

**Iran says should be forerunner in Islamic human rights** **2**

**U.S. ignorant of Yemen's missile technology: general** **2**

**IKCO starts mass production of 2 new national car models** **4**

**Iran advance to IBSA Blind Football World Championships** **15**



# 'Poison gas against Palestinians'

See page 13

## Certain countries catch cold when Trump sneezes: Zarif

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday that certain countries in the region depend too much on major powers, noting they catch a cold when U.S. President Donald Trump sneezes. "All the countries around us are either member to NATO [the North Atlantic Treaty Organization] or enjoy nuclear power and survival of some others depends on major powers which tremble when Trump sneezes and become happy when he laughs," he said during a speech at a human rights conference in Tehran. However, he said, Iran draws its legitimacy and power from its own people. "We have always been supported by the people and presence of the people helped the country pass the most serious crises," the chief diplomat remarked. **->2**

## Sajjad Rafei wins top prize at Tehran Intl. Cartoon Biennial

**ART** TEHRAN — Sajjad Rafei from Iran has won \$8,000 in prize money as the top winner at the 11th Tehran International Cartoon Biennial. The winners were announced during the closing ceremony of the biennial, which was held at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art on Friday. In the main section, which focused on the theme of safety and security, Toso Borkovic from Serbia received the first prize, while Shahram Rezaei from Iran and Mikhail Zlatjovskiy from Russia received second and third prizes respectively. In the cartoons with free subject section, Mahnaz Yazdani from Iran won first prize. Josef Prchal from Spain received second prize and Klaus Pitter from Austria was awarded third prize in this section. **->16**

## Iran highlights sand, dust storms in Asia-Pacific Carbon Forum

**ENVIRONMENT** TEHRAN — Iran has once again remarked the importance of addressing sand and dust storms on the international scale, ISNA reported. Kaveh Madani, deputy head of the Department of Environment on Research and Education and acting head of International Affairs and Conventions, has urged the United Nations to promote regional cooperation to reduce the detriment of sand and dust storms emphasizing the necessity for establishing a regional center for sand and dust storm warning advisory and assessment system in the region. **->12**

**ARTICLE**  
By Hanif Ghaffari  
Political analyst

## Netanyahu only looking for a helper

As time goes by, we see an increase in the general and universal hatred of the Zionist occupying regime. In recent years, and in surveys conducted in European countries, most of the citizens of the green continent have supported the embargo on Zionist regime by the European Union. Although Zionist officials are trying to construe this issue as anti-Semitism, the reality is that "fight against Zionism" is increasing in Europe day by day. The latest decision of the U.S. President, Donald Trump regarding the announcement of Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist regime, has once again led to an increase in public hatred in Europe over the president and prime minister of the Zionist regime.

Netanyahu's recent trip to the European Union can also be analyzed in this context. The trip took place without a formal invitation from the European Union. This is a good indication of Netanyahu's feeling of isolation and humiliation. During his meeting with the Foreign Relations council of the European Union, Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister of the occupying regime of Jerusalem, called on the European Union to follow Donald Trump's approach towards Quds. Also, Netanyahu once again spoke about what he was calling "anti-Semitism" in Europe.

Federica Mogherini, the current High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, also stressed that Netanyahu's trip, which is considered the first trip of a Zionist regime official to the headquarters of the European Union during the last 22 years, has signaled the visit as a historic one. At the same time, Mogherini emphasized that the European Union will be subject to "international agreements" in relation to Quds issue. There are some points about the visits of the prime minister of the occupying regime of Quds with the European authorities, which should be taken into consideration:

Firstly, during the visit of "Jared Kushner", the son in law of the President of the United States, to the Israeli authorities and Netanyahu in Tel Aviv in August, full agreement was reached on the declaration of Quds as the capital of the Zionist regime by Trump. **->7**

## Iranian rails safer than expected: UIC expert

By Mehdi Torabi & Vahid Pourtajrishi

TEHRAN — George Oliver, the head of Safety Database (SDB) of the Union of the Int'l Railways (UIC) praised the Iranian railways for their high safety and reliability even in comparison with some European railways.

The significance of safety of passenger transport is getting more attended by relevant companies all over the world. Expansion of rail network and using rail as the safest mean of passenger

and freight transportation is highly attended by many economic blocs like EU's policies toward attraction of more passengers into rail network instead of road. To make this matter more clear, we talked to Olivier Georger, the senior expert in rail and head of UIC's Safety Data Base. The full text of this interview is as follows:

**Q:** What was your purpose for coming to Iran?  
**A:** It is six years that I am the head of UIC Safety Database and Iran also started its partic-

ipation in our department from six years back and that's why this is my pleasure to come to Iran and holding training lectures on this matter.

**Q:** Could you please elaborate what is Safety Data Base (SDB) of UIC and what the output of your department is?

**A:** UIC Safety Data Base registers all significant rail accidents since ten years back to now. These keep comparable bases, same definitions and parameters for all railway companies. **->13**

## Haley's jongler at cirque Pentagon; not first of its kind

By Behzad Saberi

VIENNA — On December 14, Nikki Haley, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in New York, organized a display of some alleged missile debris, calling them "concrete evidence" of Iran's weapons proliferation and called on the international community to join a united front in resisting this "global threat". Did she do so in the United Nations? Well, not exactly. In fact, while the alleged "evidence" has been previously submitted to the UN and is said to be under examination, the U.S. envoy to the UN preferred to set the scene elsewhere, at a military base in Washington, for the press and public.

It's not the first time that the United States resorts to such shows. Years ago, in October 1987 and April 1988, several warships of the U.S. Navy attacked and destroyed three offshore oil production complexes, owned and operated solely for commercial purposes by the National Iranian Oil Company. As a result of such attacks, production from those platforms was interrupted for several years. Later on, in 1992, Iran filed an application instituting proceedings in the In-

ternational Court of Justice against the United States with respect to the destruction of the oil platforms. In response, the U.S. made the most bizarre argument and claimed that its navy had only acted in "self-defense".

The United States relied on the some alleged incidents involving American vessels in the period up to 19 October 1987, and attributed them to Iran. It claimed that Iran had attacked a U.S. vessel (Sea Isle City) using a Silkworm missile, and also some other U.S. vessels were damaged by mines allegedly laid by Iran in international waterways. And the U.S. representatives, organized a show, similar to Nikki Haley's, for the judges of the Court, presenting them with such so-called "evidences".

In that case, after thorough examination of all the "evidence" presented by the U.S., the Court concluded that "at the end of the day the evidence available is insufficient to establish that the missile was fired by Iran" and therefore "the necessary burden of proof has not been discharged by the United States." Similarly, on the issue of alleged damages caused to the American vessels by

mines, the Court came to conclusion that "mines were being laid at the time by both belligerents in the Iran-Iraq war, so that evidence of other minelaying operations by Iran is not conclusive as to responsibility of Iran for this particular mine". The court described some of the evidence as "highly suggestive, but not conclusive". Therefore, "in view of all the circumstances, including the inconclusiveness of the evidence of Iran's responsibility for the mining of the USS Samuel B. Roberts, the Court was unable to hold that the attacks on the Salman and Nasr platforms had been justifiably made in response to an "armed attack" on the United States by Iran, in the form of the mining of the USS vessels."

Moral of the story: fake and fabricated evidence is of no use when presented to a court. Instead, Haley and her masters believe they can fool general public with such evidence. This was the reason behind the show. But there is one very important point they need to be reminded of: the age of "hit-and-run" in the Persian Gulf is long over. They may rest assured that Iran will make them pay a huge price for any stupid "hit".

**ARTICLE**  
By Yuram Abdullah Weiler  
Analyst and journalist

## The usurpation of Palestine from Balfour to Trump

"Palestinian Arabs might have ended up governing their own country if a Russian Jew living in Manchester had not developed a chemical process for extracting nail-varnish remover from horse-chestnuts."

—Karl Sabbagh  
In a lackluster speech on December 6, 2017, U.S. president Donald Trump announced the official recognition of Jerusalem al-Quds as the capital of the Israeli entity and directed the U.S. state department to make arrangements to move the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv. While Jerusalem was acknowledged as the Israeli capital by U.S. Senate Concurrent Resolution 106 in 1990 and the embassy move was mandated by the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, Trump has once again managed to spark worldwide outrage by declaring publicly what most intelligent observers had long since surmised.

The timing of Trump's address on al-Quds was ironic, for one hundred years earlier British General Edmund Allenby, after having captured the city, which had been under the rule of the Ottoman Turks, spoke of "the establishment of national governments and administrations in those countries deriving authority from the initiative and free will of those people themselves." Allenby's words, however, had previously been neutered by the now notorious Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, which declared the British government to "view with favour the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object," and indeed "His Majesty's Government" did.

The Balfour Declaration would never have materialized without the strident efforts of a Jewish chemist named Chaim Weizmann, a Zionist who later became the first president of the Israeli entity. Originally from southern Russia in the Pale of Settlement, Weizmann left his homeland for Switzerland where he earned a doctorate in chemistry in 1904 from the University of Geneva. Later he immigrated to Britain where he accepted a position at the University of Manchester until he was tapped by the British government in 1916 to work on munitions. **->13**



## Hectic Chabhar shoreline

Tens of small and medium-sized vessels dock at a scenic coastline of Chabhar, a busy port city edging the Persian Gulf, southern Iran, December 14, 2017.

Lying on the coast of the Gulf of Oman in Sistan-Baluchestan province, Chabhar is the country's only oceanic port and given its strategic location in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) development of the port is of high significance for Iran.

**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**Iran says should be forerunner in Islamic human rights**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said on Saturday that the Islamic Republic should become the forerunner of the Islamic human rights across the globe.

Addressing a meeting on human rights issues in Tehran, Shamkhani said the country's efforts to uphold human rights are rooted in the principles and obligations stipulated in the Iranian Constitution, IRNA reported.

He also said that the human rights campaign launched by the hegemonic powers against Iran is politically-motivated, stressing that Iran should try to improve its human rights regardless of such counterproductive pressures.



**U.S. ignorant of Yemen's missile technology: general**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Brigadier General Massoud Jazayeri, the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces, on Saturday denied accusations that Iran was supplying arms to Houthi fighters in Yemen, saying the allegations show Washington's officials are ignorant of Yemen's missile technology.

The remarks by the general came after the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, on Thursday showed the debris of a missile at a military base in Washington in which she claimed had been made by Iran and fired by Houthis at an airport in Riyadh on November 4.

"If the Americans knew of Yemen's modern missile technology, they would have avoided making such absurd remarks," Jazayeri said, Fars reported.

Jazayeri also said the U.S. cannot build consensus against the Islamic Republic and the resistance movement, urging Washington to stop its warmongering across the world.



**Iran, Turkey ink deal to boost border control**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Iranian and Turkish interior ministries signed a roadmap to expand cooperation in various security fields, including efforts to boost border control and counter money laundering.

The roadmap was signed at the end of the second session of the joint working group by officials from the two countries held in Ankara from Wednesday to Friday, Tasnim reported.

Iranian Deputy Interior Minister for Security Affairs Hossein Zolfaqari and his Turkish counterpart headed the delegations of the two countries in the session.

Zolfaqari said Iran and Turkey have close cooperation in fighting terrorism.



**West Asia might collapse: advisor**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Hessameddin Ashena, an advisor to President Rouhani, warned on Saturday that Western Asia might collapse in the near future, unless regional countries resolve their problems.

In a conference on the security of the Middle East, Ashena said political instability, social conflicts, civil wars, and cross-border conflicts threaten the security of the region, IRNA reported.

The advisor called on regional countries to expand cooperation to counter threats.

He also said cyberspace has brought with itself new threats that need to be dealt with in order to establish security in countries.



**Hashd al-Sha'abi essential for Iraq security: ambassador**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to Baghdad has defended the role of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), better known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, in fighting terrorism in Iraq, saying the force is a "necessity" for the country's security.

"Hashd al-Sha'abi is today a powerful legal organization in Iraq and recognized by the Iraqi government and parliament," Iraj Masjidi said, Press TV reported on Saturday.

Hashd al-Sha'abi, a combination of some 40 groups of mostly Shia fighters, was formed shortly after the emergence of the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq in mid-2014.



**Yemeni fighters slam U.S. accusations against Iran**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — A spokesman of Yemeni fighters has strongly criticized U.S. charges that Iran is funneling missiles to fighters in Yemen, known as Houthis, Washington Post reported.

Muhammad Abdul Salam said on Friday that Washington is "fabricating lies" to escape the repercussions of its recent decision to recognize the city of al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's capital, a move that triggered protests in the Muslim world including in war-torn Yemen.

It came after the U.S. claimed it has "undeniable" evidence that Tehran is violating international law and unveiled segments of missiles launched at Saudi Arabia from Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen.

**Iran calls U.S. complicit in Yemen calamity**

**POLITICS** Iran's permanent mission to the UN has said since Saudi Arabia relies heavily on the Trump administration's help in its war on Yemen, Washington is a complicit in the sufferings of the Yemeni people.

"Riyadh's aerial attacks on Yemen have, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, included U.S.-supplied cluster munitions. These bombs are banned under a treaty signed by 119 nations," a case study published by Iran's mission to the UN on Friday said.

Following is an excerpt of the case study: Last year, Saudi Arabia was the world's second largest weapons buyer, increasing its intake by 212% - mainly from the United States. President Donald Trump's trip to Riyadh in May featured the signing of a \$110 billion arms deal. As recently as late last month, it was confirmed that Raytheon and Boeing will sell thousands of 'precision guided munitions' worth \$7 billion as part of this mega agreement. The Saudi-led bombing campaign has



been directly bolstered by the provision of targeting information, logistical support and daily refuelling of warplanes by U.S. personnel.

The United States has supported the Saudi-led bombing campaign from the very beginning, including by refuelling Saudi-led warplanes in mid-air. In 2015, a sales process began for more than 8,000 laser-guided bombs for the Saudi air force. It also included more than 10,000 general purpose bombs, and above 5,000 kits to convert munitions.

The Obama administration signed a total of 42 weapons deals with Saudi Arabia. Worth over \$115 billion, they were highest level of arms sales offers by any administration in the history of the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

Indeed, U.S. offers of arms sales to Saudi Arabia under President Obama covered everything from small arms, to tanks, to helicopters, to attack aircraft, to bombs and missile systems, and to combat ships. The United States also provides maintenance and training, including a \$4 billion contract with the Saudi National Guard, which has played an important role in the war in Yemen.

**Certain countries catch cold when Trump sneezes: Zarif**

**1 -> 'Piece of metal'**

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the conference, he also said claims by U.S. Ambassador to UN Nikki Haley that Iran was supplying missiles to Yemeni rebels are "unfounded".

"The U.S. levels unfounded accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran by showing a piece of metal to hide its presence in the region and the actions it takes, most of which can be considered as war crimes," he explained.

Haley on Thursday presented the debris of a missile at a military base in Washington in which she claimed it had been made by Iran and used on November 4 by Yemen's Houthi group to target an airport near Riyadh.

Zarif said that Haley's claims were not "authentic" and not even convincing for the Westerners.

"These claims were aimed at marginalizing the U.S. complicity in crimes being committed



in our region especially in Yemen and also the very dangerous move by the U.S. in recognizing al-Quds as capital of Israel," he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump declared on December 6 that he recognizes al-Quds as the capital of Israel and ordered the relocation of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to al-Quds. The move sparked international condemnation and led to protests around the world, especially in Arab countries.

**France reacts cautiously on U.S. 'evidence' on Iran weaponry in Yemen**

**POLITICS** France reacted cautiously on Friday to U.S. evidence which claimed Iran supplied weapons to Yemeni Houthis, saying it was still studying information at its disposal and the UN had yet to draw any conclusions.

U.S. Ambassador to UN Nikki Haley on Thursday presented the debris of a missile at a military base in Washington in which she claimed it was made by Iran and used on November 4 by Yemen's Houthi group to target an airport near Riyadh.

"The United Nations secretariat has not, at this stage, drawn any conclusions. France continues to examine the information at its disposal," Reuters quoted Alexandre Giorgini, the French foreign ministry deputy spokesman, as saying.



In a tweet on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, "While Iran has been calling for ceasefire, aid and dialogue in Yemen from day 1, U.S. has sold weapons enabling its allies to kill civilians and impose famine. No amount of alternative facts or alternative evidence covers up U.S. complicity in war crimes."

**U.S. accuses Iran of UN violation, but evidence falls short: NY Times**

The Trump administration tried to mount a case on Thursday that Iran violated an international agreement to limit its arms dealing, but American officials failed to show how an array of weaponry presented as evidence proved the charges, according to the New York Times.

Nikki R. Haley, the American ambassador to the United Nations, accused Iran of providing weapons to Houthi rebels in Yemen who toppled the government in Sana.

At a military base in Washington, Ms. Haley stood in front of pieces of what defense officials said were Iranian-made Qiam missiles, including one that was fired by Houthi militants at an airport in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Saudi officials have called that attack an "act of war" by Iran.

Ms. Haley said that the weapons on display were declassified by the Pentagon so that the Trump administration could rally other countries to crack down on Iran. Without saying exactly what the administration is seeking, she vowed that "you will see us build a coalition to really push back against Iran and what they're doing."

Her accusations were the latest step by the Trump administration's effort to punish Iran for its ballistic missile program.

Asked what international agreements Iran was violating, Ms. Haley cited the United Nations Security Council

resolution 2231. Passed in 2015, it bars Iran from supplying, selling or transferring certain weapons outside the country unless approved by the Security Council. It also prohibits Iran from transferring weapons capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

But the evidence she showcased at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling — four weapons provided to the American government by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — fell short of proving her claims.

Defense officials said they could not say exactly when the weapons — the Qiam missiles and an anti-tank missile and a drone that were both recovered in Yemen — were given to the Houthis, which means that they could have been transferred before the Security Council resolution was enacted. And in some cases, the officials said that they could not say when the weapons were used.

Defense officials were also unable to say exactly where or when the drone, a broken Qasef-1, was found. It was evidently turned over without its warhead or guidance system.

Additionally, none of the weapons displayed were capable of delivering nuclear warheads, said Jeffrey Lewis, an analyst at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, Calif.

Iran dismissed her assertions. Alireza Miryousefi, a

spokesman at Iran's mission to the United Nations, called them fabricated and part of a pattern of false accusations by Washington, according to Agence France-Presse, the French news agency.

The Iranian foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, tweeted side-by-side photos of Ms. Haley at Thursday's news conference and Colin Powell, the former secretary of state, during his infamous 2003 speech at the United Nations arguing for an invasion of Iraq. It was in that speech that Mr. Powell outlined for the world what turned out to be the Bush administration's false case asserting that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

"When I was based at the UN, I saw this show and what it begat," Mr. Zarif, who was Iran's representative to the United Nations at the time, said on Twitter.

For all the hardware on display, the administration may face an uphill battle getting European allies, let alone Russia or China, to take tougher measures against Iran. The Bush administration's accusations about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction could long haunt United States diplomats trying to get the United Nations to sign on to tougher measures based on American intelligence.

What's more, the Trump administration has its own short history of uneasy relations with the United Nations.

**Japan backs nuclear deal, confirms no violation by Iran**

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono said on Friday that Japan supports the 2015 nuclear deal and confirms no violations by Tehran.

"Japan supports the Iran agreement with the nuclear deals... So far we have not confirmed any violation by Iran," Sputnik quoted Kono as saying during a press conference at the UN.

Kono also said that Tokyo and Tehran share a "very good relationship".

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.

Under the nuclear deal, Iran is obliged to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions against Tehran.



Since the implementation of the nuclear deal the United Nations nuclear watchdog has issued nine regular reports each time confirming that Iran is abiding by the terms of the agreement.

However, U.S. President Donald Trump, in a state-

ment issued on October 13, refused to certify Iran's compliance to the nuclear deal and asked Congress to decide about the fate of the nuclear deal.

On Friday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said a possible breakdown of the nuclear deal would send the wrong signal when it came to trying to resolve the situation around North Korea, Reuters reported.

At a speech at the European Parliament plenary session on December 21, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said preserving and implementing the nuclear agreement 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 stated.

**U.S. to pursue diplomacy toward Tehran: Mattis**

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has said that Washington will pursue a "diplomatically-led effort" toward Tehran, a day after a top U.S. diplomat claimed Iran was supplying weapons to the Houthis in Yemen.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, on Thursday accused Iran of arming the Houthis, in violation of UN sanctions, during a news conference held at a Washington-area military warehouse where U.S. defense officials put weapons fragments on display.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, Mattis said such evidence would not lead to an expanded military response from Washington.

"Not militarily right now, no," Washington Examiner quoted Mattis as saying. "It's the reason Ambassador Haley was there and not one of our generals."

He also said it was "healthy" for the

international community to know "what Iran is up to", accusing Iran of contributing to the deaths of innocent people, in reference to the Yemeni conflict.

"Ambassador Haley was revealing evidence — physical evidence, debris — that we got our hands on that shows they have been providing ballistic missiles to the Huthis," the U.S. defense minister said. "Everywhere you find turmoil, you find Iran's hand in it."

Meanwhile, UN officials who examined debris from the missiles said they could not conclude that they came from an Iranian supplier.

Tehran, which openly champions the Houthis in Yemen, has repeatedly denied accusations that it was supplying weapons to the Yemeni fighters.

On Friday, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad rejected Haley's allegations, saying the United States and

its regional allies are responsible for the plight of the Yemeni people.

"While #Iran has been calling for ceasefire, aid and dialogue in #Yemen from day 1, U.S. has sold weapons enabling its allies to kill civilians and impose famine," Zarif tweeted. "No amount of alternative facts or alternative evidence covers up U.S. complicity in war crimes."

Saudi Arabia and its regional allies, backed by certain Western countries including the United States, launched a military campaign against Yemen in 2015. The Saudi-led military campaign has so far killed thousands of civilians and left millions of people on the verge of starvation.

According to the UN, the situation in Yemen is the largest humanitarian crisis across the world, as two-thirds of the country's population need aid and more than seven million people are hungry.



U.S. is the main supplier of weapons to Saudi Arabia in the war on Yemen.

Some consider the U.S. an accomplice in the Saudi-led war crimes in Yemen.

According to the Washington Post, both the United States and Britain have been making more money with arms sales to Saudi Arabia in recent years than ever before. Human rights critics fear that Saudi Arabia has not only bought their weapons but their acceptance for its policies.

# Fatah calls for protests against U.S. VP al-Quds visit

The Fatah faction of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday called for demonstrations next week when the United States Vice President Mike Pence visits al-Quds (Jerusalem), after Washington's policy shift on the holy city.

Breaking with decades with the U.S. policy, President Donald Trump announced on December 6 his decision to recognize al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's capital and that he would move the U.S. embassy to the city.

The move has stirred global condemnation and sparked angry protests across Arab and Muslim countries, as well as deadly clashes in the occupied territories between Palestinians and Israeli forces.

It also prompted Abbas to cancel a meeting with Pence, who arrives on Wednesday in al-Quds, and warn that Washington no longer had a role to play in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process.

Fatah called for a day of "protests" on Wednesday near al-Quds (Jerusalem) and the Old City "against the visit of the American vice-president and Trump's decision" to recognize al-Quds as Israel's capital, a statement said.

The status of al-Quds is one of the most controversial issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel seized control of the eastern part of the city in the 1967 Middle East war and sees the whole of al-Quds (Je-



rusalem) as its undivided capital. The Palestinians view the east as the capital of their future state.

The call to protest came as thousands of Palestinians took part in funerals for two of four men killed on Friday in clashes with

Israeli forces during protests in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

Mourners chanted anti-Trump slogans and masked men fired into the air during one of the ceremonies in the village of Beit Ula, located between al-Quds and the occupied

West Bank.

Funerals were also held for the two other Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in Gaza, where the enclave's Islamist Hamas rulers had on Friday called for a "day of rage".

(Source: AFP)

## Austria conservatives, far-right reach coalition agreement



Austria's conservatives and the far-right have agreed to form a coalition government with anti-immigration policies and restrictive plans against the European Union role on top of its agenda.

Sebastian Kurz's People's Party (OeVP) and the anti-immigration Freedom Party (FPÖ) announced the coalition agreement late on Friday, making Austria the only Western European government with a far-right party in its government.

"Voters gave us a clear mandate to take into account their concerns, particularly when it comes to their security," FPÖ chief Heinz-Christian Strache told the same news conference. Kurz is currently the foreign minister of the outgoing government of "grand coalition" between OeVP and the center-left Social Democrats (SPOe).

The OeVP came first in the October 15 elections with 31.5 percent, making Kurz,

31, the next Austrian chancellor and also the world's youngest leader.

The key campaign promises of both the OeVP and the FPÖ were cutting benefits for all foreigners, slashing bureaucracy and restricting the EU's influence on national affairs. The last time the FPÖ entered government in 2000, Austria was briefly ostracized within the EU.

Strache, 48, is set to become deputy chancellor. His party has also secured the interior and the defense ministries while a diplomat close to the FPÖ is set to become foreign minister.

Several different groups, including the anti-fascist "Offensive Against the Right", plan to stage protests in Vienna on Monday.

The two parties have reportedly agreed on cutting tax and other salary charges and loosening labor laws.

(Source: AP)

## Israeli intelligence minister wants Saudi regime crown prince to visit Tel Aviv



Israeli Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz wants the House of Saud regime Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) to visit Tel Aviv.

Katz revealed his wish during an interview with a Saudi regime-run news website, said the minister's spokesman, Arye Shalimar, on Wednesday.

"He said that he asks the king to invite (Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu officially to Riyadh, and he asks MBS, Mohammed bin Salman, the son, to come and visit Israel," AFP quoted Shalimar as saying.

Katz's request is aimed at bolstering regional peace and boosting security and economic cooperation, Shalimar added.

In recent years, there have been numerous reports of behind-the-scenes contacts between Riyadh and Tel Aviv, despite the fact that the Saudi regime, along with oth-

er Arab League states, does not formally recognize the occupying entity.

In November, Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz revealed for the first time that Tel Aviv has had covert contacts with the House of Saud regime.

Furthermore, Israeli Communications Minister Ayoub Kara extended a warm invitation to the Saudi regime's Grand Mufti Abdul Aziz Al Sheikh to visit Israel for what he said were his friendly comments about the kingdom.

The Israeli minister of military affairs has also recently extended the hand of friendship to Arab states, calling on them to form an alliance against Iran.

Affected by succession plans and the failure of its aggressive policies, Riyadh has engaged in a process of normalizing relations with Israel.

(Source: Press TV)

## Israeli police question Netanyahu again over corruption probe

Israeli police investigators have questioned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his residence in occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem) again over suspicions he received illegal gifts from a number of wealthy businessmen.

Interrogators from the so-called Lahav 433 anti-corruption unit arrived at Netanyahu's home just before 9 a.m. local time (0700 GMT) on Friday to question him over his involvement in police cases 1000 and 2000. The session lasted 4.5 hours.

Israeli Hebrew-language media outlets reported that Netanyahu was presented with testimony given by Australian billionaire James Packer, which strengthened the likelihood of bribery charges brought against him.

This is the seventh time that Israeli police investigators are grilling Netanyahu for corruption. The last round of questioning took place on November 19, and lasted for four hours.

Case 1000 revolves around alleged illicit gifts given to Netanyahu and his family by different businessmen, most notably the Israeli-born Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan.

The Israeli prime minister and his wife, Sara, have denied wrongdoing in the case, claiming that the value of the items was significantly lower than reported, and that they were only "trifles" exchanged between close friends.

Case 2000 focuses on an alleged clandestine deal made between Netanyahu and Yedioth Ahronoth publisher and owner Arnon "Noni" Mozes, in which the 68-year-old chairman of the Likud party promised Mozes he would support a bill to reduce the circulation of Yedioth's main commercial rival, the Hebrew-language freebie Israel Hayom, in exchange for favorable coverage of himself in Yedioth.

Reports emerged earlier this year that the president of



the World Jewish Congress and Netanyahu's long-time ally, Ronald Lauder, had given the premier and his son gifts, including expensive suits. The accounts prompted Israeli police to interrogate the prime minister.

Netanyahu is currently under probe over suspicions that he accepted 1 million euros (about \$1.1 million) from accused French fraudster Arnaud Mimran for campaign funds during the 2009 elections.

There are also calls for Netanyahu to be investigated for his role in a billion-dollar deal to purchase three sub-

marines from German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems GmbH.

Netanyahu's personal lawyer and one of his closest confidants, David Shimron, reportedly represented the German company behind the submarine contract.

The Israeli prime minister, in an apparently unrelated case, is also subjected to accusations that he and his spouse misappropriated public funds to pay for private expenses, ranging from laundry to ice cream.

(Source: agencies)

## U.S. pressuring Afghanistan to ditch free Kalashnikovs, buy American weapons: Lavrov



The United States has been pressuring Afghanistan to ditch the thousands of free Kalashnikov assault rifles that it has received from Russia and buy American equivalents instead, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says.

"The Americans insist that 50,000 Kalashnikov rifles with munitions that were handed over to the Afghan security forces free of charge be removed from operational use and Afghanistan buy U.S.-made rifles and submachine guns instead," Lavrov told Russian lawmakers on Friday.

Russia has donated the weapons over the past few years, with at least 10,000 of them having been delivered in 2016.

Upon receiving the batch, Hanif Atmar, who is the national security adviser to the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, hailed the move as a sign of the "deep friendship between" Afghanistan and Russia. "This important donation is from an important friend of Afghanistan in a crucial time for Afghanistan and the region," he said at the time. Having been in use for decades now, the AK rifle series has proven reliable in various battle conditions. Its older, iconic model, the AK-47, remains in active use in Afghanistan and other countries.

Lavrov said Moscow had already raised concerns with Kabul about the true intentions behind the U.S. demand and the fate of the Russian-provided weapons in case the Afghans cave in to the U.S. pressure.

"Along with a question where these 50,000 rifles are to go — and we have asked the Afghans about that — we have another question: what is the reason behind these plans to strip the Afghan army of the possibility to use weapons it is accustomed to and to make it use what it is yet to get comfortable with," he said. "There is no answer to this question other than that the Americans are seeking to militate against us just for the fun of it."

According to the top Russian diplomat, Washington has also told the Afghan government to stop buying Russian helicopters and opt for the U.S.-made rotorcraft.

Afghanistan has been plagued by years of militancy and a devastating U.S.-led war that has been raging since 2001. It is now almost entirely dependent on foreign aid to maintain security. The latest push to replace Russian weapons with American ones seems in line with the U.S. President Donald Trump's new strategy for Afghanistan, which includes prolonged military presence and an increase of troop levels in the country.



■ UN allows Russia to deliver arms to CAR military: source

Elsewhere, Russia has been authorized to provide the Central African Republic (CAR)'s armed forces with light arms, under an exemption to an arms embargo on the country granted by the United Nations, diplomatic sources said on Friday.

"It's clear," an official said on condition of anonymity.

London, Paris and Washington had asked that the request be put on hold as they sought additional information on the shipments. They also called on Russia to strengthen measures related to the storage of the weapons in the Central African Republic, which has been under an arms embargo since 2013.

"Our only request was that the Russian delegation submit additional information on the serial numbers of the weapons... so that we can track weapons going into CAR," said a United States official. "We think it is a reasonable request and underscores the importance of coordinating the physical protection, control, safe storage and management of transferred arms and ammunition."

The Central African Republic's leaders asked Russia several months ago to provide weapons for units being formed by the European Union.

Moscow wants to equip two battalions totaling 1,300 men. Among the weapons to be shipped are 900 pistols, 5,200 assault rifles, 140 sniper rifles, 840 Kalashnikov machine guns, 270 RPGs and 20 anti-aircraft guns.

France blocked a previous request last month over concerns about the storage of the weapons in the volatile country, a council diplomat said.

In response, Russia promised reinforced security for warehouses and that it would stagger future deliveries. The first delivery is due next week, with two more on February 1 and April 1. It also wants to train troops on use of the weapons, another proposal subject to the UN's green light.

In the long term, the UN's peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic must be replaced by the country's own armed forces. The Central African Republic has faced instability since it exploded into violence after the 2013 overthrow of longtime leader Francois Bozize by the Seleka alliance.

(Source: agencies)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	94606.43
IFX	1056.5

Sources: tse.ir, lfb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	41,900 rials
EUR	50,000 rials
GBP	57,000 rials
AED	11,550 rials

Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$62.65/b
WTI	\$57.33/b
OPEC Basket	\$60.87/b
Gold	\$1,256.45/oz
Silver	\$16.11/oz
Platinum	\$895.75/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

IKCO starts mass production of 2 new national car models

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran's largest auto manufacturer, Iran Khodro Industrial Group (IKCO), opened production line for two new models of sedan in the presence of two Iranian senior officials on Saturday, IRNA reported.



Dena+ equipped with a turbo-charged EF7 engine and Peugeot 207 automatic transmission sedan are the two new models unveiled in the presence of the Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani and Industry Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari.

The challenges looming for central banks in 2018

Three major central banks met this week — and markets barely stirred. The US Federal Reserve raised interest rates for the third time this year and laid the ground for further tightening. The European Central Bank left its stimulus policies in place but confirmed plans to scale back asset purchases from next month. The Bank of England paused after its November rate rise, but signalled that interest rates were likely to rise again next year.

The lack of reaction to seemingly imminent tightening is worth celebrating. Investors no longer hang on central bankers' every word because, after the greatest firefighting operation in generations, most major economies are in decent health and monetary policy has of late become more predictable.

In the US, the outgoing Fed chair Janet Yellen has overseen the economy's return to full employment — accompanied, at last, by rising wages. She has also proved more deft than her predecessor at putting the Fed's vast programme of quantitative easing into reverse without unsettling markets.

In the EU, Mario Draghi deserves enormous credit for overcoming resistance to radical policies that are now starting to bear fruit: unemployment is falling across the eurozone and the latest data suggest the bloc is growing at its fastest pace in seven years. Periphery economies such as Spain, Portugal and even Greece are on the mend. Neighbouring Iceland — an early casualty of the 2008 crash — has lifted capital controls and is regaining its standing in international markets.

The outlook for the UK is less benign, thanks to the uncertainties attending Brexit. But the global upswing is at least cushioning the blow and Mark Carney, the BoE governor, can argue that the central bank is now a supporting actor in the drama, not the protagonist.

However, central bankers cannot rest on their laurels. The decisions they must take next year, over the pace and extent of tightening, will be fiercely contested, and they will be complicated by the uneven nature of the recovery, in the eurozone in particular.

Meanwhile, the direction of policy is likely to become less predictable for investors, with a wave of new appointments at the Fed and speculation already beginning over who might succeed Mr Draghi at the ECB in 2019.

On one side of the debate, the worry is that withdrawing stimulus too early, in the name of "normalisation", will choke off growth, or trigger big falls in asset prices and renewed debt problems. On the other side, the concern is that an extended period of ultra loose policy is allowing risks to build up in the financial system that could generate the next crisis — and that central banks might have no ammunition left to fight it when it struck.

For monetary policymakers, tightening too fast looks like the bigger risk, given the stubborn absence of inflationary pressures. The Fed has chosen to embark on a tightening cycle trusting that higher inflation will follow the improvement in jobs and growth. There is not much sign of it yet. The ECB's latest forecasts show inflation still below target in 2020, even if interest rates remain at historic lows.

All the more reason, though, for central banks to use the macro-prudential tools at their disposal to contain financial risks and stop asset prices overheating. Jay Powell, the new Fed chair, and Randal Quarles, its new supervisory chief, should not be too quick to deregulate. The ECB has a fight on its hands to force banks to tackle the crisis legacy of bad loans: it must press on.

Central banks, much maligned in recent years, can now claim success for their unorthodox policies. But their job is not about to become any easier. (Source: The Financial Times)

Iran to reach stable status in gasoline production by Mar. 2018

**ENERGY** TEHRAN — Iran will reach a stable status in gasoline production once the second phase of Persian Gulf Star Refinery comes on stream, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh told IRNA on Saturday.

He said the second phase is scheduled to be inaugurated by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018).

The average daily production of gasoline in Iran during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- November 21) reached 74.4 million liters to register an eight-percent rise compared to last year's eighth month output.

The country's refineries produced 68.8 million liters per day of gasoline during last year's first eight months, according to National Iranian Oil Refining & Distribution Company (NIORDC).

Of the mentioned daily production, 25,824 million liters was reported to be Euro 4 gasoline, 16 percent more than the figure for last year's eighth months.

Meanwhile, according to a report by Mehr news agency, the first shipment of Euro 5 gasoline produced by Iran's Persian Gulf Star Refinery was delivered to Shahid Rajaei port in south of the country on December 3.



Iran's oil output up 20,000 bpd in Q3: EIA

**ENERGY** TEHRAN — Iran produced 3.83 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil during the third quarter of 2017, with a 20,000 bpd increase from 3.81 million bpd in its previous quarter, according to the latest statistics released by U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).

In its report titled Short-Term Energy Outlook (STEO) released on December 12, EIA also put Iran's oil output at 3.8 million bpd in the first quarter of 2017.

The country's oil production in this year's third quarter also shows increase compared to 3.67 million bpd in the third quarter of 2016.

Further in its report, EIA put Iran's



liquid fuels production at 4.7 million bpd in November increasing from 4.6 million bpd in October. The average figure for October-November 2017 was 4.6 million bpd rising from 4.4 million bpd in October-November 2016.

Iraq begins to rebuild largest refinery

Iraq began to rebuild its largest oil refinery this week, jumpstarting an effort to reconstruct the country after a three-year war with ISIS, an announcement from the oil ministry said.

The Baiji complex should produce 70,000 barrels of oil per day upon completion, ministry spokesman Assem Jihad told reporters on Thursday. The facility, originally constructed in 1975, is currently completely offline and refined between 250,000 to 300,000 barrels per day before it was seized by ISIS in 2014.

"The rehabilitation will allow the distribution of refined products for the north of the country and reduce our imports," said Jihad.

Baiji is strategically located along Highway 1, which runs from Baghdad to Rabia, a border town in the North West of Iraq. It is only 111 kilometers from Kirkuk and therefore encroaches on the oil concessions that have been granted by the KRG to international oil companies in South-

Eastern Kurdistan. Despite its geographical proximity to Kurdish oil fields, the Baiji refinery is more of a strategic asset for Baghdad's National Oil Company (NOC) as opposed to Erbil.

ISIS presence in this region, and control over the refinery, not only hampered Baghdad's oil production, but also threatened to spill over into de facto Kurdish civilian territory. The New York Times cited reports from the Iraqi military that it had retaken the Baiji oil field from ISIS on the 16th of October 2015, bringing an end to approximately six months of ISIS control over the refinery. Although ISIS no longer occupies the land, the damage to the refinery after its re-capture was extensive.

Reports in early 2016 stated that it was 'plundered beyond repair', this corresponds with a wider ISIS tactic of decimating all existing infrastructure when forced out of an area.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Armenia launches free economic zone on Iran border

Armenia officially launched Meghri Free Economic Zone on its border with Iran on Friday.

Addressing the event, Armenian Minister of Economic Development and Investments Suren Karayan said the opening of the free economic zone is a remarkable event, as it will contribute to the proportionate development of the regions, improvement of national competitiveness, production of competitive goods, attraction of foreign investments, increased volume of exports, etc.

"Creation of the free economic zone in Meghri is important for the reason it is situated on the Iranian border, which will serve as an additional impetus for intensification of trade-economic relations between the



two countries, thus reinforcing the existing cooperation," he added.

Unlike the two other free economic zones, this one will embrace a wider framework of spheres, including agriculture, manufacturing industry, trade, cargo shipment and storage economy, tourism and others.

(Source: armradio.am)

Europe getting duped with U.S. LNG, Kremlin says

Under the guise of diplomatic force on the Kremlin, Washington is pressuring European allies to buy overpriced natural gas, Russia's foreign minister said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said American leaders in Brussels are taking orders from "across the pond" and sanctioning entities that harm Russian business interests.

"The Americans themselves did not incur losses," he was quoted by Russian news agency Tass as saying. "Moreover, under the pretext of fighting Russia, they want to push Europeans to buy overpriced American liquefied natural gas, and ramp up defense spending."

The European energy sector is exposed to geopolitical risk from its network of pipelines extending from Russia. Some of those networks run through the former Soviet sphere of influence, like in Ukraine where simmering conflicts add to energy security concerns in the European market.

Looking for options because it has few

resources of its own, European leaders have said liquefied natural gas sourced from shale basins in the United States could be a source of diversity.

Polish Oil and Gas Co., known commonly as PGNiG, signed a five-year contract to secure LNG from the Sabine Pass terminal in Louisiana, the first mid-term contract of its kind, in November.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., a member of a Senate energy committee, said the deal played "an important role in reducing Russian President Vladimir Putin's ability to bully Europe."

A National Defense Authorization Act for the current fiscal year that passed out of the U.S. House of Representatives in November said Russia uses energy "as a weapon to coerce, intimidate and influence" countries in the region. A pro-energy former real estate tycoon, U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to release his National Security Strategy on Monday.

(Source: upi.com)

U.S. setting stage for solar trade war with China

By Emily Holden

An unreleased White House document offers the strongest hint yet that the Trump administration is laying the groundwork for punitive tariffs on Chinese-made solar power equipment — a step that would promote the president's "America First" trade agenda while sharply increasing the costs of solar power in the U.S.

The prospect of such tariffs, which President Donald Trump could announce in January, has deeply alarmed the U.S. solar installation industry. It warns that it could lose tens of thousands of jobs if the cost of solar spikes, slowing the booming growth that sun-powered energy enjoyed during the Obama administration.

But the White House is preparing to argue that trade barriers are needed to foster solar manufacturing inside the United States, something it calls important to both national security and the economy, according to a document draft obtained by POLITICO. The paper argues that cheap solar imports allow China to unfairly profit from Americans' use of renewable power and gain influence in the developing world's energy infrastructure.

"While solar energy is forecast to play a larger role in the world's energy mix, other countries stand to benefit significantly more than U.S. workers," says the four-page paper, which is circulating within executive branch agencies for comment.

Trump has not said whether he intends to initiate the trade barriers on solar equipment imports, but he has accused China of "ripping off" the U.S. in international trade and called for the U.S. to become energy dominant by hiking production of oil, natural gas and coal. The new paper is likely to inspire a debate about whether the White House's rhetoric about creating U.S.-based solar manufacturing masks an effort to kneecap a growing, green alternative to fossil fuels such as coal — an energy source that Trump has repeatedly championed on the stump.

While the administration has touted an "all of the above" energy approach, it has instead taken significant steps to bolster fossil fuels, proposing measures to give financial support to coal-fired power plants even as it works to repeal the Obama administration's climate rules for the power industry. It has also pushed to grow U.S. exports of liquefied natural gas, and sent EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to



Morocco this week to promote U.S. gas shipments.

Trump must decide by Jan. 26 whether to institute the tariffs that the U.S. International Trade Commission recommended last month, after two U.S. solar manufacturers, Suniva and SolarWorld Americas, filed complaints accusing Chinese competitors of undercutting them.

Suniva, which is majority owned by a Chinese investor and is in bankruptcy, and SolarWorld, whose German parent is also in bankruptcy, say the flood of solar cells and panels from factories across Asia that are owned by Chinese companies has driven prices too low for them to compete.

Suniva spokesman Mark Paustenbach welcomed the White House's approach.

"Suniva applauds the Trump Administration for championing American manufacturing in the face of cheating by China and its proxies who want to kill American jobs and make America dependent on China for its energy and security needs," he said in a statement Friday.

But the U.S. Solar Energy Industries Association has said the drop in solar panel prices has triggered a boom in sales across the U.S., and establishing high tariffs could eliminate more than a third of the 240,000 solar jobs in the United States. Solar energy prices have tumbled dramatically over the past decade, and large, utility-scale plants in the Southwest are cost-competitive with natural gas and coal-fired power plants now. The industry fears that tariffs would reverse those cost declines, dealing a blow to project developers just as federal incentives for solar power phase out over the next four years.

The companies suing have countered that they believe tariffs could result in a net increase in jobs across the solar industry.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative heard from both sides at a hearing earlier this month and will soon send its own report to the White House.

The White House also opposes incentives for renewable energy. The paper advises against the federal and state tax incentives and mandates that have helped fuel the growth of renewable power, saying they are "subsidized by U.S. taxpayers," and "become overseas job creation programs."

The new White House paper says the international solar sector, "including its supply chain and critical minerals requirements, will grow in importance from an economic and energy security perspective," and it cites estimates that the global solar market will expand to \$140 billion in 2023 from \$65 billion in 2015. Chinese companies hold about 80 percent of the solar manufacturing capacity, although the U.S. is the second-largest market for solar energy, the paper says. The U.S. has about 38,000 solar manufacturing jobs, and China has 1.5 million, it notes.

The document says that depending on foreign countries for energy technology imports also jeopardizes U.S. energy independence and dominance.

It suggests the U.S. could focus on advanced solar technologies, rather than current ones already dominated by other countries, but it doesn't offer any potential policies. Trump has announced a review of the nuclear power sector, and the White House document says that might be necessary for solar and other energy sectors.

The White House document claims China has used its "monopoly" to punish U.S. industries that are part of the global supply chain, including by imposing its own tariffs.

U.S. producers "could benefit from moves designed to undermine China's monopoly over much of the sector and generate competition, including steps to revitalize U.S. manufacturing," it says. "Yet questions remain about the scope and extent of those potential benefits, especially in the context of various policy options that, depending on the course chosen could backfire on the U.S. supply chain, while imposing minimal harm on Chinese state-owned enterprises."

(Source: politico.com)



Ω  
OMEGA

SEAMASTER  
AQUA TERRA

Available at:



TEHRAN WATCH  
SINCE 1901

## U.S. delegation mystified by no Saudi protest over Jerusalem

By Nasim Ahmed

Saudi Arabia was one of a number of countries whose head of state failed to attend the extraordinary summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Istanbul last week. The absence of the self-proclaimed "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" at a conference to discuss the fate of the third holy mosque in Islam — Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem — was met with raised eyebrows, although many were not surprised at all.

There was speculation that King Salman's absence was due to Saudi Arabia's refusal to share a platform with Qatar and, above all, to keep good faith with U.S. President Donald Trump. Though Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel broke with international law and consensus, it seemed that the Kingdom wanted no part in a universal rebuke for the American leader.

The Saudi monarch did try to distance himself somewhat from Trump's announcement, reiterating the Kingdom's stated commitment to a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital during a televised address to the country's Shura (Consultative) Council in Riyadh on Wednesday. This took place while the world's main pan-Islamic body held its summit in Turkey.

Nevertheless, Riyadh's apparent indifference to the fate of Jerusalem has been so uncharacteristically baffling that even pro-Saudi commentators in America have been mystified by the muted response. Prominent U.S. officials and commentators had actually anticipated a Saudi backlash. "The protector of Islam and home to its two holiest sites," wrote Robert Satloff, "[was] a good place to judge the impact of President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital on U.S. interests in the region."

### Thunderous outrage

The real question, according to the director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy — a think tank allied closely to the UAE and Saudi Arabia — was how "America's friend's one step removed from the circle of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would react." Satloff said that he and a delegation of 50 supporters of the think tank who were in Riyadh to meet with Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and other senior Saudi officials were anticipating "thunderous outrage" at Trump's announcement. Instead, what they found to their surprise was a royal family unconcerned about the fate of Jerusalem; a crown prince, he said, "who offered a very different vision for both the Saudi-American relationship and a potential for Saudi-Israeli partnership."

Describing his encounter with the Saudi royals, the think tank chief had nothing but high praise for Bin Salman. "Jerusalem was never uttered" during their meetings, which took place while Trump made his televised declaration about the holy city. "The U.S. delegation had spent five hours in meetings with three different Saudi ministers, discussing everything from crises with Yemen, Qatar and Lebanon, to the kingdom's ambitious 'Vision 2030' reform program, to the possible public offering of the state oil company Aramco," Satloff wrote in an article for Foreign Policy magazine.

Mystified by the silence over Jerusalem, the U.S. delegation, according to Satloff, were anticipating the Saudis to "unload" their frustration during their final meeting of the day with the Secretary General of the Muslim World League. "Surely," he mused, "the head of the MWL would denounce America's assault on the sanctity of Muslim control of Jerusalem."

To his "amazement" Jerusalem never passed the lips of the Saudi officials. Instead, they "noted with pride" their friendships with rabbis in Europe and America, the visit that had been made to a synagogue in Paris, and the interfaith dialogue to which the Saudis were now committed. The U.S. delegation went to bed that evening confident that they would witness the "fire and brimstone of the old Saudi Arabia" once the details of Trump's announcement were known.

The following day they had an audience with none other than the Crown Prince himself. The 32 year old Mohammad Bin Salman is the de-facto ruler of the Kingdom, and he "had a lot to say" explained Satloff, although it wasn't apparent that Jerusalem was one of the issues bothering him. "If we hadn't asked him directly about Trump's announcement, it may never have come up. He certainly didn't come to the meeting to vent [his anger]."

Critics have suggested that Saudi silence over Jerusalem is a reflection of Riyadh's abandonment of the Palestinian cause. Under the new alliance between Bin Salman, Trump and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, Riyadh appears to have adopted Israel's vision for settling the conflict in Palestine.

The proposal apparently backed by the Saudis will grant Abu Dis, a town to the south-east of Jerusalem, as the future capital of an independent state of Palestine instead of occupied East Jerusalem. Palestinians will then have a non-contiguous statelet in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over which they will have only partial sovereignty; the majority of Israeli settlements in the West Bank will remain. Furthermore, the proposal does not grant Palestinian refugees and their descendants living in the diaspora their currently legitimate right to return to their land and homes in what is now Israel.

Should we be surprised? Optimists sensed a glimmer of hope that Saudi Arabia, while avoiding public condemnation of Trump, was privately expressing its displeasure to the Americans as forcefully as it could. That doesn't seem to have been the case. Bin Salman's abandonment of not only the Palestinian cause but of Jerusalem itself, a holy city to 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide, has completely disqualified the Kingdom from making any claim about protecting Islam and leading the Muslim world.

(Source: middleeastmonitor.com)

# Diplomacy only viable option to deal with North Korean crisis: William Perry

Former U.S. Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, who helped resolve the 1994 crisis on the Korean Peninsula, says the United States and other countries should stick to diplomacy to address military provocations by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

"Discussions and negotiations with North Korea are the only reasonable alternative to what could turn into a disastrous military operation," Perry told The Asahi Shimbun during an interview on Nov. 14 in Palo Alto, Calif.

Perry, 90, revealed that the Clinton administration drew up a plan to destroy North Korean nuclear facilities with cruise missiles in 1994.

He also said President Bill Clinton was prepared to "approve" his recommendation to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to South Korea to defend against a surprise attack from North Korea and safeguard Seoul.

Still, Perry sought a diplomatic solution as a presidential envoy to ease the tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Perry said he does not believe that a U.S. first strike is a viable option today because North Korea already possesses an "arsenal of perhaps 20 or so nuclear weapons."

Speaking of the consequences of a war, Perry said: "As bad as the first Korean War was, a war in the Korean Peninsula that extends to Japan and that goes nuclear would be 10 times worse."

Perry said he is "convinced" that Defense Secretary James Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson both understand the consequences of a military action in North Korea, although he is not as sure whether President Donald Trump does.

"While they're not the final decision-makers, they are certainly in a powerful position to recommend to the president, and I think they're recommending diplomatic solutions rather than military solutions," he said.

Perry, who advocated "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons" with three other U.S. statesmen in 2007, also suggested how the world could narrow the gap between the goal and the reality.

Excerpts from the interview follow:

### North Korean crisis in 1994

Q: Could you review for us the work you did and what happened during the North Korean crisis when you were secretary of defense in 1994?

A: I was appointed secretary in February 1994, and the first crisis I faced as secretary was North Korea, which culminated in June but it actually began in March and April. The North Koreans had a nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, for the purpose of generating electrical power. And it was operated—its fuel was plutonium. And, after it operated for so many months, the fuel was spent, and you had to take it out for reprocessing. But the spent fuel from that kind of reactor can be converted into plutonium that can be used for a bomb. It's a dangerous reactor, from that point of view.

Up until that point, the North Koreans were members of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and they had promised, therefore, not to make atomic bombs. But in March or April, they announced they were going to begin reprocessing the fuel to make plutonium out of it. And had they done that would have given them enough plutonium for six nuclear bombs. So we were very strongly opposed to that. And in the ensuing discussions over the next few months, they actually sent the UN (International Atomic Energy Agency) inspectors home, who were there to see that they didn't do something like that. And they were talking about withdrawing from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. So this was a very dangerous situation.

My position at the time, which the president shared, was that we would not allow them to make six nuclear bombs and, therefore, we needed to stop them from reprocessing that fuel, which would give them plutonium. Once they had the plutonium, it was relatively easy to make the bomb. So the key action we could take was to stop them from the reprocessing. So I was the secretary at the time and I made the public statement, with the approval of the president, that we would not permit them to make plutonium and that we were prepared to take military action if necessary, to stop it. And this was, I might say, not an empty threat.

Since then, many secretaries and many presidents have made statements somewhat like that, but they were empty threats. But we were prepared to follow through. I actually had a plan, on my desk, for using a cruise missile to destroy Yongbyon (nuclear site), which would have meant they could not make the plutonium. Well, our first priority was to get the military (aspect) carried out. The military, as I said, was very far back on the table, but it was there, and it was a threat. It was the coercion factor of our diplomacy. We hoped, and believed, we would not have to apply it, but we were serious about it there, and we were prepared to apply it, had North Korea rebuffed our diplomatic approach. But they didn't, so we'll never know what would have happened.

But in my view, we were prepared at that time that if they rejected diplomacy and went ahead to start making nuclear bombs, we were prepared, then, as we knew the consequences could be serious, but we also believed the consequences of them getting a nuclear bomb would be serious and probably even more serious, which, in fact, has turned out to be.

But both I, and certainly the president, understood that that was an action we did not want to take, not because it would be any difficult doing it, not because the result wouldn't have been desirable, but the consequence was the possibility that North Korea would respond to that by taking



William J. Perry

**Speaking of the consequences of a war, Perry said: "As bad as the first Korean War was, a war in the Korean Peninsula that extends to Japan and that goes nuclear would be 10 times worse."**

military action against South Korea. Not against the United States, they had no way of doing that against the United States. But they could have taken it against South Korea. And as you know from looking at the map, the DMZ is very close to Seoul. Just imagine having North Korean troops 20 miles from Tokyo. You get an idea of that, of the consequences of this. So the military option was on the table but it was very far back on the table. We were pushing for diplomatic solutions.

Q: But was it nearly going to war?

A: Yes, because at the time the North Korean response was very aggressive. After I made my public statement, the North Korean press referred to me, personally, as a "war maniac," which is pretty far from the truth. I'm actually a very peaceful person. And, as I said, although I had the plan to destroy them, we did not intend to use it if we didn't have to. I favored, and certainly the president favored, diplomacy as our first option.

Q: And then how can you make sure that they would listen to you seriously, that they wouldn't really take it as an empty threat, but this is a serious one?

A: Well, once you make two or three empty threats, you lose credibility. We hadn't done that yet. So I think our threat was credible. It was reinforced inadvertently, in that shortly after I made that statement, the man who had been the national security adviser to the previous administration, Brent Scowcroft—he had been the national security adviser for the first President Bush—wrote an op-ed for The Washington Post, in which he recommended that we use cruise missiles to strike the reactor if the North Koreans did not stop the reprocessing.

He was a good friend of mine, and I have always believed that the North Koreans, who "do their homework" on these issues, believed that I had put him up to writing that article, and that we were serious about this. So we were favoring diplomacy but this is what you would call "coercive diplomacy." It was diplomacy with a promise, on the one hand, but with a threat. And I believe the threat was credible to the North back in 1994. All of the threats since then have not been credible and they have ignored them. That threat was credible.

So shortly after that, the next day, Kim Il Sung invited (former) President Jimmy Carter to come over, to discuss the crisis, which President Carter was happy to do. And that led, in a few days, to his offering to negotiate. It was a very close-run thing because between the time that Carter was invited over there—in the next few days after Carter was invited over there—we had put together our plan for imposing very, very serious sanctions on North Korea, and I had advised the president we should not impose those sanctions until we had—I said that it's possible that the sanctions themselves would precipitate a military strike against the South. In fact, that's what the North was saying they would do. And I thought we had to take them seriously.

So, during that period of a few days there, I met with the president, along with our chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and along with our military commander in Korea, who had come home for that meeting, to present to him a proposal to reinforce our troops in South Korea before we imposed the sanctions, so that if the North conducted a military action, we'd be prepared for it. And I was proposing a really substantial, you know, 30,000 more troops, which is a lot! Today, for example, we only have 30,000 troops in all of South Korea. But we then had 40-some-thousand. I was proposing to add another 30,000. So, this would have been a pretty significant move.

We were actually in the meeting, when I was proposing that, when the telephone call came from Carter, in Pyongyang. He said that Kim Il Sung was ready to negotiate about not processing the plutonium. And I recommended to the president—which he accepted—that we accept his

recommendation but only—if he agreed to stop the activity at Yongbyon, while the negotiations were going on. I was afraid the negotiations would be interminable and in the meantime they'd go ahead and make their plutonium. So that was the way we responded, and Kim Il Sung accepted that. And that led in just a ... that stopped the crisis and within a few months we had actually negotiated the so-called "Agreed Framework."

Q: Before the meeting at the White House you and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, Gen. Shalikashvili, summoned every active four-star general in the meeting. How many percent thought that you had to take military action that would be going to war at that time?

A: I want to be clear on one thing. We were not planning to start a war, but we recognized that the actions we would take and the strong position we were taking, in particular, sending more troops over there and imposing sanctions, might prompt North Korea to start a war. And we wanted to have strong enough forces there that, if they started a war, they could not overrun Seoul, because they would do inconceivable damage if they could actually capture Seoul. So, we wanted to have enough—we knew we would win a war with North Korea, but we wanted to win it before they destroyed Seoul. That's what the extra troops were there for, and that's why we were taking these actions.

Q: And what was the reaction of President Clinton after the briefing?

A: He was prepared to approve the reinforcement that I was proposing. I actually gave him several options. There was a 20,000, a 30,000, a 40,000. Several options. But they were all substantial, and he was quite clear he was going to approve them. He never had to make that decision because the phone call came in, literally minutes before he was going to make that decision. I have always wondered if that was coincidental or I suppose not, because it was publicly known that we were having the meeting, and so the North Koreans would have known that. And they wanted to get—I think they wanted to get their proposal in before the meeting was over. That's what I assumed anyway.

Q: While you were preparing military action, what did you coordinate or request to the Japanese government?

A: I made a trip over, the week before that meeting, to Japan and to South Korea. In South Korea, I met with both the American and the South Korean generals. I reviewed their plan. I forget the number now. It was a contingency plan for the defense of South Korea, in the event of a North Korean surprise attack. I had to review that, and that was what led me to conclude it would not be sufficient—we couldn't be sure it would stop the North Koreans before they destroyed Seoul. And that led me to conclude we needed to have another 30,000 troops. And so, Gen. Luck was the commander of the Joint Korean Forces at that time, and he was the one that made the recommendation, and then he came back with me to Washington for the briefing to President Clinton. That was the meeting with the South Koreans, both American and South Korean militaries, as well as the South Korean government officials and president.

Then, I also met with the incoming Japanese Prime Minister (Tsunomu Hata). I don't remember whether it was before or after that meeting, but on the same trip. I told him what we were doing. I said that I believed we were not going to go into a war but we had to be prepared for it, but that if we went into a war, our plans and vision was not Japan entering the war, but envisioned using the air bases in Japan for resupplying our forces in Korea. I wanted him to be aware that our plans called for that, and to get his prior permission for doing that, so I could tell the president we would be able to execute this plan, by using the Japanese air bases.

**When President George Bush—the second President Bush—finally was elected in 2001, one of the first things he did was seek to revoke the Agreed Framework, which happened in 2002.**

Q: What was Japan's reaction to that?

A: His reaction was "Yes, we understand that." But he asked me not to make a public statement about it. Which I didn't. It would unnecessarily worry the Japanese public.

Q: As it turned out, you did sign the Agreed Framework with North Korea and avoided a military clash. What was the decisive factor to reach the agreement?

A: Well, the Agreed Framework, as it was constructed, could either end the nuclear threat from North Korea or at least delay it for a number of years. We couldn't be sure it would end it, but we were pretty sure—we knew it would delay it for many years. But I think, more importantly, the Agreed Framework—so, it put that nuclear problem at least on the back-burner for a while. And then, in the meantime, it gave an opportunity to develop a more normal relationship with North Korea. The Agreed Framework had some what I would call "hard agreements" and some "soft agreements." The hard agreements had to do with the aid we were supplying North Korea, which was the biggest part of which was two commercial nuclear reactors for providing electricity to North Korea, which were going to be built by Japan and South Korea. And, until those reactors were on the air and providing electricity, the United States was going to provide fuel oil to run generators to provide electricity. So, there were the "hard" features of it.

And we complied with those agreements. I must admit that the building of the reactors ran behind schedule. It was a couple years behind. But it was being built. And I have pictures of the state of construction at the time that it was actually stopped. It was pretty, reasonably, far along. But it was a couple years behind schedule, which the North Koreans—rightfully, I think—complained about. But, in essence, the "hard agreements" were being met. But the "soft agreements" envisioned assistance to North Korea in building up its industry, assistance in improving their agriculture, trade agreements back and forth, family meetings between South and North Koreans, the things that would start making North Korea more like a normal nation.

And, to me, the soft agreements were just as important as the hard agreements, but in fact the soft agreements were never met. When people say we didn't comply with the Agreed Framework, they're usually talking about the fact that the reactors were running a little bit late. I don't think that was the big issue because they were being built, and visibly being built. You could see them being built. I think it was the fact that we did not go ahead with the soft agreements. South Korea did go ahead with one of them, which was moving ahead with the establishment of the industrial facility at Kaesong. That was one positive consequence. But the United States did none of those things. And the reason the president did not do those things is because he ran into a very strong resistance in the U.S. Congress for even having signed the Agreed Framework. Many, particularly Republicans, did not agree with it. And, in fact, when President George Bush—the second President Bush—finally was elected in 2001, one of the first things he did was seek to revoke the Agreed Framework, which happened in 2002, I think.

So, there was a lot of resistance to the Agreed Framework and, as a consequence, President Clinton decided to meet the hard agreements to the Agreed Framework. Every year we supplied fuel oil, although I must say it came out of the Defense Department budget, so I had to get the authorization from the Congress, and there was much resistance in the Congress for doing that. The first year I just did it, I didn't ask for permission, and I got pretty badly criticized for doing that. The second year I went back for the permission. I got the permission but after a hard fight. So, the Congress was opposed. And it was a small problem in the first year or two, when there was still Democratic control of the Congress, but in the third year of my term the Republicans gained control of the Congress and it was very, very hard to get the "hard agreements" carried out. We did. But the "soft agreements" were not carried out because President Clinton had so much resistance on the "hard agreements." He said, "Well, we'll meet the 'hard agreements;' we'll give up on the soft." We never did them. We'll never know, we cannot relive history so we'll never know whether we would have had a different outcome if we had actually followed through on those what I call "soft agreements."

Q: Do you think that would have, sort of, changed the society of North Korea, from the core from that point?

A: I think there was a possibility. I think North Korea was probably sincere in wanting those soft agreements to be carried out, wanting to become more like a normal nation. And we later saw that manifested when I had another chance to negotiate with them in 1999 and 2000, when they actually did things like having their athletes march with the South Korean athletes to the Olympics. We saw Kim Jong Il going to Shanghai to visit the stock exchange. He was thinking of introducing something like that into his country. So there was, I think, serious consideration by North Korea to stop being "the hermit kingdom" and start joining the family of nations. And there were provisions in the Agreed Framework which facilitated that happening, which were not carried out, and we'll never know, had they been carried out, if it would have made a difference. But I'm inclined to believe it would have. And the same thing with two of the later discussions we had in the year 2000.

(Source: The Asahi Shimbun) Part 1

# IRGC's role in fight against regional terrorism

By Sajad Abedi

**TEHRAN** — The start of the political crisis in Iraq and Syria led regional actors and transnational actors to pursue a specific policy in the face of insecurity based on their own interests. Given the geopolitical and geo-strategic importance of the two countries in Southwest Asia, the attitudes of each of these actors differed in their dealings with the story.

Strategies and policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but compared with some supporters of chaos and insecurity in the field of foreign policy based on religious teachings, rationality, the interests of the Islamic Ummah and national interests, and hence the conflicting and shaky policies of the convincing governments of the fight against terrorism, Human rights and democracy are very different.

With the onset of the Russian crisis and the role of regional and transnational states that were largely in favor of the terrorists and rioters, Iran also expressed its willingness to resolve the crisis. Initially, activities began on diplomacy, and Iran was able to play a diplomatic role, and invited some countries, such as Russia and China, to play a more active role in the Syrian case.

Despite effective efforts in this regard, Iran came to the conclusion that not all diplomacy capacities could be used to cope with insecurity and that they should pursue the issues more seriously. Although this announcement was not so favorable to America and its allies, it was natural that the national interests of each country, such as Iran, were at the head of national security, and our country also has an impediment in these areas.

The Islamic Republic of Iran could not only witness the crisis of various confrontational and terrorist groups and their supporters in the region, with only the role of spectator in the scene.

Iran's defense of the people of the region is based on principles and principles and, accordingly, protects the sovereignty of legitimate and legitimate governments. Naturally, given the principled belief of the Islamic Republic of Iran about the sovereignty of the Syrian people to determine their political destiny, the support of the state's legal government against insurgents was emphasized as a general principle of foreign policy.

In the field of defense and defense, the Syrian government faced turbulence on the one hand, which was gradually expanding its influence, and on the other hand, the United States and its allies did not seek any support for military, financial and armaments from the terrorists.

The Syrian government's and the Syrian Army's approaches to dealing with this crisis



performance, accompanied by weaknesses and did not have much effect on the set of approaches to resolving the issue. The weakness in identifying the causes and sources of insecurity and the lack of use of the popular mobilization in dealing with terrorists and the unfamiliarity of the Syrian classical army with urban warfare led to a more complicated crisis.

The presence of these factors led Syria to invite Iran to fight the terrorists, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), as the executive arm of the regime, went to this country for guidance and action. With the presence of the IRGC in the area and the use of military advisories by the Iranian forces, the Syrian army made a defensive rebuilding, and, basically, the terrorist attacks were stopped in many areas, with the change of the rules of the game.

The Syrian classical army has since developed its defense capability in dealing with terrorists and was able to learn the methods of urban warfare with the help of the IRGC's training and to find the means to defend the rioters with the least possible casualties. Those who are, as a result of the rapid end to the turmoil of Syria, now saw their hopes unattainable.

Westerners and other supporters of the terrorist currents in this situation were completely concerned about changing the situation on the battlefield and tried to accuse Iran of military intervention in Syria. A weapon that, although at first glance, was very good, but with the release of documents from insurgents showing the obvious and covert support of the western and Arab axis opposing the terrorist movement, it slowed down and lost its part

performance, accompanied by weaknesses and did not have much effect on the set of approaches to resolving the issue.

Along with this, the victory of the Axis of Resistance in Aleppo as a result of military assistance and military advisories and the widespread mobilization of the popular mobilization was a turning point in the Syrian case, strengthening the Syrian government's position to continue to confront the insurgents and Terrorist groups.

The contributing role of the IRGC in Syria has led advocates of terrorism, especially the United States, which used to take all the necessary measures to damp Iran's position in the region, especially in resolving the regional crisis, following the developments that took place on the Syrian front. In order to solve the crisis, they would confess the role and position of the Islamic Republic of Iran and urge Iran to engage in Syrian settlement talks.

The rise of ISIL as a terrorist power in Iraq and Syria has caused changes in the region since a few years ago. The rapid progress of the Takfiri group in the midst of the Iraqi crisis has made it difficult. Since its inception, the IS have faced little resistance.

The combat capability of this terrorist group and the support of the Arab countries of the region on the one hand, and the apparent betrayal of some of the commanders of the middle classes of the Iraqi Army and the Ba'athist survivors of Saddam Hussein, provided that the Takfiri group, like the Ramadan, had long been in the military arena Golan and occupy vast sections of Iraq's five major provinces. In those days, even though some of the US-led countries whispered in vain, it was reported that the formation of a failed coalition would be called in the name of the

anti-ISIL coalition, but its initial rumblings fell from the very first days of its formation. The bitter sadness was that some of the Arab and European countries participating in this coalition were the main financial suppliers and weapons of the AIs, and the attacks of advanced US and European fighter aircraft targeted civilians instead of bombing the positions of this takfiri group. Naturally, these demonstrative and promotional measures not only did not help to contain terrorism, but it was.

Since Iran saw the lack of integrity of the participating members as the most important reason for the failure of the coalition, another way was to assist the Iraqi people to repel ISIL. Armed assistance and advisory services to the army and volunteer groups in Iraq were one of the effective ways for Iran to resolve this situation. For example, Massoud Barzani, head of the Kurdish region of Iraqi Kurdistan, said in a news conference that Tehran has provided weapons to Peshmerga forces. We demanded weapons and Iran was the first country to provide us with weapons.

The creation of a heightened al-Qaeda in Iraq was a long step taken by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to lift the military and military capability against ISIL, and that the blind knot of the confused Iraqi crisis would be largely unleashed.

The successful operation of the IRGC in Iraq's field greatly weakened the role of the US-led anti-ISIL rebellion in the country and promoted Iran's position as the guiding and the leadership of the resistance. The military and intellectual confrontation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps with ISIS as the most dangerous combat force against the resistance axis, while limiting the sphere of influence and circle of their activities, has also led to the defense of Iraq's territorial integrity.

The IRGC's contingent operations in Iraq led to mobilization of a range of different countries including the Kurds, Sunni tribes and Shi'a Hades al-Sha'bi against the ISIL, and retreating terrorists and Takfiris from the occupied territories. Another point was that as a result of these efforts, the ghost of war and chaos that had shadowed Iran's border lines in the early days of the Islamic Revolutionary Aid was hundreds of miles away.

Meanwhile, the role of Qassim Soleimani is undeniable. Major General, whom the peoples of the region considered him one of the greatest saviors of, and thus the strong power of the IRGC in resolving a decisive strike against the region's terrorists, has become the soft power of our country to increase bargaining power and increase popularity in other countries.

## Netanyahu only looking for a helper

1 → Subsequently, during the September meeting between Netanyahu and Trump in New York, declaration of Quds as the Zionist capital was examined and finalized by both sides.

The meeting stipulated that Washington and Tel Aviv, following the announcement of this controversial position, would take joint action to control and manage the positions of European countries regarding Quds. In other words, Netanyahu and Trump are seeking to «manage European countries' positions» after the announcement of the White House's recent decision. Netanyahu's trip to the European Union is also planned on the same lines.

A contemplation on the position of the European Union regarding the issue of the declaration of Quds as the capital of Israel by Trump is required here. As we can conclude by Federica Mogherini's words, the opposition of the European Union authorities to the recent action of Trump is a «subjunctive opposition.» In other words, the European Union has condemned the actions of the United States President following the negative influence of Trump's position on the so-called Middle East peace process and the formation of two states. Meanwhile, key variables such as «supporting the people of Palestine» and «Quds belonging to Palestine and the Islamic world» aren't basically part of this opposition. Therefore, we should be careful in examining the European Union's position towards Quds.

The opposition of the European Union to Trump's recent action, is different from the real and legal opposition of the Palestinian people, and especially the resistance movements. By decoding Mogherini's remarks, we come to know that Europe merely calls for direct participation in the process of forming two governments, and rejects Trump's decision since it has damaged the process and has led to a reduction in the power of maneuver in the Palestinian reconciliation process.

Thirdly, during the last decade, the Zionist leaders have always used the word «anti-Semitism» as a codename for the begging of diplomacy and the support of European countries. They try to analyze the «hatred toward Zionism» in Europe, which is increasing day by day among the public opinion of the member states and non-members of the European Union, in the form of «anti-Semitism», and thus, get some privileges of the European countries.

On the other side, the performance of the three European countries of Britain, Germany and France, has always been in order to complete the Zionist psychological puzzle. However, European public opinion is today more aware than ever about the nature of the Zionist regime. As a result, the «fight against Zionism» is now more evident than ever. Obviously, European authorities have no longer the power to persuade their citizens to «support the Zionist regime.» Today, Netanyahu and other Zionist officials are considered as criminals and usurpers not only in the region, but also in Europe, and this trend will surely continue in future. Therefore, any single game by the European Union on the United States and the Zionist regime's ground will face the anger of public opinion and, consequently, it would be of heavy political and social costs.

Although in recent years, European countries have opposed to actions such as settlements of the Zionist regime in the Occupied Territories, or opposition to announcement of Quds as Israel's Capital, but such opposition has not been enough to satisfy the public opinion. No doubt, the European dual play towards Palestine has come to an end. In this equation, taking a soft approach by the EU authorities towards Netanyahu and Trump and their demands, will be evaluated as a political suicide in the field of European foreign policy. Will European officials finally become aware of their deep misgivings over the Palestinian issue during the last decades? Will they refine their strategic approach to the issue of Palestine? These are questions that will be answered in the near future. However, any unwise action by European officials and their conformity with the Zionist regime and the United States will lead to the confrontation of the public opinion.

## The state of Alabama shocked Republicans

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — The Republican defeat in the state of Alabama has created a very difficult situation for US President Donald Trump and his entourage. Many American analysts now believe that the defeat of Trump and the Republicans in Alabama will be an introduction to defeating the Republicans in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Undoubtedly, in the future, the power of Trump will decrease in US political and executive equations.

An overview of Al Jazeera's latest report shows that the defeat of Trump and the Republican Party in Alabama has been remarkable. As Al Jazeera reported, Republican Judge Roy Moore, who had secured the backing of US President Donald Trump, lost the senate race in the conservative state of Alabama to his Democrat rival Doug Jones. Moore has been accused of rape and molesting a 14-year-old girl, and many believe these accusations cost him the election. But his was still a very narrow defeat, as the Republican candidate got very nearly half the vote.

The defeat of Moore is exciting at least because it shows that a Democrat can actually win an election. But it is also a matter for concern - if not despair - that his defeat only came over allegations of sexual misconduct. In September, prompted by his support for Donald Trump's claim to make «America great again», he was asked the obvious question: When did he think the country had been great?

Moore said, «I think it was great at the time when families were united - even though we had slavery - they cared for one another ... Our families were strong, our country had a direction.» This is a kind of lunacy. How is it possible to say, «families were united» when slave owners could sell off a mother's children? When they could separate husbands and wives? What does it mean to say that «families were strong,» when the infinite gradations of colour among African-Americans were being created by slave owners raping the women whom they owned. Their wives had



to tolerate this, because men controlled all the property and money.

Roy is most famous for his putting up a massive monument to the 10 Commandments in the Alabama Supreme Court building as a statement that it is the basis for the US's legal system. He is not alone in this. The late Justice Antonin Scalia said, «It's a symbol of the fact that government comes - derives its authority from God.»

Yet if we actually compare the Ten Commandments to the first Ten Amendments, what's striking is that the Constitution is a direct refutation of the ones that aren't part of all standard legal systems, the rules against murder, theft, perjury, and adultery.

The First Commandment is «Thou shalt put no other God before me.» The First Amendment is that «Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.»


The second, «Thou shalt make no graven image and not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain» is also opposed by First Amendment which says there shall be «no law abridging freedom of speech.» The Commandment to «honor thy father and mother,» likewise comes up against the guarantee of free speech.

«Thou shalt not covet,» would make


thoughts into crimes. The Bill of Rights call for adherence to «the rules of common law,» which require actus reus, an act, for something to be a crime.

In the end, Roy Moore lost the election. But his narrow defeat came only over allegations of sexual misconduct and not because he wants to return to the days of slavery, voting by white males only, and wants to impose a theocratic vision on the US. Perhaps the tidal wave that put Trump in the White House and Republicans in control of all branches of government, has begun to recede. Perhaps Democrats can figure out how to keep winning elections. But if some of the worst candidates in history can be nearly elected, it means that the backward logic and disguised appeal to pre-civil war racism and women as second class citizens without voting or property rights remain powerful and dangerous.

Eventually, after defeating the Republicans in the state of Alabama, the Democrats have found hope for a victory in the 2018 election and domination of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Yet, we have to wait for the competition between the two main US parties. A competition that will be crucial for Trump and his entourage and will shape their political destiny.



**N.I.O.C**  
1396.4240



National Iranian  
Drilling Company

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

One-Stage(compressed)

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
14,170	566,000,000	11,306,071,897	PARTS FOR NATIONAL SWIVEL MODEL P-500	1,508,706	Tender No.: FP/17-96/047 Indent No.: 48-22-9622030	1
23,530	940,000,000	18,787,952,250	PARTS FOR VARCO KEYLLY SPINNER MODEL 6800	1,508,708	Tender No.: FP/17-96/051 Indent No.: 48-22-9622038	2

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

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

B) Preparation of tender documents:  
Purchasing of documents:  
In order to receive the tender documents, 510,000 Rials should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.  
Notice: According to N.I.D.C technical and commercial committee rule, the limitation for job referrals in procurement field is four active and in process contract.

Receiving of documents:  
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN

C) Delivery of envelopes of bids and call quality evaluating:  
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including bank guarantees(A), financial offer(C) and stamped and signed of tender documents(B) along with qualificaion worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 40 days from last day of document received deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN.

Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.

D) Tender Guarantee:  
**Type of guarantee:**  
A)Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activites licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.  
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to National Iranain Drilling Company.  
Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:  
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.  
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on . WWW.NIDC.IR  
NIDC Telegram Channel: @nidc\_pr

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

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۰۹/۲۶ نوبت دوم ۹۶/۰۹/۲۷

# One last push to end South Sudan's deadly civil war

By Winnie Byanyima

I know and have seen war and its horror and cruelty in my own country. I have supported peace processes in conflicts since. But all of that didn't quite prepare me for my trip to South Sudan earlier this year.

Since civil war broke out in December 2013, South Sudan has spiraled into a deeper state of emergency. It's a brutal conflict, steeped in claims of ethnic cleansing. A deadly hunger crisis reigns over parts of the country: It is the civilians, the women and the children who are paying the price. The palpable hope of South Sudan's independence in 2011 - something so many of us celebrated in our region - now seems very distant.

Women - strong, hard-working and self-sacrificing women - told me, «We want to walk freely, we want to farm, we want to feed our families.» They live in a city called Malakal, on a «Protection of Civilians.»

I visited what felt like a ghost town. Malakal used to be South Sudan's second largest city af-

ter the capital, Juba. Now, most of its former residents have fled to neighboring Sudan - the country that they fought for independence from so fiercely - or they live in the POC camps.

The camp I visited is now home to many displaced women and girls; it is guarded by UN peacekeepers who line its outskirts, in tall watchtowers. They carry heavy weaponry in case the camp is attacked - which it has been, on several occasions.

#### ■ Negotiating table

I urge our leaders to give space at the negotiating table not only to those wielding a gun!

It is not a stretch for me to compare these camps to open-air prisons. This is not because these people are detained - they are not. It is also not a criticism of the United Nations for creating these sites - they are needed and have undoubtedly saved countless lives so far.

The camps do however signify the tragedy that the people of South Sudan face: people are there because they need protection from armed

groups. I was told that should a person walk out of this camp they face the risk of persecution, harassment, even death.

I will never forget the women I met who told me they have to choose between their children going hungry, or risking rape if they leave to search for food. The stories I heard are too awful to repeat. I saw the squalid conditions people have to live in, and I heard of the hunger people are enduring.

A war of this nature, which is now so deeply rooted, is unlikely to end without a huge diplomatic effort - something which up to now, has fallen short.

Ending the war in South Sudan must be at the very top of African leaders' political agendas. It is a catastrophe for the entire continent, and our region's biggest refugee crisis. It is a shameful failure of leadership in Africa.

#### ■ Long-lasting peace

The people of South Sudan and our region need renewed negotiations to begin, in order to bring genuine and long-lasting peace to the

country. Peace may feel distant, but it is not unreachable. In December, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) will be holding the High-Level Revitalization Forum in Addis Ababa. It is a critical opportunity to bring together warring parties to seek a long-term solution to this bloody conflict.

I call upon our regional leaders to push the warring parties to make the hard choices for peace. And together with our partners, Oxfam demands that regional and international powers throw their diplomatic weight behind a transparent and inclusive peace process.

The voices of the people affected by the conflict - women like Mary - must finally be heard. I urge our leaders to give space at the negotiating table to them, not only to those wielding a gun.

Any political process must formalize the involvement of the South Sudanese people, including the millions of refugees now living in Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, DRC and Kenya. This

is the best way to establish a peace that lasts. Citizens have the right to determine the future of their country.

Oxfam is supporting South Sudanese civil society, including refugees, to come together to deliver their message to this forum. This week, representatives from South Sudanese civil society, including refugee communities, will present their vision to IGAD on how to create long-lasting peace in their country.

The longer the international community is complacent, the more they risk being complicit. Failure is not an option. To ensure a credible peace process, we need timelines, indicators and accountability.

This latest push for peace could end this war. Let us ensure it is guided by its people - not just the political elites. No person I met in South Sudan wants - and none of our leaders should want - countless more lives to be ruined through this war.

(Source: Aljazeera)

## Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

### Apartment

Super luxury Apt in Elahieh new building, several apts with 2 Bdrs. to 4 Bdrs., furn & unfurn, balcony, nice lobby gym saloon, spj, parking unbelievable view good access to highway diplomatic building  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Luxury Apt in Jordan new, 120 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., luxury furn, parking, lobby, **\$2300**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

New Apt in Zafaranih 180 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., new furn parking, **\$3000**  
**Ms.Ava: 09128440156**

Apt in new Building in Niavaran 6<sup>th</sup> floor, each floor one apt each Apt 300 sq.m with 4 Bdrs., balcony, lobby, spj furn & unfurn good access to highway **\$7000**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in Tower in Farmanieh 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 200 sq.m, 3 Bdrs. new furn, parking, spj 3 balconies, **\$3600**  
**Ms.Ava: 09128440156**

Apt in Jordan 70 sq.m, 1 Bdr., fully furn, nice & cozy, parking, **\$1400**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

### Villa

Super Luxury Villa in Farmanieh 800 Built up in 1200 land duplex completely renovated 7 Bdrs., 2 level, green garden outdoor pool, high security equipment kitchen  
**Suitable for Residency of Ambassadors**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Villa in Niavaran 650 sq.m built up, 450 sq.m land duplex villa with one extra apt indoor pool, spj, parking  
**\$10000 Suitable for Residency or Embassy**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Villa in Darous duplex, 1200 sq.m built up 2000 sq.m land, 5 Bdrs. renovated big saloon, semi furn beautiful garden pool, sauna, jacuzzi  
**\$17000 Suitable for Residency & Embassy**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Super Luxury Villa in Elahieh 1500 sq.m, 900 sq.m built up duplex, green garden, outdoor pool, renovated, furn & unfurn  
**\$15000 Suitable for Embassy & Residency**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**



Holder of

ISO 9001:2008

ISO 10004:2012

ISO 10002:2014

From Oxford Cert Universal

**Best Consultation,  
Best Services, Best Result**

Section Manager "Tina 09128440154"

Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

**Hot Line: 28141**

**info@parsdiplomatic.com**

### Building & Office

New Commercial Building in a Tower in Zafaranih 60 sq.m, open office lobby, parking  
**Price negotiable**  
**Ms.Ava: 09128440156**

Whole Building in Jordan 15 Apts, 25 Bdrs., new, excellent furn, lobby, parking good access to Modarress highway good condition  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Commercial Building in Fereshteh 120 sq.m 250 sq.m, flat, modern  
**reasonable price**  
**Ms.Ava: 09128440156**

Nice Office in Jordan 120 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., almost new parking, lobby  
**Price per each sq \$40**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

New Commercial Building in Saadat Abad totally around 3000 sq.m built up unbelievable building, each floor 1500 sq.m, flat, 180 parking  
**Suitable for foreign companies**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

### Ideal Offers

Commercial Building in Valiasr \_ Park Melat 130 sq.m, 3 rooms, almost new lobby, security, guest parking good access to highway full of foreign companies  
**Price reasonable**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in Elahieh 170 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., full furn big balcony, **\$1500**  
**Ms.Ava: 09128440156**

Offer in Soheil 170 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., sauna pool, jacuzzi, nice & clean furn, **\$2500**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in Qeytarih 4<sup>th</sup> floor 120 sq.m, 2 Bdrs. fully furn, parking near to Qeytarih Park **\$1500**  
**Ms.Ava: 09128440156**

Apt in Velenjak brand-new flat in a garden 85 sq.m, tower, 1 Bdr. fully furn with spj, parking & storage, **\$3000**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

مالکین محترم

ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آپارتمان، ویلا، مستغلات، اداری و تجاری) به ما بسپارید.

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

مالکین محترم املاک میله و غیرمیله، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا و مستغلات شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شرکت های خارجی نیازمندیم.

مالکین محترم

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

**PARSIAN Real Estate**

**SHANON**  
Shanon\_zt@yahoo.com  
+989121907875  
Tel: 88745542

**Zafaranih Apts** (\$2400) 2bdrs, S/p  
(\$3200) 3bdrs, S/p

**Elahieh Villa (\$8000)** 1500sq.m, 5bdrs S/p, green yard, F.F

**Jordan** (\$1800) 2bdrs S/p, S, F.F

**Tajrish Apt (\$5000)** 300sq.m, 4bdrs S/p, balcony, F.F

**Farmanieh (\$10000)** 3storey bldg, 10bdrs yard, pkg lots, & F.F

**FIRST CHOICE REAL ESTATE**



Mr. Ghanizadeh Nobody does it better

آژانس املاک انتخاب اول در خدمت شماست  
TEL: 22041212 - 09121081212  
APARTMENT - VILLA - OFFICE  
PROPERTY@FIRSTCHOICECO.COM  
**WWW.FIRSTCHOICECO.COM**

**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

**www.DeltaHOME.ir**

The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

**HOME**  
Real Estate

Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group  
(021) 88888865

**ISF-EHSANI Real Estate**  
IRAN-SARAYE-FERESHTEH

Apt. in Elahieh

270 sq.m, 3 bedrooms, bid terrace, full of lights, full facilities, high security, modern and new, unbelievable view

**Ehsan 0912 4388634**

Tel: (021) 22022920 Fax: (021) 26201855  
www.maskanfereshteh.com maskanfereshteh@gmail.com  
Add.: No. 18, Hojjat Bldg., Sharifimaneh Intersection, Fereshteh, Elahieh

**Apt. in south Dibaji**  
3rd. floor, 120 sq.m,  
2 Bdrs. fully furn,  
2 parking spots  
spj, \$1800

**Reza**

**09304869911**

**IRANIAHOME**

**Real Estate**  
**SH.LAVASANI**

**09123103526**

مالکین محترم: ویلا و آپارتمان میله شما را جهت اجاره به دیپلماتها نیازمندیم

Societe immobiliere  
"Iraniahome"

Specialise dans la location de villas, appartements, ou bureaux pour une clientele essentiellement etrangere. Fichier tres riche a votre disposition.

**M.A. Ahrabi**

Directure de la section francaise.

**0919 2571076**

**Tel: 88888007**

**Fax: 88675936**

www.iraniahome.com



# Yalda Night, fun-filled heritage for kids

By Setareh Behroozi

Despite modern busy life, the feast of Yalda, which marks the winter solstice, the longest night of the year by one minute, is still held by Iranians with some details mentioned below.

Children, as future generation, who lives in a world much different from our childhood, may have many questions about Yalda. This is our duty as their parents to answer their questions and make them accompany us to celebrate this national ritual.

Iranians all around the world celebrate Yalda Night, which falls on coming Thursday, December 21. During the night, families gather at an elder's house and feast on watermelon, pomegranate, dried fruits and nuts.

They eat and drink and read poetry, especially poems of Hafez, until midnight.

■ **Yalda, a great story-inspired event**

Don't search for mythical and heroic tale! Tell them about Nan-e Sarma, which literally means 'Grandma Frost', a mythical character in Iranian folk, which is responsible for winter's cold and frost.

Most stories about Yalda revolves around two sons of Nan-e Sarma Chelleh Bozorg and Chelleh Koochak. In Persian chelleh means forty. In ancient time, Iranians divided winter into two forty days, the first forty days begin from December 21.

There are several folktales about this family in different regions of Iran. You can search the web or ask elders about them and recount them for your children to familiarize them with Yalda.

■ **Make Yalda a joyful event for your kids**

Make a happy night for your children with a friendly reunion. If you don't have access to grandparent's homes, just make the event memorable with a friendly reunion.

Forget about lavish meal and decorated table set. Choose an easy-to-prepare food and prepare a friendly but beautiful table and invite friends and family.

In this way, you teach your kids that enjoying togetherness needs no money or extra time.

■ **Set Yalda table with help of your kids**

Tell your kids about the elements, which are served during Yalda Night and ask him or her to help you for setting the table.

During the process, you can explain to your child about each item, which is a symbol



**Remind our kids about the essence of Yalda heritage, that they should always esteem togetherness and enjoy human bonds, which save us in the coldest days of our life.**

in Iranian culture as well.

Hence your kid becomes more excited about the celebration and wait for the event in coming year.

■ **De-seed pomegranate with little hands**

Pomegranate is an essential part of Yalda Night. Ask your kid to de-seed pomegranate for Yalda. In this way, you engage your child for the celebration.

You can explain to your kid about the fruit, which is great choice for Yalda with

its bright color and its characteristics for general health.

■ **cherish Yalda with your kids**

You can ask your child and other children, if there is any amongst your invitees, to draw a painting about Yalda Night and reward them with a little gift.

You can also ask your guests to recount their memories of their childhood about Yalda and share them during the reunion.

Reading and recounting stories of Shahnameh is also a great choice for entertaining

children during the event.

■ **Dear parents, don't forget origin!**

In fact, Yalda is a celebration, which gathers families and relatives before the cold days of winter emerge. It is a heart-warming event for our ancestors to deal with frost and cold of days to come.

This is the essence of this heritage, which we should transfer to the next generation. Teach them to esteem togetherness and enjoy human bonds, which save us in the coldest days of our life!

## Colorful Iran: Chelleh Sho in Mazandaran



Like other Iranians, people living in the northern Mazandaran province celebrate Yalda Night - the longest night of the year on the last eve of autumn - in a gathering called Chelleh Sho in local language.

Watermelon, yoghurt and nuts including almonds, pistachios, raisins, figs and dried berries as well as roasted wheat and peanut are amongst the eats served during the Chelleh Sho.

Medlar, which is named Konos in local language, is one of the main fruits, which

is eaten during the night.

They also cook a special kind of cookie named 'Posht Zik' with sesame and sugar. During the night, one blackens his face and goes door to door to collect money for poor families to live during winter.

People read Holy Quran and pray for late members of their families during the night.

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 remove stains from stainless steel?



Have you had a cleaning mishap that left brown stains on your stainless steel? For example, you may have sprayed a cleaner on your stainless steel sink and didn't rinse it. Later, you notice brown stains all over the sink. Is it possible to remove these stains, and what can you use to do the job without creating further problems?

Many people are surprised to find that stainless steel can be stained.

Cleaning stainless steel can sometimes seem tricky, but is a very resilient surface. When problems happen, it is best to start with the basics to help repair the surfaces.

First, look at your stainless steel surface and determine which way the grain runs. You will want to rub in the direction of the grain rather than across the grain once you start cleaning. Now there are four methods to use to see which can remove the stains, starting with the least corrosive method.

■ **Steam Cleaning:** Heat water to boiling in a kettle with a spout, so you'll be able to pour it. Place a paper towel or microfiber towel over the stained surface. Pour enough of the boiling water onto the paper towel to wet it. Allow it to steam for five to 10 minutes. By then, it will have cooled, and you can rub the surface with the paper towel with the grain.

■ **Baking Soda and Dish Soap:** Baking soda mixed with liquid dish soap can make a good paste to gently rub on stains. Use a microfiber cloth or other soft cloth to rub in the direction of the grain. Be sure to rinse the stainless steel surface thoroughly, and towel dry.

■ **Vinegar:** If the stains remain, try vinegar. Pour a little white vinegar or apple cider vinegar onto the stained surface. Let it sit for a few minutes. Then rub it with a soft cloth following the grain of the steel. Remember to rinse thoroughly and towel dry.

(Source: The Spruce)

## PERSIAN DRUGSTORE

### Prepare for winter in Persian style



Winter is associated with flue and cold in our minds. Iranian traditional medicine provides some advice for each season. By following the guideline, you can enjoy more during the cold season:

- Increase your sport activities and exercises. However, be aware of cold weather and stay warm with proper clothing.
- Due to increase of flue and catarrh in cold season, do not use foods with cooling characteristics.
- Use more chicken egg, quail egg or pigeon egg in your foods.
- Drink herbal teas made from ginger, saffron, cinnamon and cardamom daily.
- Try to eat more hot food and drinks as well as edibles with warming characteristics.
- Kebab, Abgusht (a stew with meat, chick pea, and beans), Haleem (a stew including wheat or barley and meat) are good choices for winter.
- Eat more apple and quince during cold seasons.
- Don't forget seasoning with warming characteristics like cinnamon, saffron, caraway, thyme and pepper.
- Do not drink cold water and also be cautious about using yoghurt and dough (a yogurt-based beverage).

## Ways to save money on your wardrobe



Being on a budget doesn't necessarily mean you have to cut new clothing out of your life for good. Follow these simple tips to save—while you shop.

■ **Do shop slightly out of season**

Most retailers get new deliveries of clothing at least every two weeks (if not more often), and are under constant pressure to turn over their merchandise. This means that season-specific items—summer shorts and sandals, winter hats and gloves—hit the shelves a month or so early and are likely to be deeply discounted halfway through the season, despite still being the latest trends (making right now, for example, a great time to shop for swimwear). Resist the urge to stock up on the new pieces you want for the coming season—snag them when they're marked down, but still wearable for months instead.

■ **Do buy better basics**

When it comes to wardrobe staples (a white buttoned shirt, black trousers, a go-to tee), the options are endless, seemingly similar, and available at every price point, from Forever 21 to Fendi. But when it comes to these pieces—the ones you'll wear over and over again, year after year—it makes more sense to invest in quality items.

■ **Don't get sucked in by sales**

Do you have Black Friday marked on your calendar? What about Cyber Monday? Super Saturday? Amazon Prime Day? Are you on the mailing list for all of your favorite stores because they offer insider deals and discounts? You may think you're being a savvy consumer by always scoring new things at lower-than-retail value, but you're really just playing into well-known consumer psychology retailers use to get their customers to buy more—and more often. Do yourself a favor and unsubscribe from all of those email lists.

■ **Don't dry clean**

Prevent your laundry bills from racking up by checking care tags before you walk out of the store. If you have any items that are "dry clean only," keep in mind that the purchase price of that item isn't the final amount that it will ultimately cost your bank account—you need to factor in the cost of dry cleaning for every wear.

■ **Do pay attention to care tags**

If avoiding "dry clean only" items is a maxim you already live by, take it one step further and ensure you're taking proper care of the clothing you have—just because you don't need to dry clean a piece doesn't mean it won't need special care. Check the care tag and always launder according to the manufacturers specifications, whether that's with cold water only, laying flat to dry, or handwashing. It will greatly extend the lives of your clothes.

■ **Do try alternative ways to shop**

Mass retailers aren't the only options out there to keep your closet well-stocked. Try hosting a clothing swap with friends, scouring eBay for coveted investment pieces, and keeping an eye on the offerings at your local thrift, consignment, and off-price stores.

(Source: realsimple.com)



## 101 ITEMS FOR YOUR BUCKET LIST!

### #16. Let someone know how much he/she means to you

In our life's journey, we are constantly touched and supported by people around us, be it friends, family, or acquaintances. Can you identify someone who has made a difference in your life? Write a letter to the person today and let him/her know how much he/she means to you. You can do this as many times as you want, for as many people as you like.

Through the note, you tell the person how much he/she means to you, your recognition of what he/she has done for you, and how appreciative you are of his/her existence and actions. This note can be a handwritten one, an email, a message on your favorite social media platform, or even mobile messages.

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)

## INT'L COMPANIES/EMBASSIES

Prime Tehran location. 1,250 m<sup>2</sup> Modern Office

Building in 5 Floors. 18 Parking spaces +yard.

Excellent Lease Opportunity.

Tel: (021) 26153267

## UNESCO-listed Tchogha Zambil undergoes urgent restoration

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN — Tchogha Zambil, a prehistoric ziggurat in southwest Iran, has underwent some vital rehabilitation works.

Prior to the mission, a workshop on bricks and mortar was held near the site with the aim of producing optimum and consistent materials, based on laboratory studies on original materials employed in the ziggurat, Mehr reported on Sunday.



People visit ruins of Tchogha Zambil in Khuzestan province southwestern Iran.

Refurbishing waterproof fabrics and gutters is atop agenda in the first phase of the restoration project being carried out by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization.

A topmost tourist destination in Khuzestan province, the magnificent ruins is considered by many the finest surviving example of the Elamite architecture in the world. It was made a UNESCO site in 1979.

The prehistoric mud-brick complex bears testimony to the unique expression of the culture, beliefs, rituals and traditions of one of the oldest indigenous communities of Iran.

## Record number of Americans to travel during Christmas holiday: AAA

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — U.S. travelers will hit the roads, rails and skies this Christmas holiday in their largest numbers on record, lured by cheap plane tickets and a growing economy, the nation's largest motor advocacy group said on Thursday.

Roughly 107.3 million Americans will journey 50 miles (80 km) or more from home during Dec. 23 through Jan. 1, a 3.1 percent increase from a year earlier and the most ever recorded, AAA said in a report.

That would be the sixth consecutive record high for the holiday season, the Heathrow, Florida-based organization said.

"More expensive gas prices are not swaying holiday revelers to stay home," AAA Senior Vice President Bill Sutherland said. "We've seen the strong economy and growing consumer confidence fuel holiday travel all year long."

The largest share of travel, roughly 90.7 percent, will be on U.S. roads. Energy traders watch this activity closely because it accounts for 10 percent of global oil demand.

U.S. motor trips will rise to 97.3 million for this holiday season, the seventh consecutive annual increase, AAA said.

The group expects air travel to grow by 4.1 percent to 6.4 million trips, the highest since 2004 as passengers take advantage of lower ticket prices.

Air travel now accounts now for 5.9 percent of all travel, following four consecutive years of share increases, AAA said.

For 2017, motorists are on pace to break the record for most vehicle miles driven on U.S. roads, helping spur potential record demand for gasoline.

U.S. gasoline demand and vehicle miles traveled both set records in 2016. (Source: Reuters)



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Lushan National Park

Mount Lushan, in Jiangxi, is one of the spiritual centers of Chinese civilization.

Buddhist and Taoist temples, along with landmarks of Confucianism, where the most eminent masters taught, blend effortlessly into a strikingly beautiful landscape which has inspired countless artists who developed the aesthetic approach to nature found in Chinese culture.



A view of the Lushan National Park, a World Heritage in China

More than 200 historic buildings are located in the Lushan National Park; complexes of prayer halls that have been rebuilt and extended many times to create an ongoing center for study and religion.

Mount Lushan has an important place in Chinese history and culture. It is an outstanding representative of Chinese landscape culture, as well as a remarkable model of Chinese academy-based education, and a focal point for the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, once acting as the cultural center of southern China. The significant cultural developments and political events occurring over the course of Lushan's history have influenced the course of Chinese history.

The natural beauty of Lushan is perfectly integrated with its historic buildings and features, creating a unique cultural landscape which embodies outstanding aesthetic value powerfully associated with Chinese spiritual and cultural life. Combining nature and culture, Mount Lushan represents the Chinese national spirit and epitomizes its cultural life. (Source: UNESCO)

# Wider tourism scene projected for Isfahan

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — Isfahan authorities are seeking a wider tourism scene for the ancient city, which was once the seat of power in Persia and a top tourism destination now.

Isfahan, central Iran, embraces a wide variety of historical places some of which have mainly been off the radar of foreign travelers for some reason.

Fereydoun Allahyari, Isfahan province's tourism chief, seeks to make a balance of tourist flow between downtown Isfahan and its other less-touched neighborhoods, Mehr reported on Thursday.

"Over the past couple of years, tourism industry has mainly been expanded around historical districts of downtown Isfahan, therefore we are adopting new plans to define new tourism axes ..., a bid for balanced tourism development in all districts of the metropolis," Allahyari explained.

As a recent move, Isfahan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department in collaboration with Isfahan Municipality decided to turn a vast historical bathhouse into a hub for international travelers, after being fully restored and came equipped with modern amenities.

The historical bathhouse is located in Rehnai District in west Isfahan. It dates from the Safavid era (1501-1736). During its heyday, it was departed to two sections, the bigger one dedicated to men and the smaller to women.

Isfahan is one of the top tourist destinations in the country. A record number of some 85 thousand foreign travelers set foot in Isfahan during the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (Mar. 21 to Apr. 20), setting a new record for the past 40 years.



Wax effigies are seen at the Rehnai historical bathhouse in Isfahan, central Iran

Profusion of tree-lined boulevards, abundant Persian gardens and impor-

tant Islamic buildings give Isfahan an unmatched visual appeal while its ubiq-

uitous artisans underpin its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture.

## No link between departure tax and inland tourism: expert

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — A tourism expert says a sharp rise in the departure tax does not necessarily lead to an increase of domestic travels due to the psychology of tourism that has not been taken in account.

A proposal by the administration to triple the departure tax for the upcoming fiscal year, starting March 21, 2018, has prompted a wave of concerns over the fate of traveling in the country.

The tax hike is not likely to attain its goal of boosting domestic tourism as most countrywide destinations lack sufficient infrastructure to host huge numbers of holidaymakers, ISNA quoted Mohammad

Ebrahim Larijani as saying on Friday.

"People might desist from going abroad for a short while due to a sudden shock [derived by the tax rise] but will resume their [international] travels in less than two months."

The ones who can't afford such extra cost will mainly cut down on their domestic trips to compensate for overseas travels, meanwhile the tax is not expensive for many, he added.

The departure tax is proposed to reach 2.2 million rials (about \$52) from the current 750,000 rials (about \$17), yet the fee will jump for ones who would make their second or third trips over a one-year period.



## First 10 months this year see robust results in world tourism: UNWTO

**MADRID (Xinhua)** — The first 10 months of 2017 saw 1.12 billion people make international trips which involved an overnight stay, representing a 7 percent increase from the same period in 2016, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) confirmed on Thursday.

That 7 percent rise translates into 70 million new international arrivals, with results driven by "sustained growth in many destinations and a firm recovery in those which experienced declines last year."

The UNWTO highlights the performances in southern and Mediterranean Europe and the Middle East, which the organization describes as showing "extraordinary strength," with growth exceeding 7 percent across the region.



Africa as a whole enjoyed 8 percent growth, where there was 10 percent growth in south Asia and 8 percent in southeast Asia.

"These robust results, the best we have seen in many years, reflect the sustained demand for travel around the world, in line with the improved global economy and the rebound of destinations that suffered declines in previous years," said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, in a press communique.

Rifai stressed the benefits of sustainable tourism for development, saying tourism, "brings benefits to local communities and visitors through the promotion of peace and mutual understanding" and "respect for cultural heritage and values."

## A peek into Iran's first modern university

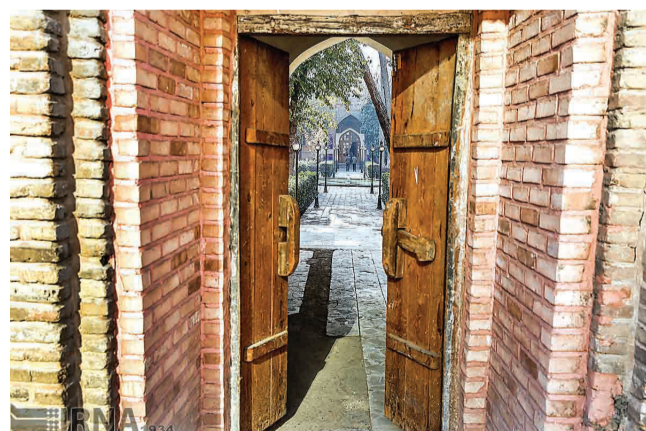
**TOURISM** A photo collection captures views of Dar ul-Funun, a mid-19th century scholastic center in downtown Tehran, which marks the start of modern education in Iran.

Dar ul-Funun has partly been restored with the aim of making it into a museum on education. Its courtyard houses an atmospheric garden that is hemmed by walls featuring Persian poetry inscribed on decorative tiles.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, the number of students in its first year reflected an immediate popularity of Dar ul-Funun, with about 105 students enrolling in seven main subjects.

The center was opened in 1851 by Mirza Taqi Khan Farahani (1807-1852), who was nicknamed 'Amir Kabir'.

He was chancellor under Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, appearing to be one of the most capable and innovative figures in the whole Qajar period.



# The Zika virus' effects on babies as they grow up are heartbreaking

Scientists are just starting to find out the heartbreaking effects of the Zika virus on babies that were born infected with it. The babies, followed in a study by the CDC, are facing significant developmental difficulties.

As the first babies that were born with brain damage due to the Zika epidemic of 2015 turn 2 years old, scientists are finding out the heartbreaking effects of the virus.

Scientists and the government have not stopped trying to come up with ways to fight against the Zika virus, including releasing millions of mosquitoes that are infected by the Wolbachia bacteria and raising awareness on mosquito control. Unfortunately for the babies that are already born, a challenging life awaits them as they grow older.

## Baby's underdeveloped head

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a study that saw researchers follow 19 babies in Brazil who were born with microcephaly, which is a birth complication that is characterized by a baby's underdeveloped head and Zika virus infections. Four of the 19 babies were found to have been misclassified as Zika babies, but the 15 other babies were indeed affected by the virus.

The babies, now between 19 months and 2 years old, are facing significant developmental difficulties. Out of the 15 babies, 11 have possible seizure disorders, 10 have trouble getting sleep, nine have trouble eating, 15 have motor impairments that prevented them from doing things such as sitting on their own and chewing, 13 have hearing difficulties,



**There were almost 3,000 Zika babies that were born in Brazil with microcephaly, and it is unclear how many of them will face the same difficulties as the babies that were the subject of the CDC's study.**

and 11 have vision issues.

The babies also had the cognitive and physical development similar to babies who are six months old or younger.

There were almost 3,000 Zika babies that were born in Brazil with microcephaly, and it is unclear how many of them will face the same difficulties as the babies that were the subject of the CDC's study. However, doctors believe that there will be at least hundreds of babies that will have the same developmental difficulties.

"It's heartbreaking," said CDC director Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald. "We would expect that these children are going to require enormous amounts of work and require enormous amounts of care."

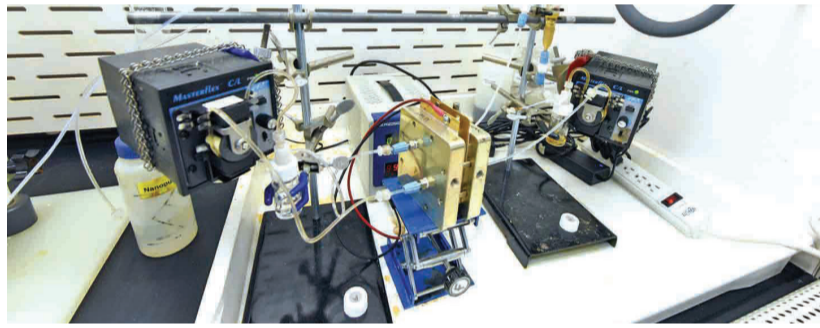
## Zika complications

The number of babies born with Zika complications in Brazil has vastly decreased, as people are gaining immunity from the virus and pregnant women are taking more precautions to prevent themselves from being infected.

However, 3 percent of a sample of 1,000 pregnant women still tested positive for a Zika virus infection, claimed Dr. Ernesto Marques. He is an expert on infectious diseases from the University of Pittsburgh and the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation in Recife.

As such, expectant mothers are urged to take extra precautions to protect themselves from Zika infection, not just in Brazil but anywhere in the world where the virus has been detected. (Source: Tech Times)

## New technique could make captured carbon more valuable



Carbon capture could help the nation's coal plants reduce greenhouse gas emissions, yet economic challenges are part of the reason the technology isn't widely used today. That could change if power plants could turn captured carbon into a useable product.

Scientists at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory have developed an efficient process for turning captured carbon dioxide into syngas, a mixture of H<sub>2</sub> and CO that can be used to make fuels and chemicals. The team has published its results in Green Chemistry, a publication of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Traditional approaches for reusing the carbon from CO<sub>2</sub> involve a reduction step that requires high temperatures and pressures.

## Liquid materials

At lower temperatures, the CO<sub>2</sub> doesn't stay dissolved in water long enough to be useful. The process developed at INL addresses this challenge by using specialized liquid materials that make the CO<sub>2</sub> more soluble and allow the carbon capture medium to be directly introduced into a cell for electrochemical conversion to syngas.

"For the first time it was demonstrated that syngas can be directly produced from captured CO<sub>2</sub> - eliminating the requirement of downstream separations," the researchers wrote in the Green Chemistry paper.

The newly described process uses switchable polarity solvents (SPS), liquid materials that can shift polarity upon being exposed to a chemical agent. This property makes it possible to control what molecules will dissolve in the solvent.

In an electrochemical cell, water oxidation occurs on the anode side, releasing O<sub>2</sub> gas and hydrogen ions that then migrate through a membrane to the cathode side. There, the hydrogen ions react with bicarbonate (HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, the form in which CO<sub>2</sub> is captured in the SPS), allowing the release of CO<sub>2</sub> for electrochemical reduction and formation of syngas. Upon the release of CO<sub>2</sub>, the SPS switches polarity back to a water-insoluble form, allowing for the recovery and reutilization of the carbon capture media.

## Turning CO<sub>2</sub> into syngas

Luis Diaz Aldana, principal investigator on the experiment, and Tedd Lister, one of the researchers, conduct electrochemical research at INL. In 2015, while having lunch with colleagues Eric Dufek and Aaron Wilson, they hit on the idea of using switchable polarity solvents to turn CO<sub>2</sub> into syngas.

The team received Laboratory Directed Research and Development funds in 2017. As promising as the idea was, in the first experiments, too much hydrogen and not enough syngas was being produced. The results improved when the team introduced a supporting electrolyte to increase the ionic conductivity. Adding potassium sulfate increased electrolyte conductivity by 47 percent, which allowed the efficient production of syngas.

When syngas can be produced from captured CO<sub>2</sub> at significant current densities, it boosts the process chances for industrial application. Unlike other processes that require high temperatures and high pressures, the SPS-based process showed best results at 25 degrees C and 40 psi. (Source: eurekalert.org)

## Huge study says rainy weather doesn't actually make your joints ache



For the first time, data from millions of doctor's visits has revealed that there really doesn't appear to be a link between rainy weather and achy joints - a claim that has persisted for centuries.

Most of us likely have an older relative who says they can predict a weather change coming, thanks to flare-ups of their arthritis or back pain.

Studies have investigated such claims before with mixed results, and the lack of a firm conclusion has been compounded by small sample sizes and the limitations of using surveys where people self-report their symptoms.

## Barometric pressure

Such methods make it difficult to weed out the possibility that people are simply seeing a correlation where none actually exists, even if the idea that changes in barometric pressure have an effect on a chronic condition is not entirely wacky.

A team of U.S. researchers decided to look into this question using a different approach - by linking Medicare insurance claims to rainfall data from thousands of weather stations in the country.

This "big data" approach allowed the researchers to analyze a much, much larger sample than what is achievable with typical surveys - over 1.5 million patients aged 65 years and older, who had more than 11.6 million joint- or back-pain related outpatient visits over the course of four years.

The team compared the proportion of such visits on rainy and non-rainy days,

and ended up with a negative result - there was no link between complaints about pain and rainfall on the day of the appointment, or during that week, or even the preceding week.

"No matter how we looked at the data, we didn't see any correlation between rainfall and physician visits for joint pain or back pain," says lead author of the study, physician Anupam Jena from Harvard Medical School.

"The bottom line is - painful joints and sore backs may very well be unreliable forecasters."

Overall, they found that 6.35 percent of the office visits included pain complaints on rainy days, while 6.39 percent of the pain-related complaints were noted on dry days. And that difference is so small, the team doesn't consider it to be of clinical significance.

## Self-managing their pain

As the researchers note, the main limitation of the study is the fact the data didn't account for disease severity to "definitively exclude higher rates of joint or back pain related to rainfall," and they also didn't have data on whether people may have been self-managing their pain with non-prescription painkillers.

Additionally, the research only looked at rainfall, not things like temperature, barometric pressure and temperature, so there's still more scope for future investigation. (Source: sciencealert.org)

## Mehrdad Fakhri Appointed Exemplary Manager in 11th National Young Producers' Festival

Mehrdad Fakhri Managing Director of TIPAX Company was selected as the exemplary young manager in 11th Young Producers and Managers Festival, the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

For this purpose, the young and able managing director of TIPAX Company was awarded with a Plaque of Honor and in the presence of Dr. Ali-Akbar Salehi Chief of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), Dr. Reza Rahmani

Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Dr. Mansour Moazami Deputy Minister of Industry and Chief Executive of IDRO (Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran), a number of Majlis deputies.

The Plaque of Honor is read as follows: "Salient activities of TIPAX Company are appreciated especially in the year named after "Resistance Economy, Production and Job Creation".



## L/C Opened for Tehran-Mashhad Railway Electrification Project

The first financing scheme in post-sanctions period was opened for the electrification of Tehran-Mashhad Railway project, Public Relations Dept. of Bank of Industry & Mine (BIM) reported.

BIM put the Letter of Credit (L/C) rate opened by Chinese for this giant project in Iran at \$1.7 billion.

As guarantor of finance for electrification of Tehran-Mashhad Railway Project, Bank of Industry and Mine estimated that construction operation of this project will be terminated during 48 months.

Reducing trip time up to 4 to 6 hours, increasing speed



route along with high safety coefficient, reduced road accidents and air pollution have been cited as the salient advantages of this project.

In this contract, Chinese firms financed \$1.5 billion of total \$1.7 billion predicted for the electrification of Tehran-Mashhad Railway Projects.

Given the above issue, Islamic Republic of Iran Railways invested only \$200 million for this project, so that Bank of Industry and Mine from Iran and Exim (Import-Export) Bank of China have been introduced as operating banks for this project, Public Relations Dept. of the bank concluded.

## Corals grow in patterns, even if we can't always see them

The colorful riot of a coral reef might seem chaotic, but new research indicates that it's actually far from random. Scientists have created 3D maps of 17,000 square feet of reefs and discovered that corals grow in patterns. Some species huddle close together, while others are less densely packed. These clusters could protect the corals from danger and give conservationists a blueprint for how to rebuild damaged reefs.

"What was surprising was how even the ones that seemed random were not random," says coauthor Clinton Edwards, a marine ecologist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego. "There's a level of organization that the human eye can't really catch."

To understand how corals are spaced, he and his colleagues swam over the reefs at the Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, which lies about 1,000 miles south of Oahu, Hawaii. They photographed more than 44,000 coral colonies from multiple angles, then fused the images together to create three-dimensional maps.

The team then analyzed how various species were scattered across the landscape. They counted the number of corals at different spots on the reef, then calculated how many colonies would be expected in a given space if they really were growing randomly. It turned out that most areas had noticeably more or fewer corals than this average, indicating they were crowded into clusters.

The most densely-populated areas could be seen with the naked eye. But other clusters were harder to discern. "It looks like a shotgun blast against a wall," Edwards says. However, only a few species grew in no apparent pattern, and none were sprinkled evenly over the reef. (Source: Popular Science)

## Cannabis ingredient holds promise as antipsychotic medicine

An ingredient in cannabis called cannabidiol or CBD has shown promise in a clinical trial as a potential new treatment for psychosis, scientists said on Friday.

Marijuana plants are seen in an indoor marijuana plantation of a marijuana smokers club in the outskirts of Montevideo, Uruguay July 16, 2017.

Scientists conducted a small trial of people with psychosis and found patients treated with CBD had lower levels of psychotic symptoms than those who received a placebo. Psychosis is characterized by paranoia and hallucinations.

The study found that they were also more likely to be rated as "improved" by their psychiatrist and there were signs of better cognitive performance and functioning.

The most common forms of psychosis are part of mental illnesses such as schizophrenia - which affects more than 21 million people worldwide - and bipolar disorder, but psychotic symptoms can also occur in conditions like Parkinson's disease and alcohol or drug abuse.

The main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC. It can induce paranoia and anxiety and hallucinations and has been found in studies to increase the risk psychotic illness in people who regularly use potent forms of cannabis such as skunk.

But its second major constituent, CBD, has the opposite effects to THC - leading scientists to think it might one day be useful as a treatment in mental health.



Scientists at King's College London's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience conducted a placebo-controlled trial of CBD in patients with psychosis and published their findings in the American Journal of Psychiatry.

In the trial, 88 patients with psychosis received either CBD or placebo for six weeks, alongside their existing antipsychotic medication. Beforehand and afterwards, the scientists assessed symptoms, functioning and cognitive performance, and the patients' psychiatrists rated their overall condition overall. (Source: Reuters)

## Alien minerals identify ancient meteorite strike

Geologists have uncovered mineral forms never before seen on Earth at the site of a 60 million-year-old meteorite strike on the Isle of Skye in Scotland.

When probing a thick layer of ancient lava flow on the small, picturesque island, Simon Drake and colleague Andy Beard from Birkbeck, University of London, were surprised to find a bizarre-looking rock.

Upon further analysis with electron microscopes, the team found minerals that led them to believe the rock was of extra-terrestrial origin.

"The most compelling evidence really is the presence of vanadium-rich and niobium-rich osbornite. Neither of these have ever been found on Earth before. We have these mineral totally enclosed in native iron, which itself is not of this planet," Drake says.

NASA's Stardust spacecraft found vanadium-rich osbornite in the path of a comet in 2004. Stardust collected space dust floating in the trail of the 4.5 billion-year-old Wild 2 comet.

As well as the exotic mineral forms, the team reported the osbornite had not melted, which means that it is probably an original chunk of the meteorite itself.

The discovery of reidite in their samples also suggests the minerals have come from meteorites. "If you have a meteorite impact at extreme pressures, the mineral zircon will convert to a much denser mineral," Drake explains. "This instantaneous conversion from zircon to reidite has only ever been discovered on Earth at meteor impact sites."

Four miles away, the research team found the same minerals buried in a two-meter-thick layer of hardened volcanic lava.

The Isle of Skye is of particular interest to geologists because it was created during a period of extreme volcanic activity. The island was formed when magma rose from deep inside the Earth and broke through the crust. The same event is believed to be responsible for modern-day Iceland. (Source: Newsweek)

## Iran highlights sand, dust storms in Asia-Pacific Carbon Forum

1 → Madani made the remarks over a meeting with Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations as the head of UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Carbon Forum 2017, held in Bangkok, Thailand, on December 13-15

He further expressed readiness for setting up the center in Iran and pledged full cooperation with it.



Kaveh Madani (L) and Shamshad Akhtar (C)

Sand and dust storms, originating from hot spots in neighboring countries mostly in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and Syria, or dried up wetlands in Iran are causing a great deal of discomfort to habitants in some south western and south eastern provinces of Iran.

Iran has been working hard to garner international attention and cooperation to tackle this predicament. The International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms which was held in Tehran on July 3-5, 2017 was one of the outcomes of these efforts gathering some 35 countries to discuss the issue of sand and dust storms internationally.

Head of UNESCAP, Akhtar, for her part, hoped for establishment of a sand and dust storm warning advisory and assessment system in Asia and Pacific Region.

The two sides agreed upon giving a top priority to sand and dust storms by launching a United Nations office for disaster risk reduction which is set to be launched in Iran in the near future.

## Smart buses to hit Tehran streets

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — New buses equipped with internet, digital library, voice announcement and video systems will soon be added to Tehran's public transportation fleet.

"We will add smart buses to the Tehran transportation system in the near future," Peyman Sanandaji, Tehran bus operating company's director general said on Saturday. These features have been installed in 3 buses right now and this process will be accelerated, Tasnim quoted him as saying.

Sanandaji highlighted that since the year 2010, the administration has not delivered any buses to Tehran bus operating company adding, "Tehran Municipality, as planned, has provided 80 new buses over the current year but the metropolis of Tehran needs more than 3,000 buses for renovating the transportation system."

"More than 50 percent of around 6,200 buses in Tehran are clunker and age more than 10 years," he mentioned.

"According to a five-year plan, Tehran should have 9,000 buses and we are looking into the possibility of attracting investment from the private sector to overcome at least a portion of this shortage," Sanandaji noted.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Looking for an Apartment

A: Hi! We are the Christianson's! We are here to see the apartment.  
 B: Oh, hi! Sure, **come on in!** Well, as you can see, the place has just been **renovated**. The previous **tenants** left a huge **mess** here, so the **landlord** has redone everything.  
 A: It looks great. It's so bright and **airy!** What great light! I really like these hardwood floors. What's the **square footage** of this place?  
 B: Well, it's about 120 square meters, or 1300 square feet, more or less. Oh, the landlord has also installed new kitchen **appliances**. There's a new dishwasher, and a **professional-grade gas range**. Really, at this price, this place is an amazing deal!  
 A: I love it! But what are the payment terms?  
 B: First and last month rent as **deposit** and rent is **due** on the 1st of every month. Considering the amount of money invested into the apartment, it's a very good deal!  
 A: Yes, it is! Too good to be true...  
 B: The living room and dining room are quite **spacious** as you can see, and down this hall, here's the master bedroom. It has a huge **walk-in closet** and an **en suit bathroom**. We can't go in there yet as the police... I mean the cleanup crew hasn't finished.  
 A: What do you mean? What's in here?

■ **Key vocabulary**  
**come on in:** please come in  
**renovate:** to repair a building or old furniture so that it is in good condition again  
**tenant:** the person that rents a house  
**mess:** disorder, unorganized  
**landlord:** the owner of the apartment  
**airy:** spacious so that air moves freely  
**square footage:** showing how big one space is measured in feet  
**appliance:** electric equipment found in a house  
**professional grade:** good enough to satisfy professional use  
**gas range:** a stove that uses gas to cook  
**deposit:** a part of the cost of something you are buying that you pay some time before you pay the rest of it  
**due:** if an amount of money is due, it must be paid at a particular time  
**spacious:** large; having lots of space  
**walk-in closet:** a room contained in a bedroom for storing clothes  
**en suit bathroom:** a bathroom within the main bedroom  
 ■ **Supplementary vocabulary**  
**attic:** a room or space that is just below the roof of a building and that is often used to store things  
**basement:** the part of a building that is entirely or partly below the ground  
**lawn:** an area of ground (such as the ground around a house or in a garden or park) that is covered with short grass  
**real estate:** the business of selling land and buildings  
**lease:** to allow someone to use(something) for a period of time in return for payment

(Source: irlanguage.com)

# \$7.5m earmarked for Golestan National Park

National parks budget raised by threefold

**ENVIRONMENT** TEHRAN — The budget of Golestan National Park, northern Iran, will rise to 300 billion rials (nearly \$7.5 million) in the next Iranian calendar year, starting March 21, 2018.

The national parks budget for the current year has increased by threefold, Sa'eed Namaki, a senior advisor to the Department of Environment said, without providing further details.

"This is the first time that we see a threefold increase in national parks budget," ISNA quoted Namaki as saying on Friday. "We believe that spending on environment and health is nothing but investment [on the future]."

Namaki touched upon the damages that have been imposed on the national park by civil developments and stated "this park is one the significant biosphere reserves and if we don't address its problems now, no trace of it will remain in the near future."

"Preserving the environment without the help of people and national mobilization will not deliver the desired results. We have diverse ethnic groups in this region and all of them can cooperate in environment preservation," noted the senior advisor.

"One of our future policies is to encourage local communities for environment protection and old hunters are among the most important figures in this regard" said Namaki, suggesting, "We should benefit from the valuable and vast experiences of these individuals".

Spreading over 91,895 hectares, Golestan National park is a protected area situated in the eastern part of Golestan province and western area of North Khorasan. The national park is home to more than 200 animal and about 1,300 plant species.



"This park is one the significant biosphere reserves and if we don't address its problems now, no trace of it will remain in the near future."

## S. Korea to have a hand in Iran's health sector

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — Iran and South Korea have committed to cooperate on health-related issues concerning equipping and building new hospitals as well as sharing specialized knowledge in the sector.

Iranian Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi and his South Korean counterpart, Park Neunghoo, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in Seoul on Friday.

Six other agreements regarding building new hospitals in Iran, increasing investment schemes, social security and insurance, and information technology were inked between the two sides, the Iranian health ministry's official website reported.

"South Korea has made considerable advances in the health sector and is eager to expand cooperation with us," Qazizadeh-Hashemi said, stating "this is a wonderful opportunity for us to use South Korea's knowledge and experience and I'm sure that private sectors of the two countries will make full use of the investment opportunities which is provided by South Korean banks."

Till now contracts for building 3 hospitals have been signed and this is an "excellent" opportunity for Iran to raise employment, the minister highlighted.

He emphasized that the administration is deeply interested in the rise of private sector activities in providing health services saying "the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1397 [starting March 2018] clearly indicates that both domestic and foreign private sector can invest on providing health care services."

"In South Korea there are 11.5 hospital beds per 1,000 people while the number is 1.5 in Iran," Qazizadeh-Hashemi said.

Speaking on the hospital staffing ratio per bed Qazizadeh-Hashemi noted that there are 3 healthcare providers per bed in South Korea which is an indicative of



Health Minister Hashemi (2nd L sitting) and the Iranian delegation are posing for a photo along with Korean officials and staff at the Severance Hospital.

**Speaking on the hospital staffing ratio per bed Qazizadeh-Hashemi noted that there are 3 healthcare providers per bed in South Korea which is an indicative of proper salary systems in the country.**

"Asian countries including South Korea has made great advancement in health sector and we, the ministry and the private sector, can take advantage of their success particularly in building new hospitals, setting up and developing the use of electronic health records," he stated.

The Iranian deputy health minister Mohsen Asadi Lari deemed Qazizadeh-Hashemi's trip to Korea important in building and developing new hospitals in the country by executing the previous and newly signed MOUs between the two countries.

"Using financial aids provided with other countries can enable us to build some 15,000 hospital beds," IRNA quoted Asadi Lari as saying.

Qazizadeh-Hashemi traveled to South Korea at the head of a delegation comprising MPs and health officials on Thursday on an official invitation of South Korea's Ministry of Health and Welfare. He paid a visit to Severance Hospital of the Yonsei University Health System which has approximately 2,500 bed. He also visited 1,400-bed Seoul national university hospital during his three-day trip.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

### RoboCup Iran Open 2017 kicks off in Tehran

The 12th edition of the international Robocop competitions (RoboCup Iran Open 2017) started on Tuesday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairground. Some 2,820 contestants from the United States, Germany, India, Japan, China, Singapore, South Korea, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Mexico, England, Turkey, Peru, and Iran will be competing during the 4-day event, Tasnim news agency reported. The first RoboCup Iran Open took place in April 2006, Tasnim quoted Morteza Moosakhani, the chairman of the National Robocop Committee as saying. He went on to say that 139 Iranian teams and 21 foreign teams will be competing in the university students' league, 167 Iranian and foreign teams in the school students' league, and 39 Iranian teams as well as 15 foreign teams in the simulation league.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### "-borne"

■ **Meaning:** used to show that something is moved by a particular thing  
 ■ **For example:** Infections can be passed around by **airborne** particles.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Ebb away

■ **Meaning:** to gradually decrease  
 ■ **For example:** Linda's enthusiasm began to ebb away.

### ENGLISH IDIOM

#### Once bitten twice shy

■ **Explanation:** this is said by someone who has had an unpleasant experience which has made them more cautious.  
 ■ **For example:** I'm never going to get married again. Once bitten, twice shy!

### دوازدهمین دوره مسابقات بین‌المللی ربوکاپ آزاد ایران فردا آغاز می‌شود

دوازدهمین دوره مسابقات بین‌المللی ربوکاپ آزاد ایران از روز سه شنبه در محل نمایشگاه بین‌المللی تهران آغاز شد. به گزارش خبرگزاری تسنیم رویداد مذکور از ۱۶ تا ۱۸ فروردین خواهد بود که با حضور دو هزار و ۸۲۰ نفر شرکت کننده از کشورهای آمریکا، آلمان، هند، ژاپن، چین، سنگاپور، کره جنوبی، هلند، پاکستان، مکزیک، انگلستان، ترکیه، پرو و ایران برگزار خواهد شد. مرتضی موسی‌خانی رئیس کمیته ملی ربوکاپ جمهوری اسلامی ایران گفت: مسابقات ربوکاپ آزاد ایران از سال ۸۵ آغاز شده است. وی ادامه داد: ۱۳۹ تیم ایرانی و ۲۱ تیم خارجی در بخش لیگهای دانشجویی، ۱۶۷ تیم ایرانی و خارجی در بخش لیگهای دانش‌آموزی و نهایتاً ۳۶ تیم ایرانی و ۱۵ تیم خارجی در لیگهای شبیه‌سازی حضور خواهند داشت.

# 'Poison gas against Palestinians'

By staff & agencies

Palestine Authority Health Ministry said Israel forces use poison gas to target Palestinians.

Israeli military forces have shot dead four Palestinian men in the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip amid ongoing tensions between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian protesters in the occupied territories over the recent decision by the United States President Donald Trump to recognize Israeli-occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the capital of the Tel Aviv regime.

Palestinian sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Israeli military forces shot dead a Palestinian at Beit El checkpoint north of the central West Bank city of al-Bireh, located 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) north of al-Quds, on Friday afternoon for allegedly carrying out a stabbing attack, Arabic-language al-Aqsa television network reported.

An Israeli trooper was injured in the purported assault.

The second Palestinian, identified as Basil Ismail, was killed during clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli troops in a town northeast of al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Another Palestinian protester, identified as Yasir Soker, 32, was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in Gaza's Shejaiyah district.

A wheelchair-bound man with no legs also succumbed to his injuries suffered during clashes with Israeli troops in Gaza. Ibrahim Abu Thuraya, 29, had lost his legs during the 2008 Israeli aggression that killed hundreds of Palestinians in the coastal strip.

The development came as separate clashes erupted between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers across the occupied West Bank following Friday noon prayers.

The skirmishes broke out in Ramallah, al-Khalil (Hebron), Qalqilya and Beit Lahm (Bethlehem), according to local sources.

In the besieged Gaza Strip, hundreds



marched after the Friday prayers on the Salah al-Dein highway, which goes from the northern borders of the Gaza Strip towards the southern borders with Egypt.

"We will not make any compromise on our interests or our religion. Our main project is the liberation of all Palestine. Our battle will continue until the full liberation of Palestine. This is the promise of God," Mahmoud Zahar, a senior leader of the Islamic resistance movement, Hamas, said.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said about 400 Palestinians were injured in the clashes.

Trump announced his decision to recognize al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's capital and relocate the U.S. embassy in the occupied lands from Tel Aviv to al-Quds (Jerusalem) on December 6.

The dramatic shift in Washington's al-Quds policy triggered demonstrations in the occupied Palestinian territories, Iran,

Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco and other Muslim countries as well as few other none Muslim states.

On Sunday, violent clashes erupted outside the U.S. embassy in the Lebanese capital city of Beirut during a protest against the U.S. administration decision. Demonstrators burnt tires as well as the U.S. and Israeli flags as they pushed to break through a barbed wire erected by security forces around the embassy complex.

Security forces used tear gas and water cannon to disperse the angry protesters.

Al-Quds (Jerusalem) 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.

**U.S. signals Western Wall has to be part of Israel**

The developments follow as the U.S. ad-

ministration has signaled that the Western Wall, a site of worship in al-Quds' Old City, has to be a part of Israel.

The declaration by two U.S. senior officials on Friday came amid mounting tension over Trump's decision to recognize al-Quds as Israel's capital.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, ruled out any scenario that did not retain Israeli control over the site.

"We cannot envision any situation under which the Western Wall would not be part of Israel. But as the president said, the specific boundaries of sovereignty of Israel are going to be part of the final status agreement," the Associated Press quoted one of the officials as saying.

Another official later added by email, "We note that we cannot imagine Israel would sign a peace agreement that didn't include the Western Wall."

This also came ahead of the U.S. Vice President Mike Pence's trip to the region on Wednesday, a visit Trump officials said is aimed at reinforcing the president's announcement on al-Quds.

Trump made the controversial announcement in a speech at the White House on December 6, saying his administration would also begin a process of moving the American embassy in Tel Aviv to the holy city, which is expected to take years.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed Trump's recognition as "historic" and a "courageous and just decision."

The entire al-Quds (Jerusalem) 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 their future state.

## Palestinian billionaire Masri detained in Saudi Arabia

The House of Saud regime has reportedly arrested Sabih al-Masri, prominent investor and chairman of the Arab Bank, as uncertainty grows among foreign businessmen about the future of their investment in the kingdom.



Citing some Arabic-language media outlets, the Middle East Eye (MEE) news portal reported that Masri was taken into custody on his way to the airport in the Saudi regime capital on Wednesday and thus failed to attend the Arab Bank board meeting in Amman the same day.

Sources close to Masri said that he was cautioned against travelling to Saudi Arabia prior to his trip, but the investor said he had nothing to fear there.

Jordanian mediators' attempts to reach out to Saudi regime authorities was said to have been failed because Masri holds a Saudi citizenship.

After his arrest, the Jordanian reportedly made two phone calls with top executives in the Arab Bank and a close associate.

Hind Khlaifat, the CEO (chief executive officer) of Arab social media startup Alcloud, highlighted Masri's investments in the Jordanian economy. "In Jordan, our economy depends on Sabih; don't let our economy be destroyed overnight. A message in a Tweet for [Saudi Crown Prince] Mohammed bin Salman, with kind regards," she tweeted.

**Foreign investors concerned about Saudi regime policies**

Back in October, Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Riyadh hosted the "Future Investment Initiative" conference, where Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) unveiled plans to build a new city and business zone, called NEOM, a project that will be backed up by more than \$500 billion in investment.

In November, however, the same hotel turned into a prison for hundreds of Saudi regime royals and businessmen critical of the crown prince's policies, who were rounded up under the banner of an "anti-corruption campaign."

Later reports revealed that Saudi regime authorities were offering deals to the Ritz-Carlton prisoners in which they pay for their freedom. The detentions raised alarms among foreign investors and bankers who had previously appeared enthusiastic about a raft of radical reforms spearheaded by bin Salman in Saudi Arabia.

"One day we are sleeping at the Ritz-Carlton, excited about a new era," said a regional investor. "The next day they have turned the hotel into a prison — what sort of message does this send us? We some need stability."

Investors said they want reassurances that capital deployed in Saudi Arabia will be safe.

"Half my Rolodex is in the Ritz right now. And they want me to invest there now? No way," said a senior investor. "The wall of money that was going to deploy into the kingdom is falling apart." (Source: agencies)

## The usurpation of Palestine from Balfour to Trump

**1→** Weizmann developed a new process to make acetone, which is used in nail polish remover and for making cordite, a propellant used in British artillery projectiles, and when Munitions minister David Lloyd George was faced with a shortage of acetone, Weizmann came to his rescue. Lloyd George later remarked, "Acetone converted me to Zionism," and after becoming prime minister in December 1916, he rewarded Weizmann by his full support for a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

To be understood, the Balfour Declaration must be viewed through the lens of Britain at war against Germany shortly after the Russian Revolution and a mutiny by French troops, events that threatened to leave the British without allies. Further fueling British fears of fighting the war singlehandedly were rumors that Germany was contemplating a pro-Zionist declaration to entice the Russians to leave the war, which the Bolsheviks did on November 7, 1917 when they entered into peace negotiations with the Germans. Compounding British anxiety was the reality that most American Jews at the time favored supporting Germany over Britain; those from Germany retained fond memories of their former homeland while those from Russia recalled the Tsar's pogroms and transferred this antipathy to Britain, Russia's ally.

Knowing that U.S. president Woodrow Wilson held strong convictions concerning self-determination of peoples, British prime minister Lloyd George sought the help of American Jews to convince Wilson of the strategic importance of a British invasion and occupation of Palestine towards victory in the First World War. The plan conceived with the help of Chaim Weizmann was to portray the Zionist project to Wilson as Jewish self-determination in Palestine, thereby averting any accusations of post-war annexation of conquered lands. American Jewry had to be enticed to support the British war effort, so in exchange, Britain pledged to support the Zionist objectives in Palestine, but this also required the help of such notables as U.S. Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis, who headed the Zionist organization in the U.S. and was close to president Wilson. It was Brandeis who informed Weizmann of the U.S. president's interest in Zionism.

The other side that had to be convinced to join with Britain in the war effort against the Ottoman Empire and Germany was the Arabs, who were also anticipating their own self-determination at the end of the First World War. To that end, British diplomat Mark Sykes wrote a declaration of assurances to Sharif Hussein bin Ali, the leader of the Arab Revolt, which Hussein declared against the Turks in 1916. Sykes assured that the Palestinian Arabs would be granted political freedom and that the Balfour Declaration announcing British support for a Jewish homeland would be applied only as would be "compatible with the freedom of the existing population, both economic and political." As a result, Hussein was deliberately duped by Sykes into accepting the idea that Jewish immigration into Palestine would not amount to much. The British charade became apparent in 1918 when the Bolsheviks published copies of the British and French secret plans to carve up the Middle East at war's end based on their respective self-interests.

It should be mentioned that the Zionists hedged their political bets in case Britain did not emerge from the First World War victorious by approaching the German and Turkish governments with proposals delivered by the Zionist organization's representative in Istanbul, Richard Lichtheim. Pointing out the anticipated gratitude of Jewish Americans, Lichtheim listed the advantages of German support for the Zionist project in Palestine, noting the common German language and emphasizing the business connections of the Jews already there. To sweeten the deal, Lichtheim even offered to arrange for a Zionist armed force to fight against the British in the Middle East alongside their Turkish and German allies. As Palestinian author Karl Sabbagh explained, "The unique status of Jews in global politics made this sort of double-dealing possible."



Britain emerged from the First World War with a mandate for Palestine, which was granted at the San Remo Conference in April 1920. The Balfour Declaration was also included in the obligations for the mandatory power, enshrining the document in an international agreement and thereby forcing Britain to abide by its terms to facilitate a Zionist colonization project in Palestine. This was while the terms of the mandate also demanded of Britain that it preserve the rights of the existing inhabitants of Palestine. However, the mandate document itself failed to mention the word "Arab" even once; instead it referred to "non-Jewish" inhabitants as if the overwhelming majority of the population of Palestine at the time were nothing more than a numerically inconsequential minority.

Unsurprisingly, conflict arose almost immediately, as European Jewish immigrants poured into Palestine, the first of which occurred during the Palestinian Muslim festival of Nabi Musa, which took place in April 1920. Nine people were killed and over 200 wounded in the clashes along with much destruction and looting of property. The chief Zionist political officer, Richard Meinertzhagen, even accused the British of having foreknowledge of the riots and allowing them to happen, despite having told the British foreign office four days earlier that he did not anticipate any trouble. To investigate the causes, the Palin Commission was formed, and after interviewing 152 witnesses, reported that while the violence may have been initiated by Arabs, these were "people who see themselves menaced with deprivation by a race they have hitherto held in dislike and contempt."

Through the 1920s and 1930s, the conflict created by Balfour's letter to Lord Rothschild continued to escalate as the native Palestinian Arab majority protested the wholesale colonization of their ancestral land by European Zionists. Until 1928, the British government attempted to maintain "parity" in its treatment of the indigenous Palestinian Arab population, none of whom had access to British notables, and the incessant demands of the Zionists, who through Weizmann and others enjoyed close relations with British prime ministers and MPs. While rejecting the concept of parity at first, Palestinian leaders finally agreed to accept the principle only to see their efforts at peaceful compromise summarily rejected by the Zionists. The result was twofold: first, Palestinians launched a massive uprising in 1929 against the mandatory government, which they rightly saw as favoring the Zionists; and second, a pattern of Palestinian compromise and Zionist intransigency was established, which has held to the present.

Throughout the mandatory period, whenever the British government exhibited tendencies towards acknowledging and correcting the injustices committed against the Palestinians, the Zionists, with their close ties to His Majesty's Government, managed to force a return to the Balfour colonization track. This, of course, resulted in additional protests and uprisings by Palestinians, culminating in 1936 with the Arab Revolt, which lasted until 1939 before the British managed

to suppress it by sending more troops to Palestine. In the meantime, the Zionists took full advantage of a proposal by the British Peel Commission to divide Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states, and worked feverishly to establish an autonomous Jewish enclave. By 1942, Zionist leaders were demanding all of Palestine, and drawing up plans for the ethnic cleansing that would be necessary to rid Palestine of her native Arab population.

Throughout the Second World War Palestinians and Zionists alike sensed that another clash was coming, as foreshadowed by the increasing number of British casualties and the pace of Zionist terrorist attacks such as the July 1946 bombing by the Stern Gang of the British headquarters in the King David Hotel in al-Quds. The British government, with dire economic woes at home, decided it could no longer afford the expense of maintaining a standing army in Palestine larger than the one it had in India, and handed the entire Palestinian conundrum over to the fledgling United Nations in February 1947, announcing its intention to withdraw by mid-May in 1948. By July 1947 the U.N. Special Commission on Palestine recommended partition of the country and the proposal was approved in the U.N. General Assembly on November 29. Concurrently, the Hashemite leadership of Transjordan entered into secret talks with the Zionist leadership in hopes of gaining a share of the vacated mandate. The stage was now set for the Nakbah, the 1948 expulsion of native Palestinians from their country.

In anticipation of the termination of the British mandate on May 15, 1948, the Zionists under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the "State of Israel" the day before. On May 15, U.S. president Harry Truman instructed the U.S. delegation to the U.N. to announce America's recognition of the newly-created Israeli entity, making the United States the first country to convey diplomatic legitimacy to the Zionists' usurpation of Palestine. On the same day, armed forces from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan, with a small number from Saudi Arabia, invaded Palestine in a futile attempt to liberate the land from its Zionist usurpers. Apparently, even then, Saudi Arabia was not greatly concerned about the Zionist threat, and was even viewed as a collaborator given the kingdom's extensive ties with the United States. In any case, Palestine was not liberated, and some 450,000 Palestinians lost their homes in the ensuing war while hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants poured in from abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the ongoing theft of Palestinian lands since 1949 by the regime in Tel Aviv, which has enjoyed ever-increasing economic and political support from Washington. Suffice it to say that the 1967 war, which by Menachem Begin's own admission was a "war of choice" for the Zionists, created 275,000 additional displaced Palestinians and gave the Israeli entity de facto control over most of what had been called Mandate Palestine. By 1973, when Syria and Egypt launched limited military strikes hoping to recoup losses of the Golan and Sinai respectively, "Eretz-Israel" not only had massive conventional armed forces but also had become a nuclear-armed state. Peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, and the much-vaunted Oslo Accord of 1993 notwithstanding, Palestinian negotiator Haydar Abd al-Shafi correctly predicted that Israel had "no intention of ever allowing a [Palestinian] state."

How ironic that a former New York real estate developer, who managed to become the U.S. president, has now cut a deal with the Zionists involving a piece of priceless Palestinian real estate, namely al-Quds, which incidentally was not his in the first place. While the move marks the death knell of any "peace process," yet Trump continues to pontificate about "building a future of peace and security in the Middle East." No doubt, Lord Balfour would be pleased.

## Bahraini regime forces detain 6 civilians with no charge: activists

Activists say Bahraini forces have held six civilians, including a woman, without offering any legal justification for their detention as the ruling House of Khalifah regime presses ahead with its repressive measures and heavy-handed crackdown in the tiny Persian Gulf state.

Human rights activists, requesting anonymity, said Fawzia Mashallah had been kept in police custody over the past three days after regime troops raided her home in the Bilad al-Qadim suburb of the capital Manama, and took her to the Interior Ministry's Criminal Investigation Directorate without providing any reasons, Arabic-language Bahrain Mirror news website reported on Saturday.

The forces also arrested a young man, identified as Mohammed Ja'afar al-Jamri, in the northwestern village of Bani Jamrah. Separately, officials detained Ibrahim Sabbat at Bahrain International Airport upon return from a vacation abroad.

Bahraini troops also made three separate arrests in the northwestern village of Diraz, situated some 12 kilometers west of Manama, as well as al-Dair village on the northern coast of Muharraq Island. (Source: Press TV)

## Iranian rails safer than expected: UIC expert

**1→** It recommends the measures that have to be taken and checks the effects of these measures. The outputs of course include international benchmarking and preparation of annual reports to its members.

**■** How many members of UIC are working under SDB?  
A: There are 22 active members plus Turkish Railways and Iranian Railways. It means EU rail members plus Iran and Turkey.

**■** How is the condition of the SDB of Iranian Railways?  
A: According to the given SDB data of 2016 that was not a very good year because of the specific accidents, but I was expecting more accidents (in Iranian railways) that what really has happened in this year. So, I am happy to say that the outcome of Iranian railways in this field is better than European railway. Most of accidents (in Iran) are happened by individual accident. Level crossing train accidents contains 25% of European train accidents and this number is only 3% in Iran. That's why I wondered because of such few level crossing accidents in Iran just there are many motorcycle accidents with train in Iran that this matter is not seen common in Europe. We have to adapt some parameters of this present state of SDB to meet the requirements especially the rail environment which might be different in Europe. For example, we don't have deserts in Europe. If you don't have desert, you don't have desert, you don't have sand on the rails.

The prepared SDB by Iranian Railways was quiet good and I'm so happy that it's the first report of Iran while its quality was better than many other railways.

## Mourinho: I don't like a circus when you win

Jose Mourinho appears to have renewed his criticism of Manchester City and Pep Guardiola, claiming he prefers to strike an emotional balance in both victory and defeat.

The Manchester United manager was reportedly furious at City's noisy celebrations in the wake of their 2-1 derby win at Old Trafford last weekend, prompting a confrontation between the players that remains under Football Association investigation.

United responded to that loss by battling to a 1-0 home victory over Bournemouth on Wednesday. And Mourinho, speaking ahead of his team's away match at West Brom on Sunday, insisted the atmosphere at the club had cooled considerably soon after the post-match confrontation with their neighbors and rivals. "The next day the place was normal — as I like it," he said. "I don't like a circus when you win and you're happy. I don't like a sad place when you lose. I like an emotional balance. Bournemouth was difficult and we coped. Back to normal."

Romelu Lukaku cut a restrained figure after he netted the only goal against the Cherries in the 25th minute.

Questioned about the striker's apparent lack of desire to celebrate, Mourinho replied: "I didn't either. I control my emotions. I'm not acting to the cameras or the fans."

(Source: Soccerway)

## Liverpool boss Klopp tips City for title, aims to be 'best of the rest'

Manchester City are clear favorites to win the Premier League title after their winning run and Liverpool must target to be the best of the rest, manager Juergen Klopp has said.

Liverpool are on 31 points, sandwiched between fourth-placed Tottenham Hotspur and sixth-placed Burnley with all three teams 18 points behind leaders City after 17 league games.

Second-placed Manchester United are 11 points behind City while third-placed Chelsea are a further three points behind.

"This season nobody is really fighting anymore for the title. I don't think United are," Klopp told reporters on Friday.

"... If City doesn't have any drop then they will probably win it so does that mean all the others have to stop? To be the best of the rest could be a fantastic target.

"So it is to try to have the best position in the table which for us is probably third or second... others are ahead of us as well in the moment but our performances show we could do it if we bring our skills often enough on the pitch."

City are on a 15-game winning streak in the league and host Tottenham Hotspur later on Saturday while Liverpool travel to 14th-placed Bournemouth on Sunday.

(Source: Reuters)

## Williams put off driver announcement to New Year

Formula One team Williams have put off until the New Year an announcement on who will partner Canadian teenager Lance Stroll next season. A team spokeswoman confirmed no driver news was planned before January, with the 21-race 2018 season due to start in Australia on March 25.

Russian Sergey Sirotkin appears favorite for the drive, the only remaining vacancy on the starting grid, rather than Poland's comeback hopeful Robert Kubica.

Williams have said their decision would be based on performance and have given few hints about who is likely to succeed now retired Brazilian Felipe Massa at the former champions.

Sirotkin, a 22-year-old development driver for the Renault team this year, has been backed by Russian billionaire Boris Rotenberg and his SMP Racing. Rotenberg's brother Arkady is a close ally and former judo partner of President Vladimir Putin.

Leaving aside his significant backing, the Russian impressed in post-season testing in Abu Dhabi after he was passed over by Renault when that team were looking to replace Britain's Jolyon Palmer. Both he and Kubica, 33, were at the factory last week for debriefs and further assessment, with media reports suggesting Russian Daniil Kvyat was also in the frame after being dropped by Red Bull and Toro Rosso.

Russia, which pays handsomely for the right to host a grand prix in Sochi, currently has no Formula One driver contracted to race next year. Kubica was tipped as a future champion before a 2011 rally accident partially severed his right arm, and while there are some lingering doubts about his ability to race without full movement the Pole has said he has no problems and is fitter than ever. Kubica has tested twice for Williams this year, as well as with Renault, and his case for the seat is being argued by former world champion Nico Rosberg, who is acting as a go-between.

(Source: Reuters)

## Leicester City 0 Crystal Palace 3: Benteke, Eagles end drought

Christian Benteke redeemed himself by scoring for the first time this season and ended Crystal Palace's long wait for an away goal as Roy Hodgson's resurgent team defeated Leicester City 3-0 in the Premier League. Benteke incurred the wrath of his team-mates by taking a penalty against the manager's orders and failing to score in a 2-2 draw against Bournemouth last weekend.

The Belgium international made amends by scoring his first goal of the campaign at King Power Stadium, before setting up Wilfried Zaha for the visitors' second five minutes before half-time.

Leicester had a goal ruled out and saw Wilfred Ndidi sent off in the second half, as the 2015-16 champions failed to force their way back into the contest, Bakary Sako adding gloss to the score line for the visitors with a third in injury time.

Palace are now unbeaten in seven matches since losing 1-0 to Tottenham early last month and, having now moved out of the bottom three, will prepare for another winnable fixture away to bottom-of-the-table Swansea City next weekend.

Having seen their own four-match winning run come to an end, Leicester have a daunting EFL Cup fixture at home to Manchester City coming up on Tuesday, before the visit of Manchester United in the league.

(Source: Goal)

# Trabzonspor challenge puts Gianni Infantino's stint at Uefa under scrutiny

The Fifa president, Gianni Infantino, has been accused of permitting a lax approach towards match-fixing when he was Uefa general secretary during the 2010 11 scandals within Turkish football, which still reverberate years later.

Fenerbahce won the 2011 Turkish Super League on goal difference from Trabzonspor but 36 officials and players were later convicted of match-fixing in criminal proceedings in Turkey, including the president, Aziz Yildirim, who was sentenced to six years and three months in prison. In 2015, after Turkey under its president Recep Erdogan abolished the special courts that heard the Fenerbahce cases, Yildirim and the other defendants were acquitted of the charges in retrials.

Uefa enforced its own sanctions against Fenerbahce after 2011, banning the club from competing in the Europa League or Champions League for two seasons, a decision upheld in 2013 by the court of arbitration for sport. European football's governing body, Infantino and the then Uefa president, Michel Platini, have always emphasised that match-fixing constitutes a fundamental attack on football's integrity, calling for zero tolerance and harsh punishment. That stance is maintained by Platini's successor, Aleksander Ceferin, who has described match-fixing as "a disease that attacks football's very core".

The firmness of Infantino's stance is under scrutiny, however, because of the approval he gave in January 2012 to the Turkish Football Federation to apply lesser sanctions than those in the TFF's own disciplinary regulations, which would have relegated Fenerbahce. The club were vehemently opposing that sanction and a fear was also circulating in Turkish football that TV income could be reduced if Fenerbahce were not playing in the top division.

On 19 January 2012 the TFF general secretary, Ebru Koksak, wrote to Infantino, asking if it was permitted under Uefa's rules for the TFF to "amend" the sanctions in its own disciplinary regulations. The TFF proposed that instead of relegating Fenerbahce, the club would be stripped of the 2011 championship, have 12 points deducted, be fined and withdrawn from European competition.

Infantino replied to Koksak the next day, 20 January 2012, reassuring her that it would not break Uefa rules for those lesser penalties to be applied. Infantino advised: "The task of dealing with this matter is primarily the responsibility of the TFF."

But Infantino went further than stating that regulatory position and advised Koksak that Uefa approved of these lesser sanctions for match-fixing: "We can say, on behalf of Uefa, that taking all circumstances into account, your



proposal appears to constitute a reasonable, proportionate and appropriate response to address this matter."

The TFF chairman at the time, Mehmet Ali Aydinlar, has said publicly that this agreement from Uefa was reached to avoid the Turkish clubs losing huge money and was the result of "bargaining" with Uefa officials. Uefa held its annual congress two months later, in Istanbul.

Trabzonspor, who have pursued their grievances at Uefa and Cas, are now mounting a challenge under Fifa rules, more than six years after losing the title to Fenerbahce, who in fact were never stripped of it as envisaged by the rule changes. Erdem Egemen, a lawyer acting for Trabzonspor, told the Guardian: "We are still disputing the TFF decision not to apply its own disciplinary rules and we are calling for Fenerbahce to be stripped of the championship, which

should be awarded to Trabzonspor. TFF violated its own regulations and the Uefa principles of fair play and zero tolerance. We cannot explain or justify Infantino's approach or the cooperation of Uefa with this."

A spokesman for Platini said he was unaware of the letters or that this approval had been given because Infantino "was in charge of all legal and disciplinary issues."

In a statement, Infantino, who was elected Fifa president last year, did not directly explain why he approved the lesser sanctions or described them as "reasonable, proportionate and appropriate". He emphasised that he has a strong track record on combatting match-fixing, which included the banning of Fenerbahce and three other Turkish clubs from European competitions.

(Source: Guardian)

## Germany to set up World Cup headquarters near Moscow



The DFB has announced that the national team will set up its headquarters for next summer's World Cup on the outskirts of Moscow. The region is seen as the most convenient for travel to and from Germany's matches.

The German football association (DFB) announced in a statement released on Friday that head coach Joachim Löw's men would make their home-away-from-home in Vatutinki, a town located southwest of Moscow, in the summer of 2018.

"This time, the decision wasn't an easy one, because we had a very good time in Sochi during the Confed Cup," Löw (pictured above) said. "In Moscow we can work under the best training conditions and in a quiet area, we will have the best conditions for rest and recovery."

National team manager Oliver Bierhoff said that although Germany would be thinking from game to game, the decision stay in the Moscow region was made with a view to the entire tournament.

"The housing near Moscow guarantees that we will have short distances to travel on our daily drives to training, to the airport and to the Luzhnicki Stadium, where we all hope we will play three times."

Bierhoff was referring to the fact that Germany open the tournament in Luzhnicki Stadium, which will also host the semifinal that they would play in, should they get that far, as well as the final. He noted that not having to move between the semifinal and the final was "an important factor" in the decision for Vatutinki, which is located 35 kilometers (22 miles) from Luzhnicki and 25 kilometers from Moscow's international airport. The training facility that Germany intend to use is that of CSKA Moscow and is a five-minute bus ride from their headquarters.

Germany, who are looking to defend the 2014 title that they won in Brazil, are to open their pre-World Cup training camp in the South Tyrol region of northern Italy.

(Source: Deutsche Welle)

## Pique: 'Sometimes I am criticized for what I say, but I am not worried'



He is often a controversial figure and Barcelona defender Gerard Pique has acknowledged that he is aware of that, but refuses to change for anyone.

Away from the field of play, the Spain international has a reputation for being a forthright character who is unafraid of voicing his opinion. That has made him something of a polarizing figure in the game and he elaborated on that public persona of him and living under such pressure in an interview with The Telegraph.

"I've lived with pressure since I was very young and now I'm almost 30 years old," explained the center-back.

"For more than 10 years, I've played for Barcelona and I'm a professional who knows that words sometimes have consequences but I try to choose the right words every time. "Sometimes, the truth hurts and people don't want to hear it but in the end, we're all human."

"I always try to give my opinion and sometimes I'm criticized for that. I don't

care. I'm the way that I am and I'm not going to change. "If somebody says something that isn't fair or isn't true and I disagree, then I'll say it."

Politics has been a sticky subject which has landed the defender in hot water and even threatened his international career at one point.

He admitted that it has been a contentious issue at times for him.

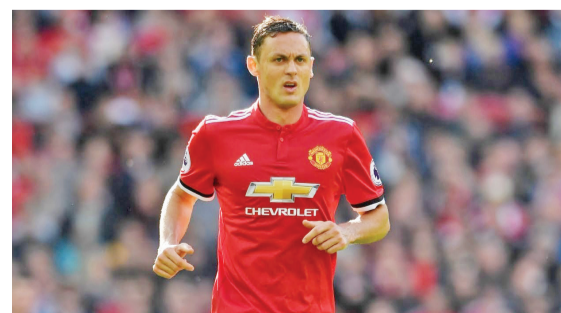
"That's a difficult thing to talk about because the views are radical, like football," he added. "You may think one way and someone else will think the opposite. It is almost always a fight with strong feelings."

The former Manchester United man will return to England early next year when Barcelona take on Chelsea in the Champions League, a competition which he believes has put a bullseye on his side's back of late.

"Every year is more difficult because clubs want to beat us. Every year brings a new chapter in our careers," he continued.

(Source: Telegraph)

## Nemanja Matic: Man Utd must win almost every game but title race isn't over



Nemanja Matic says Manchester United are not out of the title race, but admits they must win almost every game for the rest of the season to catch Manchester City.

Man Utd's 2-1 defeat by rivals City on Sunday left them 11 points behind the Premier League leaders with just 16 games played. Many have been writing City's rivals off, such is the dominance of Pep Guardiola's unbeaten side, but Matic says there is a long way to go yet.

He told Soccer Saturday: "The gap is big, obviously 11 points is a lot, but the league is not finished. I'm sure there will be very interesting games until the end, and of course that they will drop some points. We will see what will happen."

"As I say there are still many games to play and I think that we are not out of the title race. If we want to catch them, we have to win almost every game."

"But as we know, and as everyone knows, in the Premier League it is not always possible to win every game, but we will try to do that."

"Obviously we are still in the title race. We also have the cups, we are in the knockout stages of the Champions

League, so Manchester United is going game by game to be in there."

United go to West Brom on Super Sunday, live on Sky Sports Premier League at 2.15pm, while City host Tottenham at 5.30pm on Saturday.

Midfielder Matic, who signed for United from Chelsea in the summer, says United can do big things in the near

future, with many young players still improving.

"I think we have a good team, we are second in the table, which is not bad. Obviously we are 11 points from first but we are improving."

"We will see. It's difficult to say anything more because I am only four months in the club, and I am happy with how the team is doing."

"We have many young players, playing and improving with the team, and I'm sure in the future we can do big things."

Matic's midfielder partner Paul Pogba has been missed in parts this season due to injury, and the Serbian admits that while he gives them something special, there are worthy replacements for the Frenchman.

"He's a very important player for us, he always brings some extra quality to our team. So of course we miss him, but we also have some very important players to substitute him."

"Obviously when he comes back, for sure we are going to be stronger because as you know he has a lot of quality and he is very important to the club."

(Source: Sky Sports)

# Iran advance to IBSA Blind Football World Championships

**S P O R T S** Iran qualified for the 2017 IBSA Blind Football Asian Championships final match after defeating Thailand on Saturday.

Reigning Asian champions Iran were made to work hard by Thailand in the semi-final.

The first half was a tight affair and there were no goals at half-time. But in the second minute of the second half Iran's No 10 Behzad Zadalasghari struck a beautiful shot into the top of the net to open the scoring.

The lead didn't last for long, however, as Thailand's No 7, Panyawut Kupan, equalized from a free kick, his long-range shot from 15 meters squeezing under the Iranian goalkeeper and into the back of the net.

So it was 1-1 at the end of regular play and the game went into an exciting penalty shoot-out, with Iran coming out on top 3-2.

Earlier in the day, China overpowered South Korea 6-0 and secured a place in the final.

Iran and China, the finalists from the 2015 championships, will play in final on Sunday, while Thailand and South Korea face at third-placed match.

With Iran and China have already booked their places at the IBSA Blind Football World Championships in Madrid, Spain, next year, the winner of Thailand and South Korea will book the third and last berth.



## Iran's Pars Jonoubi beat Flamengo to qualify for Mundialito de Clubes final

**S P O R T S** Pars Jonoubi beach soccer team defeated Brazilian Flamengo 6-4 on Saturday to book a place at the Mundialito de Clubes final match.

Pars Jonoubi had lost to Spain's Levante 7-6 in their opening and defeated 2016 runners-up Rosario Central from Argentina 8-4 in Group B of the competition.

Group A consists of Lokomotiv Moscow, Sporting CP and Corinthians.

Pars Jonoubi will face Lokomotiv Moscow in the final match on Sunday.

Corinthians also meet Flamengo in the third place play-off. The 2017 Mundialito de Clubes is the fifth edition of

the Mundialito de Clubes (Club World Cup in English), a biennial international club beach soccer competition contested between top men's clubs from across the world (existing clubs and teams specially assembled for the event).

The tournament is loosely similar to the FIFA Club World Cup in association football, however participating teams are not regional champions, entering via invitation.

Organized by Beach Soccer Worldwide (BSWW) and other local entities in Brazil, the competition is being held in Vargem Grande Paulista, São Paulo State, Brazil from Dec. 14 to 17, featuring eight clubs.



## Mkhitarian's Man United future in doubt after Mourinho row

Henrikh Mkhitarian is battling to save his Manchester United career after being dropped by Jose Mourinho following a row between the two men during a video analysis session at the club's Carrington training ground last month, sources have told ESPN FC.

Mkhitarian, 28, has been absent from seven of United's last eight matchday squads and sources at Old Trafford have confirmed that the former Borussia Dortmund midfielder angered Mourinho by disagreeing with the manager's assessment of his contribution during a substitute appearance against Brighton on Nov. 25.

Mourinho was unhappy with Mkhitarian's defensive work rate and a mistake made by the player, singling the Armenian international out for criticism in front of the rest of the first-team squad.

Mkhitarian responded to his manager's remarks, with

the player continuing to debate Mourinho's assessment of his performance in the corridor outside the analysis suite at Carrington.

Sources told ESPN FC in September that Mourinho was unhappy with Mkhitarian's contribution against United's top-six rivals, but the player appeared to have overcome his manager's reservations by making an impressive start to the season with two goals and five assists in all competitions.

However, Mourinho was unimpressed by Mkhitarian's performance against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge at the beginning of November and has not selected him to start since.

When asked on Wednesday why Mkhitarian had not been in his plans recently, Mourinho said: "I can only have six [outfield] players on the bench and I try to

have some balance on the bench -- I had two defenders and [Daley] Blind who can play in different areas. I had Ashley Young to cover me all of the wing and the wing-back position.

"I had [Ander] Herrera as a midfield player, Zlatan [Ibrahimovic] as a striker and Marcus [Rashford] as a second striker and winger. I played [Anthony] Martial, [Juan] Mata and [Jesse] Lingard in the team. To have Micki means that I don't have one of them and, in this moment, I believe the other ones they deserve [the chance to play]."

Inter Milan are keen to sign Mkhitarian, who signed for United in July 2016, and could offer Portugal midfielder Joao Mario in an effort to negotiate a deal when the transfer window opens next month.

(Source: ESPN)

## Real reportedly met with Neymar Sr. to discuss deal



Real Madrid president Florentino Perez reportedly met with the father of Paris Saint-Germain forward Neymar Sr. to discuss a world-record transfer for the Brazil international.

Spanish source Diario Gol revealed how Perez had dinner with Neymar Sr. in Los Angeles, during which a potential deal worth €220 million dominated the agenda. Wright noted how Diario Gol also reported it may be 2019 before any such deal took place, despite Neymar Jr. wanting to move from the French capital next summer.

Talk of Neymar eventually joining Los Merengues has been growing recently. Eduardo Inda of OK Diario helped stoke the rumors when he said earlier this month talks over a transfer were already taking place.

Inda even revealed a deal is already set for ex-Barcelona star Neymar to return to La Liga in 2019 at a cost of £200 million. Los Blancos are willing to pay such a fee because they want the South American attacker to replace Cristiano Ronaldo, per Archer.

It may be premature to think about replacing Ronaldo, even though he's 32. After all, Real's talismanic No. 7 remains as prolific as ever, scoring nine goals in the group stage of the UEFA Champions League.

Ronaldo is still the main man for Los

Blancos, a role Neymar would surely want should he move to the Spanish capital. A similar desire motivated the latter's decision to leave the Camp Nou and join PSG, according to former Barca centre-back Jeremy Mathieu, who revealed Neymar wanted to escape Lionel Messi's shadow, per an interview with EFE.

There is no doubt Neymar is the headline attraction at PSG, even ahead of fellow attackers Edinson Cavani and 18-year-old sensation Kylian Mbappe. He has quickly become the creative and goalscoring talisman for the Ligue 1 leaders, netting 15 times and providing nine assists.

There have been rumors of tension with manager Unai Emery, per Le Parisien (h/t Sport). It's something Real could take advantage of, especially with ESPN FC's Julien Laurens revealing other members of Emery's squad are tired of the preferential treatment the world's most expensive player receives.

Real will find it difficult to strike a quick deal for the man who only joined PSG for €200 million in the summer. However, the speculation won't go away and is sure to intensify when the two clubs meet in the UEFA Champions League last 16 in February.

(Source: Bleacher Report)

## Guardiola hits back at Jose Mourinho's tactical fouls comments



Pep Guardiola says he never sends out his players with instructions to foul after Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho accused his side of "tactical fouls."

Mourinho made the comments ahead of the Manchester derby on Sunday, which Manchester City won 2-1, committing 10 fouls to United's 16 and picking up two fewer yellow cards than United's four.

The Football Association has since asked Mourinho to provide his observations about his comments after also saying that the City players "lose their balance very easily."

But Guardiola denied Mourinho's accusations and says it's harder to commit fouls if you are in control of the possession. "When we have the ball, we kick each other? I think that doesn't happen in football," the City boss told a news conference ahead of Saturday's game at Tottenham Hotspur. "I don't know statistically but I don't think so."

"I never, never, never, never sent a message to my players. You can ask the players, these players and the old players if my message on the pitch was to make fouls. I don't use this kind of message."

Guardiola said they occasionally commit fouls but insists it is not a tactic and they try to stop opponents' counter-attacks by

winning the ball back quickly.

"[We try] to be ready, to be close, to be close to their run," he added. "Of course, we make fouls. Of course, we do that. We are not a saint. Of course we do fouls."

"It's because of the way the game is. Sometimes, when tripping, you make a foul and get a yellow card. That's football."

City have a chance to extend their record-breaking winning streak with a 16th successive league win against Spurs, who they have failed to beat for the past two seasons.

It will see Kyle Walker face his old club in a competitive game for the first time and Guardiola believes the defender is one of the best right-backs in the world but says he can still improve.

"Right now I'd rate him as one of the best definitely," Guardiola said. "He is so strong defensively. I'd like to help him to solve not just the problems through his physically but also through his thinking."

"When you are so strong physically, you solve all the problems that way. When you get to a certain age, 28, 29, 30, after that you need to think more about what is going to happen. I always encourage him to think and after, do it."

(Source: Soccer.net)

## Iranian skier Forough Abbasi carries Winter Olympic torch

**TASNIM** — Iranian alpine skier Forough Abbasi carried Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 in Seoul, capital of South Korea on Saturday.

The Olympic Torch Relay will reach its conclusion at the Opening Ceremony of the XXIII Olympic Winter Games at PyeongChang Olympic Stadium on 9 February next year.



The Olympic flame will be transported across the country by no fewer than 7,500 torchbearers.

The torchbearers will each carry the flame for 200 meters. The torch, which measures 700mm in length – reflecting PyeongChang's altitude of 700 meters above sea level – has been designed to withstand the wind, rain and snow it may well encounter en route to the Olympic Stadium.

Iran is expected to participate in the competition with four skiers.

The PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games will take place from March 9-18.

## Serten Cuk parts company with Persepolis

**IRNA** — Persepolis assistant coach Serten Cuk has parted company with the Iranian football team.

Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic said Cuk has left the team because he has been appointed as manager of grassroots program in Croatia Football Federation.

Iranian media reports suggest that Branko's brother Zlatko will replace Cuk in Persepolis.

Cuk was named as Persepolis coach in June 2016 and played a role in the Iranian giants' success in the last season.

He has also worked at Croatian football clubs NK Lokomotiva and Dinamo Zagreb.

Persepolis topped the table at the first half of the Iran Professional League season.

## Ramos rubbishes suggestions Spain could be kicked out of World Cup

Sergio Ramos has rubbished suggestions that 2010 champions Spain could be kicked out of next summer's World Cup for "political interference".

Spanish newspaper El Pais reported that FIFA has contacted the Spanish football federation (RFEF) warning it that continued involvement from the centre-right Spanish government in the upcoming election for the football federation's new president could result in them losing their place at next year's tournament.

But Ramos, 31, on Friday refuted suggestions Spain's appearance at next year's finals was in jeopardy ahead of Real Madrid's Club World Cup final with Brazil's Gremio on Saturday night.

"We have played well and I don't think it will cost us our achievement," said the 149-times capped defender, behind only former Real teammate Iker Casillas (167) on the country's all-time appearance list.

"I don't think we will not play in Russia after all we have done. The results are there, we have won our matches. I don't think anything can influence us playing there next year."

La Roja qualified at the beginning of October, having finished top of UEFA Group G, beating out fellow European giants Italy.

The RFEF is currently led on an interim basis by Juan Luis Larrea, after former president Angel Maria Villar was forced to step down on corruption charges.

The government's National Sports Council have made contact with the RFEF over Villar's eventual successor and that would be in direct contradiction of FIFA's strict rules.

FIFA can suspend the membership of any national football team if they judge the association has been influenced by external political pressure.

Earlier this year, the Pakistan Football Federation was banned by FIFA due to "undue third-party interference", while the Kuwait Football Association was suspended between 2015-2017 for similar levels of interference.

(Source: Sport360)

## Alpine skiing: Vonn enjoys first World Cup win of season

**VAL D'ISERE, France (Reuters)** — American Lindsey Vonn won the Super G at Val d'Isere to claim her first victory in a World Cup race for nearly a year on Saturday.

The four-times overall World Cup champion completed the course in one minute 4.36 seconds and showed no signs of the back pain which troubled her in St Mortiz last week.

It was the 78th World Cup race win of Vonn's career but the first since the downhill at Garmisch in January.

Vonn finished 0.31 seconds ahead of Italy's Sofia Goggia with Norway's Ragnhild Mowinckel in third.

"I had a bad start to the season, and now I'm at a much better level, this win is very important for me," she told Swiss television, adding that she would also race in another Super G on Sunday.

"I hope the weather helps tomorrow and we can have a good race."

Liechtenstein's Tina Weirather, third in the overall World Cup standings at the start, crashed on a steep curve high on the course but skied away unharmed.

Switzerland's Lara Gut, recovering from an anterior cruciate knee injury, was ninth.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY  
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari  
■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

▶ Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
editor@tehrantimes.com  
▶ Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
▶ Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450  
▶ Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807  
▶ Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603  
▶ www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.  
Tel: 88911433  
▶ Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com  
▶ Printed at: Rooztab - ISSN: 1017-94

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran  
P.o. Box: 14155-4843  
Zip Code: 1599814713



## Sajjad Rafei wins top prize at Tehran Intl. Cartoon Biennial

In the caricature section, which was dedicated to works on world-famous figures, top prize went to Bruno Hamzagic from Brazil. Amin Torabi and Aref Niazi, both from Iran, won second and third prizes respectively.



Cartoon by Sajjad Rafei won \$8,000 in prize money at the 11th Tehran International Cartoon Biennial on December 15, 2017.

A jury composed of Shankar Pamarthy from India, António Santos from Portugal and a number of Iranian cartoonists judged the works at the event, which showcased about 500 works from 74 countries.

## Iranian film festival opens in Seoul

TEHRAN — An Iranian film festival opened at the Ewha Womans University in Seoul, South Korea on Friday night by screening legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami's acclaimed movie "Where Is the Friend's Home".



A scene from "Where Is the Friend's Home" by Abbas Kiarostami

Seven films are scheduled to go on screen during the three-day event, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Saturday.

The Ambassador for Public Diplomacy at Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Park Enna, and Iranian Ambassador Hassan Taherian were among the officials attending the opening ceremony of the festival, which has been organized to mark 55 years of diplomatic relations between Iran and South Korea.

## "The Post" is about the state of America, star Hanks says

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — Steven Spielberg's new movie "The Post" isn't just a 1971 tale of press freedom or the place of women in the workplace.

It poses key questions about the United States today, star Tom Hanks says.

"I think it's a very good patriotic movie about 'what is the state of America?'," Hanks told Reuters at the world premiere in Washington D.C. on Thursday night.

"This is about a women's place and equality in the workplace ... It is definitely about the legacy of the Vietnam War and what 40 years of policy did to the United States of America. And it's also about the journalistic integrity of people who view it as not their job, but their responsibility to go out and get the truth," Hanks added.

Starring Hanks as Washington Post editor Ben Bradlee and Meryl Streep as Washington Post publisher Katharine Graham, "The Post" dramatizes the battle by newspapers in 1971 to publish the leaked Pentagon Papers detailing the U.S. government's misleading portrayal of the Vietnam War.

Spielberg has said he rushed to film and release the movie within a year because the parallels between 1971 and 2017 were "terrifyingly similar."

The movie, opening in U.S. movie theaters on Dec. 22, arrives at a time when the media has been under attack by U.S. President Donald Trump since his election in November 2016.

On Thursday, Spielberg said the theme of press freedom goes beyond any single government.

"Everybody goes through a tug of war with the media, with the press. Obama went through it. Bush goes through it. Clinton went through it. The current administration is going through it," he said.

"The Post" was nominated this week for six Golden Globes and is seen as a front runner for Oscar nominations when they are announced in January.

## University of Tehran opens permanent exhibit for artist Monir Farmanfarmaian

TEHRAN — The Negarestan Garden Museum of the University of Tehran (UT) opened a new section on Friday to put 51 artworks by artist Monir Farmanfarmaian on display in a permanent exhibition.

Sitting in her wheelchair, the 95-year-old artist, who is famous for her mirror mosaics and geometric drawings, attended the opening ceremony of the section titled "Monir Hall", the Persian service of ILNA reported on Saturday.

Speaking at the ceremony, UT Deputy Director for Cultural Affairs Majid Sarsangi said that he has received numerous calls from museum curators and world collectors who have praised UT's decision to dedicate the section to works by Farmanfarmaian.

Actors Faramarz Qaribian and Saber Abar, Visual Arts Office director Majid Mollanoruzi and Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Mojtaba Hosseini were among the guests attending the ceremony.



Monir Farmanfarmaian sitting in a wheelchair visits a permanent exhibition of her artworks opened at the Negarestan Garden Museum of the University of Tehran on December 15, 2017. (Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

Farmanfarmaian's work has been collected by institutions around the world such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Tate Modern in London and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

## "Gamichi" director honored at India's Smile filmfest

TEHRAN — Iranian director Majid Esmaili-Parsa's film on Lake Urmia and its environmental crisis, "Gamichi", brought him the award for best director at the Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth in New Delhi, the organizers announced on Saturday.

The film is about a young boy, Hassan, who lives near Lake Urmia with his family. The lake is drying up so they have to sell their boat.

Hassan tries to keep the old boat and wait for his father, who has left the family to earn money elsewhere.

"Village Rockstars" by Rima Das from India received the best film for children award, while "Mum's wrong" by Marc Fitoussi from France won the best film for youth award at the festival.



A scene from "Gamichi" by Majid Esmaili Parsa

## Iranian photographer wins award at Trofeo Gipuzkoa contest

TEHRAN — Iranian photographer Davud Ameri has won the CEF Silver Medal at the Trofeo Gipuzkoa Internacional, an international photography salon in San Sebastian, Spain.

He received the honor for his single photo "The Place I Lost My Leg", the organizers announced on Friday.

Ameri fellow photographers Mohammadreza Masumi and Saman Purkoshhamuz received honorable mentions at the contest.

The winning photos will be showcased in an exhibition during January and February 2018.

The contest was organized by the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP).



"The Place I Lost My Leg" by Iranian photographer Davud Ameri won the CEF Silver Medal at Trofeo Gipuzkoa Internacional in Spain.

## Iranian center honored at Sheikh Hamad awards

TEHRAN — Iran's Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia in Tehran was honored with a \$100,000 prize at the Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding (SHATIU) in Doha, Qatar on Friday.

The center received the Achievement Award in the Translation from Persian into Arabic category, Iran's Culture Center in Doha announced on Saturday.

A number of the Qatari royal family members and cultural officials from around the world attended the awards ceremony held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Qatar established the Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding (SHATIU) in 2015 "to honor translators and acknowledge their role in strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation among peoples and nations of the world," the organizers have said.

"The award also aspires to inculcate a culture of knowledge



A view of the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, Tehran

and dialogue, promote Arab and Islamic culture, develop international understanding and encourage mature cross-cultural interaction between Arabic and other world languages through the medium of translation."

The total value of the award is \$2,000,000, divided into three categories: translation prizes (\$800,000), achievement prizes (\$1,000,000), and prize for international understanding (\$200,000).

## "The Last Jedi" cruises toward \$200 million domestic debut

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — "Star Wars: The Last Jedi", the new film in the beloved space saga, opened with massive ticket sales that put it on track to ring up around \$200 million at domestic theaters over the weekend, distributor Walt Disney Co said on Friday.

The movie brought in \$45 million in the United States and Canada on Thursday night, second only to the \$57 million from 2015's "Star Wars: The Force Awakens". That film went on to generate more than \$2 billion worldwide.

"Last Jedi" is the eighth movie in the saga created by George Lucas in 1977. It picks up from the end of "Force Awakens" with the scavenger Rey asking Luke Skywalker to come out of seclusion to help fight the evil First Order.

The new film features actress Carrie Fisher's final performance as Leia, the famous princess who has become a general leading resistance forces. Fisher died of a



Praetorian Guards on the red carpet. (Reuters/Danny Moloshok)

heart attack in December 2016.

Fans' love of the franchise, and Fisher, is expected to drive heavy ticket sales for "Last Jedi" over the upcoming Christmas and New Year holidays, according to box office analysts.

"Last Jedi" began rolling out on Wednesday in international markets, where it has brought in \$60.8 million in its first two days, Disney said.

## Wrestler turned actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson receives star on Walk of Fame

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Professional wrestler turned actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson paid tribute to his family on Wednesday as he accepted his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The 'Jumanji' actor, one of the highest paid in Hollywood, struggled to get through his speech with fans chanting "Rocky", a reference to his wrestling moniker.

Johnson, 45, recognized those who helped him in his career, including girlfriend Lauren Hashian, who is pregnant with their second child.

"You don't have success alone. You don't do it alone," he said. "It takes a team so I'm so grateful right now to recognize a few people in my life and it is just a few and they are here who without them there would be no me."

After thanking the crowd, he recounted his favorite quote that he first discovered as a 15-year old - "It's nice to be important



Actor Dwayne Johnson poses on his star after it was unveiled on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles, California, U.S., December 13, 2017. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

but it's more important to be nice."

Johnson's star, the 2,624th to be awarded, is next to the stars of World Wrestling Entertainment CEO Vince McMahon and muppet Kermit the Frog.

## Weinstein denies blacklisting actresses Ashley Judd, Mira Sorvino

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Harvey Weinstein on Friday denied barring actresses Ashley Judd and Mira Sorvino from working on the movie adaptation of "The Lord of the Rings" or blacklisting them from further projects.

Weinstein, who has been accused of sexual harassment by more than 50 women, including Judd and Sorvino, was responding to remarks by "Lord of the Rings" director Peter Jackson.

In an interview with New Zealand website Stuff on Thursday, Jackson said he expressed interest in casting Judd and Sorvino in the movie while pitching the project to Weinstein's production company Miramax.

"I recall Miramax telling us they were a nightmare to work with and we should avoid them at all costs. This was probably in 1998," Jackson said.

"At the time, we had no reason to question what these guys were telling us... I now suspect we were fed false information about both of these talented women - and as a direct result their names were removed from our casting list," he added.



Harvey Weinstein speaks at the UBS 40th Annual Global Media and Communications Conference in New York, NY, U.S. on December 5, 2012. (Reuters/Carlo Allegri/File Photo)

The "Lord of the Rings" movie trilogy later went to New Line Cinema and released in 2001.

Weinstein's spokeswoman Holly Baird said in a statement that Harvey and his brother Bob "had no input into the casting whatsoever" on "Lord of the Rings."

The statement said that Judd was subsequently cast by Weinstein in two other movies - "Frida" and "Crossing Over." It added that Sorvino called Weinstein earlier this year to ask if her husband, actor Christopher Backus, could be cast in the TV series "Six" that he was producing "and Mr. Weinstein cast him."

Judd, responding on Twitter on Friday, recalled having detailed talks with Jackson about "Lord of the Rings" but "then I abruptly never heard from him again."

Sorvino said on Twitter that she "burst out crying" when she read Jackson's remarks, calling them "confirmation that Harvey Weinstein derailed my career, something I suspected but was unsure."

Representatives for the two actresses did not respond on Friday to a request for further comment.