community and a failure to recognize, let alone protect, the rights of Palestinians is what is truly scandalous and irresponsible, and this shameful record cannot be pinned on Donald Trump.

Collective failures

Decades of tolerance of Israeli policies of home demolitions, military detention of minors and collective punishment are the context in which this recent announcement must be understood.

The global community should certainly continue to call out Trump as the foolish demagogue that he is, but we should not The international allow self-satisfied fingerwagging to distract from our more substantial collective failures. Denunciation of the U.S. president is not

protecting human rights. The appropriate response to this latest rejection of international law and United Nations resolutions is a renewed commitment to an international order based on

to America's decision to a substitute for upholdrecognize ing international law and Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by recognizing the Palestinian state immediately justice, respect for the

rule of law and protecting human rights. The international community must respond to America's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by strengthening the diplomatic hand of the Palestinians, by recognizing the Palestinian state immediately - something the British Parliament has already voted in support of.

We should also use our power to hold Israel accountable in accordance with international law via the imposition of both diplomatic and economic sanctions.

People across the world who wish to see a just peace should continue to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign directed against the illegal settlements and their products at the request of and in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

(Source: middleeasteye.net)

community

must respond

Moore's defeat is the biggest sign of hope for Americans wanting to stop Trump

Alabama is a place with an awful lot of history. It's known as a state that was at the center of the slave trade, which fought a bloody civil war to try and keep hold of it, and even when it was gone, it long pushed for a system of segregation between the races and discrimination against black people. At the State Capitol in Montgomery, just yards from where Roy Moore's supporter gathered, Governor George Wallace notoriously declared at his 1963 inauguration: "I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.

But it is also a place of hard-won political change. Down the hill from Moore's stunned supporters had gathered, is a memorial for Rosa Parks, who in December 1955 refused to give up her seat for a white passenger and sit in the so-called "colored section" of a bus. It was to Montgomery, that Martin Luther King led the marchers from Selma, a bloody and lethal endeavor that helped persuade President Lyndon Johnson to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

"On a very personal level, I want to thank each of you for fulfilling a lifelong dream to serve in the U.S Senate. We have work to do in this state. Thank you all, god bless you", said Doug Jones, at election

It would be offensive and wrong to equate the struggles of the civil rights era with Doug Jones' stunning victory on Tuesday night in the Alabama Senate race. But Jones' win over Moore carried with it no small burden of unlikeliness and effort.

of Alabama have more in common than divides us," Jones told his supporters in Birmingham, while Moore sulked and refused to concede defeat. "We have shown not just around the

I have always believed that the people

state of Alabama, but we have shown the country the way - that we can be unified.

The night before, at his final rally, Jones was joined on stage by Randall Woodfin, the recently elected mayor of Birmingham, who had overcome the odds to beat the



Millions of the President's opponents will be heartened by the events in Alabama.

long-term incumbent, William Bell.

"I know what it's like to climb an uphill battle against people telling you, 'You can't win'," he said. "Let me be the first to tell

you: It can be done."
And so it was. While Moore was still claiming he could seek a recount if the result was within less than half-a-per-cent, a tally collated by the New York Times showed Jones had won 671,151 votes to Moore's 650,436, giving the Democrat a 49.9-48.4 victory.

There are several takeaways from this week's result. It was a humiliation for Donald Trump, who had endorsed Moore and mocked Jones. It also raises questions about the viability of Steve Bannon's plan to push

so-called insurgent candidates in the 2018 elections. He had hoped a win here would give momentum to that plan, in which he intended to target the Republican leadership of Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan. With Republicans already blaming Bannon for losing one of the safest seats in the country, that may now come to little.

Democrats ought not to read too much into the victory. Not every candidate they encounter in 2018 will be facing multiple allegations of child sexual assault and abuse (accusations Moore strongly denies. And they would be wise not to start making too many assumptions about 2020.)

Despite what Hillary Clinton claimed, just because Jones won in Alabama, it

does not mean Democrats are going to win everywhere. There are an awful lot of red conservative states, and, as a result of Moore's defeat, there are likely to be fewer hardcore candidates that Bannon would have wished to see

Yet for progressives and Democrats, for those still licking their wounds from Trump's defeat over Clinton, the drama in this southern state, where Trump trounced Clinton in the 2016 presidential election, has given them something to finally cheer, a really staggering and surprising win.

For many, it has provided hope. Sweet hope Alabama.

(Source: Independent)

Germans like Macron but are suspicious of his reforms

Angela Merkel is happy to leave grand declarations of visionary purpose to the French

I discovered a new German hero on a recent visit to Berlin. Politicians hold him up as the embodiment of a historic moment that must be seized and a vision that must be embraced. Except that this German hero is not German: he's Emmanuel Macron, the youthful French president.

At a conference on German foreign policy, I heard both Sigmar Gabriel, the foreign minister, and Cem Ozdemir, the Green party chief, sing the praises of Macron, and urge chancellor Angela Merkel to respond to his call for radical European reform. Two days later, Martin Schulz, the Social Democrat leader, sounded more French than the French president, arguing for a United States of Europe. Macron has successfully presented himself across Eu-

rope as a new hope for mainstream parties struggling to counter the Euroscepticism peddled by populists. In Germany, though, the alignment with Macron is, above all, a matter of political calculation.

Germany's traditional stability has been upset by an election result in which the main parties lost votes to the more radical fringes. The SPD, partners in the last government, had ruled out another grand coalition with Merkel's Christian Democratic Union. But they've now changed their mind out of national necessity, and they need to justify their reversion to their pro-European base. As one delegate at the conference put it: "Macron gives the SPD a narrative to tell the base that the party is needed.

Predictably, Macron fever hasn't reached the CDU, which views the French proposals more cynically as a way of loosening Germany's tight fiscal purse.

Within the larger population, too, Macron is well regarded; his reform proposals less so. In a survey of German attitudes to foreign policy commissioned by the Körber Stiftung, a think-tank, France has supplanted the



Macron has successfully presented himself across Europe as a new hope for mainstream parties struggling to counter the Euroscepticism peddled by populists.

U.S. as Germany's most important partner.

But when asked whether they supported the development of a European economic and financial policy, and the establishment of a European minister of finance — as put forward by Macron — only 39 per cent of respondents were in favor. Merkel, too, has reservations. But at a time when her star is dimming, and Europe has been shaken by Britain's imminent departure from the EU and the election of a U.S. president with questionable

commitment to European security, she needs a stronger French partner. And she can't appear dismissive of the new European hero. Will she give a big speech of her own to answer Macron's landmark September address at the Sorbonne, where he laid out his reform proposals? Her critics say she must.

Her allies say she won't. She's happier leaving emotions and theatre to the French.

'Germans long for a French president we can work with," Jan Techau, a policy analyst, told me. "But Merkel finds big vision statements suspicious and she dislikes binding herself. She wants to be flexible at all times. That's her strength." Macron serves another useful purpose for Germany: he can take on the mantle of leader of the free world that Merkel wears so uncomfortably.

Even as Germany tries to put its internal house in order, it is debating its role in the world. A majority of Germans remain opposed to their government playing a larger role in international affairs. But policymakers are beginning to recognize that the U.S.'s disengagement from Europe, and the rest of the world, did not start with the Trump administration and will not end when he is out of office. That means not only that Europe will bear more responsibility for its own defense but also that it has to be more active in its own neighborhood. While Merkel is loath to guide the western liberal order, she is more comfortable throwing her weight around in areas that directly affect Germany.

No issue features higher on the domestic agenda than migration. So Merkel is backing a Marshall plan for Africa. As Gabriel said last week, the days of standing on the sidelines are over for Germany. But, assuming she succeeds in forming a new government, s Merkel won't stray too far from home and will keep Macron by her side.

Retired military leaders urge Trump to choose words, not action, to deal with North Korea

A group of 58 retired American military leaders is making a rare public plea to President Trump, urging him not to take military action against North Korea but to instead pursue a diplomatic resolution to the current standoff.

As North Korea has demonstrated its increasing technical abilities, including the capacity to send a missile anywhere in the United States, Trump and some of his top aides have suggested that a military strike on North Korea might be the solution.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to "win victory in the showdown" with the United States, state media reported Wednesday.

Dozens of retired military leaders from across the services are writing to Trump to urge him not to start a conflict with North Korea, but to instead choose diplomacy.

"The current approach taken by the United States is failing to stop North

Korea from developing its nuclear and missile technology," states the letter, which will be sent to the White House on Wednesday.

Military action would result in hundreds of thousands of casualties in South Korea, putting the lives of more than 150,000 Americans there at risk, and the United States would be drawn into

a preventable war, the letter says. "Military options must not be the preferred course of action," it continues.

The 58 retired admirals and generals who signed the letter were motivated by the deteriorating situation in North Korea, said Michael E. Smith, the retired U.S. Navy rear admiral who initiated the letter and leads a new nonpartisan organization called the American College of National Security Leaders.

"We felt we had a moral obligation to share our concerns with the president," Smith said. "It is clear that more can be done and we are urging the President to explore every possible diplomatic option before it is too late and we find ourselves in a dangerous and preventable war."

The fact that former military leaders were prepared to come out publicly on such a sensitive issue shows how strongly they feel about it, said Tom Z. Collina, director of policy at Ploughshares Fund, a nonprofit organization that advocates for nuclear disarmament.

Ploughshares is working with the American College of National Security Leaders to promote a diplomatic solution to the crisis in North Korea.

"It is very difficult to get senior officers to speak out on an issue like this where troops could soon be sent into action. Collina said. "This is very sensitive."

The Trump administration is continuing to send mixed signals to North Korea. Right now is the "last, best chance to avoid conflict" with North Korea but "time is running out," H.R. McMaster, Trump's national security adviser, said

at a British think tank Tuesday. But even as McMaster was speaking in London, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that the Trump administration wants talks

"We've said from the diplomatic side we're ready to talk anytime North Korea would like to talk, and we're ready to have the first meeting without precondition,' Tillerson told a forum at the Atlantic

Council in Washington on Tuesday. Joseph Yun, the State Department's envoy on North Korea policy, is in Tokyo and Bangkok this week for talks with government officials about "ways to strengthen the pressure campaign' against North Korea after its latest ballistic

missile test, the State Department said. North Korean officials are struggling to decipher the Trump administration's policy and the president's tweets. They have contacted former officials, some with Republican ties and some who have been involved in North Korea policy in the past, to ask them to interpret Trump

for them. (Source: The Washington Post)

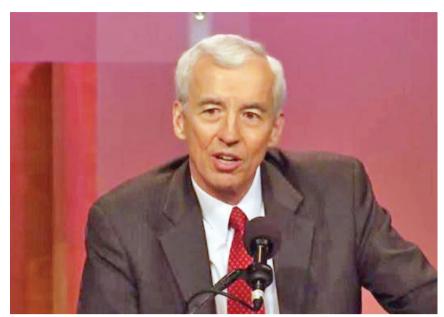
Amano cannot afford to alienate himself from U.S.: ex-senior CIA official

■ Why U.S. again try to bring up Iran PMD Case in IAEA?

A: Those who tried to kill the JCPOA before it even came into effect have not given up their effort to kill the agreement. Of course, the opponents now have a U.S. president on their side; Mr. Trump has been outspoken in his opposition to the JCPOA. The PMD issue always has been one of the issues opponents have liked to raise. With the Iranians complying with the agreement, according to repeated declarations by the IAEA, the PMD issue will continue to be a popular opposition argument. It carries the implication that Iran might be doing something questionable in secret, even if the opponents cannot point to any evidence of a violation.

■ IAEA Director General ask Iran for "more" verification about Section T. It seems that Director General Yukiya Amano's message is closing to Nikki Haley, United States Ambassador to the United Nations. What is

A: The IAEA director general is in a delicate position. He cannot afford to alienate himself from the United States, but he also must maintain the integrity of his own organization and the integrity of its inspections. Vague references asking



for more is one way to make noises of the sort that the Trump administration likes to hear, without imperiling the soundness of the IAEA's exercise of its duties to monitor

compliance with specific requirements in the JCPOA.

Iran's Ambassador to the IAEA Reza Najafi highlighted that "by limiting Iran's

benefits from the deal the U.S. Government in contradiction with both letter and spirit of the agreement, particularly paragraphs 26, 28 and 29 of the JCPOA, has taken a negative approach to undermine "successful implementation" of the JCPOA." This statement is while U.S. try to place sanction Iran on the name of Human Rights and terrorism. What will happen for JCPOA if Iran limited from benefiting of the agreement?

A: The JCPOA rests on a basic and well-understood bargain, in which Iran agreed to specified limitations on its nuclear program and additional international monitoring, in return for suspension or elimination of certain economic sanctions that had been imposed in response to Iran's nuclear activities. The JCPOA also contains additional obligations for the non-Iran parties not to impede Iran's normal economic activity in ways that would negate the economic benefits from sanctions relief. The fulfillment of all obligations in the agreement is essential for the agreement to survive. Iran cannot be expected to continue meeting its commitments if the United States does not fulfill its own commitments.

Iran played pivotal role in anti-terror campaign in region: British activist

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A prominent political expert and activist based in the UK praised Iran for its major role in the fall of the Daesh (ISIS or ISIL) terrorist group in the Middle East and said without Tehran's support, both Baghdad and Damascus were very close to collapse.

"Iran has played a pivotal role in defeating both state-sponsored and Takfiri-mercenary terrorism in the Middle East militarily," Hannah Smith said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency.

"Without Iran's support both Iraq and Syria were very close to being overrun by Daesh," she added.

Hannah Smith is a community activist based in Birmingham, UK. She is involved withgrass roots and nationwide UK-based activities inspiring movement towards Islamic objectives. Hannah has written dozens of articles covering the relationship between Islamic religion, culture, human rights, education, politics, and science. She has worked in scientific research, human rights, political campaigning, and education, and currently works as a high school teacher of Physics. Hannah holds a Master's degree in Geophysics, a post-graduate teaching certificate and has completed one year of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

Following is the full text of the interview:

As you know, the resistance forces and the armies in Syria and Iraq have recently liberated last strongholds of Daesh in the Arab countries. What do you think about the recent military achievements? Do you have a positive perspective on the security situation?

A: I think the defeat of Daesh is something the whole world should be grateful for. It was achieved with the bravery, courage and military tactical excellence of ground troops committed to the Holy Ahlul Bayt (AS). With the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei and the call from Ayatollah Sistani, Hezbollah, Hashd al-Shaabi and other soldiers of the Imam offered their lives to save humanity. It is what the Shiite of Ahlul Bayt do in every age.

Major General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), recently declared the collapse of the Takfiri terror group in Iraq and Syria. What is your assessment of Iran's role in the anti-terrorism campaign in the Middle East?

A: Iran has played a pivotal role in defeating both state-spon-



militarily. Without Iran's support, both Iraq and Syria were very close to being overrun by Daesh. By the grace of Allah (SWT), this disaster was averted by the prompt actions of Ayatollah Khamenei. However, the puppet masters behind Daesh will likely sustain Daesh as a guerrilla terror group in the region which is a threat that still needs to be taken seriously. Without Iran's geopolitical counterbalance to Western imperialist designs in the Middle East true Islam would be wiped out and replaced by a neoliberal fascism and it is important for Iranians and Arabs to understand who their real enemy is and unite under the banner of Islam to secure justice in their territorial jurisdictions and across the world. The Islamic Revolution remains a beacon for all who long for a humanity living in harmony with nature

Secretary-General of the Lebanese Hezbollah Resistance Movement Hassan Nasrallah said recently that despite the US claims about fighting terrorism, it spared no effort to help Daesh forces in the Syrian town of Al-Bukamal. "The

of directly engaging forces that fought to liberate the town from Daesh," the Hezbollah leader noted. What do you think about the remarks?

A: Seyed Hassan Nasrallah has on the ground evidence about what he says. It is his troops who engaged and defeated Daesh across Syria and they are best placed to provide evidence of the duplicitous game the US plays in the Middle East. It says it is fighting a war against terror yet it is an open secret that they armed Al Qaeda in Syria in the shape of Jabhat al-Nusra. The mercenary Daesh forces that sprung up in Iraq and Syria were armed with equipment from the US industrial arms complex too. Who financed them? How did they get into these countries? Why did not the US unleash their much-vaunted firepower on them? Why were they supporting many of the terror-linked Daesh forces throughout the Iraqi and Syrian conflicts? These are questions the US regime needs to answer to the world, but Hezbollah's leadership knows these Western instigated conflicts are all about destroying the true Islamic resistance to Israel and sored and Takfiri-mercenary terrorism in the Middle East US helped Daesh as much as it could in Albu Kamal short the resource acquisition in the Middle East

Last nail in coffin of two-state solution in Palestine

TEHRAN (FNA) — It is said every dark cloud has a silver lining. Not US President Donald Trump's declaration of Jerusalem Al-Ouds as Israel's new capital.

The torrent of complex this problem that Trump has unleashed by his recognition will plague United States policy and Middle East peace-making for many years. Consider these news headlines first that appeared after his dangerous decision to also move the US em-

bassy to the Holy City: UN Security Council Members Condemn Trump's Jerusalem Move

Two Dead, Hundreds Wounded in Pal-

Israeli Airstrikes Pound Gaza After Rocket

estinian 'Day of Rage' Protests Across Middle East Against

Trump's Jerusalem Declaration All these headlines imply one thing: You cannot un-recognize a capital once you have recognized it. Whatever caveats he may of-

fer, Trump has effectively accepted Israel's annexation of vast swaths of the occupied West Bank into greater Jerusalem Al-Quds, and its declaration of this entire zone as its "eternal undivided capital."

But in plunging the Middle East into what will be a prolonged crisis, and saddling future generations of American policy-makers with the burden of dealing with the mess he has made, Trump has inadvertently cleared the air. He may have smashed a rotten status quo of US "peace processing" that has served only to entrench and legitimize Israel's military occupation and colonization of Palestinian land for a quarter-century, which has made more difficult a just, lasting peace.



After Trump, how can the eternally dishonest broker even pretend to act as a mediator? Trump has, in effect, adopted wholesale the Israeli position that all of Jerusalem Al-Quds belongs exclusively to the Zionist regime, and that all of it - including areas extending far north, south, and east of the city - is the usurper regime's capital, denying the Palestinians any national or political rights there. He has thereby nailed the United States flag to a position that antagonizes virtually every Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim, and the overwhelming majority of peoples and governments around the world.

There can be no going back to the old formula in place for decades, whereby the United States colluded privately with Israel and the two powers thereafter imposed their will on the Palestinians. That was never the way to achieve a just and lasting peace; it served only to oblige the weaker party to bow to the will of the stronger, which in turn exacerbated and prolonged the conflict. If this changes, it is indeed a silver lining to what promises to be a debacle for US diplomacy and for the stability of the Middle East.

So what next? Surely Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem Al-Quds as Israel's capital does not represent only the last nail in the coffin of the two-State solution, but also a strong blow in the face of 57 Muslim countries, including Arab allies, let alone igniting fire in this easily inflammable region, providing more false arguments to criminal Zionist groups and illegal settlers to escalate their brutal attacks on Palestinians, in addition to taking a step further in Washington's new wars and the 'restructuring' of the Middle East.

These are the main conclusions both Middle East analysts and international policy experts reached as soon as Trump announced on 6 December 2017 his decision to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem Al-Quds, thus recognizing as capital of Israel this Holy City, home to essential shrines of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

On this, the 'Old City' of Al-Quds has been steadily considered by Palestinians to become the capital of their future state, should all international agreements – including the United Nations General Assembly - implement their commitment for the peace process. Palestinian leaders have already warned that Trump's move could have dangerous consequences, calling for massive popular mobilizations that are feared to lead to new ploodshed in the occupied West Bank and

Another immediate, dangerous consequence of President Trump's decision could be a new wave of attacks on US and Western interests worldwide. This will tragically and dangerously unleash a new wave of hatred and Islamophobia that will only add fuel to popular anger, to the benefit of terrorist groups, Washington, Tel Aviv, and their client states in the Arab world. Judging by what's happened over the last 98 years, i.e. since the then British Empire released its 1919 Balfour Declaration granting Israel a national home in Palestine, it's time to fasten your seatbelts all over again, because it's going to be a bumpy ride.

Trump's shock to compromise advocates



Netanyahu understood that Donald Trump, since he wasn't really a Republican member, and because of his opposition to the Democrats, could serve him, and could fulfil this demand of the Zionists far better than Ted Cruz demand that even President George W. Bush did not succeed to fulfil during his presidency in the years between 2000 and 2008. Under these circumstances, Netanyahu and the AIPAC lobby ceased to support Ted Cruz and simply backed Donald Trump. Even they forced Ted Cruz to announce his support for Trump against Hillary Clinton in

Donald Trump started to accomplish his promises to Netanyahu and the IPAC lobby immediately after entering the White House. In February 2017, about a month after Trump's presidency, «Jerusalem Post», the Zionist newspaper, announced the presence of eleven Jewish figures at senior governmental positions in the United States including people like Jarad Kushner, Jason Greenblatt «And» David Friedman «. The common denominator of these politicians who were to serve mostly in the two fields of foreign policy and the U.S. economy, was the support of Zionist settlements and the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem.

In August this year, Jared Kushner met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on a trip to the occupied territories. The main agenda of the parties was to make preparations for the declaration of Quds as the capital of the Zionist Regime and the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. A month later, Netanyahu travelled to New York to attend the UN General Assembly.

On this trip, the prime minister of the Zionist regime and the President of the United States made an agreement on the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of the occupied territories. It is worth mentioning that almost none of the American news agencies has spoken neither of this agreements between Netanyahu and Trump nor of the ongoing efforts of Kushner and his entourage to declare Quds as the capital of the occupied

Undoubtedly, the recent act by the government of Donald Trump to declare Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist regime, beyond being a deadlock for a two-state solution or a so-called peace deal, was the final shot on the compromise discourse in Palestine and in the region.

«Abu Mazen» (Mahmoud Abbas), the President of the State of Palestine and Palestinian National Authority, who was still confused among ambiguous words and terms raised by the Camp David and Oslo treaties, and was considering the speeches and positions of the two Democratic and Republican officials in the pursuit of «American-Zionist» peace, is remained shocked with his eyes wide open.

Now he sees that all his dreams are gone. The United States would not even stay committed to the discourse that it had created in the region!

In this situation, the status of Washington's other commitments in the international system is quite clear. Obviously, the recent action by Trump's government has once again proved the authority and authenticity of the Resistance discourse to everyone. Today, people all around the world can once again see that a strategic and even tactical game on Washington's ground would lead to nothing but failure and defeat.

Today it's time for those who advocate the compromise discourse against the resistance discourse for resolving the Palestinian issue to fully review their positions.

There is no longer any excuses to support the compromise discourse in dealing with the United States and the Zionist

While today, the advocates of compromise discourse are struck by this late action of the U.S. government, the discourse of resistance is developing more dynamically than ever in Palestine and in the region. The crystallization of this discourse will be the beginning of the new Intifada in Palestine.

An Intifada that will spread all over Palestine, including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and will turn into a nightmare for the occupying regime of Quds, and the United States and their regional mercenaries.

Many wrongly believe Palestinians sold land voluntarily to Israelis, says Islamic Jihad rep.

1 -> Abu Shareef said that that none of the former U.S. presidents had dared to make such a move as they were "fearful" of the Islamic world and Palestinians' reactions.

Abu Shareef blamed Arab rulers for Trump's decision. "They had convinced him [Trump] the world's reaction is bound to die down after a week or two.

The representative of the Islamic Jihad Movement called on all Muslims and freedom loving people around the world to continue to voice out their opinions and stand against the decision by the U.S., as he reasoned the intention of the Zionist regime is to "gain complete control of Al-Quds", which is home to Muslim and even Christian shrines.

He regretted that regional Arab states have taken no action to raise public awareness on the Palestinians' struggle, saying it is "a clear proof of their intention."

He concluded that the Palestinian youths are prepared for another "intifada", with the backing of Islamic and Arab world. Known in the West as simply Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Islamic Jihad Movement is fighting to gain back the lost land of Palestine and its sovereignty.

What can we expect from South Africa's ANC conference?

By Raymond Suttner

These days, South Africa's media seem to be reporting continuously on a single subject: the governing ANC's 54th national conference that is expected to be held in Johannesburg from December 16 to 20. The coverage of the upcoming conference is mostly focused on what journalists simply call the «race», referring to the election of a new ANC president.

There are daily media reports on how many delegates appear to have pledged their support to one or the other candidate for the position which South African President Jacob Zuma is due to vacate. Zuma's term as state president is due to end in 2019, unless he is removed, for one of his many misdemeanors, before that term ends.

When the ANC held its first official conference in 1991, following a 30-year ban that forced the party to operate illegally, it was simply called a «national conference». But today, it is widely described as an «elective conference». By changing the description of the conference, the media is echoing the ANC's preoccupations and reducing party politics to discussions on who gets elected to this or that position.

Back when the party was illegal, and involvement in the ANC was dangerous, people gained little by being part of the leadership in the party. But today, what position people hold in the party relates to the amount of power and resources they and their associates acquire or control.

The ongoing contest for access to resources, which come with holding an elected post within the ANC, has resulted in some people resorting to illegality, violence and even murder. Extensive litigation has also arisen from disputes over the elections of executives for provinces and branches.

The largest ANC membership

For example, in the case of KwaZulu-Natal, the province with the largest ANC membership, a leadership that has been declared illegal by a court has continued to oversee the election of branch delegates for the national conference. This and similar developments in other provinces may have legal and political consequences that endanger the conference itself. The conference may be cancelled or cut short if accreditation of participating delegates is repeatedly questioned.

If the Zuma-supporting forces sense defeat, they

may take illegal steps to ensure that the conference does not take place.

Zuma and his loyal supporters may also cause the conference to collapse. The main contest in the conference will be between those who support the incumbent president and those who, while deriving from the same leadership, are less reliable. Zuma wants a trouble-free retirement. He wants to hold on to his wealth, however acquired, and he wants to avoid prosecution. And to achieve this goal, he needs to transfer control of the party to his loyal supporters.

If the Zuma-supporting forces sense defeat, they may take illegal steps to ensure that the conference does not take place. That is not difficult to achieve, as individuals who have been vetted for loyalty to Zuma will be in charge of security at the conference. There are numerous ways of «sinking» the conference, short of outbreaks of violence already seen in some provincial or branch elections. The party's computer system could be damaged, making it impossible to accredit delegates. The venue can be made unusable in multiple ways - by flooding, inflict-

ing damage or even dumping feces (now a fairly common form of protest). It would be logistically difficult to find and speedily transport 5,000 delegates to a new venue.

Much blood has been shed in South Africa in recent years as result of intra-ANC violence relating to elections. Candidates or councilors have been attacked, injured or even murdered. The conflict is generally described as «factional». This may be true, but these days the «factions» in the ANC do not represent political tendencies or ideologies. Instead, they represent people loyal to certain individuals or even criminal networks.

Ideological differences

It has not always been like this. In the past, divisions in the party were mostly related to ideological differences, as with the breakaway of the Pan Africanist Congress in the late 1950s. There were other factional splits and differences, but these were also related to broad issues like the relationship between race and class, socialism and national liberation, or the resort to armed struggle.

Given the ethical corrosion of the ANC and its descent from an organization with a thriving politi-

cal inner life into violent and criminal practices, can it recover?

All of the candidates for the ANC presidency were complicit in Zuma's rule and advance scrappy, uninspiring alternatives.

One needs to be cautious before suggesting that an organization that has been at the center of struggles for freedom for over a century will simply disappear. But it is equally difficult to imagine the ANC ever regaining the moral stature and level of trust that it enjoyed when the ban on its activities was lifted in 1990.

The future of the ANC is not assured, and even if it survives this conference, it will remain a deeply fractured organization. There is no leader or group of people with a vision that unifies its members or attracts the enthusiasm of ordinary citizens. None of these evokes a sense of excitement that once surrounded the ANC.

But there are many who are hoping that this gloomy prognosis is proved wrong. South African business leaders long for stability, and many believe the conference may deliver a level of political certainty that would make this possible.

>13

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INTERNATIONAL DAILY TEHRANTIMES

Mesmerize everyday life with exuberant Termeh

By Setareh Behroozi

TEHRAN — Termeh, a precious Iranian hand-woven cloth, fascinate everyone with its brilliant color and intricate pattern.

Made from natural silk and wool fiber, Termeh is originally woven in the city of Yazd city, central Iran.

The renowned Venetian explorer Marco Polo (1254–1324), has pointed to Yazd's fine silk-weaving industry while he visited the city in 1272

Due to its delicacy and elaborate pattern, Termeh has always been considered by Iranians as a valuable fabric during history.

Many families set sofreh aghd, a kind of spread designed with symbolic items dur-

ing Iranian weddings, on a piece of Termeh. Yet, some Termeh producers in Iran design

Termeh so that it can be used in everyday life. Here we mentioned some of these products. Termeh as table runner, tablecloth

As we mentioned above, Termeh previously used as table cloth and spread in Iran. However you cannot ignore the variety of size, color and pattern.

The wide range of color let you to choose the best one according to your furniture and internal design. The satin lining Termeh turns your table into a delicate place in your house.

Termeh as bed sheet, curtain

This is a great choice for having a traditional as well as classic bedroom. Bed sheets and pillow cover is now available in different



colors and types. Termeh can be used as curtain as well. All depends on the size of your window and your personal taste.

It can be used as scarf valance in your sitting room make it elegant and stylish. There are some retailors in Iranian bazaars

who sell Termeh fabric as well.

You can even buy the fabric and make whatever you want by yourself.

Cushion and floor seats with Termeh

You can design your sitting room in Persian style with cushion and floor seats cover with cases make out of Termeh.

The flamboyant colors and floral motif on Termeh cloth, use on your sofa or floor

makes your house warm and cozy.

Termeh decorated shoes, handbags

There are several shops in Iran, which offer shoes and bags decorated with Termeh cloth for women in Iran.

You can have your personal style by choosing them. Termeh is a great choice for modern life. This beautiful fascinating piece of art is still practical in everyday life all around the world. Don't hesitate to cherish your decoration and style with it.

Your lengthy to-do list helping you live Longer

Let Alice, the housekeeper from that famous '70s sitcom, The Brady Bunch, be your guide: We've already found out that everyday tasks like washing dishes, mowing the lawn, and making the bed carry some fairly surprising health benefits—seriously, take a look at these findings. Now it seems that crossing items off your to-do list can add years on your life, according to new research published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

For five years, researchers from the University of California $\,$ San Diego School of Medicine kept tabs on the activity levels of 6,000 women between the ages of 65 and 99. Wearing a device that tracked movement on their hips, the women went about normal life.

Remarkably, women who managed to average just 30 minutes of light physical activity (dusting, washing dishes) each day dropped their risk of dying during the five-year period of the study by 12 percent. Women who got up to an



hour of moderate activity (brisk walking, taking the stairs) lowered mortality risk three times as much—a whopping

Every movement counts," Andrea LaCroix, PhD, senior author of the study and professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health at UC San Diego told

ScienceDaily.com. "A lot of what we do on a daily basis is improving our health, such as walking to the mailbox, strolling around the neighborhood, folding clothes and straightening up the house.

Activities like these account for more than 55 percent of how older individuals get their daily activity.

In other words, you don't need to train for triathlons to get the benefits of exercise. Even chores that require light to moderate activity can keep disease at bay, regardless of your weight, education, or socioeconomic status

"With the increasing baby boomer population in the United States, it is imperative that future health guidelines recommend light physical activity in addition to more strenuous activity," said Dr. LaCroix. "When we get up from the couch and chair and move around, we are making good choices and contributing to our health.

(Source: Reader's Digest)

Colorful Iran: Turkmen's Aq Aash ritual



E Turkmen who live in northeastern Iran hold Aq Aash celebration for those who turn 63 in the month of Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was born on Rabi' al-awwal 17 and lived 63 years, so Muslims mark the prophet's birth anniversary in Rabi' al-awwal and Turkmen aged 63 hold the Aq Aash celebration on

During the celebration, they serve white

soup, which is made with white sheep meat. Most of the foods which are served during the ritual are white.

If the host is a man, he puts on white dress and if she is a woman, she wears white chador.

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

How to wash and clean heavy winter bedding?



Check the care labels on your bedding for cleaning instructions. If the bedding is washable, a coin laundry is much less expensive than taking the items to a dry

When you're ready to wash, take advantage of the large folding tables to spread out the comforter and check it for specific stains. Use a solvent -based stain remover like Zout or Shout or Spray 'n Wash.

Apply the stain remover and work it in with your fingers or a soft-bristled brush.

Allow it to work for at least 15 minutes before adding the comforter to the washer.

Use either cold or warm water and set the washer for the largest load capacity. Measure the detergent carefully so you don't overdose and leave excess detergent in the comforter fibers that doesn't get rinsed away.

Be sure to wash the comforter alone to reduce lint from flannel sheets or towels. The comforter should be tumbled on

low heat to help wrinkles release.

(Source: The Spurce)

101 ITEMS FOR YOUR BUCKET LIST!

#15. Connect with past teachers

Some of us may think of teachers in a bad light. After all, teachers are often remembered for giving us endless assignments and tests and generally making our lives miserable while in school!

Yet, our teachers are also crucial educators who impart knowledge – and life skills – to us during our early ages when we were the most impressionable.

They ensured that we would be on the right path as we entered preadolescence, adolescence, and subsequently adulthood. While teachers don't always get everything right, their intentions come from a good place and they want to see us win. Think about your past teachers in junior school, high school,

and tertiary education. Find ways to get back in touch with them. 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)

#IRANIANLIFESTYLE



A small howz, a centrally positioned symmetrical axis pool, is decorated

with flower pots (Instagram/hosna.homemade)

Natural remedies for sore throat



A sore throat refers to pain, itchiness, or irritation of the throat Throat pain is the primary symptom of a sore throat. It may get worse when you try to swallow, and you may have difficulty swallowing food and liquids.

Honey mixed in tea or taken on its own is a common household remedy for a sore throat. One study found that honey was even more effective at taming nighttime coughs than common cough suppressants. Other research shows that honey is an effective wound healer, which means it may help speed healing for sore throats.

Salt water

Gargling with warm salt water can help soothe a sore throat and break down secretions. It's also known to help kill bacteria in the throat. Make a saltwater solution with a half-teaspoon of salt in a full glass of warm water. Gargle it to help reduce swelling and keep the throat clean. This should be done every three hours or so.

Chamomile tea

Chamomile tea is naturally soothing. It has long been used for medicinal purposes, like soothing a sore throat. It's often used for its anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and astringent properties.

Some study reviews have shown that inhaling chamomile steam can help relieve symptoms of a cold, including a sore throat. Drinking chamomile tea can offer the same benefit. It can also stimulate the immune system to help your body fight off the infection that caused your sore throat in the first place.

Peppermint

Peppermint is known for its ability to freshen breath. Diluted peppermint oil sprays may also relieve sore throats. Peppermint contains menthol, which helps thin mucus and calm sore throats and coughs. Peppermint also has anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antiviral properties, which may encourage healing.

Never use essential oils without mixing them with a carrier oil such as olive oil, sweet almond oil, or softened coconut oil. For peppermint oil, mix five drops of the essential oil with one ounce of the carrier oil of your choice. Never ingest essential oils.

Apple cider vinegar

Apple cider vinegar (ACV) has many natural antibacterial uses. Numerous studies show its antimicrobial effects in fighting infections. Because of its acidic nature, it can be used to help break down mucus in the throat and stop bacteria from spreading.

If you sense a sore throat coming on, try diluting 1 to 2 tablespoons of ACV in one cup of water and gargle with it. Then take a small sip of the mixture, and repeat the whole process one to two times per hour. Make sure to drink lots of water in between the gargling sessions.

(Source: healthline.com)

Some unexpected causes of pollution

Some surprising ways you're hurting the environment—and the surprisingly easy changes you can make to be greener.

Using body wash all the time

Liquid soaps require five times more energy for raw-material production and nearly 20 times more energy for packaging production than bar soaps do. "And higher energy consumption usually correlates with a higher carbon footprint," says David Tyler, a professor of chemistry at the University of Oregon, in Eugene.

• Greener habit

Stick with bars when you wash up. Not only do they have a considerably lower impact on the environment but also you'll use less. A study from Zurich's Institute of Environmental Engineering found that consumers use almost seven times more liquid soap than bar soap when hand washing, so it's quite likely that we're overdoing it in the shower as well.

Being oblivious to your electronics settings

The average home contains about 24 energy-sucking electronic devices, with TVs, desktop computers, cable boxes, and game consoles among the worst. Combined, they consumed about \$20 billion worth of electricity in 2013, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), in New York

Greener habit

It's easy to tweak a TV, so start there. Select "home" mode in the setup instead of "retail," which is meant for a bright instore display. If there is an automatic brightness control, turn it on. "This feature measures the amount of light in a room and adjusts the screen. This can cut energy use by up to 50 percent," says Noah Horowitz, a senior scientist for the NRDC. On smart TVs, disable the quick-start function, which eats up extra power.

Dishwasher and the dryer run during the day

These machines produce heat and humidity, which means your air conditioner has to work harder, says Jennifer Amann, the buildings program director at the American Council for an $Energy-Efficient\ Economy, in\ Washington,\ D.C.\ Besides,\ many$ utility companies charge higher rates during peak hours. Greener habit

Use your dishwasher and dryer during off-peak hours, which typically start between 8 P.M. and midnight and end around sunrise. For maximum efficiency, use a low dryer setting, and line-dry thick items, like jeans and towels, whenever possible. Tossing used coffee pods

Around 9.8 billion K-cup pods were sold in 2014. (They account for a reported 85 to 90 percent of the coffee-pod market.) The number seven plastic most contain isn't accepted at many recycling plants (also, plants won't accept pods if they are filled with coffee), so a majority end up in landfills, says Elizabeth Glazner, the editorial director of the nonprofit organization Plastic Pollution Coalition.

Greener habit

Find a nearby recycling facility that will take. Then separate the plastic cup from the lid, the filter, and the grounds.

(Source: Real Simple)

13 new hotels under construction in Kerman

TOURISM TEHRAN—Atotal of 13 hotels and apartment e s k hotels are under construction across Kerman with the aim of buttressing the booming tourism industry in the southeastern vast province.

The projects are between 30 percent and 90 percent complete, Mehr quoted Mahmoud Vafai, Kerman tourism chief, as saying on Tuesday.



An undated photo depicts travelers walking across the scenic Shahdad Desert in Kerman province.

Considering the prospect for attracting more domestic and foreign tourists as per a 2025 vision plan, construction of these hotels was placed high on agenda to address accommodation problems, Vafai added.

Of the said hotels, seven are being built in the capital city of Kerman, and two in each cities of Baft, Sirjan and Jiroft, he explained.

Back in November, the official announced that international tourist arrivals in the province rose 30 percent in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2017) from

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Vietnamese officials, travel marketers visit Isfahan

TOURISM TEHRAN – A delegation of Vietnamese officials and travel associates has embarked on a familiarizing tour of Isfahan province, central Iran.



Accompanied by Ambassador Nguyen Hung and National Administration of Tourism Deputy Director Bui Duy Hung, the delegation explored avenues for bolstering tourism ties during their meeting with provincial officials on Tuesday, Mehr reported.

Profusion of tree-lined boulevards, abundant Persian gardens and important Islamic buildings gives Isfahan an unmatched visual appeal while its ubiquitous artisans underpin its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture

Antique relics seized in Hamedan

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Three historical objects have been confiscated in an anti-smuggling operation in Hamedan, west central Iran, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

The raid, followed by an intelligence operation, yielded two copper vessels and a piece of engraved metal which had been concealed at the home of a local citizen, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

Experts with the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization suggest the objects date back to Seljuk (1037–1194) and Qajar (1789–1925) eras.

The seizure was carried out in coordination with the judicial body and the CHTHO conservation unit.

ROUND THE GLOBE

Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

The Camino Real de Tierra Adentro constitutes a part of the Spanish Intercontinental Royal Route from Mexico City to

The property, consists of five existing urban World Heritage sites and 55 other sites related to the use of the road, such as bridges, former haciendas, historic centers/towns, a cemetery, former convents, a mountain range, stretches of road, a mine, chapels/temples and caves within a 1,400 km stretch of the road between Mexico City and the Town of Valle de Allende.

The Camino was an extraordinary phenomenon as a communication channel. Silver was the driving force that generated the wealth and commitment of the Spanish Government and the will of colonists to 'open up' the northern territory for mining, to establish the necessary towns for workers and to build the forts, haciendas, and churches.

The outcome of this highly profitable process was the development of mines, and the construction of the road and bridges, the establishment of multi-ethnic towns, with elaborate buildings that reflect a fusion of Spanish and local decoration, an agricultural revolution in the countryside centered on large hacienda estates with churches, and the movement of peoples up and down the road, facilitated to a great degree initially by settlements of muleteers, all of which led to the development of a distinctive culture along the route. (Source: UNESCO)

Explore a microcosm of Sufism while traversing Iran

1 → A UNESCO World Heritage, the ensemble is named after Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili (1253-1334), who was a Sufi philosopher and leader of Islamic mystic practices.

Developed between the early 16th century and the end of the 18th century, this place of spiritual retreat enjoys principal elements of traditional Iranian architecture to make the best use of existing space for accommodating

It embodies an essence of Sufi traditions by having a microcosmic 'city', which embraces a mosque, a madrasa, a library, a cistern, a bathhouse, kitchens, a hospital, as well as religious houses and kitchens amongst others. The place also boasts a remarkable collection of antique

The Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble includes a route to reach the shrine of the Sheikh which is divided into seven segments that mirror the seven stages

Its special layout has made it a reference to other Khanegahs across the country.

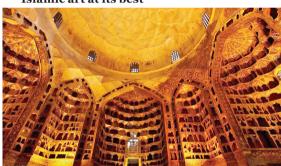
Under tourists' eyes

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

'Fantastic place to visit!'

There is so much to see here, so take your time and leisurely wander around. We had a local guide who took us through some of the exhibits, and then we enjoyed our own time looking through the rest. It is certainly worthwhile to have some knowledge of the history of this area of Iran, so you can appreciate this shrine even more. (Randall K. from Canberra, Australia; reviewed October 1, 2017)

'Islamic art at its best'



An interior view of the Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and



An exterior view of the Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble, a tourist destination in Ardabil, northwest Iran.

This place is definitively worth a visit or stopover when traveling from the Caspian to Tabriz or vice versa. Renovation is currently ongoing and will provide very nice mprovements on the decorations...

Don't leave town without getting a jar of fresh honey or even a complete honey comb from one of the many honey shops on the main street (Imam Khomeini)! (Markus U. from Modling, Austria; reviewed August 25, 2017)

'Magnificent! The mausoleum was the reason we visited Ardabil,

and we were not disappointed. Great example of Safavid architecture. Photos usually cannot grasp the beautiful play of lights. (Fred G. from Berlin, Germany; reviewed

'Do your best to see this UNESCO World Heritage site'

Not many foreign tourists come to Ardabil. Ardabil is usually not part of a tour group itinerary. But if you can, really try to visit this site... (Wilbur M. from London; reviewed April 18, 2015)

It embodies an essence of Sufi traditions by having a microcosmic 'city', which embraces a mosque, a madrasa, a library, a cistern, a bathhouse, kitchens, a hospital, as well as religious houses and kitchens amongst others.

An Iranian village built on rooftops

By Shervin Abdolhamidi

I gazed out the window onto a series of yellow, mud-brick cottages built on a slope, surrounded by verdant hills engulfed in a blanket of swirling fog. In the village of Masouleh, nestled deep in northern Iran's Alborz Mountains, every view is a rooftop view.

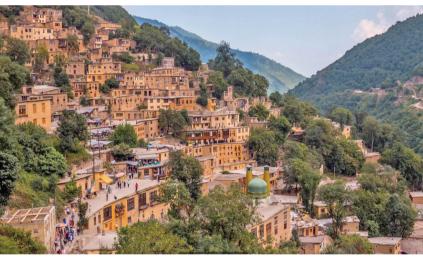
Masouleh was built partway up a steep mountainside to keep the village safe from floods in the valley below and protect it from frigid winds that whip the summit above. But to conform to the steep incline caused by a 100m elevation change, residents had to find creative ways of optimizing space.

Indeed, the architecture of this roughly 1,000-year-old village is such that the front garden of each house – as well as restaurants, outdoor cafes and even parts of a bazaar – sits on the rooftop of the house below it.

For centuries, the roofs of these houses, constructed from clay, stone and wood, have had to not only endure the wet climate (the region sees around 150cm of rain and snow each year), but also the weight of constant foot traffic - women hanging clothes to dry and merchants selling colorful scarves and handmade dolls from small stands along the alleyways.

The guesthouse where I was staying, like many other homes in Masouleh, had a large window that spanned the front wall of the room to let in sunlight and warmth – one of the traditional techniques to contend with cold winters. (Many of the older Masouleh homes also have a winter room at the back of the building, insulated by the thick, clay

With a cup of tea in hand, I peered down into the slender passageways formed by the interconnected rooftops. I spotted a man carrying groceries from the bazaar up a winding



To conform to the steep incline, Masouleh residents had to find creative ways of optimizing space (Credit: Arterra/Getty Images)

staircase between two houses to his house

in the upper levels. "One never gets tired of this view," my host, Mr Safayee, said as he joined me by

the window. Masouleh has long been a trading hub; for centuries, people came from all around the region to sell their wares. And in the early 20th Century, the village was used as a stronghold by the Jangali Movement, which opposed the occupation of Iran by Ottoman, British and Russian forces. But while we sipped our tea, Mr Safavee lamented the gradual emigration

of villagers to Iran's more urban areas. "When I was a kid, there used to be an elementary school here. We never had a large population, but we were all very close," he told me. "Now, young people leave the village to other cities for work. Now we don't even have the elementary school."

Those who remain have profited from tourism. "It allowed us to have a good living, and to repair our old houses to the way they were," Mr Safayee said.

With the rise of Masouleh as a popular tourism destination in Iran, the narrow streets can sometimes feel more reminiscent of a large city than a tranquil village. With the larger hotels located at the lower levels near the village entrance, many tourists seem content to stay near the bazaar, which is surrounded by rooftop cafes and restaurants. However, the higher levels tend to be more tranquil.

I finished my tea and set out to explore Masouleh. As I made my way up towards the top of the village, I glanced down to the valley, where a tour bus was slowly making its way up the inclined road to the base of

the village, the point at which visitors would have to walk, as Masouleh's alleyways do not support vehicle traffic.

Away from the crowds, I walked along the Barf-Andaz area, meaning 'place to throw snow'. "Here in Masouleh, we shovel our snow onto the rooftop of the neighbor below us," Mr Safayee had told me earlier that day, chuckling at my surprise.

Because it is closest to the slope of the mountain, the 1-2m area at the back of each roof is the strongest part of the structure. This is where the shoveled snow is stored in the winter, thus minimizing the chance of a roof collapse.

I made my way back down into the village towards the bazaar, a compact alley filled with shops selling handcrafted knives, mountain goat horns and an assortment of bracelets. Tourists perused the wares while locals went about their evening grocery shopping, stopping at vendors offering baked goods, dried fruit, homemade jam and mountain herbs such as chamomile and mint. I passed an elderly lady, who was winding yarn into the shape of a doll to add to the colourful bundle

"Would you like a doll?" she asked as her fingers expertly twisted the yarn to form the shape of a head. She told me that after her daughters had moved to the city of Rasht 70km away, she now makes the dolls that she once made for her daughters for visitors. I politely declined, and she bid me farewell.

I followed a stairway to the level above the bazaar, took a seat at a restaurant patio and ordered mirzah ghasemi, a flavorful Persian dish of squash, aubergine, garlic and egg served together like a stew. Here, I enjoyed an early dinner while the evening fog rolled in once more, permeating the streets and shrouding (Source: BBC)

All the perks ski destinations can offer non-skiers

just off the slopes say otherwise.

When you're planning your next winter vacation, don't write off a ski destination if you're not a skier, says Nancy Cutter, the president of Court Travel, a travel consultancy in Charlotte, N.C.

"The best kept secret is that winter ski spots aren't just for skiers," she said. "Many have lots of fun activities for all kinds of travelers." Ms. Cutter offered a few reasons non-skiers should consider ski resorts, and tips on how to make the most of the trip.

Get active

Famous winter ski resorts like Vail, Colo., and Park City, Utah, offer a variety of physical activities in addition to skiing. Snowshoeing, for one, is a great way to hike through a winter wonderland and doubles as a low-impact

If you don't ski, you may not think a ski resort workout for people of all ages. Many resorts has much to offer — but these great amenities offer guided snowshoe treks. Cross-country skiing and mountain biking in the snow are two other possibilities, both common at many ski resorts

Tap into your creative side

Ms. Cutter also suggested you can use your winter vacation to learn a new skill. If you're interested in photography, many hotels in ski locales (as well as local tour companies) offer daylong and even weeklong photo safari excursions where students snap pictures of wildlife like buffaloes and wolves. Cooking classes are another option, although you'll have to look and book in advance. Also, art abounds in the mountains, "You'll will find top-notch galleries in ski resorts all over the world," Ms. Cutter said. Some hotels even offer gallery tours.

Check out the culinary scene

One of the highlights of Ms. Cutter's trips to popular ski destinations is the cuisine. "You'll find no shortage of great restaurants to suit all tastes and budgets," she said. She recommends travelers seek out eateries known for tasty ver-

sions of wintertime favorites, like fondue. And for a particularly memorable evening out, book a sleigh ride through the woods or a meal in a mountain cabin where you can sit by a roaring fire, be serenaded with live music, and feast on grilled meats such as bison and elk. Also, don't forget about après-ski bars. Many feature creative cocktails, local brews and live music.

Chill out The mountains make for an ideal getaway if you're seeking solace and relaxation. "The air is pristine and the atmosphere is peaceful," Ms. Cutter said. Take long walks on snow-covered

paths or try a yoga class at a local studio or your hotel. Also, spas tend to be a big amenity at ski resorts, and there's no better way to unwind than by booking a massage or enjoying the resort hot tub, sauna and steam room.

Take a snowmobile ride

Traveling through closed snowy roads in a snowmobile is one of Ms. Cutter's favorite ways to spend a day in the mountains and a great way to check out local sights. In Big Sky, Mont. and Jackson Hole, Wyo., for example, many resorts and tour companies offer snowmobile tours of Yellowstone National Park. In fact, many domestic and international ski spots have numerous options for snowmobile tours in parks or private ranches. Some of these excursions include a stop at a cozy lodge for a warm-youup lunch of hot soup or chili.

(Source: The New York Times)

Experimental drug marks huge breakthrough in human Huntington's trial

cessful, sparking hopes that the disease could one day have a cure. An experimental drug lowers the levels of harmful proteins in the nervous system and could slow down the progression of the disease.

A groundbreaking trial for Huntington's disease has shown that an experimental drug could slow down the progression of the disease.

Huntington's disease is ruthless and it currently doesn't have a cure. It affects the brain and the damage is irreversible. Current treatments can only help with symptoms, but not slow down its progression.

The positive results of this landmark trial spark hope that one day Huntington's disease might have a cure. Researchers at the University College London (UCL) developed an experimental drug which, when injected into the spinal fluid, managed to lower the levels of toxic proteins called Huntington affecting

Breakthrough results

With these breakthrough results, the research team thinks that the deadly disease might one day be stopped. No drug has ever managed to suppress the effects of the Huntington's mutation, which is why this trial is extremely significant and holds great promise.

This was the first trial for Huntington's conducted on human patients and the drug proved to be safe. Trial patients have tolerated it well and it managed to lower the level of Huntingtin in the brain.



Professor Sarah Tabrizi

Huntington's Human Trial The experimental drug was in pre-clinical

development for more than 10 years and this trial on human patients started toward the

The experimental drug was in pre-clinical development for more than 10 years and this trial on human patients started toward the end of 2015. Professor Sarah Tabrizi of the UCL Institute of Neurology led the trial, and Ionis Pharmaceuticals sponsored it.

end of 2015. Professor Sarah Tabrizi of the UCL Institute of Neurology led the trial, and Ionis Pharmaceuticals sponsored it.

The research team conducted the trial at nine facilities in Canada, Germany, and the UK, on 46 people with an early-stage Huntington's disease. Each of the patients enrolled in the trial received four doses of either placebo or IONIS-HTTRx, injected into the spinal fluid so it gets to the brain. The IONIS-HTTRx dose was gradually increased throughout the trial and an independent safety committee closely monitored patient safety from the beginning to the end of the trial.

Positive effects

The trial has now ended and concluded that patients have successfully tolerated IONIS-HTTRx and it had positive effects, so further testing is warranted.

The "results of this trial are of ground-breaking importance for Huntington's disease patients and families," says Tabrizi. "For the first time a drug has lowered the level of the toxic disease-causing protein in the nervous system, and the drug was safe and well-tolerated. The key now is to move quickly to a larger trial to test whether the drug slows disease progression.

Huntington's is one of the most ruthless, relentless, and devastating diseases, and it's transmitted genetically. It's caused by a mutation in a section of DNA, dubbed the Huntington gene.'

(Source: Tech Times)

New power plant to produce clean energy from cow manure: study



after a nearly five-year flight. Since then, the Japanese automobile giant Toyota is spacecraft has made eight science passes making some exciting moves in the realm of renewable, clean energy. over the gas giant, with a ninth scheduled The company is planning to build a power plant in California that turns the methane

gas produced by cow manure into water, electricity, and hydrogen. The project, known as the Tri-Gen

Project, was unveiled at this year's Los Angeles Auto Show. The plant, which will be located at the

Port of Long Beach in California, will be "the world's first commercial-scale 100 percent renewable power and hydrogen generation plant," writes USA Today.

Toyota is expecting the plant to come online in about 2020.

Enough energy

The plant is expected to have the capability to provide enough energy to power 2,350 average homes and enough fuel to operate 1,500 hydrogen-powered

The company is estimating the plant to be able to produce 2.35 MW of electricity

The facility will also be equipped with one of the largest hydrogen fuelling stations in the world. Toyota's North America group vice president for strategic planning, Doug Murtha, says that the company "understand[s] the tremendous potential

to reduce emissions and improve society.' Toyota is heavily investing in its

hydrogen fuel cell technology. The cells are being used in the company's Mirai sedans and the upcoming Project Portal semi truck.

"Environmentally conscious motorists demand newer, cleaner forms of transportation. [The] Mirai fuel cell vehicle helps answer that demand alongside our other alternative fuel vehicles to power a better future," the company's website boasts.

Environmental impact

The carmaker's goal is to heavily reduce the environmental impact of the company and its products.

Recently, Toyota has set a goal to cease production of traditional internal combustion engines by 2040 and reduce its vehicles' carbon emissions by 90 percent by 2050. This plant will be an important proof-of-concept demonstration.

Toyota's efforts could go a long way to speed along the shift toward cleaner vehicles. Elon Musk's Tesla is already finding great

Couple that with the great strides being made in making clean energy more desirable than fossil fuels, and we have a promising recipe for success for consumers and the environment alike.

(Source: sciencealet.com)

Jupiter's Great Red Spot is more than 50 times deeper than Earth's ocean



NASA's Juno spacecraft is getting to the roots of Jupiter's famous Great Red Spot. New research, collected during the mission's first pass over the iconic storm, reveals that it extends far beneath the planet's surface. The spacecraft also discovered two newly identified radiation zones

"One of the most basic questions about Jupiter's Great Red Spot is, how deep are the roots?" Juno principal investigator Scott Bolton, of the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, said in a statement.

"Juno data indicate that the solar system's most famous storm is almost one-and-a-half Earths wide, and has roots that penetrate about 200 miles (300 kilometers) into the planet's atmosphere," Bolton said.

Despite being long-lived, Jupiter's Great Red Spot hasn't been a model of consistency. While the massive feature has swirled across Jupiter for at least 200 years - possibly 350, if early telescope observations describe the same storm — it has been slowly shrinking. During the 19th century, and again when NASA's Voyager 1 and 2 spacecraft sped by on the way to Saturn in 1979, the spot stretched well over two Earths wide. But Earth-based measurements today put the spot at only a third of the size measured by the Voyager probes.

Five-year flight

Juno arrived at Jupiter on July 4, 2016,

for December 16. In July 2017, it made its first close flyby of the Great Red Spot. The spacecraft's Microwave Radiometer probed the clouds surrounding the gigantic storm, measuring their depth in the atmosphere. "Juno found that the Great Red Spot's

roots go 50 to 100 times deeper than Earth's oceans and are warmer at the base than they are at the top," said Andy Ingersoll, a professor of planetary science at Caltech and a Juno co-investigator. "Winds are associated with differences in temperature, and the warmth of the spot's base explains the ferocious winds we see at the top of the atmosphere."

Radiation zone

Juno detected a new radiation zone just above the atmosphere near Jupiter's equator. The diagram also indicates regions of high-energy, heavy ions at high latitudes.

'We knew the radiation would probably surprise us, but we didn't think we'd find a new radiation zone that close to the planet," said Heidi Becker, Juno's radiation monitoring investigation lead at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "We only found it because Juno's unique orbit around Jupiter allows it to get really close to the cloud tops during science collection flybys, and we literally flew through

(Source: space.com)

SAIPA Offers Special Auto Service Package in Hormozgan Prov.

SAIPA Auto Making Company will offer special auto service packages to the noble people in Hormozgan Province, the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

Manager of the Public Relations Department of the company Mohammad-Reza Haghighi announced the above statement and reiterated: "As one of the largest car manufacturing company in the country, SAIPA Auto Making Company intends to maintain its regional and provincial exhibitions actively.'



In general, the company, moreover introducing its products, intends to take giant stride in line with easy purchasing of car, he observed.

The company will increase share of its products at the consumer market under the auspices of unflinching efforts of staff, expert engineers and affiliated companies, Haghighi stressed.

It should be noted that SAIPA Auto Making Company participated in 3rd Auto Parts, Equipment and Machinery

Exhibition in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, he said, adding: "SAIPA showcased its 14 products in this prestigious exhibition.

In the end, Mohammad-Reza Haghighi Manager of Public Relations Department of SAIPA Auto Making Company said: "This exhibition is a suitable opportunity for the noble people of this province in order to touch the safety, quality and beauty of products of this car manufacturing unit very closely."

Deputy Oil Minister Reveals Iran's Ranking Improvement in Global Competitiveness Index

 $Iran's\ ranking\ was\ improved\ in\ the\ world\ competitiveness$

Deputy Minister of Oil Eng. Nematzadeh announced the above statement in 561st specialized meeting of House of Managers at Industrial Management Institute (IMI) and said: "With the studies made in this regard, Iran managed to improve its rank in the world competitiveness index."

This prestigious meeting was held at Dr. Reza Niazmand Amphitheater of the Industrial Management Institute (IMI), Public Relations Dept. of the Institute reported.

"Competitiveness" is the key criterion for the successful evaluation of economic enterprises and businesses in the arena of international trade, he said, adding: "Competitiveness is a resultant of performance of associations and application of the policies which strictly hinge on the existence of various factors that determines the productivity of a country."

Five main pivots can be considered for the criterion of competitiveness including power of attraction of capital and business promotion, employment of efficient and the most experienced manpower, improvement of entrepreneurship and use of modern technologies, creation of new and suitable business environment, etc., he maintained.

World Economic Forum (WEF) has raised 12 pillars for the competitiveness and also more than 100 variables, the most important of which include: infrastructures, stability in macroeconomics, elementary education and health, higher and professional education, goods market efficiency, manpower market efficiency, improved and advanced financial market, technology preparation, advanced business and economic enterprises, market size and innovation, Nematzadeh concluded.



New silicon structure opens the gate to quantum computers

In a major step toward making a quantum computer using everyday materials, a team led by researchers at Princeton University has constructed a key piece of silicon hardware capable of controlling quantum behavior between two electrons with extremely high

The team constructed a gate that controls interactions between the electrons in a way that allows them to act as the quantum bits of information, or qubits, necessary for quantum computing. The demonstration of this nearly error-free, two-qubit gate is an important early step in building a more complex quantum computing device from silicon, the same material used in conventional computers and smartphones.

"We knew we needed to get this experiment to work if silicon-based technology was going to have a future in terms of scaling up and building a quantum computer," said Jason Petta, a professor of physics at Princeton University. The "creation of this high-fidelity two-qubit gate opens the door to larger scale experiments.'

Silicon-based devices are likely to be less expensive and easier to manufacture than other technologies for achieving a quantum computer. Although other research groups and companies have announced quantum devices containing 50 or more qubits, those systems require exotic materials such as superconductors or charged atoms held in place by lasers.

Quantum computers can solve problems that are inaccessible with conventional computers. The devices may be able to factor extremely large numbers or find the optimal solutions for complex problems. They could also help researchers understand the physical properties of extremely small particles such as atoms and molecules, leading to advances in areas such as materials science and drug discovery.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Can high-intensity exercise help delay Parkinson's progression?

New research suggests that high-intensity exercise is a safe and effective way for those with early-stage Parkinson's disease to delay the progression of the condition.

New U.S. research has found that high-intensity exercise three times a week is not only safe for those with early-stage Parkinson's disease, but it could also decrease the worsening of symptoms.

Led by Northwestern Medicine and University of Denver scientists, the study is the first time scientists have tested the effects of high-intensity exercise on patients with Parkinson's disease, after it had previously been thought high-intensity exercise was too physically stressful for individuals with the disease. For the new phase 2 trial, the researchers looked at 128 par-

ticipants age 40 to 80 years old who were at an early stage of Parkinson's disease and not taking any medication, to ensure that the results of the study were related only to exercise.

Participants worked out three times weekly for six months at high intensity, which is 80 to 85 percent of maximum heart rate, or moderate intensity, 60 to 65 percent of maximum heart rate, or didn't work out at all to act as a control group



After six months, participants were rated by clinicians on a arkinson's disease scale ranging from 0 to 108

The team found that the participants included in the study had a score of about 20 before exercise, with those who had been in the high intensity group still showing a score of 20 after the six months.

However, the group who did moderate exercise got worse by 1.5 points, and the group that did not exercise at all worsened by three points, enough to be clinically important to patients as it makes a difference in their quality of life.

(Source: news18.com)

Scientists may have found impulse control genes

For people who struggle to say "no" to another slice of pie or whose last cigarette is never quite their last, the fight may start in their genes

One part of human's ability to control their impulses might be rooted in variations of a set of genes, according to a paper published in Nature Neuroscience on Monday that used data collected by the genetic testing company 23 and Me.

This is the first time that a particular trait called delay discounting has been linked with genes. Having a better understanding of how these genes influence this particular trait could lead to more precise diagnoses or treatments in the future for related conditions.

In essence, delay discounting is what's happening when someone tends to always pick an immediate reward over a slightly larger reward further in the future.

Weight problems

Delay discounting is part of impulsivity, and has been linked

with ADHD, substance abuse disorders and weight problems. Researchers already knew about the link between delay discounting and these conditions, researcher Abraham Palmer told Newsweek, but they didn't know what might be driving that connection.

'It may be that we can discover risk factors for diseases like ADHD and drug abuse by studying delay discounting," said Palmer, a researcher at the University of California, San Diego's medical school. "It might be easier to study delay discounting with really large cohorts than it would be to study these disease diagnoses.

(source: Newsweek)

Calls for greater fossil fuel divestment at anniversary of Paris climate deal

The Paris agreement on climate change, ratified by world governments a year ago, has failed to ensure major investors are moving away from fossil fuels with the urgency required to safeguard the planet, civil society groups have said.

Large companies, investors and national and local governments met in Paris on Tuesday to celebrate the second anniversary of the signing of the landmark 2015 agreement, which bound nearly all developed and developing countries for the first time to keep global temperatures below 2C, the threshold scientists regard as the limit of safety

Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, arranged the One Planet conference to bring together governments, businesses and others to help find ways to meet the Paris goals. It followed a meeting of governments in Bonn, Germany, last month under the auspices of the UN, aimed at fleshing out the technicalities of the Paris agreement.

Donald Trump, president of the U.S., has vowed to withdraw his country from the agreement, but this action cannot take effect until November 2020, the day after that year's U.S. presidential election.

The Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change said its members and related groups, with more than \$26tn under management in total, would work with companies to help them reduce emissions over the next five years, in accordance with the Paris goals. This would not include divesting from companies with large fossil fuel holdings, however.

Companies also made pledges: for instance, the French insurer Axa, the world's third-largest insurance company, said it would divest €2.4bn in coal assets and €700m in tar sands assets, and put in place a new policy of not investing in companies with more than 30% of their power or revenues from coal, or planning to build more than 3,000MW of coal-fired

Local governments signed the One Planet charter, which requires cities and their mayors to use their public procurement and policy decisions to promote green technology, including renewable energy and zero-emissions buildings, as well as better arrangements for waste and recycling.

Nearly 200 civil society organizations, from nearly 60 countries, called on governments at the meeting to end subsidies and public finance for fossil fuels, and for the World Bank to end fossil fuel finance. The signatories included Greenpeace, the Climate Action Network, WWF, Christian Aid and Oil Change International.

A group of economists including Jeffrey Sachs and Yanis Varoufakis also called for no more to be spent on fossil fuels, while more than 50 companies including Adidas, Alliance, H&M and Philips signed another declaration calling for the polluting fuels to be phased out.

But green campaigners were concerned that the measures announced at the conference were insufficient to drive forward the Paris agreement goals.

Rachel Kennerley, of Friends of the Earth, said: "[The conference] should resolutely move cold hard cash away from dirty, polluting energy, and instead invest in clean energy, if we are to avoid the earth's temperature rising by 3C [which scientists say is likely on current trends]. The [One Planet conference] will fail if it just delivers a rehash of previous commitments, because the scale of the challenge faced clearly cries out for a radical and immediate response.

Alex Doukas, of Oil Change International, said companies were still investing in, and receiving government funding for, "exploration for more oil and gas that can never be burned if we have any hope of limiting the damage from climate change.'

Lord Stern, former chief economist of the World Bank, and author of the 2006 review of the economist of climate change that found tackling emissions would be much less costly than the effects of global warming, also called on Europe to take a lead. He said the current price on carbon under the European emissions trading scheme was too low, and called for a price of \$40 to \$80 a tons of carbon dioxide by 2020 in order to reach the Paris agreement goals.

He said: "Fossil fuels must be confronted with their real costs, and polluters must pay, if markets are to work and emissions are to fall at the rate necessary. However, a carbon price by itself cannot deliver the required design of cities and networks that will be crucial to reducing emissions on the scale necessary. Carbon pricing must be supported by other policies to drive the low-carbon transition [including] regulation to drive out coal from our power systems quickly, and stopping the sale of new cars powered by fossil fuels over the next couple of decades.' (Source: The Guardian)

LEARN ENGLISH

Canceling an Appointment

- A: Hello, Samantha speaking.
- B: Hi Samantha. This is Angela calling.
- A: Oh, hi Angela, what's up?
- B: I'm just calling about our meeting today. I wonder, is it possible to reschedule our appointment in the afternoon? I have a bit of an emergency that I need to take care of.
- A: Let me see, it shouldn't be too much of a problem...
- B: I'm really sorry, I hope it doesn't **inconvenience** you too much, it's just this thing came up, and...
- A: Angela, you know what, I can't make it to our meeting, either. Why don't we **postpone** it to tomorrow afternoon at the
- B: Sounds great. See you tomorrow.
- C: Angela... Angela, look up! See that lady over there who is trying on a red leather jacket? Isn't that Samantha?
- B: What? **No wonder** she told me she couldn't make it to the meeting, oh, no, I think she saw me..
- Key vocabulary
- what's up: what is the matter
- **reschedule:** schedule something for a different time
- inconvenience: cause problem or trouble
- come up: occur in an unexpected way make it: come
- postpone: decide to do something at a later time no wonder: not surprisingly
- ■Supplementary vocabulary
- scheduling conflict: two or more appointments scheduled at the same time call off: cancel

double-book: have two appointments or meetings at the same time **push back:** move a meeting or appointment to a later time rain check: a promise or offer to do something in the future that is not possible to do now

(Source: irlanguage.com)

The importance and specifications of "Akhlat"- Yellow bile



TEHRAN — According to the sayings of prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the twelve Shia imams 'abstaining', not consuming food and drinks which are not good for us, and heeding other environmental factors are the keys to health.

So not abstaining would certainly lead to health conditions and the reverse. By recognizing the Mizaj (temperament) of food stuff and drinks as well as our own temperament we can fully succeed in purposeful abstaining and hence keeping healthy

To put it briefly Iranian traditional medicine suggests that 'Akhlat' are liquid humors including blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm, formed from consumed foods in the liver and gastrointestinal system after digestion.

Each body tissue will mainly feed from some of the four humors more than the other ones. So it is wise and of great significance to eat as appropriate as possible, abstain from food stuff which are not suitable for one's Mizaj and also eat in accordance to one's main Mizaj in order to provide body organs with healthy and sufficient humors to remain healthy.

■ 'Akhlat' have Mizaj

As mentioned previously everything around us in this world has Mizaj and Akhlat are no exception. As mentioned in previous articles Akhlat can be also examined according to their warmness and humidity Yellow bile is warm and dry, in case it increases

- in the body the body will become warmer and drier
- Blood is warm and wet, excessive blood will surge warmness and humidity in the body
- Phlegm is cold and wet, high amounts of phlegm in the body will rise coldness and humidity in the body Black bile is cold and dry, similarly with copious amounts of black bile the body will get drier and colder

Yellow bile

Yellow bile is not as abundant as phlegm and blood in the body. It is the lightest of all humors. It resembles cooking foam. Yellow bile acts as a diluent and facilitates the transfer of blood and nutrients from capillaries to the remote body organs.

It is also in charge of metabolism of fats and lipids and ease digestion. Yellow bile is tasked with cleaning up the digestive system, vascular tissues, and genitalia. That's why people with excessive yellow bile might experience burning sensation with urination or defecation, frequent urination, frequent bowel movements, and heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding.

Thick or viscous blood cannot effectively flow into the small vessels and capillaries and provide the tissues with sufficient oxygen and nutrients, so it

Consuming food stuff such as sour or soursweet tamarind, zucchini, spinach, coriander, sour fruits and fruits with high water content such as greengage and sour apple would benefit this group of people.

could cause lack of energy (fatigue) along with bruising or discoloration, cold feet, and cold hands. Yellow bile would stop such health conditions by improving blood circulation as its job is to accelerate the transfer of blood and nutrients in the body. Being hot and dry, yellow bile is accompanied with movement and motion rather than immobility.

Excessive yellow bile symptoms

Before describing the symptoms that might appear owing to the excessive yellow bile in the body it is vorth mentioning that by having one of the symptoms one might not necessarily suffer excessive yellow bile but it doesn't mean that one must display all the symptoms at the same time to be diagnosed with excessive yellow bile either. Experiencing one or some of the symptoms might be the reasons for excessive black bile.

Thick or viscous blood cannot effectively flow into the small vessels and capillaries and provide the tissues with sufficient oxygen and nutrients, so it could cause lack of energy (fatigue) along with bruising or discoloration, cold feet, and cold hands. Yellow bile would stop such health conditions by improving blood circulation as its job is to accelerate the transfer of blood and nutrients in the body.

On the other hand one might suffer excessive yellow bile along with other humors namely blood, black bile or phlegm and report symptoms which may occur due to the various humors excess that stem from today's unhealthy lifestyle. Therefore one might exhibit symptoms for excess of one or more humors.

Another point is that one might suffer some of the symptoms which seems to be relating to excess of humors but they might be actually experiencing another condition.

Here are the symptoms that develop by excess of yellow bile in the body:

Yellowing of the skin and eyes; feeling bitter taste in mouth; getting acne on the face or the scalp; having dry skin, eyes, mouth, nasal passages and bad breath; getting wrinkles; dark circles under the eyes; losing appetite; feeling nauseated, itching, burning, and irritation in genitalia or rectum; getting thin; feeling unquenchable thirst; troubled sleep; sleep deprivation; feeling stressed out; pins-andneedles sensation in fingers and/or toes and strong smelling waste materials (urine, sweat, menstrual blood) are some of the symptoms which appear by excessive yellow bile.

What to eat what not to eat

 $Food\,stuff\,with\,warming\,characteristics\,(warm$ Mizaj), spicy food, overly sweet or greasy food, foods that are easy to digest such as well-baked wheat bread and young birds' meat specially in warm and dry season of summer can constitute to formation of fairly large amounts of yellow bile in the body.

Those who are affected with excessive yellow bile should abstain from food stuff with warming or drying characteristics namely, spices, pepper, ginger, spicy vegetables such as garlic, onion, tarragon, and green cress, too much salt, sautéed or deep fried food, nuts such as walnut, hazelnut and peanut, sweet food stuff such as honey, red meat such as lamb, chicken, quail, partridge, or camel meat.

On the other hand, consuming sour food stuff such as sekanjabin (an Iranian traditional syrup made of honey or sugar and vinegar), verjuice, sour or sour-sweet tamarind, lettuce, cucumber, zucchini, spinach, coriander, sour fruits and fruits with high water content such as citrus fruit, greengage, black mulberry, sour apple, blackberry, sour cherry, tangerine, sour orange, water melon, white meat and food with barely or mung bean would benefit this group of people.

Generally adapting the lifestyle suitable for people with choleric temperament would suit people with excessive yellow bile.

Other humors characteristics will be detailed in the next articles.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Ebtekar urges Iraq to join hands with Iran to tackle dust storms

The chief of Iran's Department of Environment has urged Iraq to take effective measures to get the grips with dust storms in collaboration

Over a phone call Masoumeh Ebtekar has asked Iraqi Health Minister Adeelah Humood to help implement the previously signed memorandums of understanding on addressing dust storms between Iran and Iraq, Nasimonline reported on Monday.

ابتكار خواستار همكاري كشور عراق براي رفع گردو غبار شد

رئيـس سازمان محيـط زيسـت ضمـن تشـريح تاثيـرات منفـي طوفانهـاي گـرد و غبـار حاصل از کانـون هـای موجـود در عـراق بر ایـران، خواسـتار همکاری کشـور همسـایه برای

به گرارش روز دوشنبه «نسیم آنلاین»، معصومه ابتکار در تماس تلفنی با وزیر بهداشت عراق عدلیه حمود ضمن تأکید بر ضرورت افزایش همکاری های دو جانبه به ویـژه در حـوزه محیـط زیسـت، خواسـتار اجرایـی شـدن یادداشـت هـای همـکاری دو

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"-al"

Meaning: a word ending used to form nouns from verbs **For example:** The wastes are best stored in specially engineered cooling pools for several decades prior to **dispos**al.

PHRASAL VERB

Dwell on/upon something

- Meaning: to think or talk for too long about some-
- thing, especially something unpleasant For example: That is not a subject I want to

ENGLISH IDIOM

Get a second bite at the cherry

- Explanation: get a second opportunity to do or try something.
- For example: He was eliminated in the semi-finals, but he'll get a second bite at the cherry next year.

Anti-Trump protest turns violent in West Bank

Israeli Arab protesters: Hands off Jerusalem al-Quds

Israeli forces have clashed with Palestinians protesting against the new US policy on Jerusalem al-Quds in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

The Palestinians carrying national flags took to the Bethlehem streets on Wednesday, for the seventh consecutive day since US President Donald Trump's recognition of

Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel. The Israeli forces used tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

Latest reports say some 40 Palestinians, among them officials from the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, were detained by Israeli forces during raids on the West Bank cities over the past few hours.

On December 6, Trump declared that Washington was recognizing Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel and that he had instructed his administration to begin the process of moving the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the holy city.

Hands off Jerusalem al-Quds'

Scores of Israeli Arabs have taken to the streets of Tel Aviv to vent their anger at US President Donald Trump's new policy on Jerusalem al-Quds, saying the ancient city is the capital of Palestine, not that of the occupying entity.

The demonstrators, among them Arab members of the Israeli parliament, rallied outside the US embassy in Tel Aviv on Tues-

Carrying Palestinian flags, the protesters chanted slogans such as, "Trump, Israel, Jerusalem is Arab. Jerusalem is Muslim," "capital of Palestine," "Trump=new Balfour," referring to the 1917 Balfour Declaration that paved the way for the creation of the Israeli



They also carried signs and banners reading, "The United States is the snake itself," "Trump's decision violates international law," "Hands off al-Quds" and "America isolated itself from the international community."

Tuesday's event was organized by the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee, an independent political organization that coordinates the activities of various Israeli Arab bodies.

Trump sparked international outrage last week by declaring that Washington was recognizing Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel and that he had instructed his administration to begin the process of moving the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the holy city.

The entire Jerusalem al-Quds is currently under Israel's control, while the regime also claims the city's eastern part, which hosts the third holiest Muslim site. The city has been designated as "occupied" under international law since the 1967 Arab War, which Palestinians want as the capital of

Speaking at the Tel Aviv demonstration, Israeli Arab lawmker Aida Touma-Suleiman said Trump's declaration is a "rude intervention in the region" and leads to "further

This decision clarifies for us further that the US is not a neutral player in making peace. The US is an ally of the Israeli occupation,"

Ahmad Tibi, another Israeli Arab law-

maker, said, "Trump is totally adapting the narrative of the occupation. Mr Trump is proving that the White House and himself are part of the problem, not part of the solution."

"We are here to say that al-Quds is the capital of Palestine and that the United States is no more a player in the so-called ultimate deal, which became, ultimate slap in the face," he added.

Former Israeli MP Ibrahim Sarsour also accused the US president of "endangering" people in the region, urging him to change his controversial policy and act in line with international law.

Another ex-Israeli lawmaker, Taleb el-Sana, warned that Trump's "unacceptable" move "makes obstacles in the peace process and he has no right to declare that Jerusalem belongs to Israel. Jerusalem [al-Quds] is an issue for negotiations between Palestinians

The occupied territories witnessed several protests this week in the fallout of the US president's al-Quds decision.

Anger in Berlin

Separately on Tuesday, some 200 people gathered in front of the Berlin Central Station in the German capital on Tuesday to condemn Trump's announcement.

They carried placards reading, "Freedom for Palestine," and "Defend the right to pray. Save al-Aqsa Mosque.'

The demonstrators held the Tel Aviv regime responsible for the latest violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces, which has left four Palestinians dead and over 1,700 others injured.

(Source: agencies)

Tillerson says U.S. ready to talk to North Korea; Japan wants pressure

Russian military delegation in North Korea

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson offered to begin direct talks with North Korea without pre-conditions, backing away from a key U.S. demand that Pyongyang must first accept that giving up its nuclear arsenal would be part of any negotiations.

Tillerson's new diplomatic overture comes nearly two weeks after North Korea said it had successfully tested a breakthrough intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that put the entire United States mainland within range of its nuclear weapons.

"Let's just meet," Tillerson said in a speech to Washington's Atlantic Council think tank on Tuesday.

The White House later issued an ambiguous statement that left unclear whether President Donald Trump - who has said Tillerson was wasting his time pursuing dialogue with North Korea - had given his approval for the speech.

"The president's views on North Korea have not changed," the White House said. "North Korea is acting in an unsafe way ... North Korea's actions are not good for anyone and certainly not good for North Korea.'

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China welcomed all efforts to ease tension and promote dialogue to resolve the problem.

China hopes the United States and North Korea can meet each other halfway and take meaningful steps on dialogue and contact, he told reporters.

Ahead of Tillerson's speech, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to develop more nuclear weapons while personally decorating scientists and officials who contributed to the development of Pyongyang's most advanced ICBM, state media said on Wednesday.

Kim said on Tuesday the scientists and workers would continue manufacturing "more latest weapons and equipment" to "bolster up the nuclear force in quality and quantity", the KCNA news agency said.

"PERIOD OF QUIET"

While reiterating Washington's long-standing position that it cannot tolerate a nuclear-armed North Korea, Tillerson said the United States was "ready to talk any time they're ready to talk", but there would first have to be a "period of quiet" without nuclear and missile tests.

United Nations political affairs chief Jeffrey Feltman, who visited Pyongyang last week, said senior North Korean officials did not offer any type of commitment to talks, but he believed he left "the door ajar".

"Time will tell what was the impact of our discussions, but I think we have left the door ajar and I fervently hope that the door to a negotiated solution will now be opened wide," Feltman told reporters after briefing the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday.

Not everyone is ready for talks.

Japan has advocated a strategy of pressuring North Korea through sanctions to give up its nuclear weapons. Tokyo and Washington are in "100 percent" agreement on that stance, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said on Wednesday, when asked about Tillerson's comments.

A former Japanese diplomat said that, while a diplomatic solution was the "only acceptable solution", now was not

"We have to see the effects of sanctions on life in North Korea," the former diplomat, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters

"I heard that they are having a serious impact on everyday life. Let's wait and see. If we were to hint anything for dialogue, we'd be losing clout."

South Korea continued military exercises with the United States to check military readiness, exercises the North describes as preparation for war. The South's army said separately on Wednesday it conducted a successful air-toair missile firing drill from Apache helicopters.

U.S. TALKS TO CHINA

Tillerson also disclosed the United States had been talking to China about how to secure North Korea's nuclear weapons in the event of a collapse of the government in Pyongyang. He said Beijing had been given assurances that if U.S. forces had to cross into North Korea they would pull back across the border into the South.

Chinese spokesman Lu would not directly answer a question about those comments, but said China had always clearly told all its interlocutors on the issue that "There can be neither war nor chaos" on the Korean peninsula.

Tillerson made clear that the United States wants to resolve the North Korea standoff through peaceful diplomacy and, in terms far more tempered than Trump's recent threats against Pyongyang, offered to hold exploratory talks.

"We can talk about the weather if you want," he said. "We can talk about whether it's going to be a square table or a round table. Then we can begin to lay out a map, a road map, of what we might be willing to work towards.

Tillerson - whose influence has appeared to wane within the administration - said Trump "has encouraged our diplomatic efforts"

Trump said on Twitter in October that Tillerson was "wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man", using his derisive nickname for Kim. North Korea, for its part, has made clear it has little interest

in negotiations with the United States until it has developed the ability to hit the U.S. mainland with a nuclear-tipped missile, something most experts say it has still not proved. Tillerson also said the United States was working to tight-



en enforcement of international sanctions against North Korea, especially further measures that China can apply, and that Washington had a full menu of military options if such a response was needed.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the non-partisan Arms Control Association, said Tillerson's proposal was overdue but added, "In order to get to such talks going, the U.S. side as well as North Korea must demonstrate more restraint".

Russian delegation in North Korea

A Russian Defense Ministry delegation has arrived in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

The development was reported Wednesday by Russia's Interfax news agency, citing sources in North Korea's Embassy in Moscow without elaborating on details about the visit.

The visit followed the Tuesday announcement by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson of America's willingness to enter direct talks with Pyongyang without pre-conditions.

Earlier, the United Nations Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman wrapped up a five-day tour of North Korea on Saturday. He held talks with senior officials in a bid to soothe persisting tensions over Pyongyang's weapons program.

During Feltman's visit, North Korea blamed US "nuclear blackmail" for the surging tensions over its military program but agreed to remain in regular contact with the world body.

"At these meetings, our side said the US policy of hostility toward the DPRK (North Korea) and its nuclear blackmail are to blame for the current tense situation on the Korean Peninsula," read a report by the North's stated news agency, KCNA.

Later, Feltman said North Korean officials had told him it was important to prevent war.

(Source: agencies)

EU parliament backs outline Brexit deal

The European Parliament urged EU leaders on Wednesday to allow the next phase of EU negotiations to start, backing a motion that recognised the talks had made sufficient progress as a well a line criticizing Britain's Brexit negotiator David Davis.

Earlier on Wednesday, the EU's chief negotiator told lawmakers that Britain could not renege on commitments made to ensure Brexit talks with the European Union move on to discussions on

the future relationship between the two. European Union leaders are almost certain to judge on Friday that "sufficient progress" has been made on the rights of citizens, the Brexit divorce bill and the Irish border to allow negotiations to move to the next phase. The EU executive recommended last week that the leaders approve trade talks.

The European Parliament will have to approve any Brexit deal, although its motion on Wednesday was not binding.

The agreement, presented in a joint report last Friday, was in the view of some in Brussels, undermined by Brexit minister

David Davis's comment that it was more "a statement of intent" than a legally binding. Davis has subsequently said he wants the accord swiftly translated into a legal text.

'We will not accept any going back on this joint report. This progress has been agreed and will be rapidly translated into a withdrawal accord that is legally binding in all three areas and on some others that remain to be negotiated," EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier told EU lawmakers. Barnier said a lot more further steps were required to secure an orderly withdrawal. "We are not at the end of the road, neither regarding citizens' rights nor for the other subjects of the orderly withdrawal. We remain vigilant," he said.

Barnier said the next phase of talks would focus on a "short and defined" transition period and initial discussions on a future relationship, which he stressed would not erode the EU single market and its four freedoms, including free movement of people. (Source: Daily Star)

Bahraini activist detained for fighting for freedom of speech: Amnesty

Amnesty International has denounced the continued detention of prominent Bahraini human rights activist and pro-democracy campaigner Nabeel Rajab, stressing that the Manama regime is keeping him behind for no reason other than the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

The London-based non-governmental organization, in a post published on its Arabic Twitter page, called on Bahraini authorities to

immediately and unconditionally release the 52-year-old president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Arabic-language Lualua TV network reported on Wednesday.

It added that the "prisoner of conscience" must

not be subjected to torture or any form of ill-treatment, stressing that constant contact with family members and lawyers of choice in addition to access to adequate health care must be offered to Rajab.

(Source: al Alam)

Saudi warplanes keep pounding Yemen, kill 51

1→ Separately, Saudi planes pounded Sahar District in the northwestern Yemeni province of Sa'ada, injuring four civilians. One of the casualties later died of the injuries.

A Saudi strike also hit a vehicle in Maqbanah District of the southwestern Yemeni province of Ta'izz, leaving 11 people dead.

The kingdom and a group of its allies have been bombing Yemen since 2015 to put its former Riyadh-friendly government back in the saddle. More than 12,000 have died since the war began. Now, more than eight million Yemenis are on the verge of

starvation, making the country the scene of, what the UN calls, the world's worst humanitarian crisis. United Nations chief Antonio Guterres called last Sunday for an end to the "stupid war," which has also the firm backing

of the United States and Britain. Saudi still choking up Yemen ports

Meanwhile, the head of the U.S. government's aid agency said on Tuesday that there were no signs that a Saudi blockade of the ports had eased to let in aid consignments. "Unfortunately, I can't tell you there has been an easing of the

blockade," said USAID administrator Mark Green. He said he was "deeply concerned on so many fronts" about the crisis in Yemen, but in particular the failure to get fuel into

the country so people have access to clean water. "That means a number of communities are either without clean water or will be very shortly, and in both cases that is a terrible concern from the cholera perspective and the survival

perspective," he added. A rampant cholera outbreak, exacerbated by the devastation of the country's health infrastructure, has killed more than 2,000 in Yemen.

Yemeni snipers kill 19 Saudi troopers, mercenaries Meanwhile, Yemeni army soldiers, backed by fighters from allied Popular Committees, have shot dead 19 Saudi troops and pro-Saudi militiamen loyal to resigned Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi in the kingdom's southwestern border region of Najran.

An unnamed military source told Yemen's official news agency SABA that Yemeni forces shot and killed five Saudi troops in the al-Asha and al-Shorfa areas of the region, located 969 kilometers south of the capital, Riyadh, on Tuesday.

Yemeni soldiers and Popular Committees fighters launched two rockets against Saudi army outposts in the Rajla, al-Sadid and Lesser al-Makhrouq areas of the same Saudi region. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

lery rounds at the al-Karas military base, leaving scores of Saudi soldiers dead and injured. Separately, several Saudi soldiers lost their lives or sustained

Later, Yemeni soldiers and their allies fired a barrage of artil-

injuries when Yemeni forces targeted a gathering of Saudi troopers in al-Sharqan military base. Additionally, five Saudi-sponsored militiamen were fatally shot in different districts of Yemen's southwestern province of Ta'izz.

Yemeni soldiers and their allies also struck the position of Hadi loyalists east of Kahboub region in the same Yemeni province, killing two of them. In Yemen's central province of Ma'rib, army forces and fighters

from Popular Committees launched a number of artillery rounds in the Wadi al-Ziq area of Sirwah district, killing and wounding a number of them

Yemeni snipers also shot and killed seven Saudi mercenaries in different parts of Ma'rib province.

Saudi Arabia has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015 in an attempt to crush the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement and reinstate Hadi, a staunch ally of the Riyadh regime.

More than 12,000 people have been killed since the onset of the campaign more than two and a half years ago. Much of the Arabian Peninsula country's infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and factories, has been reduced to rubble due to the war. The Saudi-led war has also triggered a deadly cholera epi-

demic across Yemen. According to the World Health Organization's latest count,

the cholera outbreak has killed 2,167 people since the end of April and is suspected to have infected 841,906. On November 26, the United Nations children's agency (UNICEF)

said that more than 11 million children in Yemen were in acute need of aid, stressing that it was estimated that every 10 minutes a child died of a preventable disease there. Additionally, the UN has described the current level of hun-

ger in Yemen as "unprecedented," emphasizing that 17 million people are now food insecure in the country

(Source: agencies)

What can we expect from South Africa's ANC conference?

8 -> Many ANC veterans and other well-meaning citizens believe that if Cyril Ramaphosa, current deputy president of the ANC and the country, were to be elected, the fortunes of the country could be turned around. Ramaphosa has been a successful business person and is credited, possibly with some exaggeration, with knowing how to «fix things up».

Some, like dismissed finance minister, Pravin Gordhan, even suggest that Ramaphosa, if elected ANC president, would be able to remove Zuma as state president, but that is not easy to do. What all those who vest so much in Ramaphosa ignore is that Zuma remains president of the country and is impervious to a sense of honor.

When Thabo Mbeki, the second post-apartheid president of South Africa, lost the support of the ANC leadership, he resigned as state president. But Zuma fears prosecution for fraud and other crimes. He will not follow Mbeki's lead and simply walk away from power, as long as these charges loom over him. It may also be that if Ramaphosa is elected, he will not have a substantial majority to back such actions.

Some suggest that a package deal, similar to that offered to Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, could see Zuma go quietly. But there are doubts about the legality of such a deal. Many who respect the law and the constitution do not want to allow Zuma to hold onto his ill-gotten gains or be exempted from prosecution.

South Africans want a democratic state, run on the basis of the existing constitution. But South African democracy cannot be restored through deals behind closed doors. It requires re-empowering the citizenry, who have been so badly betrayed. That may be a difficult task, entailing listening to one another in order to rebuild democratic organization. That will not be achieved overnight.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Newcastle close to £300m takeover deal

Newcastle's owner Mike Ashley is close to reaching an agreement with British businesswoman Amanda Staveley over the sale of the Premier League club.

The investment firm run by Staveley- PCP Capital Partners - has put forward an offer of £300m, BBC Newcastle understands. Ashley said on 16 October he wanted to sell after 10 years in charge. Any takeover deal would not be completed immediately

as Premier League approval takes 30 days. Staveley helped broker the purchase of Manchester City by Sheikh Mansour in 2009 and it was reported she led Dubai In-

ternational Capital's £400m bid for Liverpool in 2008. The Magpies have been relegated twice from the Premier League during Ashley's 10-year reign and are currently 16th in the top flight after 16 matches, having won promotion last season

under manager Rafael Benitez. Ashley, 53, has been a divisive figure at St James' Park, with some supporters regularly protesting about the way the businessman has run the club.

He bought Newcastle for £134.4m in 2007. Their latest accounts - up to 30 June 2016 and before the club's relegation to the Championship - showed a profit of £900,000 and turnover of £126m in 2015-16.

(Source: BBC)

World Cup glory worth €350,000 to Germany stars

Germany's players each net a bonus of €350,000 if they retain the World Cup in Russia next year.

Joachim Low led Die Mannschaft to their fourth world title in Brazil in 2014, as Mario Gotze's extra-time strike sealed a 1-0 win over Argentina in the final.

Bolstered by a new generation of fine talent, Germany and Low will look to become the first country to win back-to-back

World Cups since Brazil in 1962. If they fall at the final hurdle, a €200,000 runners-up windfall will be a crumb of comfort, while third-place would net €150,000.

The German Football Association's (DFB) bonus structure also accounts for €125,000 in the event of a semi-final berth and €75,000 for the quarters, following talks with a players' delegation led by Bayern Munich and national team goalkeeper Manuel Neuer. DFB president Reinhard Grindel said: "It's a big motivation for our players to become back-to-back World Cup winners for the first time in the history of German football.

This would be an eternal title and is worthy of a special bonus. But we can sense that the challenge from a sporting point of view is the focal point for the team and not financial interest."

Germany will open their Group F campaign against Mexico in Moscow before taking on Sweden and South Korea in the round-robin phase.

(Source: AP)

Azarenka given wildcard for **Australian Open**

Twice champion Victoria Azarenka has been given a wildcard for next month's Australian Open, organizers said on Wednesday.

Azarenka, who won the Melbourne Park title in 2012 and 2013, returned to the WTA Tour in June after having a baby, but has been involved in a custody battle that has prevented her from playing since Wimbledon.

She withdrew from the U.S. Open and the Fed Cup final, which Belarus lost to the United States. She is currently ranked 210 in the world.

"Vika's current situation is obviously very difficult for her and we have reached out to offer any support we can," Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley said in a statement.

"As a two-time Australian Open champion we've awarded her a wildcard and look forward to seeing her back on court in Melbourne in January."

Azarenka said she was thankful for the opportunity to return to Melbourne Park and hoped it would kick-start the year for her. I'm so excited about coming back to Melbourne for the Aus

tralian Open, its my favorite tournament," she said. "I've won there twice and always feel so comfortable on court

and the city is great.

"Its been a tough year and being able to come back to the AO

will be a really positive way to start 2018. The tournament runs from Jan 15-28.

(Source: Reuters)

FFA refuses to speculate on Scolari amid Socceroos interest

Football Federation Australia (FFA) refused to speculate on reports linking World-Cup winning head coach Luiz Felipe Scolari with the Socceroos vacancy.

Scolari revealed on Tuesday that he had been approached by the FFA to replace Ange Postecoglou ahead of the 2018 World Cup in Russia, with the former Brazil and Portugal boss adding that he was interested in the job.

However, the FFA told Omnisport on Wednesday that while it was "aware of the reports", the governing body was "not in a position to comment regarding individuals and the role".

Scolari, 69, is without a job since leaving Asian giants Guangzhou Evergrande, who he guided to a seventh successive Chinese Super League crown, having also won the 2002 World Cup during his time in charge of Brazil.

The FFA has put together a selection panel to help appoint a new head coach with the World Cup looming, and the likes of Jurgen Klinsmann and Sven-Goran Eriksson are believed to be interested. Former Socceroos Mark Bresciano, Stan Lazaridis and Mark Schwarzer are among the panel of experts, who will advise the FFA on the appointment of a new coach following the departure of Postecoglou. Postecoglou surprisingly stepped down after leading Australia to a fourth successive World Cup via an inter-confederation play-off against Honduras last month.

Australia have been drawn in Group C for the showpiece event in Russia, alongside favourites France, Denmark and Peru.

(source: Four Four Two)

Chris Froome: Tour de France champion failed a drug test

The world's best cyclist Chris Froome has asthma -- and he recently failed a drugs test in one of the sport's most prestigious races because of the condition.

Four-time Tour de France winner Froome, who rides for Team Sky, was found to have double the allowed level of the legal asthma drug Salbutamol in his urine on a test taken on September 7 during the Vuelta a España, which the 32-year-old went on to win.

In a statement, the sport's governing body, the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), said the British rider was informed of an "Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF)" on September 20 and that an analysis of the B sample had confirmed the results of the rider's A sample.

Froome, Britain's most successful road cyclist, who won his fourth Tour de France in July, said: "It is well known that I have asthma and I know exactly what the rules are.

"I use an inhaler to manage my symptoms (always within the permissible limits) and I know for sure that I will be tested every day I wear the race leader's jersey

"My asthma got worse at the Vuelta so I followed the team doctor's advice to increase my Salbutamol dosage. As always, I took the greatest care to ensure that I did not

use more than the permissible dose.

"I take my leadership position in my sport very seriously. The UCI is absolutely right to examine test results and, together with the team, I will provide whatever information."

Thanking his fans for their messages of support, Froome later tweeted: "I am confident that we will get to the bottom

"Unfortunately I can't share any more information than I already have until the enquiry is complete.

Committed to establishing the facts'

The UCI said Froome was not suspended, but wanted more details from Team Sky and was investigating the case under the organization's anti-doping rules.

Under World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA) rules, Salbutamol is a permitted drug without the need of a therapeutic use exemption (TUE), but only at certain doses.

The levels of the drug in Froome's urine test were at 2,000 nanograms per millilitre (ng/ml) -- double WADA's 1,000 ng/ml threshold. The test was conducted following Stage 18 of the three-week Vuelta.

Froome was the first Briton to win the Spanish event



and his success also made him the first cyclist since 1978 to complete the Tour de France and Vuelta double in the same year.

Along with the Tour de France and the Giro d'Italia, the Vuelta is one of cycling's Grand Tours.

The Kenyan-born rider is the first to win back-to-back Grand Tours since Marco Pantani won the Giro d'Italia and the Tour de France in 1998.

Froome's team principal, Sir Dave Brailsford, said in a statement: "There are complex medical and physiological issues which affect the metabolism and excretion of Salbutamol. We're committed to establishing the facts and understanding exactly what happened on this occasion.

"I have the utmost confidence that Chris followed the medical guidance in managing his asthma symptoms, staying within the permissible dose for Salbutamol. Of course, we will do whatever we can to help address these

Riders have in the past received bans for excessive Salbutamol levels. In 2014, Italian rider Diego Ulissi received a nine-month ban, while Alessandro Petacchi got a 12-month ban in 2007 and was stripped of his five stage victories in the Giro d'Italia, but riders have also been able to successful explain AAFs.

Leonardo Piepoli tested positive on the same day as Petacchi but escaped sanction.

In 2016, British cyclist Simon Yates was banned for four months after testing positive for Terbutaline, another drug used to manage asthma.

Dickinson's tests on Team Sky's cyclists found that a third had the condition. He said cyclists were more likely to have symptoms because inhalation of dry air and pollution had been identified as triggers.

Team Sky declined to say how many of its cyclists suffer

Hamilton hopes Alonso is in 2018 title fight



Lewis Hamilton hopes his former team McLaren and Fernando Alonso are contenders for the 2018 Formula 1 world championship after their switch from Honda to Renault power. Hamilton's junior career was supported by McLaren, and he drove for the team in F1 from 2007-2012 before leaving for Mercedes. Though Alonso and Hamilton's time as McLaren team-mates in 2007 was famously tempestuous, their relationship has improved.

The pair battled for ninth at the end of

this year's Mexican Grand Prix as Hamilton recovered from first-lap damage, and the 2017 world champion wants more of that next season. "I had a great battle with Fernando earlier this year, towards the end of this season," said Hamilton.

"I'd love to have more battles with him on a much more level playing ground.

They've had such a difficult time. Given that I grew up with McLaren from 13, I go through qualifying and I always look to see where Fernando is, I always look to see where they are and am watching their progress. "There's just a natural place in my heart for them, because I achieved a huge amount with them. "I really, really hope next year is a successful year for them, I really hope we are battling with them because McLaren deserve to be at the front.

"I hope with this new power unit they're there with us. "I hope we have another incredible world champion up there with us fighting for the world championship. Alonso has not won a race since the

2013 Spanish GP with Ferrari, and scored just three top-five finishes during the past three seasons with McLaren-Honda. Though McLaren is now led by Zak

Brown following major management changes ahead of the 2017 season, Hamilton said he will always associate the team with former boss Ron Dennis.

"It's a fantastic team with incredible history," said Hamilton. "I'm incredibly proud of what Ron did with that team.

"It doesn't matter who takes over, for me it's always Ron's team."

(Source: Eurosport)

Olympic ski champion Mikaela Shiffrin 'scared' by Russian doping scandal



Russia's state-sponsored doping program before and during the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics hinged on its ability to break into 'tamper proof' bottles and replace tainted urine samples with clean ones so that dopers passed drugs tests.

If that's possible, then surely so too is the reverse -- breaking into a bottle and making a clean sample look dirty -- and that is what scares U.S. Olympic champion Mikaela Shiffrin the most about the scandal which has engulfed sport over the last 18 months.

The most concerning thing for me is that, in my opinion, it would be much easier to make a clean sample look dirty; than a dirty sample look clean," said Shiffrin, 22, who became the youngest ever Olympic slalom gold medalist when she took gold in Sochi at the age of 18 years and 345 days.

They had to go through an extensive process to cheat the system and make their dirty athletes look clean and it's really scary to think that they could take any sample and be like 'oh let's make this look dirty'.

"I suppose it's a little more complicated than that but that's my biggest concern.' 'I take it really seriously'

The Swiss company, Berlinger, designed the sample bottles so that they could not be opened without breaking the seal but Grigory Rodchenkov -- the whistleblower who claims to have masterminded the Sochi doping operation with the backing of the Kremlin -- revealed that Russia found a way to beat the bottle-locking system.

Rodchenkov, who is currently in witness protection in the United States, told the New York Times that his team would pass sealed bottles through "a hole in the wall" to Russian intelligence officers, who would take them to a nearby building and, within a few hours, bring them back with the caps loose and unbroken.

That allowed Rodchenkov and his team to swap dirty samples for clean ones and reseal the bottle without leaving a trace, a program that helped Russia finish top of the Sochi medal table with 13 gold medals. (Source: CNN)

Zlatan: Guardiola the most immature coach I've worked with

Zlatan Ibrahimovic has launched a scathing attack on Pep Guardiola, branding the Manchester City manager as 'im-

Ibrahimovic joined Barcelona in 2009 and played under Guardiola, but only stayed at the club for a season as he struggled to feature regularly at the Nou Camp. The now-Manchester United striker blames his failure at Barca on Guardiola and has criticised his man-management

and personal skills. $Speaking \ to \ Sky \ Sports \ Italia, Ibrahimovic \ said: `I'd \ walk$ into a room and he'd walk out. I'd go to meet him and he'd go somewhere else. I understood that there was something

The problem was his, it was he who hadn't solved the problem with me. I remember on my first day, he told me that the Barcelona players didn't turn up to training in Ferraris or Porsches

'He'd already judged me then, but if you don't know a person then you can't judge them. I had my experience with him, I don't know about others.

'I read the same thing had happened to (Mario) Mandzukic and (Samuel) Eto'o. He wasn't the worst coach I'd worked under, but he was certainly the most immature because a



man solves his problems.

The attack is the latest drop of bad blood between United and City since the Manchester derby on Sunday, won 2-1 by the visitors at Old Trafford.

After the game there was a brawl between players in the tunnel after United manager Jose Mourinho accused Guardiola's men of celebrating too obnoxiously - the home manager had a bottle thrown at him and was doused in water and milk.

City coaches' goading of Ibrahimovic may have played

a key role in the explosive bust-up on Sunday as Spanish newspaper Marca claim they told the 36-year-old: 'Ibra, you talk a lot but you move a little.

Guardiola offered a half-hearted apology for the bustup, leading Mourinho to say the two clubs were divided by behavior and diversity'.

Ibrahimovic has now waded in on Guardiola, saying the problems began between the pair when he was dropped for

questioning Barcelona's reliance on Lionel Messi. He said: 'I'd scored a lot of goals in my first six months and we won two Super Cups. The first six months were perfect.

'After that, we changed system and tactics, and it wasn't good for me, so the club told me to talk to Guardiola, and told Guardiola that he'd sacrificed the other players for (Lionel) Messi. He told me he understood me. 'After that, he put me on the bench for the next game, the

solved the problem very well I see!" After that, he didn't talk to me or even look at me.' Ibrahimovic left Barcelona for AC Milan in 2010, initially on loan before the move was made permanent the

one after that and the one after that, and I thought, "He's

following summer. (source: Daily Mail)

Carlos Queiroz 7th on **World's Best National Coach list**

S P O R T S Iran national football team's head coach Carlos Queiroz came seventh place at the world's best national team coach in 2017.

Queiroz, who guided Iran to their fifth World Cup qualification in history, was voted into seventh place after receiving 26 points.

After 2014, Joaquim Low, German's national coach since 2006, won with a large margin the Award 2017 of The World's Best National Coach.

Despite tough opposition from Brazil's « Tite », football experts from 91 countries worldwide had no hesitation in awarding Low a massive 299 points well ahead of Brazil's « Tite » second on 125 and newcomer Lopetegui of Spain third on 62.

The German national team won this year the Confederations Cup with very young players against Chile in final in Russia and Joaquim Low indicated one more time that he give the chance to the German new generation to built again a great team for Russia 2018.

He won the World Cup 2014 in Brazil (the year of his first Award) and is again a strong contender for the 2018 tournament.

«Tite», who took charge of the Brazilian National team in june 2016, has also made great progress in building a new team and to qualify Brazil for the 2018

Julen Lopetegui has also given a new look to the Spanish national team to bring it again as a contender for the 2018 World Cup.

RANKING 2017:

- 1 Joaquim LÖW (Germany) with 299 points
- 2 Adenor Leonardo Bacchi « TITE » (Brazil) with 125



- 3 Julen LOPETEGUI (Spain) with 62 points
- 4 Fernando SANTOS (Portugal) with 50 points
- 5 Didier DESCHAMPS (France) with 28 points,
- 6 Roberto MARTINEZ (Belgium) with 28 points
- Carlos OUEIROZ (Iran) with 26 points
- 8 Hector CUPER (Egypt) with 24 points 9 Juan Antonio PIZZI (Chile) with 16 points
- 10- Hugo BROOS (Cameroon) with 11 points

Ostersunds striker Saman Ghoddos a threat for Arsenal



S P O R T S Iranian international striker Saman Ghoddos is a threat for Arsenal when Ostersunds of Sweden meet the English giants at the UEFA Europa League Round of 32, express.co.uk reported.

Arsenal drew Ostersunds in the Europa League draw and play the team on Feb. 15 and 22.

Which players should Arsenal be wary of? Forwards Alhaji Gero and Saman Ghoddos pose a threat for Arsenal, having been the club's two most prolific scorers domestically and in Europe

Ghoddos' red-hot form has seen

Iran and Sweden in 2017 and it's likely that the striker will feature at the 2018 World Cup for the former next summer.

"We know how good we are at home. On an artificial pitch, and with the cold. There are not many who are used to it,' reports Sport Witness

Ghoddos has been OFK's standout player in the Europa League this season, and the game with Arsenal will surely put the player in the shop window ahead of next summer's transfer window.

The 24-year-old forward was linked with a move to QPR in the last window when the Championship side submitted an offer, which was rejected by the

Iran earn second win at IBSA Blind **Football Asian Championships**



S P O R T S Iran earned their second victory in a row in the 2017 IBSA Blind Football Asian Championships.

The Persians defeated hosts Malaysia 2-0 at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday.

Iran started the competition with a 3-o victory over South Korea on Tuesday. "If the boys can defend against Iran,

they can defend against South Korea. We have a one-goal advantage over them, and we're hungry for victory," Malaysia coach Sunny Shalesh said after the match.

Group A consists of China, Japan

Only the top two teams will qualify

for the last four stage.

Iran will defend the title it won in Japan in 2015 by defeating China on penalties in the final.

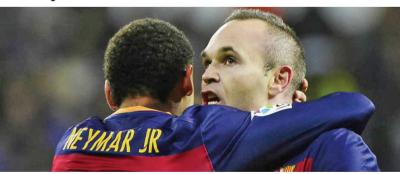
The top three teams will book spots at the IBSA Blind Football World Championships in Madrid, Spain, next year.

History of the IBSA Blind Football Asian Championships: 2005 Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam), win-

ners - Japan

2007 Seoul (South Korea), China 2009 Tokyo (Japan), China 2011 Sendai (Japan), China 2013 Beijing (China), China 2015 Tokyo (Japan), Iran

Neymar moving to Real Madrid 'would annoy me' - Iniesta



Andres Iniesta says he would be annoyed if former teammate Neymar left Paris Saint-Germain for Barcelona's rivals Real Madrid.

Neymar quit Barca in the summer, joining Paris Saint-Germain for a world record transfer fee of €222 million, but his brief spell in France has generated just as many stories off the pitch as it has on it.

His relationship with teammate Edinson Cavani has been under scrutiny following an argument over penalty-taking duties, while he has frequently been linked with a move to Madrid.

Madrid president Florentino Perez, who tried to sign Neymar before he joined Barca in 2013, said the Brazil international would be more likely to win the Ballon d'Or if he moved to the Santiago Bernabeu.

Barca striker Luis Suarez said recently that Neymar has too much admiration for his ex-club to ever move to Madrid, but Iniesta pointed out that stranger things have happened in the past.

"Anything can happen in football," the Barcelona captain told a news conference when asked if he could envisage Madrid without Cristiano Ronaldo but with Neymar. "We've seen situations which seemed impossible and have then happened before.'

Questioned on how he would feel if Neymar did move to Madrid, after a long pause, Iniesta added: "I would be indifferent. Maybe it would annoy me a little bit because he's a game-changer and he would strengthen a rival. But I'm not worried about it.'

Iniesta was also asked about Ronaldo's comments that he is the best player in the history of football after winning his fifth Ballon d'Or last week.

The Spain international said Ronaldo features in the debate, but that each person will have their own opinion on who the best ever is, with his vote going to teammate

"Each person is free to their own opinions and feelings," Iniesta said. "A player at [Ronaldo's] level, who has won the Ballon d'Or five times, obviously he is among the best.

"From there, we all have our own preferences. Mine is clear. I'd go with my teammate, with Leo, for all that he's represented and still represents.

Iniesta has missed Barca's last two games with a minor calf problem but said he is "optimistic" that he will be available for Sunday's game against Deportivo La Coruna at the Camp Nou.

(Source: Soccernet)

Pep Guardiola: If Man United were offended by celebrations, I apologise



Pep Guardiola has apologised to Manchester United if the club were offended by his team's celebrations following Man City's 2-1 derby win on Sunday, but insisted his side did nothing out of the ordinary.

Sources told ESPN FC that the celebrations following the victory at Old Trafford were "very vocal" and accompanied by loud music, prompting a confrontation between players and staff from both clubs.

The Football Association has since written to both clubs to seek their observations over a reported tunnel bust-up but Guardiola said the celebrations were not over the top.

"If we were not correct than I apologise to all of Manchester United -- our intentions was not that," Guardiola told a news conference. "It was to celebrate inside the locker room. If the people cannot understand that then I'm sorry.

"We won a derby -- if we offended United -- not just one player, not Jose [Mourinho] -- Manchester United, then I apologise. Sometimes United made a lot of celebrations in the past over City. All the managers celebrate sometimes and exceed. But it didn't happen. We have to enjoy those moments.'

The City squad also applauded their victory on the pitch with the away fans but Guardiola decided to return to the dressing room, despite his backroom staff encouraging him to celebrate with his players.

The Catalan said it is important for his team to acknowledge the supporters -- as clubs regularly do in Germany -but said he is reticent to go on the pitch now following the controversy over his exchange with Southampton's Nathan Redmond last month.

"I did the ridiculous thing with Redmond. I don't want to do that, believe me, but sometimes you do," he added. "Sometimes you can control yourself and say 'OK, it's not necessary to go there.' We haven't won anything so we went in the locker room.

"You discuss if it's a penalty or not football -- that's part of football -- and after we go to the locker room.

"To celebrate with your fans is part of it. In Germany everyone goes over if you win or lose. I said when I arrived that winning or losing, you have to go over when you are away to say thank you. The last action was in the corner and we celebrated there in a normal way -- nothing exceptional."

Masoud Shojaei trains with Las Palmas

TASNIM — Iranian international midfielder Masoud Shojaei is training with Spanish side UD Las Palmas.

Shojaei has recently parted the ways with Panionios of

The Iranian midfielder has always had a good relationship with Las Palmas President Miguel Ángel Ramírez and now trains with La Liga team to maintain his form until signing with new club.

The 33-year-old midfielder has several offers from European clubs and he is confident that his new destination will be finalized at the beginning of next January

Shojaei played 29 matches for the UD Las Palmas during the 2013-2014 season and scored five goals.

He also played two matches for Las Palmas in Copa del Rey and scored a goal.

Flamengo fans arrested over firecrackers outside Rio hotel

Around 40 Flamengo fans have been detained after setting off firecrackers outside a Rio de Janeiro hotel in which they believed members of rival team Independiente staying.

Flamengo play the Argentine side in the second leg of the Copa Sudamericana final at the Maracana Stadium on

Rio's Public Security Department said Flamengo fans shouted insults, sang songs and lit firecrackers outside the Hilton Hotel on Copacabana beach in the early hours of

Police used tear gas to bring the crowd under control. CONMEBOL, South American football's governing body, condemned the violence in a statement on Twitter.

(Source: ESPN)

I live day by day - Buffon ponders Euro 2020

Gianluigi Buffon has not ruled out continuing his career until Euro 2020. The 39-year-old Juventus goalkeeper previously stated he is "99.9 per cent" certain he will retire at the end of this season, with the caveat that he would continue to contest next year's Club World Cup if Massimiliano Allegri's men were to win the Champions League.

That meant an expected farewell with Italy at the 2018 World Cup – plans that were scuppered by the Azzurri's play-off heartbreak against Sweden last month.

A visibly emotional Buffon immediately after the second leg at San Siro became the symbol of Italy's bitter humiliation and the 2006 World Cup winner might yet look to address some unfinished business in national colors.

"After the elimination against Sweden, I have received so much love," he said at the Gazzetta Sports Awards.

"People have realised that I have never worn masks during my career. [It is] appreciated."

Asked about the possibility of playing at Euro 2020, Buffon added: "I live day by day, I do not exclude [anything]." Buffon has been on the losing side in the 2015 and 2017

Champions League finals, a partial blemish upon Juve's dominance of Serie A over the past six seasons. Those losses to heavyweights Barcelona and Real Madrid

have not dampened Buffon's enthusiasm to make history, with the Turin giants drawn against Tottenham in the last 16 this time around.

"As long as there is life there is hope," he added. "When you are still lucky enough to be able to compete on several fronts and when you play at a club like Juve you are not used to making choices [between competitions].

"You play to win, then the one that will come, will come."

(Source: Goal)

People hope 'I break my neck' after Trump comments: Vonn

Social media users have told American skier Lindsey Vonn they hoped she broke her neck after the Olympic champion made comments they deemed to be critical of U.S. President Donald Trump, she said on Tuesday. The 33-year-old said in an interview last week that she

wanted to "represent the people of United States not the President", at February's Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, which had sparked a backlash on social media.

"It is hurtful to read comments where people are hoping I break my neck or that God is punishing me for being 'anti-Trump," Vonn said in a post on Instagram on Tuesday.

Vonn, the most successful female World Cup alpine skier of all time, added she was trying to make the point during her CNN interview that Olympic athletes represent their nation and not any specific political party or individual.

Trump, who is often quick to respond to criticism from high-profile people, has not yet weighed in on Vonn's com-

Vonn, who won gold in the downhill at the 2010 Vancouver Games but missed the 2014 Games in Sochi due to injury, said people overseas were perplexed at the way the U.S. had changed.

You cannot pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV in Europe without noticing how people are questioning our direction," she said.

"It seems to me that we must lead with understanding and strive for unity in our relationships throughout the world." The reaction to her comments had also illustrated how

divided the country was, she said. "We need to find a way to put aside our differences and find common ground in communicating," Vonn added.

'Is it wrong to hope for a better world? All of this is much bigger than skiing and the Olympics. I am going to take the next two months to focus on what

I can do and right now that is competing for my country. In doing that, I will be hoping that we Americans can still be that 'shining city on a hill."

(Source: Reuters)

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Tabriz to host intl. conference on Nezami Ganjavi

R TEHRAN – The northwestern Iranian city d e s k of Tabriz in East Azarbaijan Province will be hosting an international conference on Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi on February 26, 2018.

Nezami Ganjavi (c. 1141-1209 CE) is considered the greatest romantic epic poet in Persian literature who brought a colloquial and realistic style to the Persian epic.

Nezami's reputation rests on his Khamseh, a copy of which was inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register list

Poet Fazel Nazari takes helm at IIDCYA

TEHRAN — Minister of Education Mohame s k mad Bat'haei appointed poet Fazel Nazari as the new director of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) on Tuesday.



Fazel Nazari speaks after his inauguration as the new director of the IIDCYA in Tehran on December 13, 2017. (Mehr/Mohammad

Nazari replaced Alireza Hajianzadeh who had held the position

Nazari was the former director of Tehran's Art Bureau. He is the author of "Cries of the Emperor", "The Minority", "Book" and several poetry collections.

"I Don't Like Her" wins Golden Fox at Calcutta festival

R TEHRAN – Iranian director Javad Darai's



short film "I Don't like Her" won the Golden Fox for the best free speech film

at the Calcutta International Cult Film Festival in India, the organizers announced on The film, which is about a

young girl who has problems with her identity, competed with "Ballad for Syria" by Eda Elif Tibet from Turkey and "The Cursed Queens" by Rashmi Jeta from India in this category.

Iranian films "Catfish" by Pictured above is a certificate pre- Surena Bayramlu and "Flatsented to "I Don't like Her" as the land", co-directed by Alireza winner of the Golden Fox for the Keymanesh and Amir Pusti, best free speech film at the Calcutta were also among the nomi- ${\it International Cult Film Festival} \ \ {\it nees in different sections of}$ in India on December 11, 2017. the festival.

Major Cineworld investor 'uncomfortable' with debt for Regal deal

LONDON (Reuters) - One of the biggest shareholders in Cineworldhas expressed concern about the company's \$3.6 billion takeover of bigger U.S. rival Regal Entertainment, saying it is uncomfortable with the debt the British business will take on to finance the deal.

The \$23-a-share acquisition will transform FTSE 250-listed Cineworld into the second biggest cinema chain in the world by number of screens, with 9,542 in Europe and the United States. However, it has confounded expectations among some shareholders that the company would pursue smaller acquisitions in Europe and could even return cash to investors.

Richard Marwood, a fund manager at Royal London Asset Management (RLAM), which is Cineworld's fourth-biggest shareholder with a 3.9 percent stake according to Thomson Reuters data, said the deal was "a bit of a surprise".

"We've been slightly taken aback by the region – the fact that they're going to the U.S. – and also just the sheer scale of what it is they're tackling," he told Reuters.

The takeover comes at a difficult time for the film industry, which is wrestling with falling cinema attendances in the United States as consumers' viewing habits change amid the growing popularity of streaming services such as Netflix.

It also marks another stage of consolidation among cinema operators that has seen U.S. firm AMC Entertainment Holdings acquire Stockholm-based Nordic Cinema Group, the UK's Odeon & UCI and America's Carmike Cinemas.

Criticism overshadows Iran's **House of Music Celebration**

TEHRAN - The 18th e s k edition of Iran's House of Music Celebration was overshadowed by criticism from Managing Director Hamidreza Nurbakhsh at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, which hosted government spokesman Mohammad Bager Nobakht and a number of cultural officials.

He lamented the prohibition on female musicians in some Iranian cities. "Why is a woman allowed to study music but she cannot perform," he asked.

He also criticized Iranian websites for the illegal uploading of the works by Iranian musicians and said that many veteran musicians are reluctant to produce works due to the lack of a copyright law in the

He called Iranians a lawful people and censured the state-run Iranian television over its negligence in educating people on copyrights.

Nurbakhsh announced a plan to establish an office to protect the rights to musical products in Iran in the near future.

The House of Music Celebration is organized annually to honor Iran's top musical products.

'Shall Live in Love" from vocalist Vahid Taj was selected as best album in the Iranian traditional music category. Majid Molania is the composer of the collection.

"Subdued" by vocalist Homayun Shajarian received the best album of the year in the Iranian dastgah music category. The collection has been composed by Sohrab Purnazeri.



Vocalist Homayun Shajarian (L) and composer Sohrab Purnazeri (R) accept awards for their album "Subdued" during the House of Music Celebration at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on December 12, 2017. (Honaronline/Seyyed Hatef Hosseini)

In the classical music section, "A cappella" from Damour band was named best album.

A number of musicians received lifetime achievement awards while the organizers

also paid tribute to several musical figures

Cinéma du Reel rep at Cinema Verite seeking Iranian docs

 $1 \rightarrow$ She added that she will most certainly propose some movies to the Cinéma du Réel committee like she did two years ago.

She also noted that she is not looking for any special type of documentary at this festival, "I try to watch everything," she said.

Asked about what standards an Iranian documentary would require to be selected for the Cinéma du Réel festival, she answered, "There are no specific standards for selecting Iranian documentaries. The same standards are applied to all.

"We really do care more about the form and the cinematographic view of the movie and how the director is able to give us his special take on reality, rather than the topic, the theme and the subject.

"As we know reality is always a construct whether it is portrayed in a fiction or a



documentary, and it is important and Cinéma du Réel board member Carine Bernasconi

interesting for us to see how the director will present his point of view on reality. That is what we look for.

Bernasconi is scheduled to present five documentaries previously screened at the Cinéma du Réel festival during a special program at the Cinema Verite festival.

She also explained that the French festival is open to new directors.

Bernasconi is a graduate of the theory and philosophy of film from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. She is currently working on her doctoral thesis on the subject of film theory in Iranian cinema.

She has been involved with major film events such as Lucarno festival. Vision du Reel and Cinéma Du Réel for more than

The Documentary and Experimental Film Center is the organizer of the Cinema Verite festival, which will run until December 17.

Bruce Brown, whose "Endless Summer" redefined surfing, dies



In this undated photo provided by Bruce Brown Films, filmmaker Bruce Brown holds a camera while making one of his many surfing movies. (Bob Bagley/Bruce Brown Films via AP)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bruce Brown, whose 1966 surfing documentary "The Endless Summer" molded the image of the surfer as a seeker of adventure and fulfillment and transformed the sport. has died. He was 80.

Brown died of natural causes Sunday in Santa Barbara, said Alex Mecl, general manager of Bruce Brown Films.

Along with the music of the Beach Boys, Brown took surfing from a quirky hobby to a fundamental part of American culture.

Surfers had largely been portrayed as beach blanket buffoons in the mindless party movies of the early 1960s. Then came Brown and "The Endless

Summer" with his beautiful, soulful story of surfers on a quest for fulfillment — an image that became emblazoned on the cultural psyche. "His timing, everything, was perfect,"

said legendary big-wave surfer Greg Noll, a friend of Brown's since they were young and a fellow filmmaker.

People were interested in surfing and Brown took it to a new level, Noll told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

"Thank you for showing us the world as you saw it, Bruce Brown," Kelly Slater, 11-time world champion surfer, said in an Instagram post Monday. "There are never enough words to say goodbye properly."

Brown, who took up surfing in the early 1950s, had made five other documentaries about the sport before "The Endless Summer," including 1958?s "Slippery When Wet" and 1960?s "Barefoot Adventure."

Like all the others, it was shot on a tiny budget with Brown performing nearly every duty, from camera operator to narrator.

The film follows two surfers, Robert August and Mike Hynson, as they hop hemispheres to constantly surf wherever it is summer, from Hawaii to Australia to South Africa to Senegal.

"He had a great theme," Noll said. Surfers considered Brown a peer who just happened to carry a camera instead of a board. He shot the film loosely and casually and the style proved infectious when the public saw the movie.

"I never had formal training in filmmaking, and that probably worked to my advantage," Brown said in a 2004 interview for his film company's website.

The trio's charisma and the film's natural beauty made it an unlikely hit.

"The beautiful photography he brought home almost makes you wonder if Hollywood hasn't been trying too hard," Roger Ebert said in his 1967 review of the film in The Chicago Sun-Times.

The film inspired many surfers to leave their home beaches, drop out of their sedentary lives and seek isolated places with bigger waves.

Some surfers blamed Brown's film for turning their serene spots into forever-crowded hotspots.

"The Last Jedi" seeks balance in a "Star Wars" galaxy in tumult



Actors dressed as storm troopers arrive for the European Premiere of "Star Wars: The Last Jedi", at the Royal Albert Hall in central London, Britain December 12, 2017. (Reuters/Hannah McKay)

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Light faces dark, old faces new and there's a struggle to find a balance in the Force when "Star Wars" returns with "The Last Jedi", the sequel that places Luke Skywalker and his sister Leia at the center of an emotional adventure

'The Last Jedi", written and directed by Rian Johnson, sees new characters that were first introduced in 2015's "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" return alongside franchise veterans, as the Resistance, led by Carrie Fisher's General Leia, fights the menacing First Order trying to control the galaxy.

"Because it's a new chapter and because it's the one where we have to start challenging the characters, it gets to go to intense places," Johnson told Reuters in a recent interview.

'The Last Jedi," out in theaters worldwide from Wednesday, is the eighth installment of the long-running "Star Wars" saga that George Lucas kicked off with 1977's "Episode IV: A New Hope."

Rey (Daisy Ridley) desperately tries to convince a stubborn Luke (Mark Hamill), who has sequestered himself on a remote island and given up the ways of the Jedi, to join the rebel fight, which is losing hope against a powerful First Order helmed by the tyrannical leader Snoke (Andy Serkis).

Johnson places a spotlight back on the Force, the supernatural energy that runs through the galaxy and which a young Luke was taught to harness by Jedi Master Yoda

in 1980's "The Empire Strikes Back". The older Luke has rejected the Force and

the Jedi after one of his former pupils, Ben Solo (Adam Driver), turned to the dark side. "The good guys really come up against

a wall and everyone faces challenges in this movie that they didn't expect," Hamill said.

Rey harnesses the Force and finds that it connects her through visions to Ben, now the tormented villain Kylo Ren. She tries to convince him to embrace the light, while he attempts to lure her to the dark side.

"This is about balance in general. It's sort of about taking away labels and ... finding the middle ground and understanding more that in a war, both sides are losing,

The film also shines a spotlight on Fisher, who died last December, shortly after she completed work on the film. "The Last Jedi" does not conclude Leia's story, which will be left to the filmmakers of 2019's "Episode IX."

Early reviews for Walt Disney Co.'s "The Last Jedi" were mostly warm on Tuesday, and Boxoffice.com projected that the film would gross \$185 million to \$215 million in North America in its first weekend, one of the biggest film debuts in history.

Johnson said that, like previous "Star Wars" films, he wanted to bring levity to "The Last Jedi", from Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac) mocking the uptight General Hux to Leia's scathing put-downs and Chewbacca's annoyance with fuzzy new creatures, the Porgs.