



**Zarif: Iran's security dependent on people**

2



**DOE starting to promote 'waste separation' culture**

12



**Octavio very satisfied with Iran's performance at Persian Beach Soccer Cup**

15



**Majid Majidi hails drama on Iran-Iraq war**

16



## U.S. ruined opportunity for further talks

See page 2

## Lebanese leaders say Israel threatens border stability

**INTERNATIONAL** Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri noted that the Lebanese have "united around stability and security and moved the country forward."

"We approved a budget and a new electoral law," Hariri said, adding that "the consensus is clear and significant,

and we will continue this for the sake of the country."

Meanwhile, Lebanon's top three leaders accused Israel on Tuesday of threatening the stability of the border region between them, amid rising tension over territorial and maritime boundaries. →13

## 14,300km roads under construction in Iran

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Some 14,300 kilometers of roads are under construction in Iran, the managing director of Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company announced in a news conference on Tuesday.

As IRNA quoted Kheirollah Khademi, some of these roads are to be completed in near future.

"More than 70,000 workers are con-

structing these roads," he said.

"Construction of 41,000 kilometers of roads requires 1.4 quadrillion rials (about \$30.2 billion) funds, while the government can supply 50 trillion rials (about \$1.08 billion) and the private sector can provide 20 trillion rials (about \$432 million) of the said amount per year," he lamented, "construction of 41,000 kilometers of roads will take about 20 years in Iran".

## "At Damascus Time" director wants Middle East to see his film

**A R T** TEHRAN — Iranian director Ebrahim Hatamikia has said that he is eager to see "At Damascus Time", his latest film on Daesh, screened in the Middle East.

Speaking during a press conference after a screening of his film at the 36th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran on Monday,

he said that the Daesh threat still remains.

"The Daesh forces have only lost their ground, but they still exist... they may appear in a different form again," he added.

Producer Mohammad Khazaei, who also attended the press conference, said that he will make plans to distribute the film in the world. →16



### PERSPECTIVE

By M.A. Saki  
Deputy editor-in-chief

## We have been taken hostage by vehicles

In the recent days the air pollution in some parts of Tehran has reached a dangerous level, ringing the alarm bells that something serious may happen.

Who is most at fault?

A clear-cut answer is that successive administrations and parliaments are mostly responsible for the current situation.

Even now that the national budget bill is being studied at the parliament, a special parliamentary committee tasked to first analyze the budget bill has slashed the money for development of public transport and strongly opposed a proposed 50 percent rise in gasoline prices.

These moves show that most MPs are not aware of the extravagant costs of heavily subsidized fuel on the economy and the health of citizens.

Failure to educate the people how to be environment friendly has worsened the situation. This is exemplified in the excessive use of private cars, natural gas for home heating. Waste of energy resources is more acute in state buildings.

According to experts, old trucks, motorcycles, locally-produced passenger cars, and certain foreign produced cars assembled at home are the main culprit for the pollutants.

The Majlis, which in most cases has acted as a hurdle to stop what I call the "foolish subsidization of fuel", has even failed to force car and motorcycle companies to raise their fuel efficiency.

There is a big question why responsible bodies, which have been allowing billions of dollars to be wasted through fuel subsidy, do not allocate a small portion of that subsidy for development of public transport and limit private cars in the streets at least in wintertime when inversions are common.

The health of citizens, especially in big cities, is actually being traded for production of substandard vehicles and motorcycles. Vehicles that should be at the service of citizens have turned into the enemies of people. We are now a hostage to them.

Maybe the true words were expressed by Environment Protection Organization chief Isa Kalantari who on January 28 said the domestic car companies act like a "mafia" and they are so strong that even the president may not be able to stop them from producing "polluting" cars.

## The security complex of Persian Gulf

### ARTICLE

By Mohammad Ghaderi & Javad Heirannia

In accord with Barry Buzan's understanding of Regional Security Complex, the Persian Gulf region is itself a security complex made up of friendship and enmity between nation states, communities, and individuals. The friendships and enmity range from deeply historical to current economic, social, cultural, religious, and even personal matters. The role of Iran among Arabs, for example, exhibits such complexity, and is not analyzable simply in terms of the distribution of power. Iran-Arab relations includes border disputes, attachments of persons with a same or similar tribal identity or ideological attitudes, positive or negative communications between Arab and non-Arab or Shiite and Sunni Muslims.

In fact, there is a kind of mutual dependency in the security complex of the Persian Gulf like other regions. But security competition is negative in the Iran - Iraq and

Saudi Arabia triangle. In such a complex, the small states like Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Bahrain have very limited influence on the structure of this complex. Their security almost depends on the bigger regional power's pattern and could be defined as a threat against a great power under conditions when alliances are formed with the greater powers.

The security pattern of the Persian Gulf has been worsened in its present condition because of presence of the foreign powers. The security pattern of any region is affected by the security pattern of powers. Competition between the great powers tends to increase the existing regional competitions in the security pattern of the Persian Gulf.

Some experts of the Persian Gulf affairs including Kenneth Polak believe that Arab states of the Persian Gulf have passed significant steps in order to develop some of their capabilities during the last decade. For example, they have extended their relations with the USA and the other western militaristic powers to create their armies. →7

## Advisor: Iran, Egypt need to expand parliamentary ties

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Advisor to the Iranian Parliament Speaker Hossein Amir Abdollahian in a meeting with Head of Egypt's Interest Section Yasser Othman called for broadening of mutual cooperation between the two countries, especially in parliamentary fields.

"Iran and Egypt can expand their bilateral relations in various fields, including between the two countries' parliaments, which could then be used to solve regional problems by focusing on the political solutions," Amir Abdollahian said.

The two sides also emphasized the importance of defending the rights of the Palestinian people and the need to focus on political solution to regional crises.

In a relevant development in

October 2016, Amir Abdollahian lauded Egypt for its "constructive and useful" positions on the Syrian crisis and campaign against terrorism.

He underlined the necessity for finding a political solution to the crisis in Syria, and said Iran supports any measure to this end.

Amir Abdollahian called for the development of cooperation with Cairo, and said, "Iran and Egypt are two big and influential countries which can play a constructive role through mutual cooperation in the region to help soothe tensions."

Othman, for his part, stressed Iran's important role in the region, and said, "Increased consultations between the two countries' officials will be effective in improving the regional situation."





MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



‘Subversive threats’ should be taken seriously: Jannati

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** – Guardian Council secretary Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said on Monday that “subversive threats” to the Islamic Republic should be taken seriously, warning that such plots must be foiled.

However, Jannati said authorities should listen to the voice of the nation and not distance themselves from people, Mehr reported.

“When it is hard to make ends meet, the poor people pour into the streets to protest since they cannot bear the burdens of hardship anymore,” he said in reference to recent protests that broke out across the country and died down after a week.



U.S. transferring Daesh militants to Afghanistan: general

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** – Chief of the Iranian Armed Forces said on Tuesday that the United States is relocating Daesh militants to Afghanistan now that the group has been defeated in Iraq and Syria.

Since Daesh and other terror groups lost their territories in Iraq and Syria, Washington has been relocating the terrorists to Afghanistan by various means, Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri said, Tasnim reported.

If the region became calm, the Americans would have to withdraw their forces, the general told reporters.



Zarif, Lavrov discuss Syria on the phone

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov held a phone conversation on Tuesday, discussing the recent developments in Syria.

According to Interfax, the two sides among other things exchanged views on decisions made at the Syria National Dialogue Congress in Sochi.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Iranian and Russian presidents also talked on phone on the implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



‘Mistrust between Iran, U.S. soared after JCPOA’

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** – Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has said that the wall of mistrust between Iran and the U.S. has grown taller in the aftermath of the historic 2015 nuclear agreement.

Iran has fully lost trust in Washington after the United States’ violation of the nuclear deal, he told Jam-e Jam Online in interview published on Tuesday.

He said even the international community has felt that the U.S. is untrustworthy, adding that given Washington’s increased hostile approach towards Iran, there is no place for talks with the country.

He said, “This view that negotiations with America can resolve certain problems in Iran is not correct.”



Defense Ministry unveils new maritime products

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** – Iran’s Defense Ministry on Tuesday unveiled two homegrown maritime products, one used for propulsion of speed-boats and the other for protection of metallic structures in military and civilian vessels.

The two products, designed and manufactured by Iranian experts, were unveiled in a ceremony attended by Deputy Defense Minister Qassem Taqizadeh, Tasnim reported.

The propulsion system consists of a mobile shaft for transmission of power as high as 1,800 horsepower. The other achievement unveiled was a cathodic protection system, used to protect metal against corrosion in vessels.



Astana peace talks to be resumed in February

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** – The next round of the Astana peace talks on the Syrian conflict is planned to be held later this month, Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov announced on Tuesday.

“According to information that we have received from the Astana process underwriter states, Russia, Turkey and Iran, the parties are preparing for a new round of talks in Astana in accordance with earlier reached agreements,” Abdrakhmanov said.

“The issue concerns the 20th of February, but information is yet to be ultimately confirmed by the underwriter states,” he said, according to the TASS news agency.

# Zarif: Iran’s security dependent on people



**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** – Foreign Minister Mohammad

Javad Zarif late on Monday called Iran the safest country in West Asia and said this is owed to people’s involvement in determining their own destiny.

“Our security is dependent on the people... We are indebted all we have to the people,” Zarif said in a televised interview.

However, Zarif said, there are countries “around us that depend on foreigners”.

Iran believes that security should come from within and through ballot votes, the academic and chief diplomat noted.

But certain countries in the region seek to buy security and adopt policy of buying weapons, he added.

“Based on this viewpoint, we consider dialogue the basis of interaction among the regional countries. Unfortunately, some regional countries seek to provide security from outside and try to show that they are constantly in danger. They seek to provide their security through spending money and being dependent on outside,” Zarif remarked.

■ **‘Trump’s stance on nuclear deal was predictable’**

Zarif also said that U.S. President Donald Trump’s stance on the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,

was “predictable”.

“We did not expect the U.S. to fulfill its obligations with good intention while the JCPOA obliges the U.S. to implement the deal with good intention,” the foreign minister pointed out.

He noted that Trump is not satisfied with the nuclear deal and makes efforts to scrap it through raising issues that have nothing to do with the JCPOA.

In a statement on January 12, Trump gave Europeans only 120 days to agree to an

**There are countries “around us that rely on foreigners” for security, Zarif says.**

## Putin and Rouhani discuss JCPOA, Syria on the phone

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** – President Hassan Rouhani

and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin have held a telephone conversation, during which they confirmed commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal, the Kremlin press service said in a statement.

“The parties confirmed commitment to the consistent implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) for Iran’s nuclear program, which is important for maintaining global peace and stability,” the statement read.

The two presidents also discussed the Yemen crisis and exchanged views on ways to resolve the Palestinian issue.

“There also was a discussion of pressing issues concerning bilateral cooperation in various fields,” the Kremlin press service said, adding that “a decision has been made to maintain contacts on various levels.”

Putin and Rouhani also pointed to effective cooperation between Russia, Iran and Turkey on the Astana platform which aims to resolve the Syrian crisis through dialogue.

“The parties pointed to effective cooperation between Russia, Iran and Turkey on the Astana platform,” the statement said. “They expressed readiness to continue coordinating their steps to promote the platform and put new issues on the agenda.”



The two presidents exchanged views on the outcome of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress, held in the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi in late January.

“It was stressed that the decisions made there were aimed at providing a significant impetus to the political settlement process in Syria based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, as well as at improving the situation in the region,” the statement said.

On December 30, 2016, the Syrian government and armed

opposition made an agreement declaring a ceasefire across the country, which had been brokered by Russia and Turkey.

In addition to the UN-sponsored talks in Geneva, Russia, Turkey and Iran organized a series of intra-Syrian consultations in Astana, Kazakhstan’s capital, seeking to ensure the ceasefire.

At an Astana meeting in May 2017, Russia, Iran and Turkey signed a memorandum on setting up de-escalation zones in Syria, which entered into force on May 6, 2017.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan criticized the United States for interfering in Syria, which he said is a threat against regional countries.

The U.S. is working against the interests of Turkey, Iran and maybe Russia in northern Syria, where it is sending in military supplies to an area controlled by Kurdish-dominated forces, Erdogan said on Tuesday, Reuters reported.

“If the United States says they are sending 5,000 trucks and 2,000 cargo planes of weapons for the fight against Daesh, we don’t believe this,” Erdogan told members of his ruling AK Party in parliament.

“It means you have calculations against Turkey and Iran, and maybe Russia,” he said, repeating a call for U.S. troops to withdraw from the Syrian town of Manbij.

## Rouhani: U.S. ruined opportunity for more talks

Not even a line will be added or omitted from the nuclear deal, president insists

By Mehdi Sepahvand

**TEHRAN** — By “failing to seize the JCPOA atmosphere”, the U.S. missed the opportunity to improve ties with Tehran, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Tuesday.

If Washington had shown some commitment to the nuclear deal, talks on other issues would have been possible, Rouhani remarked.

“Had America acted to its entire commitments under the JCPOA, a new situation could have been established,” Rouhani told a press conference.

“It is a pity that they ruined this golden opportunity,” Rouhani added.

“I have always stressed that the key to future Iran-America ties is in the hands of America.... They should cease exercising pressure, threats, and sanctions. [Then] the atmosphere will change and one would be able to think about the future.”

Rouhani also said, “I am happy that after a year in the White House, Trump has not been able to fulfill his promise to tear the JCPOA as he used to shout during his electoral campaign.”

He added, “We do not know what America is going to do in the future. Even Trump’s intimate European friends do not know what he is about.”

On possible violation or renegotiation of the nuclear agreement, Rouhani said, “We will not initiate a violation of the JCPOA. The JCPOA will not grow more or less. Neither would a line be added to or omitted from it. We do not associate other issues with the JCPOA. The JCPOA is the commitment of seven countries. It is an international commitment which has been endorsed by the [UN] Security Council.”

“We have made necessary predictions and will stay in the JCPOA as long as our interests are met. Whether America stays or quits JCPOA will not impact our decision. Our decision follows our interests in JCPOA.”

On Iran’s defense program, he said, “We will use whatever necessary to defend the country, be it airplanes, missiles, or submarines. But we are not looking for weapons of mass destruction. Not only because of our international commitments,

**“We have made necessary predictions and will stay in the JCPOA as long as our interests are met. Whether America stays or quits JCPOA will not impact our decision. Our decision follows our interests in JCPOA.”**

but under the fatwa of the Leader we are not after them. Iran will not go for weapons that offend morality, Sharia, or international commitments. But we will use whatever falls within conventional weapons. We will not hold any negotiation with anybody in this regard either. Iran’s missiles have never been offensive. They have never been intended to, nor will be intended to, attack a country. Our missiles are to defend us... and neither of our missiles have been developed for mass destruction weapons, because we do not have mass destruction weapons and regard their development forbidden.”

Regarding regional issues, the president said, “We are in a complicated region and face many issues. We know the main approach is negotiation with regional countries. We are not predisposed against talks with major world countries either.”

On the developments in Syria, Rouhani said, “Many good talks have been held between Iran and Russia and there has been much positive exchange of ideas. I was speaking with Mr. Putin today, who said it is necessary that leaders of the three countries of Iran, Turkey, and Russia meet soon over

**“It is wrong if they think the Zionist regime is enemy [only] with Iran and friends with other regional countries.”**

a solution to the Syrian crisis. We appreciate this trend and will keep it going.”

Rouhani further said, “We have good relations with both Turkey and Russia. But our position... [demanding] the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Syria was a principled position, because the entry of the army of a country into another country should enjoy the consent of the latter country’s government and people. We consider any other condition as unprincipled and would want it to end as soon as possible because it leads to killings on both sides. This is the same as our refusal of the presence of America in Syria, because they develop wrong ideas about disintegration of Syria.”

On Israel’s regional policies, the president said, “Israel is imagining new situations. They think they stand on new ground now, that they find Trump and Kushner by their side and [now that] in Saudi Arabia people have risen to power who are not experienced enough to deal with regional issues. But they are wrong. As you saw, most world countries and almost all, except one or two, leaders of Islamic countries adopted good position vis-à-vis making al-Quds the capital of the Zionist regime.”

The president also said Saudi Arabia will realize in the future that its rapprochement with Israel was a “wrong” policy.

“Those who rule in Riyadh will understand as times passes that they chose the wrong path which will not lead them anywhere.”

Rouhani said Riyadh made efforts in the past to raise Daesh in Iraq and Syria but those moves just led to misery and destruction.

“Where did their efforts get them? Where did they get by dragging Yemen to ruins with the hope to rule it? It is wrong if they think the Zionist regime is enemy [only] with Iran and friends with other regional countries. In the past 70 years, this regime has been plotting against Islamic countries.... Want it or not, Israel is the number one enemy of the region. Want it or not, our right path lies in unity among Islamic countries and resolution of disagreements and resentments. Saudi rulers should come to their senses and consider common regional interests as well as the people of the region and their own people. We will in the meantime provide as much help as we can.”

## Spokesman blames Britain for complicity in Saudi crimes in Yemen

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** (FNA) –

Iranian Government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht underlined that Britain’s large arms sales to Saudi Arabia means that London is an accomplice of Riyadh in its crimes against the Yemeni people.

“They should first declare the size of the weapons and bombs they have supplied to the Saudis to commit their crimes in Yemen,” Nobakht told reporters in Tehran on Tuesday.

Critics of the Saudi-led war against Yemen say Britain has a moral and historical obligation to stop selling weapons to Saudi Arabia and to pressure Riyadh diplomatically. Andrew

Smith, spokesman for Campaign against Arms Trade, thinks Britain has failed to take the initiative – frankly, because it shares the blame.

“With the atrocities that are being committed in Yemen every day, if the UK government hasn’t had any interest in flagging them up it’s because it has been so utterly complicit in the destruction which is taking place,” said Smith.

“I expect Theresa May and her colleagues are deeply ashamed of what’s happening. One of the worst humanitarian crises in the world has been inflicted on one of the poorest countries in the world. And UK arms have been central to that.”

Britain been selling the Saudis really expensive items like fighter jets – Tornados and Typhoon Eurofighters. The UK has also supplied helicopters, drones, and armored vehicles.

Missiles, including Stormshadows and Brimstones, are another big seller. Aircraft components and sniper rifles are among the more recent deliveries, topped off with a selection of anti-riot gear, spy kit and security software.

Like it or not, the war in Yemen has made a lot of money and sustains thousands of high tech manufacturing jobs in the UK.

“This has been a huge money-making

success for BAE Systems, Raytheon and MBDA,” Smith said. “They’ve all been rolling in the money from the conflict, because if there’s one industry which is dependent on war and conflict to survive, it’s obviously the arms trade. You’re talking about an industry where the people who are making money from it are so detached from the outcomes of it.”

“The people who are cashing in on the destruction of Yemen aren’t people who are ever going to experience being in a village which is being bombed by Saudi forces, they’re never going to see the devastating consequences of the brutal weapons which they sell,” Smith added.



# U.S. has calculations against Turkey, Iran, Russia in Syria: Erdogan

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says the U.S. is now working against the interests of Turkey, Iran and Russia in northern Syria, where Washington has been backing anti-Damascus Kurdish militants, after the defeat of the Takfiri Daesh terrorists.

“If the United States says they are sending 5,000 trucks and 2,000 cargo planes of weapons for the fight against Daesh, we don’t believe this,” Erdogan told members of his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in parliament on Saturday. Washington had “calculations against Turkey, Iran and maybe Russia” in Syria, he said, renewing a call for U.S. troops to withdraw from the Syrian town of Manbij.

The U.S. has around 2,000 military personnel in northern Syria supporting the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which is an alliance of militias in northern and eastern Syria and largely dominated by the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG).

Turkey is wary of the presence of Kurdish militants close to its borders in Syria, and has been opposed to Washington’s efforts to train and arm them in the Arab country. The U.S. has said it has no plans to pull out troops stationed near the town of Manbij.

Ankara has been waging “Operation Olive Branch” against the Kurds in Syria’s Afrin region since January 20 in a bid to eliminate the Kurdish militants. Turks have said the offensive could extend to Manbij and beyond.

Accusing Washington of breaking past promises, Erdogan said the Americans “told us they will pull out of Manbij. They said they will not stay in Manbij... Why don’t you just go?”

“And then you tell us not to come to Manbij! We will come to Manbij to return it to its original owners,” he added.

In a show of anger at Turkey’s NATO ally, Erdogan asked



the United States what it was doing in Syria in the first place.

“You do not have a border, you are not a neighbor (of Syria),” he said. “What’s your business there? We have a 911-kilometer (566 miles) border.”

Erdogan also accused U.S. President Donald Trump and his predecessor Barack Obama of failing to tell the truth over U.S. support for the YPG.

“They told us many things but unfortunately they did not tell the truth,” Erdogan said. “Mr. Obama did not tell the

truth and now Mr. Trump is heading down the same path.”

Erdogan had earlier said the YPG is trying to establish a “terror corridor” on Turkey’s southern border, linking Syria’s northern city of Afrin with a large Kurdish-controlled area to the east. Senior authorities in Ankara have warned Washington that there could be a confrontation between Turkish and American troops in northern Syria if arms transfer to the Kurds was not stopped.

(Source: agencies)

## UN urges one-month humanitarian truce in Syria



The United Nations has called for a one-month ceasefire in Syria to facilitate the delivery humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands of civilians in dire need of help.

In a Tuesday statement, the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Ali al-Za’tari, and the world body’s representatives in the country sounded the alarm over the “extreme” humanitarian situation in several zones across the country, to which aid workers have no access.

“The United Nations humanitarian team in Syria warns of the dire consequences of the compounded humanitarian crisis in several parts of the country,” said the statement.

The UN aid officials further called “for an immediate cessation of hostilities lasting for at least one month throughout Syria.”

The measure, the statement added, would “enable the delivery of humanitarian aid and services, evacuation of the critically sick and wounded, and alleviation of people’s suffering, to the extent possible, wherever they are.”

The statement listed Afrin, Raqqah, Hasakah and Rukban regions as well Foua and Kefraya towns as the hot spots, where people are in need of relief assistance.

A myriad of foreign-backed militant groups have been wreaking havoc on Syria since early 2011. Many of those groups have been operating as proxies of the U.S. and its allies to topple the Damascus government.

In 2014, the U.S. mobilized scores of its allies and launched an aerial campaign under the guise of fighting Daesh, the most brutal of the outfits waging violence in Syria.

That campaign failed to achieve the declared objective and only lead to civilian

deaths and considerable damage to the country’s infrastructure.

The Syrian soil has also been the scene of rivalry between the U.S. and Turkey, which have been involved in their own unilateral military actions there.

Angered by U.S. support for the Kurdish militants at its doorstep, Turkey on January 20 launched a major operation against the Washington-backed forces there.

Damascus, backed by Iranian military advisors and Russian air power, has been reversing the gains made by the militant groups across Syria over the past years. The Syrian army managed late last year to rid Daesh of the territories it had captured.

Large numbers of people who were displaced by last year’s operations against Daesh in the Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr regions are still in urgent need of humanitarian relief.

The UN says it has a plan to reach 700,000 people with relief in the next two months if it can get the permission to proceed.

Besides the battleground, the Syrian government has been holding talks with armed opposition groups in Astana since January 2016, in a process mediated by Iran, Russia and Turkey, which act as the guarantors of a countrywide ceasefire in Syria. The talks have resulted in the creation of four de-escalation zones across Syria, which have significantly helped reduce the fighting there.

Lately, however, Takfiris have been restaging attacks in the northwestern province of Idlib, where one of the four-some zones lies.

(Source: Reuters)

## Yemen separatist leader visits UAE, Saudi Arabia amid Aden tensions



The leader of United Arab Emirates (UAE)-backed separatists in southern Yemen is to visit Abu Dhabi and then Riyadh following days of heavy fighting in Aden between his forces and the Saudi-sponsored militants loyal to the former Yemeni government.

London-based al-Araby al-Jadeed newspaper said on Monday that Aidarus al-Zubaidi, who leads the so-called Southern Transitional Council (STC), had left Yemen’s port city of Aden for Abu Dhabi.

The visits come after STC separatists turned against their allies and seized major parts of Aden from the militants serving the former Saudi-backed president of Yemen, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been leading a military campaign since 2015 with the common goal of crushing Yemen’s popular Houthi Ansarullah movement and reinstalling Hadi, who had resigned as Yemen’s president amid an internal conflict and fled to Riyadh earlier that year.

In the course of the campaign, the Saudi-led alliance managed to seize Aden from the Houthis and put it under the control of the ex-president’s officials. The Houthi movement has been running state affairs in the capital Sana’a besides defending the country against the Saudi-led coalition and pro-Hadi militants.

The recent fighting that broke out late last month in Aden among the separatists and the pro-Hadi militants laid bare a deep rift in the Saudi-led coalition’s ranks.

The UAE-trained STC first joined forces with the pro-Hadi militants against the Houthis during the Saudi war, but then protested what they called Hadi’s attempt to marginalize their role, renewing their

initial separatist demands and starting clashes with his forces.

Both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi scrambled to end the situation in Aden, sending a “top military and security delegation” to the site of the clashes, which left dozens of people dead and hundreds of others wounded.

The rift in the Saudi-led coalition came to light last month, when the self-proclaimed president ousted Zubaidi, whom he had chosen as the governor for Aden, and his state minister Hani bin Breik, over their ties with the UAE. Observers said at the time that the move signaled the existence of a widening rift between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi over their ambitions for Yemen.

Aden lies at the cross-section of multiple trade routes. The resulting commercial importance has prompted a historical struggle over the city’s control.

The Middle East Eye (MEE) news portal quoted Farea al-Muslimi, Yemen researcher at the London-based think tank Chatham House, as saying that the recent developments spelled “the end...of the uncomfortable political honeymoons of the Yemen war.”

“Among those honeymoons, according to analysts, is that of the UAE and Saudi Arabia around Hadi in particular,” the MEE said. “The Saudi-Emirati coalition has been pushing a narrative which is at odds with reality,” said Simon Henderson, director of [Persian] Gulf research at the Washington Institute, the MEE reported.

“The reality seems to be that the UAE has become exasperated with Hadi and is orchestrating its own plans for the south,” he added.

(Source: Press TV)

## Lebanese army: Israeli wall violates our sovereignty



The Lebanese army has censured an Israeli plan to build a wall along Lebanon’s southern border, saying the structure will be a violation of the country’s sovereignty.

On Monday, senior Lebanese officials and Israeli army officers held a meeting under the supervision of the UN peacekeepers (UNIFIL) at the Lebanese border town of Naqoura to discuss the contentious wall.

In a statement issued after the tripartite meeting, the army said “the Lebanese side reviewed the matter of the wall which the Israeli enemy intends to build ... confirming the position of the Lebanese government rejecting the construction of this wall as it violates Lebanese sovereignty.”

The Lebanese government says the wall passes through territory, which belongs to Lebanon but is located on the UN-designated Blue Line demarcating the regime’s withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000.

President Michel Aoun has said the wall would breach Lebanese territory at 13 different points, calling for “corrections” along the Blue Line.

In the meeting, the Lebanese side also rejected recent Israeli comments about Lebanon’s offshore energy exploration, the army statement said.

Israel’s minister of military affairs, Avigdor Lieberman, last week described as “very provocative” a Lebanese tender for projects in two of its 10 offshore blocks in the Mediterranean Sea. Tel Aviv, which claims sovereignty over Block 9, also urged international firms not to take part.

Lieberman’s remarks came a few days before February 9 when Beirut is set to officially sign contracts with three international firms, allowing exploration to start.

“The block lies entirely within Lebanon’s territorial and economic waters,” the Lebanese army said in its statement.

Aoun is scheduled to hold a meeting with Speaker Nabih Berri and Prime Minister Saad Hariri before noon Tuesday at the presidential palace of Baabda to discuss the situation amid rising Israeli threats against the Arab country.

Meanwhile, Lebanon’s resistance movement Hezbollah has vowed to defend the rights of the country in oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean region against any new Israeli aggression.

Hezbollah said Lieberman’s recent comments were “a new aggression,” warning that it would “decisively confront any assault on our oil and gas rights.”

(Source: Press TV)

## Top U.S. general warns of ‘nasty’ Korea conflict, stresses diplomacy

The U.S. military’s top officer warned Tuesday that any war with North Korea would be “nasty” and said America still hopes to find a peaceful solution to the ongoing crisis.

General Joe Dunford, who is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the Pentagon’s role is to bolster diplomatic efforts by providing a clear message about U.S. war fighting capabilities.

“Right now, the military dimension of the problem is reinforcing Secretary [of State Rex] Tillerson’s economic and diplomatic pressure campaign,” Dunford told reporters travelling with him after he visited U.S. Marines temporarily deployed to an Australian air force base in Darwin.

“His diplomatic efforts are underwritten by a credible military strength.”

Dunford stressed the U.S. seeks a peaceful outcome to the crisis over North Korea’s push to develop intercontinental ballistic missiles that have the capability of reaching the US mainland.

Still, he said, President Donald Trump has asked him and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis for a “full range” of military options.

Earlier, after having lunch with troops, Dunford responded to a marine’s question about how - in the event of a war with North Korea - the military would avoid the high casualty rates that were incurred during the Korean War of 1950-53.

“We’re obviously a different force than we were even 10 years ago,” Dunford said, referencing America’s space, cyber and missile-defense capabilities.

“But at the end of the day it will be a nasty war if we fight on the Korean Peninsula and it’s going to involve marines and soldiers taking ground, alongside obviously our allies and partners.”

“If you are a Marine, and frankly if you are anybody in uniform, if you wake up in the morning always believing that this is the last day that you will be at peace, you are going to be in the right place,” Dunford added, who was head of the Marine Corps before becoming chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

“The last thing you want to do when you are in uniform is to be complacent and to think, nah, we are never going to go to war.”

The U.S. Marines have been sending troops to Darwin since 2012 on a rotational basis to train with their Australian counterparts and show a regional presence.

Last year, 1,250 were deployed but that number is expected to increase in 2018.

(Source: AFP)

## ‘Two-state’ solution only way to resolve Israeli-Palestinian conflict: UN

United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres has emphasized that the so-called two-state solution is the sole way out of the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, warning that the “negative trends” unfolding in the region could endanger the bid.

“There is no Plan B. A two-state solution is the only way to achieve the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and secure a sustainable solution to the conflict,” Guterres told a meeting of a UN committee on Palestinian rights in New York on Monday.

He hailed efforts made by the international community to encourage a negotiated process to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and the UN support for the so-called two-state solution.

“The General Assembly has reaffirmed the two-state solution through the establishment of a Palestinian State as the only way to achieve stability, peace, prosperity and development in the region,” he added.

“Negative trends on the ground have the potential to create an irreversible one-state reality that is incompatible with realizing the legitimate national, historic and democratic aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians,” Guterres said, apparently referring to U.S. President Donald Trump’s hostile measures against Palestinians.

Last December, Trump declared that Washington was recog-

nizing Jerusalem al-Quds as the “capital” of Israel and planning to relocate the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the city.

The contentious move, which drew global warnings and condemnations, led President Mahmoud Abbas to formally declare that Palestinians would no longer accept the U.S. as a mediator to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as Washington is “completely biased” towards Tel Aviv.

In yet another hostile move, the Trump administration said in January that it would withhold \$65 million of a \$125 million aid installment to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

Guterres further said he was “extremely concerned that the latest shortfall in UNRWA’s funding will gravely impair the agency’s ability to deliver on its mandate and preserve critical services such as education and health care for Palestine Refugees.”

Trump’s first pro-Israel policy shift on the conflict took place in February 2017, when he dropped a two-decade old U.S. commitment to the establishment of a Palestinian state as part of the so-called two-state solution.

Guterres also censured Israel’s “illegal” settlement activities in the occupied lands, saying the construction and expansion of settler units “is a major obstacle to peace and it must be halted and reversed.”

The UN chief also raised alarm over the “dire” humanitarian

and economic situation in the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip.

Abbas, Johnson talk over phone

Separately on Monday, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas discussed recent political developments and the Middle East conflict over the phone.

During the conversation, Johnson affirmed the UK’s commitment to the so-called two-state solution, the Palestinian WAFA news agency reported.

Following the call, the top British diplomat took to Twitter to express his satisfaction with the conversation.

The Palestinian president, for his part, said that any new round of talks should be based on a multilateral international mechanism, international law and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds during the Six-Day War in 1967. It later annexed East Jerusalem al-Quds in a move not recognized by the international community.

Palestinians want the resolution of the conflict with Tel Aviv based on the so-called two-state solution along the pre-1967 boundaries.

However, the Israeli officials insist on maintaining the occupation of Palestinian territories.

(Source: agencies)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	97927.5
IFX	1086.44

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	46,700 rials
EUR	60,520 rials
GBP	67,550 rials
AED	13,250 rials

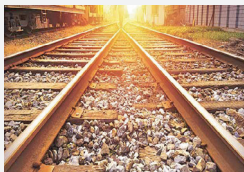
Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$66.83/b
WTI	\$63.26/b
OPEC Basket	\$67.05/b
Gold	\$1,335.65/oz
Silver	\$16.75/oz
Platinum	\$993.00/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Over 1400 railway projects to go operational in a year

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Some 1480 railway projects worth 80 trillion rials (about \$1.727 billion) will go on stream in the upcoming Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2018- March 21, 2019), IRNA reported on Tuesday quoting a railway official.

According to Maziar Yazdani, Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI)'s deputy for technical and infrastructure affairs, despite financial constraints, railway projects have always been among the government's priorities.



14,300km of roads under construction in Iran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Some 14,300 kilometers of roads are under construction in Iran, the managing director of Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company announced in a news conference on Tuesday. As IRNA quoted Kheirollah Khademi, some of these roads are to be completed in near future.

"More than 70,000 workers are constructing these roads," he said. "Construction of 41,000 kilometers of roads requires 1.4 quadrillion rials (about \$30.2 billion) funds, while the government can supply 50 trillion rials (about \$1.08 billion) and the private sector can provide 20 trillion rials (about \$432 million) of the said amount per year," he lamented, "construction of 41,000 kilometers of roads will take about 20 years in Iran".



Bulgaria suggests Iran-Europe credit line for agricultural trade

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN**— In a Tuesday meeting between Iranian and Bulgarian ambassadors in Tehran and head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), the ambassador suggested creation of a credit line between Iran and Europe to ease trade of agricultural products, the portal of TCCIMA reported.

During the meeting between Christo Polendakov, whose country has now the presidency of the Council of the EU, and Masoud Khansari at the place of TCCIMA, the two sides called for expansion of all-out bilateral ties between Tehran and Sofia and underscored the vitality of removing banking barriers in this regard.

Hedge funds pause oil buying as rally runs out of steam

Hedge fund managers have cut their bullish exposure to petroleum for the first time in six weeks as oil prices stalled and sentiment turned more cautious amid concerns about an increasingly crowded trade.

Fund managers cut their net long position in the six most important futures and options contracts linked to crude and fuels by 21 million barrels in the week to Jan. 30.

The reduction was small and comes after the net long position was increased by 258 million barrels over the previous five weeks and by 1,174 million barrels since the end of June.

Nonetheless it came after portfolio managers had built a record net long position in Brent, NYMEX and ICE WTI, U.S. gasoline, U.S. heating oil and European gasoil a week earlier.

Long positions had come to outnumber short ones by a record ratio of more than 11:1, fuelling concerns about lopsided positioning and the risk of a correction.

In the most recent week, fund managers cut their net long position in Brent (-7 million barrels) and West Texas Intermediate (-18 million barrels), according to records published by regulators and exchanges.

Changes in U.S. gasoline (+3 million barrels), U.S. heating oil (-2 million barrels) and European gasoil (+4 million barrels) were smaller and more mixed.

There is not enough data to determine whether the position reduction was merely a pause after an extraordinary bull market or the start of a more sustained pull back. (Source: Reuters)

Car production planned to grow 23-fold by 2026

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran plans to raise its car manufacturing capacity to 30 million vehicles per annum by the end of Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2026) from currently 1.3 million.

Of the mentioned figure some 30 percent is planned to be exported, Mehr quoted the head of the Industrial Development and Revolution Organization (IDRO) Mansour Moazami as

saying on Tuesday.

Iran manufactured 1.3 million cars in the past [Iranian calendar] year (ended on March 20, 2017).

The figure is hoped to reach 1.6 million by the end of the current calendar year (March 20, 2018), according to the previous Industry Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh.

The share of Iran's auto industry in the

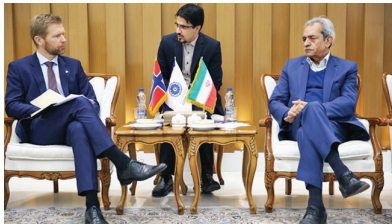
Norwegian companies eager for co-op with Iranian counterparts: envoy

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Norway's ambassador in Tehran said renowned Norwegian companies active in different areas are interested in cooperation with Iranian counterparts.

According to the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Lars Nordrum made the remarks in a meeting with ICCIMA's Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie in Tehran on Tuesday, ICCIMA portal reported.

Removing barriers in the way of banking relations and facilitation of visa issuance for businessmen were also among the topics which the officials discussed during the meeting.

Stressing the abundant of areas for mutual cooperation between the two countries, Shafeie noted that in addition to oil, gas and petrochemicals, the two countries can cooperate in technology



Norway's Ambassador in Tehran Lars Nordrum (L) held talks with the Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Gholam-Hossein Shafeie in Tehran on Tuesday.

transfer, mining, fisheries and aquaculture.

Nordrum for his part said although West-imposed sanctions have created challenges for European companies' activities in Iran, Norwegian companies are still eager to enter Iran's market.

Over \$550b wiped off cryptocurrencies since record high just under a month ago

Over half a trillion dollars of value has been wiped off the entire cryptocurrency market in just under a month, as the prices of popular digital coins plunge.

On January 7, the market capitalization or value of the entire cryptocurrency market hit an all-time high of \$835.69 billion, according to Coinmarketcap.com, a website that takes into account the prices of over 1,000 digital coins across different exchanges. In early trade on Tuesday, the value of the cryptocurrency market had plunged to \$278.53 billion, marking a more than \$557.1 billion drop since the

record high.

It comes as virtual coins across the board take a hammering. Bitcoin briefly dipped below \$6,000 for the first time since mid-November on Monday, according to data from CoinDesk. Bitcoin is still significantly higher on the year but down sharply since it recorded an all-time high of \$19,783.21 in December.

Bitcoin's market cap has fallen \$233.5 billion since that record high.

Ethereum meanwhile, which hit an all-time high of \$1,432.88 on January 13, traded around \$577 on Tuesday, marking

Global stocks plunge after Wall Street bloodbath

swinging wildly.

The market turmoil began early last week but has now intensified.

"Traders are getting nervous there is more to come," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at currency trading platform Axi-Trader.

Selling on global stock markets has ramped up because of expectations the U.S. Federal Reserve could increase interest rates more quickly than previously thought. Higher interest rates can weigh on companies' earnings and wreak havoc in bond markets.

The growing concerns about the pace of interest rate hikes came after U.S. jobs data



country's gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to rise by 70 percent in this year.

The government seeks to improve the quality as well as the quantity of the do-

Syria calls for establishing joint chamber of commerce with Iran

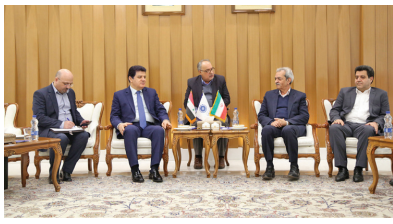
**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — During a meeting with the head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Syrian Ambassador to Iran Adnan Mahmoud expressing his country's willingness for establishment of Iran-Syria joint chamber of commerce.

In the meeting which was held in Tehran on Monday, the two sides discussed expansion of economic cooperation, ICCIMA portal reported.

Mahmoud further noted that economic cooperation with Iran is one of his country's top priorities adding that "Syria welcomes Iran's private sector".

The official also suggested holding a conference in Iran to present the two countries' trade opportunities.

Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, for his part, mentioned an official invitation to the



Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (2ndR) received Syrian Ambassador to Tehran Adnan Mahmoud (2ndL) in Tehran on Monday.

head of the Syrian chamber for traveling to Iran along with an trade delegation, and further welcomed the idea of holding a joint conference between Iran and Syria, saying, "Iranian businessmen need more information and knowledge about the Syrian market in order to work with their counterparts."

(Source: CNBC)

to "eliminate" the use of digital currencies in criminal activities, though India is a minor player in cryptocurrencies and the government apparently has yet to act.

Meanwhile, major banks in the U.S. and UK have moved to block people from using credit cards to buy cryptocurrencies.

Other worries are plaguing the digital currency market, particularly around a cryptocurrency called tether. Some experts have suggested that tether, which is pegged to the U.S. dollar, could be being created to prop up the bitcoin price.

(Source: CNNMoney)

were trading near record highs. That had led some experts to warn that markets were overdue for a correction.

The sell-off in Japanese stocks was exacerbated Tuesday as investors flocked to the yen, which is often viewed as a safe haven during periods of market panic, said Jingyi Pan, a strategist at stockbroker IG Group.

A stronger yen is bad news for profits at big Japanese exporters.

The Nikkei has been one of Asia's strongest performing indexes lately, but its plunge this week has now erased all of its gains for the year so far.

(Source: CNNMoney)

Will higher oil prices tempt OPEC and Russia to cheat?

By Tsvetana Paraskova

For more than a year, OPEC and its non-OPEC allies have been sticking to their commitment to curtail production in order to help the oil market rebalance. The cartel and friends' resolve and high overall compliance rate surprised many skeptics who had predicted a quick end to the deal, given OPEC's patchy track record of sticking to its pledges.

For a thirteenth consecutive month, OPEC and Russia complied with their commitments, and now analysts and investment banks agree that the production cuts have been depleting the global oil overhang at a rapid clip.

While the production cut pact has been a success, there has been growing speculation that the higher oil prices that the production cuts and declining inventories have inspired could unravel the deal, because OPEC and/or Russia could either start cheating or see rising U.S. supply as a threat to prices and market share.

In January, OPEC and Russia kept their commitments to the deal. The cartel increased its production by 20,000 bpd from December to 32.4 million bpd last month, a Bloomberg



News survey of analysts, oil companies, and ship-tracking data showed.

Russia, for its part, kept its January production at 10.95 million bpd — basically flat compared to December — as rising production at foreign firm-led projects compensated for small declines at the two major Russian oil producers, Rosneft and Lukoil.

OPEC's compliance with the cuts last month was 127 percent, according to the Bloomberg survey, while Russia's was close to 100 percent.

Compliance at OPEC was mostly boosted by the involuntary decline of production in Venezuela, whose oil production dropped by another 30,000 bpd to 1.67 million bpd last month. That was the lowest monthly produc-

tion since 1989, according to Bloomberg data.

Amid an economic crisis and a cash crunch, Venezuela's production has only one way to go — down — analysts say, and they don't expect production to start to recover anytime soon.

Last month, production in Saudi Arabia increased by 60,000 bpd to 10.01 million bpd, but still below the kingdom's quota under the deal, according to the Bloomberg survey. Iran booked the second-biggest increase in January, as higher production at oil fields west of the Karoun River boosted its total production by 30,000 bpd to 3.83 million bpd, slightly above its quota.

As for Russia, Dmitry Marinchenko, oil and gas director at Fitch Ratings in London, believes that Moscow is likely to keep its compliance rate close to 100 percent in 2018, "otherwise we may see a domino effect as other countries may also break the deal."

Still, Russian oil companies may become increasingly nervous about the deal preventing them from ramping up production, the expert noted. If oil prices continue to be well above \$60 and the global stockpiles continue to drop, Russian oil firms may see this as an informal sign that the production pact is nearing its end and ramp up drilling as soon as in

French manufacturers expect 4% rise in industrial investments for 2018

French manufacturing companies expect to increase their industrial investments by 4 percent compared to 2017, according to a quarterly survey published by the INSEE national statistics on Tuesday.

The survey marked a more upbeat outlook compared to the last quarterly survey, showing a rise of 4 percentage points from when it was last conducted

in October.

Official readings of business and consumer confidence have scaled multi-year peaks since the election of President Emmanuel Macron last May on the back of an agenda to reform the economy and help businesses.

Data published earlier this week also showed that the French private sector had



maintained a brisk pace of expansion at the start of 2018, with the services sector -led by hotels and restaurants - receiving more new business last month than at any time since May 2011.

However, some economists have questioned how long these positive trends can continue before they start losing steam.

(Source: Reuters)





Ω  
OMEGA

SEAMASTER  
AQUA TERRA

Available at:

  
TEHRAN WATCH  
SINCE 1901



## New U.S. nuke strategy a blow to progress made to denuclearize

The new U.S. nuclear strategy unveiled on Feb. 2 by the administration of President Donald Trump has splashed cold water on the world's hopes for a future without nuclear weapons.

The strategy pushes back the progress that has been made in nuclear disarmament and could pose a new, serious threat to the safety of the world.

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review by the Trump administration is a report that lays down guiding principles for U.S. nuclear policy for the next five to 10 years.

The new nuclear policy sharply veers from the course set by the previous administration of President Barack Obama in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review.

The new strategy has effectively scrapped the Obama administration's commitment to reduce the role and the number of nuclear arms.

On the contrary, the Trump administration has made clear its intention to expand the roles and capabilities of America's nuclear arsenal.

The report stresses the security threats posed by Russia, China and North Korea and argues that "global threat conditions have worsened markedly" since the last Nuclear Posture Review in 2010.

But the notion that national security can be maintained only by overwhelming nuclear firepower is hopelessly anachronistic.

The Cold War era, when the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in a dangerous and futile arms race, is already history.

The threat of nuclear arms has become far more complex and diversified and now include those related to international terrorist groups and cyberattacks.

If it keeps maintaining a massive stockpile of ready-to-use nuclear weapons, the United States will contribute to increasing the risks of accidental nuclear war due to human error and theft of nuclear material, exposing the entire world to the danger.

That is why a nonpartisan group of four elder U.S. statesmen, including former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former Defense Secretary William Perry, wrote a newspaper opinion piece in 2007 proposing steps toward a world free of nuclear weapons. Their call led to Obama's efforts to reduce the size and scope of the U.S. arsenal.

The Trump administration should learn from the long history of debate on the issue.

What is particularly worrisome about the report is the administration's plans to develop "low-yield" nuclear warheads to be mounted on submarine-launched ballistic missiles and cruise missiles. ➔13

**The threat of nuclear arms has become far more complex and diversified and now include those related to international terrorist groups and cyberattacks.**

# With countering migration in mind, Italy to deploy troops to North Africa

By Justin Salhani

The Italian parliament approved measures to increase the number of troops in North Africa earlier this month in an effort to combat migration and terrorism in the region.

After the approval Jan. 17, Italian officials said troops would focus on countering terrorism and ensuring security. Doubts, however, remain over the true motive, considering recent frantic efforts to prevent refugees and migrants from setting sail for Italian shores.

"It is clear that Italy's foreign policy priorities have shifted and managing migration flows from Africa through the Maghreb is now the most pressing issue," Riccardo Fabbiano, a senior Middle East and North Africa analyst with the Eurasia Group, told Al-Monitor. "While remaining loyal to its NATO commitments, Italy is trying to prioritize the issue of migration, which is already a central theme in the current electoral campaign."

Italy said it would remove 200 troops from Iraq and half its Afghanistan operation from 1,500 troops to 750 in order to increase its North Africa operation. An additional 30 troops will go to Libya, taking the total troop count to 400, while 60 new troops will go to Tunisia and 470 will go to Niger where they hope to combat human traffickers.

The deployment of Italian troops in Tunisia has been requested by the government there to help with training and advising the Tunisian military. Tunisia is still weary of militant attacks after three incidents in 2015-16: the Bardo Museum attack, the Sousse beach attack and the cross-border Ben Gardane attack.

Next door, in Libya, the current 370 Italian troops have been training the Libyan coast guard. Migration is a major electoral issue, and Italy is prepping for parliamentary elections on March 4. While the troop deployment has been advertised to help fight terrorism, the Italian motives seem to be intertwined with migration as well.

"Is there any clear distinction to be made between counterterrorism and migration? I don't think there truly is one," Jalel Harchaoui, a doctoral candidate in geopolitics at Paris 8 University and a frequent commentator on Libyan affairs, told Al-Monitor. "Both phenomena tend to come hand in hand with anarchy. Right now, minds are particularly



**It is clear that Italy's foreign policy priorities have shifted and managing migration flows from Africa through the Maghreb is now the most pressing issue," Riccardo Fabbiano, a senior Middle East and North Africa analyst said.**

focused on migration. But in 2015 and 2016, the focus was on Daesh [the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State] and terrorist groups in general. One thing is certain: If the overall security situation worsens in Libya, both banes will experience an uptick. That is the fear."

Over 100,000 refugees or migrants arrived in Italy in each of the last two years. Last year, the total was 119,130 while in 2016 the number was significantly higher at 181,436, according to The Guardian. The majority set sail from the Libyan coast after traveling through the Sahel. The Italian government has worked with and built relationships in recent years with both competing governments in Libya over trying to halt the large number of people from taking to the sea. Rome tends to favor the United Nations-backed government of Fayez al-Sarraj, based in Tripoli.

"Specifically on Libya, the marginal increase in the size of the mission is nothing new — this mission's aim is twofold: guarding a military hospital in Misrata and training the Libyan coast guard," Fabbiano said. "Nothing changes with this increase. What changes, though, is how this military presence should play a more effective role in stemming migration, thanks to the parallel missions in Niger and Tunisia."

In Libya, however, the increase of troops hasn't been received particularly well. The collective memory in Libya still recalls the Italian colonization that lasted from 1910 to 1947. When Italy deployed naval vessels off the Libyan shores in August last year, Libyans hit the streets, calling on the Government of National Accord (GNA) to step down. Posters circulated

of the Libyan resistance hero Omar al-Mukhtar, who battled Italian colonization in the 1920s.

Conspiracy theories are circulating, according to a field worker with an international nongovernmental organization working on the ground in Libya who wasn't cleared by the organization to speak to the media. There is a widely spread theory: Italy wants to reoccupy Libya, the source said, with local media presenting the topic from a negative perspective.

Internal politics in Libya may allow such rumors to spread, too. The GNA seems to be the favorite of Italy at the moment, but the Libyan National Army, which rules the eastern part of the country and is led by Gen. Khalifa Hifter, is increasingly in vogue with international rulers. The competing governments are locked in a chess match for power and legitimacy over Libya. Meanwhile, Libyan leaders have often had to walk a fine line between seeking international help and legitimacy and maintaining popular support on the domestic front.

"Italy has displayed a tendency to strike deals with the GNA in Tripoli and also local groups across the western half of Libya," Harchaoui said. "Hifter has a political incentive to criticize Rome's action in Libya."

But with the elections approaching, these policies could change based on the winner. Currently, Silvio Berlusconi's center right coalition — who supported the increase in troop deployment to the region — is thought to have the best chance at winning an outright majority or forming a successful parliamentary ruling bloc. The country's most popular single party, however, is the Five Star Movement. While the movement voted against the deployment — arguing it wouldn't allow the new government to set a foreign policy agenda of its own — they have also repeatedly voted against forming coalitions with other parties and are unlikely to receive enough votes to rule on their own.

"Nobody knows what Rome's new Libya policy will [be] after the elections," Harchaoui said. "And nobody knows what the migrant flow will look like when the winter season is over."

(Source: Al Monitor)

## A Glance at IMIDRO Measures Taken over Past Four Years and Current Year Programs

# IMIDRO Semi-Finished Projects Inaugurated in Current Year

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) inaugurated its projects in coal, pelletizing and steel manufacturing sectors. As a matter of fact, efforts taken at the unsparing support, cooperation and collaboration of private sector and with considering the policies notified in Article 44 of the Constitution in line with the materialization of objectives of resistance economy, which was taken over the past four years, are on the verge of producing positive results during 12th government.

Today, a major portion of these projects, which had remained "unfinished" in recent years, have either been inaugurated or are ready to be inaugurated. Processing projects in Sangan Mine Deposit, which were stagnant by 2013, have currently launched for the production capacity of 20-million tons of concentrate and iron ore conglomerate and created a city of mineral processing factories in steel chain of the country. As of the second half of 2013, 120, 48 and 26 percent of conglomerate, steel and sponge iron (Direct Reduction Iron, DRI) has been produced respectively.

With due observance to the said issue, these projects have generated new employment opportunities for 6,200 job-seeking people.

Given the above issue, a number of 28 projects, costing more than \$3,180 million, were inaugurated since July 2013 up to the end of Iranian month of Shahrivar 1396 (Sept. 23, 2017), based on which, direct and indirect employment have been generated for 4,657 and 6,260 people respectively.

It should be noted that other steel projects including Miyaneh, Shadegan and Neyriz steel companies were put into operation in this period.

Also, Opal Parsian Conglomerate Mfg. Company and National Development Conglomerate Company kicked off their activity officially.

Commissioning three factories in Miyaneh, Shadegan and Neyriz with domestically-produced method dubbed "PERED, Persian Reduction" is of the salient and influential events in 2017.

On the other hand, according to the report released by World Steel Association (WSA), Iran steel ingot production in 2017 hit 21.7 million tons, showing a considerable 21 percent growth.

The production capacity also stands at more than 31 million tons. (For the first time in the history, Iran's steel production volume exceeded 20 million tons at large.) Considering the acceleration of construction operation trend of projects and preparing them for commissioning, IMIDRO will complete construction operation of 34 projects by the yearend. In addition, the ground will be broken for the construction operation of 14 development projects.

The report put the value of projects which will be put into operation by the yearend at 3.8 billion dollars. The value of projects which will be put into operation stands at 4.5 billion dollars.

Of the most important projects envisioned by IMIDRO for being

	Current Capacity	Prediction of Capacity by Current Yearend	Prediction of Capacity by end of Next Iranian Year	Growth Percentage in Next Year than Current Year
Concentrate million tons	46.6	52	52	0%
Conglomerate million tons	42	48	58	21%
Sponge Iron (DRI) million tons	27.5	31	39	26%



inaugurated in the current year, it should be referred to the launch of projects such as pelletizing, concentrate production, sponge iron manufacturing plants and also provincial steel projects as well as electricity and road affairs (infrastructure) in special energy-consuming areas, access roads in the private sector mines, access road to the mines in Khaf Salami, Ghadir-Oxin Power Plant in the Persian Gulf region, etc. Of these projects, Sangan Pelletizing project in Khorasan Province and Opal of Parsian and provincial steel projects in Miyaneh, Shadegan and Neyriz were the most important projects.

According to the scheduled programs, sponge iron production plant in Sabzevar will be inaugurated.

Mehdiabad Zinc Concentrate Production Plant was one of the salient mineral projects of IMIDRO that will undertake the supply of raw materials for lead and zinc production plants in the country in very near future.

### ■ IMIDRO Exploration Performance

Execution of 250,000-km exploration program is of the basic measures taken by IMIDRO which has been put into operation since the beginning of 2014 in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade and Geological Survey of Iran (GSI). In this project, IMIDRO has covered more than 400 mineral areas in 21 provinces of the country.

It should be noted that IMIDRO conducted 31.6 thousand meters drilling operation in 2012, 44.8 thousand meters in 2013, 120.8 thousand meters in 2014, 113.5 thousand meters in 2015 and 70.5 thousand meter in 2016.

### ■ A Glance at IMIDRO Projects Finished in 11th Government "Hope and Prudence"

Hereunder are the projects that were put into operation in the 11th government:

The projects inaugurated by IMIDRO during the 11th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence" include as follows:

Venezuela Cement Production Plant, two condensing units in the provinces of East Azarbaijan and Kerman with the total production capacity of 310,000 tons, copper concentrate production plant, costing €175 million and 537 million toman and increasing production capacity of the country as much as 33 percent (33%), operating 200,000-ton Copper Refinery in Kerman Province, increasing production capacity in the country to 450,000 tons, equipping and operating Chel Kourh Copper Mine in Zahedan and expansion project of Sarcheshmeh Smelter Unit, inaugurating first phase of Sirjan-Samangan Power Plant, completion of construction operation of Phase One and engineering phase of Graphite Electrode Project, reactivation of a plan for the construction operation of Graphite Electrode Production Unit, providing report in Guinea Bauxite



of Azarshahr pilot in 2016, provision of a comprehensive copper plan report with the aim of increasing exploration activities and dividing tasks between governmental sectors for the discovery of new copper reserves and speeding up privatization process of copper industry as well as supporting the private sector, etc.

### ■ Performance of Research, Development of Technology and Training Department in IMIDRO

IMIDRO's Research, Development of Technology and Training Department implemented a number of 11 projects from 2013 to 2016 in the sector of applied researches in processing and extracting materials and strategic and vital elements required in advanced and emerging technologies, the most important of which can be referred to: identification of minerals and

elements required in the future technologies, study of methods of extracting them in the country, feasibility studies for processing and extracting soil rare elements, attaining technical knowhow and technology of production in cooperation with IT (Science and Technology) Park of University of Tehran and Minerals Processing Research Center of Iran.

### ■ IMIDRO's Cooperation Agreements and MoUs

In line with cooperating with universities and academic centers of the country, IMIDRO concluded separate agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Islamic Azad University (IAU) of West Branch, Islamic Azad University of Mashhad Branch, Iranian Mining Engineering Association, Iranian Mining Engineering Council, Malek Ashtar University of Technology, Tehran University, Sharif University of Technology, Iran Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) and also Materials and Energy Research Center.

### ■ IMIDRO's Cooperation Agreements and MoUs

In line with cooperating with universities and academic centers of the country, IMIDRO concluded separate agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Islamic Azad University (IAU) of West Branch, Islamic Azad University of Mashhad Branch, Iranian Mining Engineering Association, Iranian Mining Engineering Council, Malek Ashtar University of Technology, Tehran University, Sharif University of Technology, Iran Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) and also Materials and Energy Research Center.

### ■ 23 Training Courses

Training and education performance of the Organization in the reported years shows that it managed to organize 23 tutorial and training workshops in the field of introducing new technologies. In the same direction, the Organization invited leading foreign instructors to offer necessary training courses.

### ■ Allocation of Financial Resources

Over 766,334 million rials has been funded by the Organization and its



subsidiary units for conducting research and IT (information technology) projects. In addition, the Organization sponsored 82 conferences and seminars, 463 theses and treatise for the completion of studies, etc.

### ■ Policies Taken by IMIDRO and Subsidiary Units in Coming Year (1397)

The policies taken by IMIDRO for the next Iranian calendar year in 1397 (to start March 21, 2018) has been summarized in four sectors as follows:

- 1- Increasing competitive, financial, economic and investment capability,
- 2- Promoting and developing human resources,
- 3- Focusing on activities of electronic government and
- 4- Streamlining, clarifying and making process transparent, details of which have been envisioned in 16 paragraphs briefly.



# The security complex of Persian Gulf

**1 →** But the existence of a sum – zero game and the adoption of political realism approach has created the mind set that empowerment of any one these states will create potential threat against others in this security complex. This issue has created some kind of security dilemma in the region.

Even we can say that the dominant realist logic among Persian Gulf states is a kind of offensive realism in which the states are following their purpose of achieving to maximum power to fulfil their maximum security. It means, even defensive realist logic in which states don't adopt offensive approach and react in condition of feeling threat, this reaction also usually is in the level of balance and preventing the source of threat and is not dominant on the behavior of the Persian Gulf states.

Now, the level of security has been decreased because of the increase in militaristic power the Persian Gulf States. In such condition, there is the probability of war between Iran with Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia against UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt. So, how could we design a kind of security framework which could prevent war in short term and will lead to establish regional coordination in the region for long term? In fact, dialogue between the states of the region and passing into some level that fulfils the security of the region by the Persian Gulf states and non-intervention. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs declared Iran's will to end the current crisis and challenges of the region on June 13 during his news conference in Oslo.

He emphasized on significance of having dialogue and finding needed solutions to resolve the current regional challenges and issues. Zarif emphasized on having a comprehensive sustainable mechanism for consultation, negotiation and resolving challenges as the maximum significant issue in the region and declared this fact that idea of just negotiating on the current issue between the neighbors is not enough. The Iranian FM pointed to Helsinki Agreement (1975) as an instance for such sustainable agreement. According to Zarif, Helsinki Agreement was succeeded to decrease amount of existing challenges and disagreement between the sides on the era of cold war.

In fact, he talked about a security framework that could be able to ensure the regional security for long-term. But how could such mechanism be created? To answers this question, it is necessary to take a look at the existing security mechanisms in the region. Many of these mechanisms like GCC which was created following Iran – Iraq war on 1981 were not successful in long term. Because it could not perform a militaristic alliance by ink of a common defensive treaty between the members. We can point to the current challenges between Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Qatar and the disability of GCC and its manifest to resolve the happened challenges between the members.

ASEAN is another pattern for coordination

between the Persian Gulf states. But we have to consider this fact that the mentioned treaty has not been successful in achievement of development in security issues. One of the reasons on this issues backs to existing demographic heterogeneity among the members of this union. In the other hand, this organization has focused on economic issue since 1976 and Bali conference.

OSCE is another recommended pattern to use in Persian Gulf region. We have to mind that the focus of this pattern also is on state security and the external threat against it.

In the other hand this model is inattentive to internal changes and human security or political changes while according to the Arab Sprit issues and consequences, the Arab states just could talk about a comprehensive security framework if they focus on the issue of Human Security.

One of the other patterns for security framework of the Persian Gulf is CESE. This model is a useful and suitable one for security coordination between the Persian Gulf states.

In fact, the Helsinki Treaty (1975) led to establish of CESE and then, OSCE in its next stage. Helsinki Treaty was the beginner for a process of gathering NATO and Warsaw member states beside of non-aligned European states in one place in order to talk about their worries without any precondition.

OSCE which was created on the base of respect to sovereignty, non-use of force, respect to the political borders and territorial integrity, peaceful resolving challenges and non-intervention in each other internal affairs prepared this ability for the member states to seat around a table and talk about their security concerns to each other.

We have to mention that the idea of hegemonic security by a power (domestic or foreign) under the goal of having control and ordering a region has been proposed since the era of colonialism in the region and also the modern idea of collective security between the independent states of the region is a new subject which has been appeared in the political literature of the region.

The Persian Gulf region needs architecture of a comprehensive and extensive order by non-participation of the infra-regional powers in such order. Also the security structure of such security order has to be based on the cooperation of all member states of the region.

That's why decision making in mega scale in security coordination has to be attended. If we supposed to take the pattern of CSCE, it is necessary to hold some meetings with security agenda and all sides can declare their security, threat concerns and recommend their solutions to decrease such threats. All the sides could create special committees to negotiate with each other on the probable solutions.

Finally, some actions have to be performed by one side or all, to build confidence symmetric or non-symmetric. The member states could use these committees to resolve their differences and decrease of challenges or crisis. In the final stage, when they could achieve mutual confidences



**The Persian Gulf region needs architecture of a comprehensive and extensive order by non-participation of the infra-regional powers in such order. Also the security structure of such security order has to be based on the cooperation of all member states of the region.**

between the members, then could ink memorandums relating arm control. This helps security and settlement in the region fundamentally.

The consequence of this action could ends to creation of a temporary or permanent organization which puts clear or by case agendas in their program.

In this framework, members have to achieve this concept that no issue or problem is resolvable by war, and nobody is allowed to interfere in the other one's domestic affairs. The mentioned security framework has to be based on Barry Buzan's "security complex" model and its concerns has to be focused on the security issues of the Persian Gulf and the members are not allowed to use this mechanism for the non-related security issues to the Persian Gulf.

The mentioned framework has to be inclusive consisting Iran, Iraq and the GCC member states. It is clear that any other framework which separate one or some of these states has not been successful. The experience of Damascus Decla-

ration (6+2 Treaty) and GCC have demonstrated this fact that achievement of a comprehensive security framework in the Persian Gulf is just possible if all the member states in this region accept it. It is very idealistic view that we ask all US regional allies in the region to stop their security and militaristic relations with Washington. This issue will be right just building confidence is enough and there has to be no regional threat.

Having a similar pattern like CSCE in the Persian Gulf is not a threat but such designation will be a great way for having a safe Persian gulf if all the sides accept it.

This order has to call war illegitimate – like Karl Deutsch's "Pluralistic Security Community" theory which contains various state with ruling governments but no one use war in its relations and there is no place even for probable war in their relations.

There is some hope that dialogue between the states in the region will develop to a level that fulfils the security of the region by the Persian

Gulf states and secures the non-intervention of foreign powers. In his news conference on June 13 in Oslo, Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs declared Iran's will to end the current crisis and challenge the region. He emphasized the significance of having dialogue and finding needed solutions to resolve the current regional challenges and issues. Zarif emphasized that having a comprehensive sustainable mechanism for consultation, negotiation and resolving challenges as the maximum significant issue in the region and declared this fact that idea of just negotiating on the current issue between the neighbors is not enough. The Iranian FM pointed to the Helsinki Agreement (1975) as an instance for such sustainable agreement. According to Zarif, the Helsinki Agreement has succeeded to decrease amount of existing challenges and disagreement between the sides on the era of cold war.

*This article was originally published on the Modern Diplomacy website.*

## Qatar crisis has affected Saudi-Turkish relationship: Georgetown Uni. prof.

By Fateme Mohammadi

**TEHRAN** — According to a professor of political science at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., the United States lame attempts to distance Iran from the Persian Gulf states is falling through following the Qatar crisis.

“The United States' main concern is that Qatar-Persian Gulf crisis and its repercussions are weakening its policy of Iran's isolation by splitting the [P] GCC states,” says Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter in her recent interview with the Tehran Times.

Professor Hunter, who has also taught courses at George Mason University, and Washington College, believes that the crisis in Doha has also left traces in the Saudis relationship with Turkey.

“The Qatar issue has also created tensions in Saudi-Turkish relations that America finds harmful. Thus it wants the dispute settled so that all PGCC states turn their attention to Iran.”

Following is the complete text the interview:

■ A summit is scheduled in May in the US where the Emir of Qatar, crown prince of Saudi Arabia and crown prince of the UAE are going to meet over the Qatar crisis. Can the conference bring solution to the disputes between the Persian Gulf Arab states and Qatar?

A: The mere arranging of a summit meeting, does not mean the resolution of Qatar's problems with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Saudi Arabia and the UAE's problems with Qatar have many sources. A very important factor is Qatar's desire to pursue its own independent foreign policy that, at times, may be different with those of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Qatar also does not want to play second fiddle to Saudi Arabia and refuses to be dominated by it. This means that for the summit to be successful, Saudi Arabia and the UAE should make some compromises and allow Qatar some room to act independently form their wishes. However, the U.S. participation might enable the two sides to make the necessary compromises. The question is which side will make the most compromise. This would largely depend on America. If it continues to unconditionally support Saudi Arabia, it would make it difficult for Qatar. Bu by the same token, America might force Qatar to accept Saudi conditions.

■ U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said that the aftermath of the crisis in the Persian Gulf region is not only limited to the Arab countries but its ripple effect will be also felt in the United States. What kind of losses is the United States anxious about?

A: The United States' main concern is that Qatar crisis and its repercussions are weakening its policy of Iran's isolation by splitting the [P] GCC states. The Qatar issue has also created tensions in Saudi -Turkish relations that America finds harmful.



Thus it wants the dispute settled so that all [P] GCC states turn their attention to Iran.

■ Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman Al Thani has said that Qatar is ready to attend the summit. However, he argued that Doha is not willing to accept the conditions put down by the Saudis and also demanded resolving of the crisis on the basis of equal footing between the participating states. Can we see an end to the Qatar crisis?


A: Qatar cannot refuse an invitation from the United States. Therefore, it will attend the summit. Whether it will be able to achieve some of its goals, including a promise that it will be treated with more respect by the Saudis and the Emiratis is hard to predict. A lot would depend on American attitude. Would America be willing to pressure Riyadh and Abu Dhabi to moderate their position on Qatar? In view of the fact that America is counting on Saudi Arabia to help it resolve some Middle East issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is unlikely that it would pressure it too much in this regard. More likely, The U.S. will try to convince Qatar to be more flexible.

■ Of the 13 terms and conditions set up by Saudi Arabia and its allies for Qatar, which ones may Qatar have to accept?


A: In practice, Qatar has already accepted some of these conditions, such as stopping help to terrorists, which mean the Muslim Brotherhood and some groups in Syria. I think, most pressure will be brought on Qatar to downgrade its relations with Iran, and align its policies in the region with those of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Issues such as the closure of Al Jazeera are secondary, although the Saudis will demand that the network should not air any anti-Saudi items.

In the final analysis, the success of the summit will depend on the skill of American diplomacy and its willingness to pressure both sides rather than side with Saudi Arabia.

Second Announcement



N.I.O.C  
1396.5215



National Iranian  
Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender (One Publish-Seconded Publish)

One Stage (Compressive)

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE	DESCRIPTION	Tenders Portal Reg. No. On <a href="http://iets.mporg.ir">http://iets.mporg.ir</a>	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial	(Rial)				
7,565	327,600,000	6,552,000,000	Bottom Hole Sampler for Slick Line Operation	3,150,149	Indent No: 43-22-9403848010 TenderNo.: CGP/25-96/005	1

Brief discription of subject:

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

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

B) Preparation of tender documents:  
Purchasing of documents:  
In order to receive the tender documents, **510,000 Rials** should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.  
Reciving of documents:  
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum 10 days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Sector Tenders, Foreign Procurement of Capital Goods dept., end of the workshop No. 8, Karoon Industrial Area, Ahwaz, IRAN .  
Tel No.: 061-34142387 or Room #431, coordination office of NIDC, NIOC No. 8 center Building, Yaghma alley, Jomhoori St., Tehran, IRAN, Tel No.: 021-66700249 .  
Notice:  
Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurment department in due date will be known as tenderer from tender committee.

C) Delivery of call quality evaluating and envelops suggestions:  
Tenderers shall submit the completed documents including qualificaion worksheets in form of software in CD/DVD and documentary along with envelopes Tender Guarantee (A) and technical (B) and financial (C) offers within 30 days from last day of document received deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1th floor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel No.: 061-34148205-6

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

More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR  
NIDC Telegram Channal: @nide\_pr  
Foreign Procurement Dept  
National Iranian Drilling Company

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۱۳۹۶/۱۱/۱۷ نوبت دوم ۱۳۹۶/۱۱/۱۸



# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

## Apartment

Apt in Darakeh  
95 sq.m, 1 Bdr., fully furn parking,  
**\$1500**

**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in Elahieh  
2<sup>th</sup> floor, 260 sq.m, 4 Bdrs.  
fully furn, lobby, spj, gym diplo  
matic, 2<sup>th</sup> floor **\$4500**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

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

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

Apt in a Garden Tower in Zafarani  
6<sup>th</sup> floor, 189 sq.m, furn  
2 master room with 1 Bdr  
2 kg, spj, good light lobby man,  
cctv camera servant **\$4500**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

## Villa

Villa in Valiasr-Park way  
triplex villa, 500 sq.m built up 600  
sq.m land, 5 Bdrs., modern  
renovated, barbeque, garden  
servant quarter, luxury furn  
outdoor pool, cozy & beautiful  
**\$12000**

**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Duplex Villa in Velenjak  
1100 sq.m built up, 1300 sq.m land,  
9 Bdrs., renovated, nice garden,  
semi furn, outdoor pool nice  
garden, 2 big balconies  
nice & cozy place storage servant  
quarter, 2 side entrances, **\$15000**  
**Suitable for Embassy & Company**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Villa in Shahrak Qarb  
800 sq.m Built up, 5 Bdrs. duplex,  
renovated, semi furn nice & cozy,  
garden pool, parking  
**Suitable for Residency or Embassy**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Villa in Zafarani  
600 sq.m, 5 Bdrs., fully furn reno  
vated, outdoor pool, **\$8000**  
**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 09128103205"  
Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

**Hot Line: 28141**  
**info@parsdiplomatic.com**  
**www.parsdiplomatic.com**

## Building & Office

Whole Building in Mahmoodieh  
12 units, each unit 4 Bdrs., each  
unit 260 sq.m, unfurn, lobby, pkg  
**\$50000 negotiable Suitable for  
Residency & foreign Company**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Office in Zafarani  
4<sup>th</sup> floor, 175 sq.m, almost new  
full of foreign companies  
lobby, parking  
**Price per each sq \$40**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Office in Shariati  
130 sq.m, near to Pole Roomi  
parking, full of foreign companies  
**\$3500**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Whole Building in the best location  
in North of Tehran  
2 block, each block 5 Apts, totally  
10 Apts, 35 rooms, lobby  
too many parking, perfect quality  
roof garden, outdoor pool  
**Suitable for  
Embassy, Residency & Companies**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Nice Office in Jordan  
350 sq.m, renovated, full of foreign  
companies, lobby, pkg, **\$10000**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

## Ideal Offers

Special Offer in Velenjak  
apt in a modern garden tower 140  
sq.m, 2 Bdrs., luxury furn perfect  
light & view, spj  
parking, 24/7 security  
lobby man, **\$2500**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

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

Apt in Elahieh  
just 5 floors, each floor one apt, 2<sup>th</sup>  
floor, 270 sq.m  
4 Bdrs., fully furn, lobby  
pkg, spj, nice balcony **\$4200**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in Jordan  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, 120 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.  
fully furn, lobby, pkg diplomatic,  
**\$1500**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in Qeytarieh  
4<sup>th</sup> floor 120 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.  
fully furn, parking  
near to Qeytarieh Park **\$1500**  
**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 سروس، بالاترین رضایت

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

مالکین محترم

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



**TEHRANTIMES**  
Iran's Leading International Daily

Advertising Dept: times1979@gmail.com

Advertising Dept:

times1979@gmail.com

**430 51 450**

**430 51 405**

**PARSIAN Real Estate**

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

**Farmanieh**  
200sq.m, 3bdrs, F.F  
(\$2600)

**Darrous (\$2200)**  
3bdrs, & balcony

**Elahieh Villa**  
1400sq.m, 5bdrs, F.F  
(\$8000)

**Kamranieh (\$3400)** 3bdrs, 200sq.m, S/p, S, J, balcony, & F.F

**Mahmoodieh (\$2500)** 2bdrs, 150sq.m, S/p, S, J, balcony, & F.F

**Beheshti office (\$35 per sq.m)** 700sq.m, 2storey, & pkg lots

**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**

**For rent**

Two bedrooms  
furnished  
apartment

**0912 210 1160**

**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

**PORSALEH HOUSING**

**For rent in Elahiyeh**  
120 sqm,  
2 bdrms, European  
taste, Superb material,  
pics available  
**09128357277**  
English spoken agent

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

**Apt. in Elahieh**  
250 sq.m, brand news,  
full of lights, full facilities,  
green yard, terrae,  
high security

**Ehsan 0912 4388634**  
Tel: (021) 22022920

**IraniaHOME**  
Real Estate

**SH.LAVASANI**  
**09123103526**  
**Tel: 88888007**  
**Fax: 88675936**  
**www.iraniahome.com**  
Email: info@iraniahome.com

مالکین محترم: ویلا و آپارتمان مبله شما  
را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها نیازمندیم

**AP: 1 to 4 rs, fom 1500\$**  
**Villa : 3 to 7 rs, from 5500\$**  
Building and offices are available

**TEHRAN TIMES**  
Iran's Leading International Daily

**Advertising Dept**

**Tel: 021 - 430 51 450**  
times1979@gmail.com

**maharaja**  
Indian Restaurant

**FIRST INDIAN RESTAURANT  
IN IRAN**

**PRIVATE PARKING LOT**

Jahan Hotel (Exelsior) - Rahimzade Alley - Taleqani  
Crossroads - Valiasr St. Tel: **66476855**

**REGISTRATION**  
of  
**Company, Branch,  
Representative, Trademark**  
in shortest time & with free consultation  
Applying for Tax File & Sealing of the Books  
Applying for Commercial Card  
**Don't hesitate to call us : (+98) (21) 26 20 88 73**



# Washington seeking revenge for Pahlavi regime’s overthrow: U.S. analyst

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — An American political commentator said the U.S. government is still seeking to harm the Islamic Republic of Iran in revenge for the overthrow of the “puppet regime” of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last monarch of Iran, back in 1979.

“Historically, the United States has wanted to punish Iran for deposing its puppet and creating the humiliation of the hostage crisis. That led to using Saddam Hussein as the U.S. proxy in his eight-year long war with Iran,” E. Michael Jones, a political analyst in the U.S. state of Indiana, told the Tasnim News Agency on the occasion of the 39th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which put an end to the ruling of the U.S.-backed Pahlavi regime in Iran.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■Iranians have started Ten-Day Dawn ceremonies across the country, marking the 39th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which put an end to the ruling of the U.S.-backed Pahlavi regime in Iran. Since the victory of the Islamic revolution, the U.S. and its allies have been seeking to achieve his goal of regime change in Iran. What’s behind Washington’s regime change policy towards Iran?

A: Historically, the United States has wanted to punish Iran for deposing its puppet and creating the humiliation of the



hostage crisis. That led to using Saddam Hussein as the U.S. proxy in his eight-year long war with Iran. More recently, Donald Trump has been using Iran as a whipping boy to curry favor with the Israel Lobby because he needs the Jews on his side to thwart the Deep State’s efforts to destroy his presidency.

■In his State of the Union address, U.S. President Donald Trump repeated meddlesome remarks against the internal affairs

of the Islamic Republic of Iran, voicing his support for the rioters who in late December 2017, attempted to create chaos in some Iranian cities. He said, “America stands with the people of Iran in their courageous struggle for freedom”. What’s your take on his anti-Iran remarks?

A: Again, Trump is trying to curry favor with the Israel Lobby. America’s intelligence agencies were also quick to claim credit—if for no other reason than to justify their inflated

budgets—but these riots differed from the CIA sponsored riots of 2009. There was a large measure of domestic discontent at the root of the 2017 riots.

■As you know, Washington has set up a working to “fix” the JCPOA. In his maiden speech for national unity, Trump reiterated previous accusations regarding “fundamental flaws” in the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers, once again denouncing the deal as “terrible.” What is your take on this?

A: As we Americans say, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” The JCPOA ain’t broke, and so no one -- not Iran or any of the other co-signers -- should go along with the idea that it needs fixing. If he insists on pulling out of the agreement, Sigmar Gabriel, Germany’s foreign minister, warned that “the end of the world” would follow. Well, maybe not the end of the world, but Trump may bring about the end of NATO if he insists on having his way here. Tillerson’s stupidity in insisting on keeping American troops in Syria after the Americans lost the war there has led to the brink of war with NATO member Turkey. One more shock like that may bring about the end of NATO. Once again Trump’s irrational behavior toward Iran has put the U.S. at odds with her allies in Europe. This is all because of his rabidly pro-Israel foreign policy.

## Destroying Yemen: It’s time to stop Saudi mayhem

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — The effects of the Saudi-led war and blockade are having a dramatic impact on humanitarian situation and health care in different parts of Yemen.

According to international aid groups, “medicines can’t be brought in, so patient care is falling apart. Fuel shortages mean equipment doesn’t work. It’s a terrible downward spiral that puts thousands of lives at risk.” The humanitarian situation is nothing short of catastrophic. The world needs to wake up to what is going on. Yemen is crumbling. As a matter of urgency, there must be free movement of goods into and across the country. Deliveries of food, water and medicine should be facilitated. Minds need to be focused to find a political solution - and quickly. Simply put, the Saudis don’t let this happen.

Nevertheless, the need for greater public awareness only increases as the unnecessary conflict deepens and expands to new areas. While the tragedy is reflected in much of the country’s new reality, another worrisome consequence grips the young children of Yemen. Some are coerced into fighting; others are either killed in airstrikes or driven by social, economic, political or other motives to take up guns. Sometimes it is a complex combination of all these, but the end result is the same in any case: Children are dying.

The horror stories are easy to find in most parts of the country, where families, many of them displaced, can barely cope with the astronomical prices for basic amenities like food and fresh water, and the long queues to purchase a few liters of fuel, if they are lucky.

If humanitarian relief doesn’t reach these families soon, the tragic stories will have many tellers and many more takers, but very few actors remaining to play their parts. For today, Yemen’s children stand scarred but resolute. They wait wearily in their dilapidated neighborhoods, hoping to emerge from the rubble and return to their schools once again – once the U.S.-backed, Saudi-led war ends.

As is, the war has created a humanitarian and political catastrophe. Since Saudi Arabia invaded the country in March 2015, the conflict has spiraled into an open, multiplayer regional war that has killed more than 17,000 people. For long stretches, Yemen’s seaports have been blockaded, threatening the food supply of an estimated half of the population of 24 million. Meanwhile, the number of displaced has lurched upward to several millions.

The conflict marks yet another unfortunate escalation in the region that will exacerbate security problems and political divisions. This time around, Arab governments and the United States should do everything they can to end



their airstrikes before Yemen becomes another intractable killing field. Now, the United States and its allies have the opportunity to learn from recent missteps in Iraq and Syria, stop backing the Saudis, and take advantage of the halting negotiations that opened recently between the warring parties.

The next few months offer a narrow window to prioritize diplomacy over military action in a bid to shift worsening dynamics across the Middle East. Regional governments and multilateral organizations ought to take every conceivable diplomatic step available today to address the crisis. Otherwise, it could quickly turn into another Syria, an intractable, grinding conflict that destroys one nation, while implicating a raft of others in a conflict that has no good possible outcomes.

U.S. support has emboldened the Saudi-led coalition in the conflict, and almost all members are already pursuing military options, including the UAE. While Yemen’s resistance factions fight the Saudi-led invaders, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIL have been entirely spared foreign military strikes and are enjoying renewed latitude to operate.

The crisis poses many dangers. The most obvious lies in Yemen itself, where starvation has become endemic and an avoidable escalation of war could lead to a mass

humanitarian tragedy. Security blowback is an equally intense strategic concern. AQAP has been one of the most active groups plotting international terrorist attacks, including against the border regions. The U.S.-backed Saudi airstrikes and now the collapse of any central state authority, directly empower the terrorist groups and increase the threat to the entire region.

The war also has clear ramifications for its direct neighbors. Since March 2015, Saudi Arabia, acting out of a foreign policy that seeks expanding influence, has embarked on a coalition air war that has no discernible end game. Developments in Yemen are indeed linked to Saudi efforts to deepen their presence in the poorest country in the region. Critics paint the Saudi invasion as impulsive and slipshod and point out that Riyadh could not persuade the UN Security Council to endorse its illegality, let alone continue the war without the much-needed U.S. support.

Doubtless, the U.S.-backed, Saudi-made humanitarian crisis in Yemen has strained an already bad security climate. The current historical moment offers an opportunity for the United Nations and the international civil society to deploy diplomatic influence in a concerted and sustained manner. They are in the know that now is the time to force the Saudis to end their protracted war on Yemen and allow its people to determine their own future.

## German politics is tilting towards federalism

By Wolfgang Munchau

There is something in me that would prefer the members of Germany’s Social Democratic party to vote against a grand coalition with Angela Merkel’s Centre-right Christian Democrats. A permanent coalition would end up strengthening the hard left and the hard right. We know that in a democracy, governments tend to produce opposing forces of equal or greater strength, given enough time. This would be Germany’s third grand coalition in 12 years. Better to end this sooner than later. But there is also something in me that says that this particular coalition might actually do something useful. The chapter in the preliminary agreement on Europe is astonishing. The CDU and SPD accept the principle of a fiscal union for macroeconomic stabilization, and transforming the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), the rescue fund, into an institution of the EU. What genuinely surprised me was the initially muted response from the usual suspects on the right. The Eurosceptic backbenchers of the CDU and their Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union, were unusually quiet. So were the economic commentators in the media. My only explanation is that they either did not read the section, or did not understand it. The silence ended abruptly last week with an article by Otmar Issing in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Issing, a former member of the European Central Bank’s executive committee, rightly recognized the importance



of the EU section in the agreement. As an economic conservative he was appalled by the ease with which Germany raised the white flag in the eurozone debate. Banking union, fiscal union, transfer systems — it could all happen very soon. It is what the conservative, ordo-liberal German establishment always fought against. I personally do not agree with their world view, but they are right that the preliminary coalition agreement matters. There is also something in me that says that this particular coalition might actually do something useful. The chapter in the preliminary agreement on Europe is astonishing. This course of events will not go unchallenged. For starters, the SPD membership might vote against the coalition agreement. The Europe section matters more to Martin Schulz than to the average party member. The SPD leader omitted to campaign on this

issue in last year’s election campaign. He has lost much of his authority since he left the job of president of the European Parliament to enter German politics a year ago. His supporters are becoming weary of his broken promises, such as his pledge never to serve under Merkel and his promise not to enter a grand coalition as a junior member. The SPD’s leadership and the outside world are too complacent about the upcoming vote on the coalition. Referendums in parliamentary democracies are inherently unpredictable. With this vote, the party gives its members an opportunity they have not had before. At a single stroke, they can get rid of both their own leader and Merkel. For some, this is a temptation hard to resist. Another source of obstruction for eurozone reform is the rise of opposition inside the CDU. Issing’s article has stirred up a debate in the party’s

Bundestag group as MPs reported that the grassroots are particularly unhappy about the section on the ESM. Merkel pointed out that the Bundestag will retain its veto right on any ESM programs even if the rescue fund were to become a European institution. She said the ECB is also rooted in EU law, yet independent. Her response is both true and misleading. Anchoring the ESM in EU law will not change the national veto right over programs that are funded out of the ESM’s existing facilities. But it opens up new funding channels and decision-making procedures in the future. One has to look at the proposed shift in the legal basis in combination with the plans for a fiscal union. If a newly created fiscal capacity were to backstop the ESM in the future, then surely national governments would no longer have a veto right? It would not be their money any longer. Issing and other conservatives see the measures proposed by the CDU/CSU and the SPD as a slippery slope towards a regime no longer based on fiscal and financial sovereignty, rooted at the national level, but towards mutual governance. That’s what the debate on the eurozone was always about. It is a variant of the old conflict between federalism and inter-governmentalism. On the specific issue of eurozone governance, German politics is tilting the balance of opinion in favor of the federalist view. For that, and that alone, I would probably buy into the grand coalition, but perhaps not for a full term.

(Source: FT)

## Trump’s squeeze on immigrants is not about security

By Eleanor Acer

In his State of the Union speech, President Donald Trump reiterated his opposition to a “clean” Dreamers bill — one that protects young immigrants brought to this country as children without including other changes to immigration law that are on the president’s immigration wish-list.

He will support legislation, he said, only if it includes provisions that would supposedly protect Americans. The primary danger to Americans? People fleeing violence, persecution, and other hardships in their home countries.

In other words, the people welcomed by Emma Lazarus’s words on the base of the Statue of Liberty are now — in the president’s narrative — a threat to U.S. security.

He described his list of demands as a “down the middle compromise.” But this was the same list that his administration and their anti-immigrant allies in Congress have been peddling for a while now — dressed up, to an even greater extent, in the language of national security.

On his list of demands — one of his plan’s four “pillars” — are changes that would “fully secure the border.” But border apprehensions are at record-low levels, so what are these demands really about?

■ Trump attacks U.S. laws

His “border security” list includes a barrage of attacks on U.S. laws that protect refugees and vulnerable children. The primary victims would be families and children fleeing the Northern Triangle of Central America, where deadly violence has triggered a regional refugee crisis.

Guatemalan immigrants deported from the United States arrive on an ICE deportation flight on February 9, 2017 in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The charter jet, carrying 135 deportees, arrived from Texas, where U.S. border agents catch the largest number undocumented immigrants crossing into the United States, many of them from Central America. U.S. President Donald Trump has pledged to vastly increase the number of deportations.

The president repeated his administration’s talking points about closing “loopholes” allegedly “exploited by criminals and terrorists to enter our country.” But his “border security” demands would, in reality, prevent people seeking refugee protection from even applying for asylum.

U.S. law and treaty commitments — including the Refugee Convention and Protocol — prohibit the United States from sending refugees back to persecution and require a fair assessment of asylum eligibility before this country turns them away. Those laws and treaties already include safeguards that exclude people who pose a threat to the country.

The president also pledged to end the “dangerous” practice of “catch and release.” What he actually means is that he wants to keep asylum seekers, children, and other immigrants in jails and detention facilities for even longer.

The Trump administration has already escalated its use of immigration detention in an effort to punish those seeking U.S. refugee protection and deter others from doing so, as Human Rights First explained in a report issued last fall. The president wants Congress to remove the few safeguards that prevent immigration agencies from holding children and families in detention facilities for unduly prolonged, periods.

Are you seeing a pattern? Steps that Trump claims target dangerous people would, in fact, only hurt the most vulnerable.

This is also true also when it comes to his professed desire to protect American families from the MS-13 gang. His proposals are aimed at blocking the victims of MS-13 and other violent gangs from U.S. refugee protection.

At Human Rights First, our pro bono lawyers represent many refugees who have fled from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and received asylum — refugees like “Gabriela,” an attorney from El Salvador who escaped MS-13 death threats, and Mariella and her son who fled Honduras after her husband was murdered by brutal gangs.

Ironically, as the Washington Post’s fact check described, MS-13 was formed in Los Angeles and the gang’s reach expanded after the U.S. increased deportations back to the Northern Triangle following enactment of legislative changes to immigration law in 1996.

■ U.S. immigration system

During the speech, the White House released a statement to amplify its messaging on the threats posed by foreigners. It said that “our current immigration system jeopardizes America’s national security and public safety.”

To support this sweeping assertion, the statement regurgitated some of the same misleading numbers that the Department of Homeland Security and the Justice Department issued in a report that was debunked in various analyses, including one by the CATO Institute.

While the president painted Central American refugee families and children as threats to Americans (just as he has vilified Syrian and Muslim refugees), he touted the courage of a North Korean refugee who fled thousands of miles, crossing borders into Southeast Asia, before eventually securing refuge in South Korea.

The story made clear how important it is for countries to allow refugees to flee across borders and secure safe haven. The United States undermines this core ideal by turning away the refugees who knock on our own doors. And, as refugees and advocates pointed out in a Washington Post piece, the President’s support for this North Korean refugee stands in sharp contrast to the harm his bans and policies have caused so many other refugees and torture survivors.

The president claimed in his speech that the U.S. “does more than any other country to help the needy, the struggling, and the underprivileged all over the world.” Yet his immigration proposals would harm these very people.

Instead of using the debate over the Dreamers as an opportunity to block refugees and vulnerable children from this country, the president should support a clean Dream Act. He should also direct his administration to stop blocking refugees from seeking asylum and actually address the plight of Central American refugees as the refugee situation that it is. Congress must stand strong and fight for this approach as well.

The U.S. can manage its borders while complying with its laws and treaty obligations. To fail at this task not only risks global stability by undermining adherence to international law, but it also wreaks further damage on this country’s reputation as a champion of liberty and as a protector of the persecuted.

(Source: Newsweek)



## Autonomous transportation will arrive faster than predicted and afford bigger business opportunities

In transportation, there is probably no word more widely used and simultaneously more of a mystery than autonomy. Although its exact implications for mobility are hard to fully grasp today, the industry recognizes they are so much more than the novelty of the self-driving, flying taxis being tested in Dubai.

Consider autonomous vehicles alone. While today the market for autonomous vehicles consists primarily of unmanned military drones, our research shows that over the next 12 years it will transform into one that is 60 percent civilian; include ground, sea, air, and space transportation; and expand to 636 billion euros—more than 40 times its current size. According to our calculations, autonomous vehicles will make up 20 percent of the total vehicle market by 2030, and three out of four of them will be used as ground transportation.



For the entire transportation and services sector—including public infrastructure; mobility services; traffic, fleet and data management; defense and security; and maintenance, repair, and overhaul—the arrival of autonomy means a five-fold increase in the market to almost \$3 trillion. While the entire sector faces seismic shifts with the incumbent disruption, its players—as well as the myriad startups poised to enter—can expect outsized opportunities.

### ■ The next internet-size disruption

Like the commercial effort to capitalize on the internet that began two decades ago, autonomy is changing the way we live—how we move from place to place, what we choose to own, and eventually the leaders in the transportation industry. With autonomy advancing more rapidly than initially predicted and now expected to reach a tipping point in 10 years rather than 20, General Motors Chief Executive Mary Barra got it right when she reckoned transportation would see more change over the next decade than in the last six.

In this transition, the value is moving from large, sophisticated, and expensive platforms to small, agile and low-cost ones. For instance, 30 percent of the helicopter market will be threatened by small to midsize drones, such as the ones being developed by DJI, Delair Tech, and Parrot.

Rather than a plethora of new hardware, the emphasis will be on development of software, which will make up half of the systems on vehicles versus 30 percent today. Here names like QNX, Nvidia, Intel, Google, Airware, and Kespri stand out. And finally, by 2030 shared ownership—a trend that will be further encouraged with the arrival of autonomous vehicles—will be five times higher than today. To respond to the move away from ownership, major car manufacturers have been partnering with on-demand ride services like Lyft and Gett.

### ■ Beyond autonomous vehicles

But vehicles are only a small piece of the transformation spawned by autonomy. In the services sector, there will be similar disruptions. Take traffic management. Today, there are 300,000 aircraft in the general aviation fleet and five million drones sold annually. Given that traditional traffic management tools don't detect small unmanned autonomous vehicles, the size of the potential challenge is clear.

While discussions so far have focused on creating dedicated roadways or corridors for autonomous vehicles, NASA and Google have also been working to develop traffic management systems that would allow for the coexistence of manned and autonomous vehicles. And besides traffic there will be an array of other infrastructure overhauls required to accommodate autonomy—from parking, to servicing, to airports, to mass transit systems.

(Source: Forbes)

## 5G could change everything from music to medicine

The lightning quick “next generation” wireless technology is expected to power self-driving cars, virtual reality, smart cities and networked robots.

But what else can it do?

Ericsson has joined up with researchers from King's College London to dream up futuristic applications for 5G. They're looking at everything from music to medicine.

The team is focused on using the technology to transfer physical skills across networks, creating something they call the “Internet of Skills.” One example: A surgeon with virtual reality equipment and haptic gloves, which sense motion and pressure, could operate on a patient on the other side of the world via a robot.

Remote surgery has been possible for a while, but 5G speeds should eliminate all delays and lag. That means the surgeon could get instant feedback via the gloves.

“With 5G and the new networking architecture we're building, we're hoping to get this delay down to just the speed of light,” said Mischa Dohler, a professor of wireless communications at King's College.

Dohler, who moonlights as a composer and pianist, also plans to digitize his piano skills and teach people remotely to master the instrument. Haptic gloves can be used to track and record the movement of Dohler's fingers, and the position of his hands. The data would be stored on the skills database, ready to be downloaded by an aspiring pianist.

“They would download that in real time on to an exoskeleton, which would start to move their fingers until the muscle memory is trained,” said Dohler. “They could actually practice their muscle memory anywhere they want,” he added.

Dohler also imagines a surgeon could upload their skills to a database to train students around the world.

But he said it might take another decade for this “Internet of Skills” to be fully functional.

“We need to get security rights and the best practice of this technology right, because the moment you start moving things on the other side of the planet, you can do a lot of harm,” he said.

(Source: CNN)

# Former Facebook and Google workers launch campaign to fight tech addiction

Reformed techies have united to launch a campaign to put pressure on technology companies to make their products less addictive and manipulative.

“Truth About Tech” is the brainchild of the Center for Humane Technology, a group of former Facebook and Google employees dedicated to “reversing the digital attention crisis and realigning technology with humanity's best interests” and is funded by Common Sense, a not-for-profit that promotes safe technology and media for children.

The campaign will include educational material aimed at families highlighting the potential harm caused by digital platforms and outlining techniques for mitigating the addictive properties of tech, for example turning off notifications and changing the screen to greyscale. There will also be a lobbying push around the issue calling for policymakers to regulate tech companies using manipulative practices and the two organisations will develop standards of ethical design to help the industry discourage digital addiction.

The Center for Humane Technology is led by former Google design ethicist Tristan Harris and former Facebook investor and



adviser Roger McNamee.

“Tech companies are conducting a massive, real-time experiment on our kids, and, at present, no one is really holding them

accountable,” said Common Sense's CEO, James Steyer, warning that tech companies' attention-grabbing business models may hurt “the social, emotional and cognitive

## Single-person spacecraft design passes pool test

Putting on a spacesuit is one of the most dangerous activities for astronauts. During spacewalks, there is little protection against micrometeoroids, which can puncture the protective suits. Occasionally, the suits themselves suffer failures that can threaten the life of the astronaut.

To avoid this dangerous situation, what if astronauts could do activities that normally require a spacewalk with a maneuverable single-person spacecraft instead? That's the vision that the Maryland-based company Genesis Engineering Solutions suggests could work for future missions, including missions to NASA's proposed Deep Space Gateway near the moon.

In the company's proposed spacecraft design, the vehicle would be attached to the larger station or living space, and all an astronaut would need to do is shinny through the bottom of the spacecraft to get inside it. It would be equipped with little robot arms to do repairs, and lots of fuel to zoom to even distant areas of the space station.

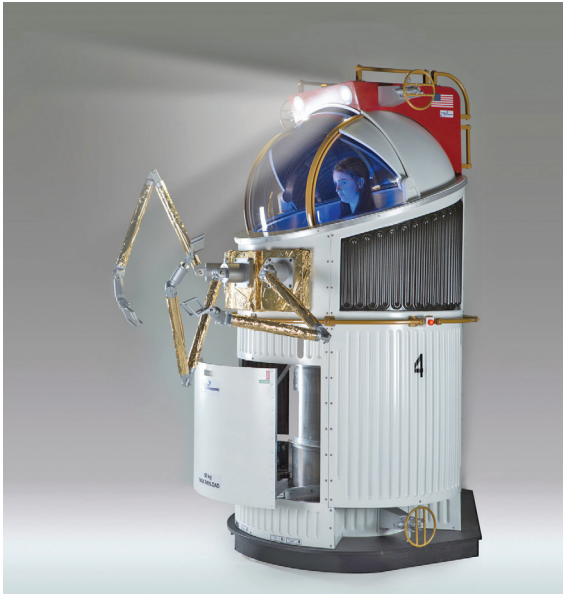
Genesis recently completed “fit testing” of its spacecraft design at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. The test involved placing a cage modeled as the spacecraft inside a large pool (to imitate the microgravity environment), and having scuba-diving volunteers in a range of sizes try to fit into the mock spacecraft, stand on its footrests and handle joysticks that control the robotic arms, all while looking through an opening where the spacecraft window would be.

The company now is focusing on more “long-lead” items, said project manager Brand Griffin in an interview with Space.com. Engineers are designing the pressurized-crew enclosure, with the aim of building and testing it. They're also planning ground tests of the propulsion system. If the company had all the money in the world, Griffin said, they could have a working prototype doing a test flight in three years. But realistically, their timeline depends on who is interested in the technology.

“There are people in NASA that love this thing, and others that don't — we're aware of that,” he said. “A lot of times, disruptive change like this [spacecraft] represents comes with a little bit of headwind.”

But Griffin — who used to work as a senior engineer supporting the Advanced Concepts Office at the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville — is keeping up conversations with NASA. And Genesis is working on the single-person spacecraft project with Sierra Nevada Corp., creators of the robotic Dream Chaser cargo spacecraft that the company is preparing to send to the International Space Station.

He also pointed out that over the decades, NASA itself has developed concepts for other types of vehicles like the



Artist's impression of the single-person spacecraft by Genesis Engineering Solutions.

single-person spacecraft. And he said Genesis is making use of NASA research in its design of the single-person spacecraft. For example, studies on the Skylab space station in the 1970s showed that astronauts tend to adopt a relaxed, almost fetal-like position when floating naturally in microgravity. The single-person spacecraft design makes use of this floating position to make the fit comfortable for future astronauts.

### ■ Decades of development

Fans of “Star Trek” may remember the 2009 reboot movie “Star Trek.” Spock Prime (Leonard Nimoy) is piloting a cute little single-person spacecraft called the Jellyfish when he is drawn into a wormhole that leads to an alternate timeline. Later, the younger Spock from the alternate timeline (Zachary Quinto) pilots this ship onto a collision course with an alien ship.

This science-fiction concept of a single-person spacecraft, however, dates back at least as far as the 1950s, Griffin said during a presentation at the Future In-Space Operations (FISO) Working Group seminar on January 18. Wernher von Braun — who is best known for developing the Saturn V rocket that got astronauts to the moon — also envisioned a “bottle spacecraft” that could take single astronauts out into space.

development of kids”.

“When parents learn how these companies can take advantage of our kids, they will join us in demanding the industry change its ways and improve certain practices.”

According to research by Common Sense, teenagers consume an average of nine hours of media per day, while tweens consume six hours. A separate study by psychologist Jean Twenge found that heavy users of digital media are 56% more likely to say they are unhappy and 27% more likely to be depressed.

This is the latest chapter in a rising backlash against big tech. Many former employees of large Silicon Valley firms have offered sharp critiques of the industry.

In November, Facebook's founding president, Sean Parker, said the social network knew from the outset it was creating something that exploited a “vulnerability in human psychology”.

“God only knows what it's doing to our children's brains,” he said.

In January, the Salesforce CEO, Marc Benioff, said that Facebook should be regulated like the cigarette industry.

(Source: The Guardian)

Other concepts include the Remora (Bell Labs) in the 1960s, the Scout (University of Maryland) in the 2000s, and even something called the FlexCraft Cherry Picker (from NASA), which Mitchell researched while he was at Marshall.

Perhaps the most famous heritage technology is the Manned Maneuvering Unit, a sort of “jet backpack” that a few astronauts got to try in the 1980s. (Bruce McCandless, who died last month, is famous for his iconic picture in the MMU, backdropped by Earth.)

The MMU allowed astronauts to venture far from the space shuttle; it was even used for satellite repairs. But after the Challenger shuttle explosion killed seven astronauts in 1986, NASA decided the MMU was unnecessary and ended the program, according to Smithsonian Magazine. Although the program is dead, the expertise still exists: MMU astronaut Robert Stewart is among the advisers helping Griffin with development of the single-person spacecraft.

Genesis has done its own development for about two years, Griffin said; back in 2016, the company ran a contest to integrate student designs into the spacecraft. Griffin estimates that between his company's investments, advice from students and mentors, and in-kind contributions from entities such as the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, development of the spacecraft has taken tens of millions of dollars so far.

### ■ Preparing for space

Griffin points to many advantages of the single-person spacecraft over a traditional spacesuit. The spacecraft will fit more body types than a spacesuit. Astronauts can do repairs without injuring their hands, which is a common problem for workers in spacesuits, he added.

There are also areas on the International Space Station that will need servicing as the station ages that are hard for astronauts to reach, Griffin said. That's either because there aren't any foot- and handholds for the astronauts, or because the Canadarm, which can carry astronauts, can reach only so far. (Just ask NASA astronaut Scott Parazynski, who did a tricky ISS solar panel repair on top of the Canadarm2 robotic arm back in 2007.)

The spacecraft would also be flexible regarding destination. If astronauts want to go to the moon, the craft could work near the surface and avoid the corrosive lunar dust that can degrade spacesuits over time, Griffin said. Or, it could float by a small asteroid or moon such as Mars' Phobos, which is too small for humans to safely walk on due to reduced gravity.

“We're picking and choosing our technology in terms of development,” he said. “We'd like to fly a demonstrator — a stripped-down version — and get up there [to space] very soon, and add capability as needed.”

(Source: Space.com)

## Tips to improve digital marketing strategy

Online Marketing is a medium which business use to attract, convert and generate more users online to their products or services. There are many channels which can be used to do so. Be it website, email, banners, social media, videos, blogging, press release or any other medium which is related to the internet qualifies under digital marketing. Traditional Marketing doesn't allow you target your audience and thus, is not as effective as a newer online method of reaching the audience where you can target, analyze, monitor and rework on results to achieve the best ROI for your website.

There is growing change in the way consumers make a purchase and search. With more than a billion searches conducted online every day and growing use of social media, emails etc. because of increased internet accessibility, digital marketing strategy has become important for every business.

### ■ Create engaging content

Digital Marketing requires a combination of strategy to succeed. Be it SEO, social media, press release or any other strategy no strategy can succeed on its own. Content forms the base of almost all strategies and is one of the key reasons where companies succeed and fail. Make sure your website has high quality, relevant and unique content. These pointers might help you

Define a content marketing strategy if you already have not done. Prepare a calendar on what topics you would be posting and by

when. This will help you define goals and prepare your content better.

Share them on social media, blogs and help your content gain traction and visibility. They are taken as a signal by search engines as well.

Create and post at least 1 article every week. There is always a need for new content on the website. Try to create at least one article every week even if you don't have a content team and are a small business owner.

Optimize content to act as a landing page for some keywords and try to have them as a part of your sales funnel strategy or with the goal of converting more users into leads.

Monitor Comments and Feedback- Reply to every comment and feedback you get. Try to revise your content and fit the suggestions you get as this would help you refine your content even further.

### ■ Increase your website's visibility in search

SEO is a strategy which can help you increase organic search results. When someone searches for your article, product or service on Google it should be visible on the front page of Google. It is the best method of generating long-term traffic and leads for your website. As an SEO Consultant in Delhi NCR, The Buzz Stand gets lots of queries regarding how to rank their web pages in the shortest possible time. Though there is no shortcut to success, there are some best practices that need to be kept in mind which can help the

website improve their traffic considerably.

Have the best content on top of your website page. It helps users, crawlers and makes it easier to find content

Have relevant keywords in the title, meta description, heading, and body content. It helps users and search engines identify what the content is about. It removes any confusion involved.

Optimize for website speed, page size, cache and Java, CSS codes to ensure a better user experience.

### ■ Create an active strategy for social media

Social Media has risen in the past decade. There are platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. which can help users to connect with their audiences, know trends, learn about information and express themselves. According to a research, more than 52% of internet users have their presence on 2 or more social platforms.

Social media provides you with an opportunity to express yourself, share and promote content and help it go viral. Every platform has a defined purpose and choosing the right platform is extremely critical to ensure the success of the business. For example, LinkedIn is useful for B2B customers, Instagram is for sharing images and those who want to showcase their products. Facebook is useful for videos and posts, gaining feedback and so on. The Buzz Stand provides digital marketing service in Delhi NCR to many clients

and suggests that including the following tips will help you optimize your campaign.

### ■ Optimize for Mobile

Around 2/3 of the total internet traffic is through mobile and this is only going to increase, a number of smartphones and internet connectivity improves. This calls for having a site which is compatible with mobile and ensures the best viewing experience for the user. The Buzz Stand is a digital marketing company in Delhi NCR and it helps businesses to make sure that mobile optimization is in place.

### ■ Capture and measure success metrics

One of the core advantages of online marketing always has been the ability to measure, track and analyze data. You can set your target audience and make sure that the message is delivered to the right set of customers which is not possible in traditional methods. For measuring SEO, you have tools like Google Analytics, Google Webmasters, SEM Rush, Majestic, Moz etc. Similarly, for measuring PPC there are Adwords, SEM Rush etc. For email marketing, there are tools like Active Hosted, Mail Chimp, Woodpecker, Sales Handy which help us in ensuring that the businesses can deliver, track and analyze their success through the campaign. Without tracking and measuring you cannot improve the strategy. Even if you have the best of strategies, measuring it would help you improve it further as no strategy is perfect.

(Source: digitaljournal.com)



# Scientists discover enormous reserves of mercury in permafrost

Permafrost is a thick subsurface layer of soil that remains below freezing point throughout the year, occurring chiefly in polar regions.

Researchers have discovered permafrost in the northern hemisphere stores massive amounts of natural mercury, a finding with significant implications for human health and ecosystems worldwide as exposure to mercury – even small amounts – can cause serious health problems.

The study reveals the northern permafrost soils are the largest reservoir of mercury on the planet, storing nearly twice as much mercury as all other soils, the ocean and the atmosphere combined.

In a new study, scientists measured mercury concentrations in permafrost cores from Alaska and estimated how much mercury has been trapped in permafrost north of the equator since the last Ice Age.

## Game-changer discovery

“This discovery is a game-changer,” said Paul Schuster, a hydrologist at the U.S. Geological Survey in Boulder, Colorado and lead author of the new study. “We’ve quantified a pool of mercury that had not been done previously, and the results have profound implications for better understanding the global mercury cycle.”

Warmer air temperatures due to climate change could thaw much of the existing permafrost layer in the northern hemisphere. This thawing permafrost could release a large amount of mercury that could potentially affect ecosystems around the world. Mercury accumulates in aquatic and terrestrial food



chains, and has harmful neurological and reproductive effects on animals.

“There would be no environmental problem if everything remained frozen, but we know the Earth is getting warmer,” Schuster said. “Although measurement of the rate

of permafrost thaw was not part of this study, the thawing permafrost provides a potential for mercury to be released -- that’s just physics.”

The new findings have major implications for understanding how Earth stores

**Mercury accumulates in aquatic and terrestrial food chains, and has harmful neurological and reproductive effects on animals.**

## The ozone layer isn’t healing itself after all, researchers say

The atmosphere of Earth, as seen during sunset in May of 2010 from the International Space Station. The ozone in our stratosphere is a vital ingredient in protecting humans from high-energy, ionizing ultraviolet radiation.

Throughout the history of life on Earth, there’s been a little-noticed helper: a thin but important layer of ozone in our planet’s stratosphere. Transparent to visible light, this trioxxygen molecule isn’t the type you breathe, but rather successfully absorbs incoming high-energy ultraviolet light. Without the ozone layer, this light would propagate down to the surface, where it’s capable of breaking organic bonds and working to counteract the natural life processes we hold so dear.

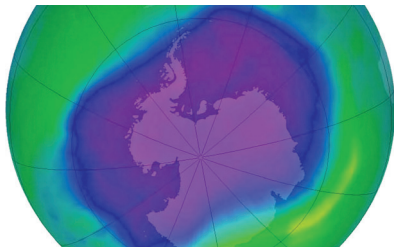
Inadvertently, the widespread rise in chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and their use in aerosol cans began to destroy the protective ozone layer, and some 30 years ago, humanity banded together to virtually eliminate CFC use.

## Ozone layer

We thought the hole would close and the problem would solve itself. But a new study, surveying a part of the ozone layer that hadn’t been examined before, shows that the overall problem hasn’t improved in 20 years.

The ozone layer in Earth’s stratosphere protects life on the surface from harmful ultraviolet radiation. While CFCs significantly damaged this layer, it was thought that ceasing those emissions would lead to a general recovery. This may not be the case at all.

Ultraviolet radiation is known to be dangerous, and our stratospheric ozone is our first line of defense. With the widespread adoption of and compliance with the Montreal Protocol, atmospheric ozone stopped decreasing, and measurements of



the upper stratosphere indicated that ozone levels were recovering.

The recovery was so significant that the leading models predicted a 100% recovery at most human-populated latitudes by the year 2100. But one unknown had yet to be investigated to the required level of scrutiny: the concentration of ozone at lower altitudes.

## Densely populated areas

Contrary to expectations and with no explanation for how it’s happened, the lower stratosphere appears to be losing ozone, so much so that the total amount of ozone over the most densely populated areas isn’t increasing at all.

From 1998 to the present, the mid-latitudes of Earth have seen a rise in ozone levels in the upper stratosphere. However, the lower stratosphere indicates an offset of the same magnitude. For some reason, the ozone layer isn’t recovering overall.

In what promises to be the first unexpected result from atmospheric sciences in 2018, a team of researchers gathered four different datasets that have been monitoring the higher altitudes of Earth’s atmosphere, and analyzed them for changes in ozone concentrations. While the upper stratosphere showed the same increases in ozone densities, the lower stratosphere, carefully analyzed for the first time, showed the opposite effect.

(Source: Forbes)

## Instead of filling cavities, dentists may soon regenerate teeth

For dentists, a cavity is a conundrum — in order to save the tooth they must further damage it. Currently, the primary way to treat a cavity is to excavate the decay and the surrounding area before filling the resulting crater with a durable surrogate material such as metal, plastic or glass cement.

But what if instead of drilling holes into teeth and patching them up with synthetic fillers, dentists could coax our pearly whites to regrow themselves? Recently, Paul Sharpe, a bioengineer at King’s College London, and his colleagues discovered a new way to do exactly this in mice.

And since then they have made even more progress that edges this experimental procedure closer to human clinical trials. If the treatment eventually becomes part of the dentist’s standard tool kit, scientists say it would easily be one of the field’s most important advances in 50 years.

## Microbes in the mouth

Our teeth get damaged all the time. Most of the injuries they endure are due to everyday wear and tear as well as the activity of microbes in the mouth. These organisms coat the surface of each tooth and feed on meal remnants. As they break down particles of food, some of these microbes produce and secrete acids as a by-product. And that acidity degrades enamel—the tooth’s hard outer layer.

When dentin is seriously injured, stem cells located in the tooth’s soft, innermost layer — the dental pulp — morph into cells called odontoblasts, which secrete new tissue. (Stem cells are capable of becoming virtually any type of cell.) Yet when the injury is too large or deep, that fresh dentin is not sufficient to restore the tooth. The result is often a cavity.

Sharpe suspected he could dramatically

boost teeth’s natural healing ability by mobilizing stem cells in the dental pulp.

## Natural mercury

Natural mercury found in the atmosphere binds with organic material in the soil, gets buried by sediment, and becomes frozen into permafrost, where it remains trapped for thousands of years unless liberated by changes such as permafrost thaw.

Schuster’s team determined the total amount of mercury locked up in permafrost using field data. Between 2004 and 2012, the study authors drilled 13 permafrost soil cores from various sites in Alaska, and measured the total amounts of mercury and carbon in each core.

Schuster and his colleagues found their measurements were consistent with published data on mercury in non-permafrost and permafrost soils from thousands of other sites worldwide. They then used their observed values to calculate the total amount of mercury stored in permafrost in the northern hemisphere and create a map of mercury concentrations in the region.

(Source: The New Indian Express)



boost teeth’s natural healing ability by mobilizing stem cells in the dental pulp.

## Cascade of molecules

Earlier research had demonstrated the Wnt signaling pathway — a particular cascade of molecules involved in cell-to-cell communication — is essential for tissue repair and stem cell development in many parts of the body such as the skin, intestines and brain. Sharpe wondered: Could this signaling pathway also be important for self-repair processes in teeth? If so, maybe exposing damaged teeth to drugs that stimulate Wnt signaling would similarly encourage the activity of stem cells in the dental pulp — giving teeth the kind of regenerative superpowers usually seen only in plants, salamanders and starfish.

To test this idea, Sharpe and his fellow researchers drilled holes into the molars of mice, mimicking cavities. They then soaked tiny collagen sponges (which are made from the same protein found in dentin) in various drugs known to stimulate Wnt signaling, including tideglusib, a compound that has been investigated in clinical trials for its potential to treat Alzheimer’s and other neurological disorders. The scientists then placed these drug-soaked sponges in the drilled mouse molars, sealed them up and left them for four to six weeks.

(Source: Scientific American)

## Changing weather patterns throwing ecosystems out of whack

In a study published in Nature Climate Change, a team of researchers from the University of South Florida in Tampa found that animal species are shifting the timing of their seasonal activities, also known as phenology, at different rates in response to changing seasonal temperatures and precipitation patterns.

“As species’ lifecycles grow out of alignment, it can affect the functioning of ecosystems with potential impacts on human food supplies and diseases,” said lead author Jeremy Cohen, PhD, postdoctoral researcher at the University of South Florida Department of Integrative Biology.

“We rely on honeybees to pollinate seasonal crops and migratory birds to return in the spring to eat insects that are crop pests and vectors of human diseases. If the timing of these and other seasonal events are off, ecosystems can malfunction with potentially adverse effects on humans.”

Dr. Cohen and his team found that cold-blooded species and those with small body sizes are breeding or aggregating earlier than warm-blooded or large-bodied species in spring. They come to this conclusion after reviewing thousands of records of phenological shifts dating back to the 1950s.

“Our research elucidates the drivers of phenological responses and the traits of organisms that influence their ability to track changing climates,” said co-author Jason Rohr, Ph.D., professor at the University of South Florida.

“We expect these findings to improve our ability to forecast the locations, systems and species that might be at the greatest risk from climate change and ideally mitigate any adverse effects that these changes might have on the services that ecosystems provide to humans.”

(Source: eurekalert.org)

## New species of crayfish can clone itself, new study finds

Most species of crayfish reproduce the same way that humans do: by having sex. But one species of crayfish that evolved out of the pet trade can do something unique — clone itself — and this ability has led populations of the crustacean to spawn out of control.

For a study published today in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution, researchers sequenced the genomes of 11 marbled crayfish, both from the wild and from the pet trade. They found that the genomes in all 11 animals were nearly identical, meaning that they don’t reproduce sexually, and that they are officially a different species than their North American mother species, Procambarus fallax.

“Here we have an evolutionary event that has happened only a very short time ago,” Frank Lyko, Head of divisions of epigenetics at the German Cancer Research Center told Newsweek. “Certainly there will be some changes, genetic changes over time that will make it more normal. At this specific time point in evolution it’s very unique.”

Lyko explained that forming a new species usually takes evolution thousands of years or more. However, it was only a few decades ago that the North American species of crayfish entered the pet trade, and now a different, exceptional species has emerged from them.

The way that this new species formed is exceptional as well. P. fallax came to Germany as a pet, sold over the internet and in pet and aquarium stores. But sometime between 1990 and 1995, the animals evolved into a new species. The new species had marbled coloring, and people first noticed that it was different from the original species because there was only one sex.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Japanese scientists develop wearable technology that can work for weeks

Scientists at the University of Tokyo have developed a new wearable electronic sensor that, they claim, can be worn for a week or more without causing discomfort.



The researchers say that the hypoallergenic electronic sensor is made up of an elastic electrode and breathable nanoscale meshes. They suggest that it could lead to the “development of non-invasive e-skin devices that can monitor a person’s health continuously over a long period”.

In recent years, a range of technology manufacturers and health organizations have launched wearable devices that can monitor heart rate and other basic metrics.

But many of these devices have relied on rubber materials that are not suitable for long-term use. The researchers claim that they prevent sweating and block airflow, which can cause harmful health effects.

“We learned that devices that can be worn for a week or longer for continuous monitoring were needed for practical use in medical and sports applications,” said Professor Takao Someya at the University of Tokyo’s Graduate School of Engineering.

In their research, the scientists were able to create an electrode by combining nanoscale meshes containing a water-soluble polymer, polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) and a gold. They said the materials are “considered safe and biologically compatible with the body”.

To attach the device onto your skin, you only need to add a small amount of water. The researchers said it “dissolves the PVA nanofibers and allows it to stick easily to the skin”.

Next, the researchers conducted a skin patch test to rule out any irritations and skin allergies. Twenty people took part, and the researchers did not detect inflammation.

(Source: v3.co.uk)

## BMI’s Global and National Prestige, Fruit of Longstanding Trust of Noble People

Member of the Board of Directors of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) Gholam-Reza Panahi said that Bank Melli Iran (BMI) owes its national and international prestige to the unsparing trust of the noble people of the country since its establishment, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

This bank has been offering high-quality services to the noble people of the country since its establishment, he said, adding: “Credit and prestige of the bank both in national and international level is the fruit

of longstanding trust of noble people of the country to this prestigious bank.”

Speaking among senior managers of branches of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) in Fars Province, he was briefed on the latest achievements and performance of the bank very closely.

While accompanied by the senior managers and directors of the bank, Panahi said: “Public trust of society to the bank is the fruit of high knowledge and insight of customers of the bank both in national

and international arenas.”

BMI is a public and national asset that deep rooted in the history, culture and belief of all noble people of the country, he emphasized.

The fast-paced development and progress of the bank in various fields of “informatics” and “foreign exchange” indicate the firm determination of the bank in development according to the internationally accepted standards, he said, adding: “Today, banking industry

in the advanced and developed countries is moving towards offering high-quality banking services.”

To conclude his remarks, BMI Board Member pointed to the development of e-banking as the most important social responsibility of the bank and added, “Since the bank has high potential and capacity, it can play an important role within the framework of easy and accessible electronic services in the development of culture and public welfare of people and society.”

## Steel Industry Has Suitable Capacity to Optimize Energy and Environment: Official

Head of Sharif Energy Sciences and Technology Research Center Yadollah Sabouhi said that steel industry has appropriate capacity for optimization of energy and environment, Public Relations Dept. of IMIDRO reported.

Speaking in a specialized workshop entitled “Managing Energy, Environment and Water in Steel Industry” with a focus on sustainable development, clean and waste-free production, he added, “6,731 million KW/hour, 1,130 million cubic meter of natural gas and 64 million cubic meter of water will be saved if steel industry is optimized.”

Optimization of steel industry will save 5,733 billion rials according to the “domestic price”, he said, adding: “Moreover, \$585 million will be saved according to the “opportunity Cost” if steel industry is optimized.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the challenges

of optimization of energy in steel industry of the country and reiterated, “the most important of these challenges, it can be referred to the inefficiency in the energy market including sovereignty of government monopoly on the market and vast volume of energy subsidize, imperative changes in the price of energy and restriction of performance of market mechanism and supply of energy balance through development of capacity of energy supply.”

Sabouhi enumerated the restrictions facing energy and environment optimization market and said, “these restrictions include difficulty in increased price of energy carriers inside the country, restriction of capability of the private sector for the implementation of energy optimization projects, restriction of experience and skill in business of energy services, etc.





## LEARN ENGLISH

### Job Interview

A: Okay, so let's go over everything one more time. I really want you to get this job!

B: I know! It's an amazing **growth opportunity**! They're true **industry leaders**, and it would be so interesting to be part of an organization that is the **undisputed** leader in business process **platform** development.

A: So, let's see, you did your research on the company, right?

B: Well, I visited their website and **read up** on what they do. They're an IT service company that offers comprehensive business solutions for large corporations. They provide services such as **CRM** development, and they also offer **custom** designed applications.

B: Well, the position is for an account manager. That basically means that I would be the link between our clients and our development team.

A: Sounds good, and so, why do you want to work with them?

B: Well, as I said they're the industry leaders, they have a really great growth strategy, amazing development opportunities for employees, and it seems like they have strong corporate governance. They're all about helping companies grow and **unleashing** potential. I guess their **core values** and mission really **resonated** with me. Oh, and they offer six weeks' vacation, stock options and bonuses... I'm totally going to cash in on that.

A: You idiot! Don't say that! Do you want this job, or not?

#### Key vocabulary

**CRM:** processes, services, technology, and people used to attract and keep customers

**custom:** specially made to fit the needs of a person or organization

**core values:** most important beliefs

**growth opportunity:** chance to gain new skills

**industry leader:** being the best in that particular field or industry

**undisputed:** definitely true, not doubted

**read up:** read to gain the most recent information on a subject

**unleash:** release; allow something to happen

**resonate:** have a special meaning or importance for someone

#### Supplementary vocabulary

**integrated solutions:** combine things to find a plan or a way to deal with a problem (esp. in business)

**competitive advantage:** something that places a company above the competition

**optimize:** make something as effective as possible

**align:** join a group in supporting something

**platform:** a program that tells a computer how to work

(Source: irlanguage.com)



Be kind to me!

# DOE starting to promote 'waste separation' culture

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** – By establishing special bins for collecting dry waste in every room of its own offices, the Department of Environment tries to promote the culture of separating waste at source.

"Waste separation is a principle and we cannot prescribe it to the public without implementing it ourselves," ISNA quoted Kaveh Madani, DOE's deputy director for international affairs, innovation and socio-cultural engagement, as saying on Monday.

Madani made the remarks on the special occasion of a Tehran's Pardisan Park cleanup event on Monday morning.

Some environmental NGOs and the employees of DOE participated in this cleanup.

Madani's earlier efforts led to the ban of bottled water at the DOE offices and all other organizations affiliated with it nationwide. This cleanup and waste sorting issue follow his previous attempts to promote the notion of "Starting with ourselves," and is based on a campaign which he has given the name of "Wasteless" to it.

The deputy environment highlighted that the campaign will continue its work till April 2 (Nature day), hoping that it can influence the public and hence the environment.

This campaign teaches our officials and managers that enjoying any positive achievement requires that "we start it with ourselves" said Madani.

Describing the role of people in developing the environment as "irrefutable," he concluded that "Even if the environment has been degraded by the administration, it's not possible to restore and improve it without the cooperation of the public."



Kaveh Madani speaking to journalists on the sideline of Tehran's Pardisan Park cleanup event on Monday morning

## Japan: Robots will care for 80% of elderly by 2020



Japan's elderly are being told to get used to being looked after by robots.

With Japan's ageing society facing a predicted shortfall of 370,000 caregivers by 2025, the government wants to increase community acceptance of technology that could help fill the gap in the nursing workforce.

Developers have focused their efforts on producing simple robotic devices that help frail residents get out of their bed and into a wheelchair, or that can ease senior citizens into bathtubs.

But the government sees a wider range of potential applications and recently revised its list of priorities to include robots that can predict when patients might need to use the toilet.

Dr Hirohisa Hirukawa, director of robot innovation research at Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, said the aims included easing the burden on nursing staff and boosting the autonomy of people still living at home.

"Robotics cannot solve all of these issues; however, robotics will be able to make a contribution to some of these difficulties," he said.

Hirukawa said lifting robotics had so far been deployed

have been developed into commercial products.

In the interests of lowering cost and complexity, these types of robots do not yet resemble humans or talk to users, but deploy smart technology to help people in specific situations.

One example is an electric-boosted mobility aid that a person can hold onto when walking around city streets.

The sensors detect if the user is going uphill and a booster function is activated. When the walker is detected going downhill, an automatic brake kicks in to reduce falls.

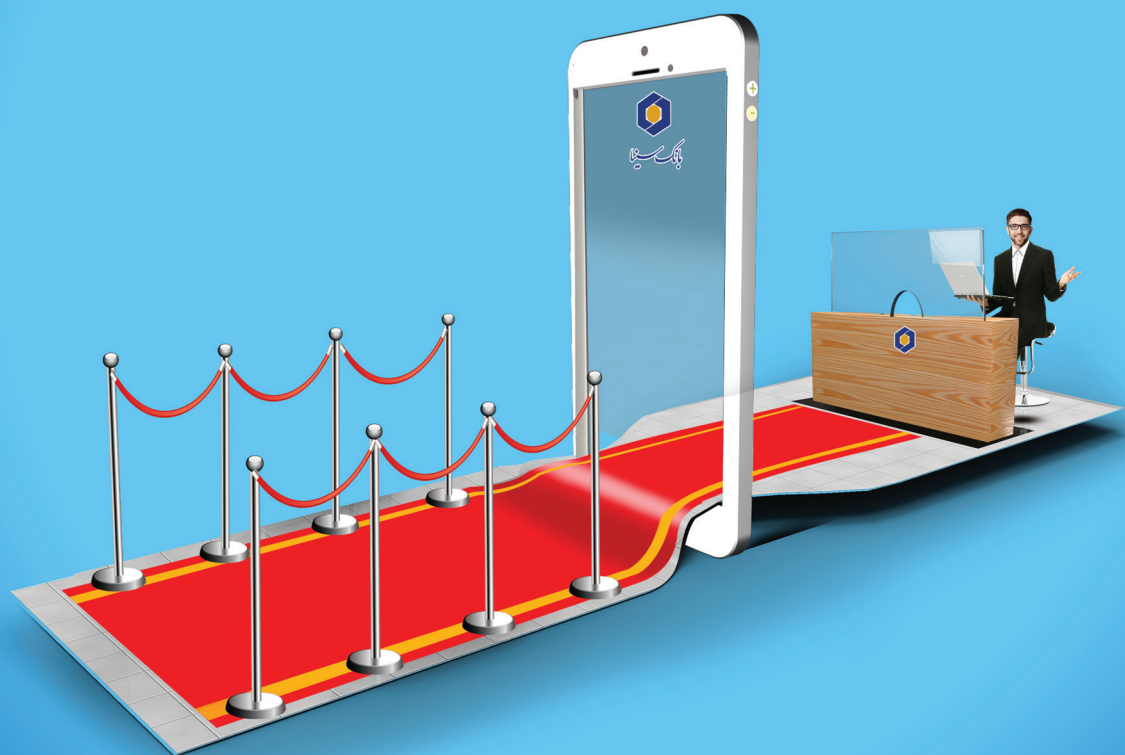
"In Japan we already have motor-supported bicycles so it is like a version of an assist for walking," Hirukawa said during a demonstration at the Foreign Press Center Japan.

The next research priorities include wearable mobility aid devices and technology that guides people to the toilet at what it predicts is the right time.

According to Japan's robot strategy, the government hopes that four in five care recipients accept having some support provided by robots by 2020.

(Source: The Guardian)

# Be Up to Date With Mobile Bank of Sina




SINA Bank

@sina\_bank  
www.sinabank.ir


Customers Call Center: 021-41731

Your trust  
is our capital





**N.I.O.C**  
1396.5216



**National Iranian Drilling Company**

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

**One Stage (Compressive)**

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE	DESCRIPTION	Tenders Portal Reg. No. On <a href="http://iets.mporg.ir">http://iets.mporg.ir</a>	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial	(Rial)				
12,124	540,000,000	10,800,000,000	Under Balance Perforation Equipment with All Accessories for Well Logging	3,150,146	Indent No: 43-22-9603848102 TenderNo.: CGP/27-96/024	1

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

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

B) Preparation of tender documents:  
Purchasing of documents:  
In order to receive the tender documents, **510,000 Rials** should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.

Reciving of documents:  
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum 10 days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Sector Tenders, Foreign Procurement of Capital Goods dept., end of the workshop No. 8, Karoon Industrial Area, Ahwaz, IRAN.  
Tel No.: 061-34142387 or Room #431, coordination office of NIDC, NIOC No. 8 center Building, Yaghma alley, Jomhoori St., Tehran, IRAN, Tel No.: 021-66700249.

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

C) Delivery of call quality evaluating and envelops suggestions:  
Tenderers shall submit the completed documents including qualifaicaon worksheets in form of software in CD/DVD and documentary along with envelopes Tender Guarantee (A) and technical (B) and financial (C) offers within 30 days from last day of document recived deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1th floor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel No.: 061-34148205-6, 061-34148580

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

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۱۱/۱۷ نوبت دوم ۹۶/۱۱/۱۸



TEHRANTIMES  
Iran's Leading International Daily



# Amnesty launches campaign to support jailed Bahrainis

Amnesty international has launched an online campaign in solidarity with prominent Bahraini human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, who has been behind bars over his criticism of the ruling Al Khalifah family, urging Manama to “immediately and unconditionally” release him.

Through its online campaign, the London-based non-governmental organization sends an email to Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah to demand the release of Rajab and put an end to the ongoing crackdown on human rights activists in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom.

“Email the King of Bahrain now, calling on him to free Nabeel - and stop the Bahraini authorities’ crackdown on the brave people who speak out for human rights,” the group urges public.

Amnesty underlined the importance of such online actions, which earlier contributed to the release of Ebtisam al Saegh, another human rights defender in Bahrain.

Stating that Nabeel’s verdict is imminent on February 21, the organization said, “We must mobilize quickly and effectively, before it is too late.”

The group described Rajab as one of the “brave human rights defenders” and a “prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.”

It said Rajab, who has been in detention since 2016, “spent an excruciating nine months in solitary confinement, which



amounts to torture and ill-treatment.”

Last month, Bahrain’s Court of Cassation, which has the ultimate say in the case of appeals in the country, upheld a two-year jail sentence issued for the 52-year-old president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights.

Rajab has faced two trials, one con-

cerning his criticism of the ruling regime in alleged interviews he has given and statements made to foreign media, and another having to do with his critical tweets.

Rajab was first detained on June 13, 2016 for the tweets. He will face a new hearing over the case on February 21.

If found guilty, Rajab would face up

to 15 years in jail, according to Amnesty.

Manama considers Rajab one of the leaders of the protests which the regime has been facing since 2011.

Scores of people have been killed and hundreds arrested during the crackdown with the help of Saudi and UAE troops.

(Source: Press TV)

## Pence says he hasn’t ruled out meeting with N. Korea officials

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said he has not ruled out the possibility of meeting with North Korean officials at the upcoming Olympics in South Korea.

Before departing Monday for a six-day swing through Asia that will be highlighted by his stop at the Pyeongchang Games, Pence said no plans have been made for him to meet with any members of the North Korean delegation.

North Korea is sending its nominal head of state, Kim Jong Nam - the highest-level visitor to the South from the North in recent memory.

“Let me say President Trump has said he always believes in talking, but I haven’t requested any meeting,” Pence said. “But we’ll see what happens.”

Pence said his message, if he met any officials from the North, would be the same as it has been in public. “And that is that North Korea must once and for all abandon its nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile ambitions,” he said.

Pence departed Monday for Japan and South Korea, aiming to ensure North Korea doesn’t “hijack” the games as it participates on a joint team with the South, in the view of the White House. He’ll hold symbolic events of his own to highlight the North’s human rights abuses and nuclear ambitions, according to White House officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to preview the trip publicly.

“We’ll be telling the truth about North Korea at every stop,” Pence told reporters after touring missile defense facilities Monday that monitor and could respond to a launch by the North. “We’ll be ensuring that whatever cooperation that’s existing between North and South Korea today on Olympic teams does not cloud the reality of a regime that



must continue to be isolated by the world community.”

In Japan, he will meet with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. service members. In South Korea, Pence will visit a memorial to the 46 South Korean sailors killed in a 2010 torpedo attack attributed to the North, and hold meetings with President Moon Jae-in.

“Missile defense is essential to our national defense,” Pence said before a briefing with U.S. Northern Command at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska. He touted the coming deployment of an additional 20 ground-based interceptors that would respond to an enemy launch.

Leading the U.S. delegation to the Olympic Opening Ceremonies, Pence will bring to the games Fred Warmbier, the father of Otto Warmbier, the U.S. student who died in 2017 shortly after he was released from North Korean detention.

“He & his wife remind the world of the atrocities happen-

ing in N Korea,” Pence tweeted Monday before departing Washington.

The trip comes after President Donald Trump hosted a group of North Korean defectors in the Oval Office Friday, including Ji Seong-ho, whom the president referenced in his State of the Union address last week. The White House cast the meeting as part of the Trump administration’s “maximum pressure” campaign to counter the North Korean nuclear program. The plan centers around rallying the international community to further isolate North Korea both diplomatically and economically.

White House officials said Pence was expected to continue to bring attention to North Korea’s human rights abuses on the trip, and offer of reminder of grim conditions in North Korea.

On Sunday, the North Korean government shot back that its nuclear missile program would “deter Trump and his lackeys from showing off on the Korean peninsula.”

“If Trump does not get rid of his anachronistic and dogmatic way of thinking, it will only bring about the consequence of further endangering security and future of the United States,” the government said in comments carried by the North’s official Korean Central News Agency.

Trump and other senior officials have repeatedly said that time is running out before North Korea gains the capability to strike the U.S. mainland with a nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile. The isolated country has proven it can launch missiles of sufficient range, but has yet to develop a vehicle that can withstand the hazards of atmospheric re-entry.

(Source: AFP)

## SE Asia ministers air concerns over Beijing’s activities in South China Sea

Southeast Asian foreign ministers Tuesday aired concerns over China’s activities in disputed areas of the South China Sea, noting that land reclamation continued even after talks began between their 10-member bloc and Beijing to agree a code of conduct.

Meeting in Singapore, the foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations welcomed the start of negotiations, while calling for restraint in activities and avoidance of any actions that may complicate the situation.

“We discussed the matters relating to the South China Sea and took note of the concerns expressed by some ministers on the land reclamations and activities in the area, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions and may undermine peace, security and stability in the region,” Singapore’s Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said.

Singapore has taken over the role of



chairing ASEAN for 2018, and this week hosts meetings of the group’s foreign and

defense ministers. China and ASEAN in August adopted a

negotiating framework for a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea in August.

Both sides hailed the move as a sign of progress, with China welcoming the talks as an opportunity to bolster mutual understanding and trust. Critics, however, suspect Beijing of buying time to consolidate its maritime power.

Malaysia, Taiwan, Brunei, Vietnam and the Philippines claim some or all of the South China Sea, one of the world’s busiest sea routes. China claims most of the waterway and has been aggressively building and militarizing artificial islands.

Balakrishnan said resolution of the South China Sea dispute would not be easy, even with the talks for a code of conduct under way.

“It’s going to be a very complicated negotiation,” he told a news conference. “Territorial claims are not resolved just because you have a COC,” he said.

(Source: Reuters)

## U.S. and North Korea trade warnings on nuclear strikes

The United States said on Tuesday that North Korea may be only months away from being able to strike the U.S. mainland with a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile, while Pyongyang said Washington was considering a pre-emptive strike against it.

The clash came at the United Nations-sponsored Conference on Disarmament days after the Trump administration said it will expand its nuclear capability.

U.S. disarmament ambassador Robert Wood, addressing the Geneva forum, also warned that arsenals in China and Russia were expanding, drawing rebukes from their respective delegations.

“Russia, China and North Korea are growing their stockpiles, increasing the prominence of nuclear weapons in their security strategies, and - in some cases - pursuing the development of new nuclear capabilities to threaten other peaceful nations,” Wood said.

North Korea “may now be only months away from the capability to strike the U.S. with nuclear-armed ballistic missiles”, he said, giving no further detail on the source of the statement.



North Korea is under tightening U.N. Security Council resolutions for its banned nuclear and ballistic missile programs, but relations with South Korea have softened in the lead-up to the Pyeongchang Olympic Games opening on Feb. 9.

North Korea accused the United States of seeking to aggravate the situation on the divided Korean peninsula by “deploying large nuclear assets” nearby and lay the ground for a possible pre-emptive strike against it.

“In view of the nature and scale of U.S. military reinforcements, they are designed to make a pre-emptive strike against the DPRK,” North Korean diplomat Ju Yong Chol told the talks, referring to his country’s official name the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

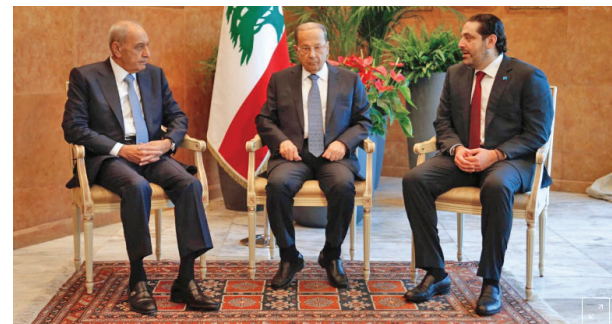
“U.S. officials including the defense secretary and the CIA director repeatedly talked about DPRK nuclear and missile threat to justify their argument for a military option and a new concept of a so-called ‘bloody nose’, a limited pre-emptive strike on the DPRK is under consideration within the U.S. administration,” Ju said.

Wood took the floor to retort: “If you claim to want peace, end your nuclear and ballistic missile tests and stop your provocative behavior and threats”.

(Source: Reuters)

## Lebanese leaders say Israel threatens border stability

President Michel Aoun, Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri, and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri agreed to act to stop Israel from building a wall on Lebanese land at the border, and infringing on an energy block in disputed waters.



Arguments over the wall and Lebanon’s plans to explore for offshore oil and gas have elevated tensions between Israel and Lebanon.

The three Lebanese leaders met to study recent “Israeli threats, and saw in them ... a direct threat to the stability” of the border region, the president’s office said in a statement.

They agreed to act “at various regional and international levels to prevent Israel from building the cement wall...and from the possibility of infringing on Lebanon’s oil and gas wealth and its (territorial) waters.”

Aoun, Berri, and Hariri will present a series of measures to Lebanon’s Higher Defense Council and security officials at a meeting on Wednesday, it said.

(Source: agencies)

## Syrian troops deal new blows to ISIL terrorists

Syrian government forces, supported by allied fighters from popular defense groups, have carried out fresh operations against the remnants of Daesh Takfiri terrorists across the violence-plagued Arab country, inflicting substantial losses on them.

A military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Syria’s official news agency, SANA, that army units and their allies had established full control over the villages of al-Naqroush, Southern al-Talal, Eastern Rajm al-Abil as well as Western Rajm al-Abil in the northeastern part of the country’s western province of Hama.

The source added that scores of Daesh extremists were killed or wounded during the military operations, and a considerable amount of their munitions was destroyed as well.

Syrian bomb disposal units after combed the liberated areas for hidden ordnance and explosive devices, which Daesh Takfiris had planted there to slow down the advance of the army forces and pro-government fighters.

Separately, Syrian army soldiers regained control over a number of town and villages in the northwestern province of Idlib, namely Ghaital, Khirbet Maradish, Khirbet Umm Rajoun, Rasm Misha’al al-Batushiya and Ghazila.

Syrian army units, in cooperation with allied forces, also clashed with terrorists from the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham Takfiri group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, as the latter attacked military outposts in Tal al-Sultan village of the country’s northern province of Aleppo.

Syrian troops thwarted the assaults, killing and injuring many terrorists in the process. They also destroyed a car bomb before it could reach its designated target.

(Source: SANA)

## China tests missile interceptor system

China has successfully tested an anti-missile system, the Chinese Defense Ministry has announced, stressing the defensive nature of the system.

The ministry said on Tuesday the “ground-based midcourse anti-missile intercept technology” had been tested within Chinese territory a day earlier.

“The test reached its expected goals,” the ministry said, stressing that it was “defensive and not aimed at any country.”

The statement provided no further details.

China is concerned about the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system in South Korea, which Washington claims is itself aimed against perceived missile threats from North Korea. But some reports say the THAAD can be reconfigured to conduct offensive launches, and Beijing says its powerful radar system can be used for surveillance purposes against China.

China and Russia, which have close military and diplomatic ties, have repeatedly expressed their opposition to the deployment of the THAAD, saying it will do nothing to help ease the tensions with Pyongyang.

(Source: Xinhua)

## New U.S. nuke strategy a blow to progress made to denuclearize

Thinking that building up smaller nuclear weapons that are easier to use would be more effective in deterring attacks by enemies seems to signal a lack of good sense.

If the border between nuclear and conventional weapons blurs, the likelihood of accidental nuclear war would rise.

The new policy also warns that the United States could use nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear attacks. Potential scenarios of such nuclear responses apparently include large-scale cyberwarfare. But this thought indicates a dangerous willingness to choose nuclear options. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which the United States has signed, requires nuclear powers to pursue nuclear disarmament.

As a leading nuclear power, the United States should bear an especially heavy responsibility. By also applying its America First principle to nuclear strategy, the Trump administration is acting in an irresponsible way that could deliver a heavy blow to the international regime to prevent nuclear proliferation.

In his State of the Union address to Congress last month, Trump said, sarcastically, “Perhaps someday in the future there will be a magical moment when the countries of the world will get together to eliminate their nuclear weapons.”

(Source: The Asahi Shimbun)



## Beckham: UCL is Madrid and Ronaldo´s moment to shine

David Beckham conceded Real Madrid face a tough task against in-form Paris Saint-Germain but he believes the blockbuster Champions League last-16 tie is the Spanish team’s time to shine.

Madrid became the first side to retain the Champions League title last season, while they also won LaLiga as Cristiano Ronaldo spearheaded the double but Zinedine Zidane’s men have endured a campaign to forget in 2017-18. The Spanish champions are fourth and a staggering 19 points adrift of bitter-rivals Barcelona as they prepare to face Ligue 1 leaders PSG on February 14. While acknowledging the challenge of PSG, former winger Beckham said via Marca: “It is going to be difficult with PSG on top form at the moment. “This is the moment for Los Blancos as they love this competition. Look at the players that they have like Cristiano. “It is in these moments that the top players come to the fore and the game is going to be incredible to watch.”

Beckham won titles with both Madrid and PSG – who are 11 points clear atop the Ligue 1 standings thanks to Neymar and Edinson Cavnai – during an illustrious career. but the 42-year-old refused to pick a side. “It is very difficult to choose as I like both clubs and they have a lot of passion,” the Englishman added.

“I had four great years at Madrid, I was not so long at PSG but obviously winning the league was great. I love the club, the people and the fans are incredible, and I say the same about Real Madrid.”

(Source: Four Four Two)

## Russian athletes appeal to CAS for Olympic invites

Another 32 Russian athletes have filed appeals at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in the hope of being invited to compete at the Winter Olympics. Each of them had failed to pass the mandatory IOC vetting process. Among the 32 Russians to file appeals on Tuesday were six-time Olympic gold medallist Viktor Ahn, world cross-country skiing champion Sergei Ustyugov and world biathlete champion Anton Shipulin. The athletes were not invited to compete at the Winter Games in Pyeongchang after failing to pass a vetting process put in place by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to screen Russians in light of suspicious doping practices at the 2014 Sochi Games.

Hearing to be held on Wednesday

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) said it expected its ad-hoc division to hold a hearing on the matter on Wednesday, two days before the Games are due to open. As decision is expected to be announced shortly afterwards.

The IOC has invited 169 Russian athletes to compete under a neutral flag in South Korea, following the suspension of the Russian Olympic Committee over evidence of state-sponsored doping.

Separately, 28 Russians have had Olympic life bans in connection with doping practices overturned by the CAS. The Lausanne-based tribunal reduced the bans of 11 other Russians to just the February 9-25 Games. On Sunday, the IOC turned down a Russian request to allow 13 athletes and two coaches, who were among the 28 to have their bans lifted, to take part in the Games.

Russian athletes are to compete under a neutral flag in Pyeongchang and will be known as “Olympic Athletes from Russia.”

(Source: DW)

## British boxer banned for two years after positive test

British Olympic boxer Muhammad Ali has been banned for two years after failing a drugs test.

The 21-year-old flyweight tested positive for the anabolic steroid Trenbolone during the World Series of Boxing in Morocco in April last year. He said: “All they caught me with was two nanograms. I can’t explain it. “I was trying to make 52kg and I wouldn’t want to put muscle on. I was literally trying to cut weight. It doesn’t make sense.”

Ali was provisionally suspended in October and has now reached a “settlement agreement” with the International Boxing Association (AIBA). AIBA acknowledged Ali had not taken the substance with the intention to cheat. Trenbolone, which supports muscle growth, is on the World Anti-Doping Agency’s prohibited list. Ali argued he may have eaten contaminated meat in Morocco, or had the steroid in his system after consuming a drink intended for his father. But AIBA deemed Ali did not provide enough proof to establish he was not at fault for the violation.

Ali, who lost in the first round of the 2016 Rio Olympics, believes the length of his ban is “extreme” and said it “couldn’t have been any worse”.

The European silver medalist added: “I didn’t leave my bedroom for five months. I was so depressed, but it is what it is. I’ve just got to do my time and move on.

“I thought it would be a six-month suspension or something.”

(Source: BBC)

## UEFA maintain ban for Real’s Carvajal

Holders Real Madrid have been dealt a blow ahead of next week’s Champions League last-16 first leg tie with Paris St Germain after UEFA said on Tuesday that it will uphold the decision to suspend defender Dani Carvajal for deliberately picking up a booking.

Carvajal was shown a yellow card in the 90th minute for time wasting in the La Liga club’s 6-0 group stage win over APOEL Nicosia.

As it was the full back’s third in that phase of the competition it ruled him out of their final group game, but in theory would have meant he was available for the upcoming round of 16 fixtures without the risk of further immediate suspension.

However, last December UEFA announced that their Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body felt the player breached Article 15 of its disciplinary regulations and rejected the European champions’ appeal against the extended sanction.

“The appeal lodged by Real Madrid CF has been dismissed and the UEFA CEDB’s decision of 7 December is confirmed,” a UEFA statement said.

“Given that Carvajal did not participate in the match between Real Madrid CF and Borussia Dortmund played on 6 December 2017, the player still has to serve one UEFA competition match for which he would be otherwise eligible.”

(Source: Mirror)

# The flowers of Manchester



Players and fans were excited because we were up against players we’d never seen. There was none of the TV coverage you have now. And you had to be champions to be in the European Cup. We had only one team in the competition, not four like now. It was a marvellous adventure.

“We’d played Real Madrid, the champions, the year before and learned a lot and I’m convinced we would have won the European Cup in 1958 because the players were so good. In fact, with players like Duncan Edwards and Roger Byrne, it’s quite possible England could have won the World Cup in Sweden that year.”

After stopping to refuel at a snowy Munich Airport, United’s plane was due to begin the final leg of the trip. The passengers, including journalists, supporters and staff, boarded

the plane three times, as twice attempted take-offs failed.

On the third occasion there would be no turning back, but the aircraft - hampered by the build up of slush on the runway - failed to get off the ground in time.

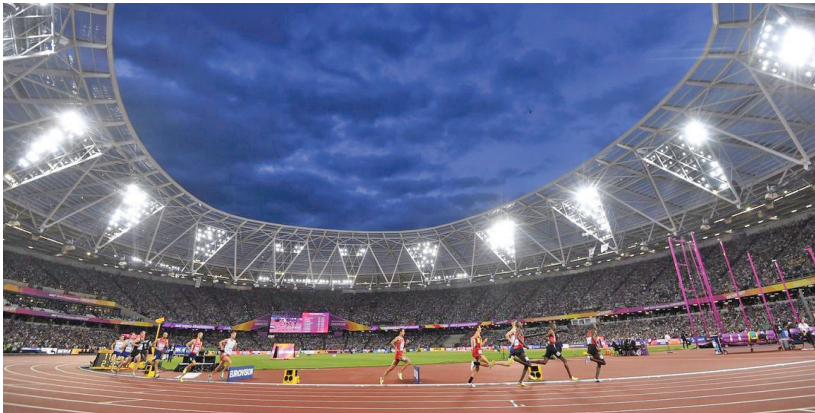
As the BEA airliner crashed through the airport’s perimeter fence and into a nearby house at 3.04pm, the United dream, and several of Matt Busby’s Babes, died with it.

Those who perished became known as ‘the Flowers of Manchester’, a phrase coined in the folk song recorded by the band The Spinners in 1962. The final verse of the song is perhaps the most poignant:

■ **The world at their feet**

A total of 23 lives would eventually be lost, including eight members of the first team squad, among them the captain of the

## London to host inaugural eight-nation World Cup



A new World Cup event featuring eight leading athletics nations and intended to attract a wider audience to the sport will take place in London this year, British Athletics said on Monday.

Britain and the United States will compete along with South Africa, Poland, France, China, Germany and Jamaica in the inaugural World Cup from July 14-15 at London Stadium, venue for the 2012 Olympic athletics events and last year’s world championships.

“This is one of the exciting innovative events we are seeing in our sport and our thanks go to British Athletics and the Mayor of London for creating it and hosting it,” International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) President Sebastian Coe said in a statement.

“We have 8 lanes, 8 top nations, 8 teams and a host of world class athletes lining up in each event to win the trophy and prize pot. This will be a fast-paced and exhilarating experience for athletes and fans.”

One male and one female athlete from each nation will be selected for every field event and each track race up to 1500 meters, with the total prize pot set at \$2 million over two evening sessions.

UK Athletics Chairman Richard Bowker said the World Cup event was an extension of the original idea to host a competition between Britain and the U.S.

Because other countries were keen to become involved an eight-country format was devised to extend the sport’s reach to a new audience.

“The two sessions will be in the evening, under lights with straight finals. There will be no heats or rounds so it should be even more exciting,” he said, adding that it might become more than a one-off.

Bowker defended the timing, which was criticized by British athlete Kelly Sotherton on social media for clashing with soccer’s World Cup final and Wimbledon tennis finals.

“We were obviously aware of the dates,” said Bowker, pointing out that organizers were constrained by the stadium sharing arrangement with Premier League soccer club West Ham United.

“There is limited availability. We know the World Cup Final happens in the afternoon, UK time, so we would say that everyone can come along afterwards. What a fantastic weekend of sport that will be.”

(Source: Reuters )

## Gary Cahill & Thibaut Courtois back Chelsea manager



Chelsea captain Gary Cahill has backed manager Antonio Conte and says the players need to “look in the mirror” following their 4-1 loss at Watford.

After the Blues’ second straight three-goal defeat, Conte said “the club have to take another decision” if they think he is not doing a good enough job.

The defending champions are now fourth in the Premier League, 19 points behind leaders Manchester City.

“Whatever is decided, the players have to take responsibility,” Cahill said.

“The manager has done an absolutely unbelievable job.”

Conte has given his players three days off following the Watford defeat.

Chelsea do not play again until their Premier League game against West Brom at Stamford Bridge on Monday and the Italian feels they will benefit from the extra time off after a period that has seen them play a midweek game every week since the middle of November.

Conte guided Chelsea to the league title in his debut season but his future has repeatedly been questioned since losing to Burnley on the opening day of the current campaign.

Defender Cahill, who has won the league twice in six years with the Blues, said Monday’s defeat at Vicarage Road was the club’s “lowest point of the season”.

“This is the worst I’ve felt for quite a while,” he told BBC Sport. “Performance-wise, I didn’t recognize us or myself. It was abysmal.

“We just need to keep strong. I’ve been here before at this club - it’s about staying calm. It hurts a lot when you come off after a performance like that.”

Goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois also gave support to the Italian boss, who has 18 months remaining on his contract.

“We believe in him and we believe in our team,” he told the club website. “We have two bad results and we just try to get back, regroup and continue.

“We showed that we wanted to fight, even with 10 men, and that shows we have character, but when you lose twice like that it is not good and there are questions raised.”

When asked about his position at the club, Conte told BBC Radio 5 live: “It is the same. I stay here, try to work and put all of myself into the work. The pressure? Which pressure? What is the pressure?”

(Source: BBC)

## North Korean inclusion a ‘positive thing,’ says ski star



American ski racer Ted Ligety says the inclusion of North Korean athletes at the Winter Olympics can help “bring the world together.”

In a thawing of relations between the countries, athletes from North and South Korea will march under a unified flag at the Games’ opening ceremony Friday and will field a combined women’s ice hockey team.

A total of 22 North Korean athletes will compete in ice hockey, figure skating, short track speedskating, cross-country skiing and alpine skiing in PyeongChang.

Critics claim South Korea’s Games are being overshadowed and worry about North Korea’s motives, but double Olympic champion Ligety said the move was a “positive thing.”

“I think it’s great that the North Koreans are going to be able to compete at the Games,” the 33-year-old told reporters.

“I think that an important part of the mission of the Olympics is being inclusive and to try to bring the world together.”

Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee, said achieving this outcome “was not an easy journey,” but added he was proud of what the representatives of North and South Korea, the IOC and the PyeongChang

says he will participate in the new team event if compatriot Mikaela Shiffrin does.

The 16-team knockout event, featuring two men and two women from each country in a parallel giant slalom format, makes its debut at the Games.

“It depends on if somebody else is going to be involved in that, which really is a determining factor in our chances to get a medal. So I will if she [Shiffrin] is,” Ligety added.

The 22-year-old Shiffrin is the defending slalom champion and is bidding for at least three gold medals in PyeongChang.

The triple world champion and runaway World Cup leader this season will race in the slalom, giant slalom and Alpine Combined (downhill and slalom) and will decide on entering others events depending on how she feels, her agent Kilian Albrecht told CNN Sport.

“I hate to lose at anything, so if there’s a competition out there, we want to win,” Team USA head men’s coach Sasha Rearick told reporters.

“We’re going to put forward the best team we can put forward.”

(Source: CNN)



# Iran defeat Iraq at AFC Futsal Championship

**S P O R T S** Defending champions **d e s k** Iran defeated Iraq 5-3 on Tuesday to win Group C in a match that proved the first real test of the holders' credentials.

Both Iran and Iraq had already qualified for the quarter-final ahead of the match at University of Taipei Gymnasium but, nevertheless, it was to be a hard-fought and intriguing contest to see who would top the standings.

With Iran having netted double figures in both previous ties against Myanmar and China, Iraq shocked the defending champions by taking the lead with seven minutes played as Waleed Khalid burst up the field on the counter to fire across Alireza Samimi into the far corner.

But Iraq's joy was cut-off in less than a minute. Hossein Tayebi bravely challenged flying Iraq goalkeeper Zaher Mahdi for Farhad Tavakoli's chipped ball forward, and his header looped into the unguarded net.

And with just over eight minutes remaining Iran completed the turnaround with Ali Asghar Hassanzadeh notching his seventh of the tournament after his shot took a wicked deflection off Hasan Ali to wrong-foot Mahdi.

Iraq were determined to restore parity before the break, though, and Samimi needed to be on his toes to keep out several efforts, including a firmly-struck shot from Salim Faisal that needed a particularly agile parry, while at the other end Mahdi bravely smothered at the feet of Tayebi.

It was a closely fought affair after the restart and it took over five minutes before



the next goal was scored, Moslem Oladghobad tapping home Tayebi's cross at the back post to double Iran's lead.

Firas Mohammed reduced the deficit to 3-2 by converting Khalid's cross with a little over 10 minutes remaining but, as before, the Iraq goal triggered an immediate response from their opponents with Tavakoli side-footing in a fine strike to restore the two-goal advantage.

The back-and-forth nature of the game continued with Mohammed adding his second

and Iraq's third of the night as he headed home after a three-on-one counterattack.

But it was Tayebi who had the final say in the game as he took the outright lead in the top goalscorers standings with his second of the night and eighth overall to give Iran the 5-3 victory.

"It was expected that we would have a tough game. We know Iraq very well, as we play each other two to three times a year. The tough teams always give tough games. It was clear Iraq wanted to be number one

in the group so they played a strong game," Iran coach Mohammad Nazemasharieh told the-afc.com.

"Time by time and step by step, the games get harder and harder as the tournament progresses. The knockout stage is no joke, if you make mistakes you'll be eliminated. We may look to be more conservative in some matches going forward," he added.

Iran will meet Group D runner-up on Thursday.

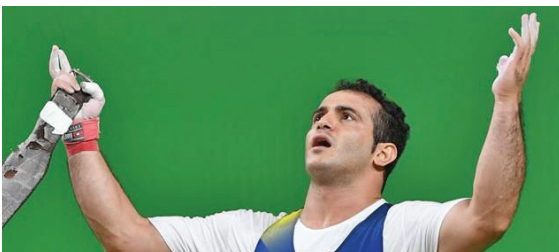
## IWF Lifters of the Year: Iran's Sohrab Moradi comes third

**S P O R T S** Iranian weightlifter Sohrab Moradi **d e s k** finished in third place in the 2017 IWF Lifters of the Year.

Both the male and the female categories received 23,301 votes, BarBend reported.

Georgia's Lasha Talakhade, +105kg weight class lifter, received 9,804 votes while second place finisher Egyptian Ihab Mahmoud got 8,491 votes and Moradi came third with 3,142.

Moradi snatched a gold medal at the 2017 International



Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Championships

He also broke two world records in winning the 94 kilogram class.

Spain's Lydia Valentin Perez, -75kg weight class woman lifter, won by an enormous margin, receiving more votes than the four runners up combined: 16,406. Second place went to Taiwanese athlete Kuo Hsing-Chun with 2,917 votes, followed by Sarah Robles of the United States with 1,606.

The IWF has held the Lifter of the Year competition since 1982, though it only opened to female athletes in 1991.

## Octavio very satisfied with Iran's performance at Persian Beach Soccer Cup

**S P O R T S** Iran national beach soccer head coach **d e s k** Marco Octavio says he is very satisfied with his men's performance in the Persian Beach Soccer Cup.

Iran claimed the title in Bushehr in late January after three wins over Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Spain.

One week ahead of the competition, the Brazilian coach was forced to leave Iran for solving family problems in his country. Octavio's assistant Abbas Hashempour led the team in the competition.

"I am very happy with our performance in Persian Cup. We improve our tactic system and won the title with new players. I support Hashampour in Persian Cup after he headed the team in all the matches," Marco Octavio told Tehran Times.

"I am in Brazil at the moment to solve some family problems. I will return to Tehran as soon as possible to start our preparation for the next Beach Soccer World Cup," the Brazilian concluded.



## Conte's job as Chelsea manager secure



Antonio Conte is in no immediate danger of being sacked in the wake of Chelsea's humiliating 4-1 defeat against Watford on Monday, sources have told ESPN FC.

A second limp performance and lopsided scoreline at Vicarage Road, following a 3-0 loss at home to Bourne-

mouth on Wednesday, left Conte's future as head coach in serious doubt.

But while there is grave concern at Chelsea's slump in form since the turn of the year -- they have won just two of 10 matches in all competitions in 2018, failing to score on four occasions -- the club hierarchy will only intervene if it becomes clear that a top-four finish in the Premier League is in jeopardy.

Losing to Watford has left Chelsea fourth after 26 matches -- one point behind Liverpool and one point ahead of Tottenham Hotspur.

Sources told ESPN FC on Tuesday that Conte has given his Chelsea players three days off to rest, with the team not in action again until West Bromwich Albion visit Stamford Bridge next Monday.

Conte and several of his players have admitted in recent weeks that they are struggling to cope with the demands of a gruelling and, at times, unfavorable schedule that required Chelsea to play nine games in December and nine more in January.

The cost has been felt in the form of an untimely wave of injuries. Andreas Christensen limped out of the Bournemouth defeat with a hamstring problem, while Ross Barkley missed the Watford match with a similar issue picked up in training. There remains no timeframe for Alvaro Morata to return from lingering back pain.

Speaking after the Watford loss, Conte reiterated that he is not concerned by the possibility of losing his job.

"I'm not worried about my job," Conte said. "I work every day and I give 120 percent, OK? If this is enough, it's OK. Otherwise, the club can take a different decision. But I'm not worried."

"It's very difficult because, every day and every press conference, you ask me if I'm worried. No. I'm not worried. Tomorrow is another day. I can be the Chelsea coach or not. Which is the problem? My soul is clear."

I go to sleep without a problem that maybe, maybe, I could do this or that. I try to do everything. If it's not good, the club can make a different decision. Life goes on."

(Source: ESPN)

## IOC launch reforms they claim could save cities hosting the Olympics \$1 billion

More than 100 reforms have been unveiled by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) today in an attempt to cut the operational costs of running the Olympic Games.

It is claimed that the 118 measures, launched in a document entitled The New Norm, could cut as much as \$1 billion (£718 million/€806 million) from the costs of staging a Summer Olympic Games and \$500 million (£359 million/€403 million) for the Winter edition.

An Olympic Games Delivery Executive Steering Committee chaired by Australia's John Coates analysed "every function of operations", including venues, energy, broadcasting, accommodation, transport and technology and the Paralympic Games.

The IOC promised to work with cities "every step of the way to ensure that the Games are affordable, beneficial and sustainable".

"These are the biggest savings in the history of the Olympic Games," IOC President Thomas Bach said.

"It is a fundamental rethinking of the organisation of future Games."

"This will lead to a new norm - from the candidature for and the delivery of the Games through to their legacy."

Cuts to competition and training venues, and technology and energy are expected to generate the biggest cost reductions.

Other changes include a "3+4 year" approach to staffing in order to "streamline production and decrease human resource needs" in the first three years.



Engagement, planning and communication would be the primary focus in these years before a shift to detailed operational planning, readiness and delivery mode in the final four years.

More services will also be provided by International Federations, National Olympic Committees and TOP sponsors.

This includes the IOC having taken over the Olympic Information Service, which provides news and results for the media and had previously been an obligation of each Organising Committee.

Other "turnkey solution" include website and ticketing plans operated by the IOC and are unchanged from Games

to Games.

The exact functioning of this ticketing solution has not yet been explained in detail.

The project was praised by IOC members during today's Session.

Coates hopes that it will help encourage cities to bid for the Games as they will have more economic certainty over lower costs.

The IOC also distributing material such as promotional videos and information about past Olympics to cities in a bid to assist them.

There is interest from five countries in bidding for the 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Calgary in Canada, Stockholm in Sweden, Sion in Switzerland, Sapporo in Japan and either Reno, Denver or Salt Lake City in United States - for the 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Malaysian IOC member Tunku Imran suggested that they encourage Sapporo to bid for 2030, rather to 2026 to avoid a third successive East Asian Winter Olympic host.

Spain's IOC vice-president Juan Antonio Samaranch is helping coordinate the bids for 2026.

He dismissed the idea of asking Sapporo to delay their interest and revealed they were remaining "flexible" at this stage so would not do this.

Cities have until March 31 to declare their interest before the contest is due to officially begin in October.

(Source: Insidethegames.biz)

## Iran, Algeria friendly match confirmed



**S P O R T S** Iran national football team will face African **d e s k** powerhouse Algeria on March 27 in the Austrian capital of Vienna, an Iran Football Federation's official said.

The friendly match will be held as part of Team Melli's preparation for the 2018 World Cup.

Some media reports had suggested that the match is scheduled to take place in Paris.

Queiroz's team have been drawn in Group B along with Spain, Morocco and Portugal.

Iran will open the campaign with a match against Morocco at Saint Petersburg on June 15.

Team Melli, meanwhile, face Spain in Kazan on 20 June before meeting Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in Saransk five days later.

## Iran learn fate at 2018 Fed Cup Asia-Oceania Zone

**TASNIM** — Iran women's tennis team have learned their opponents at the Group II of the 2018 Fed Cup Asia-Oceania Zone.

The event will be held at the Bahrain Tennis Federation (BTF) hard courts in Isa Town from.

Pool 'A' consists of Lebanon, Uzbekistan and New Zealand. Pool 'B' includes Kyrgyzstan, Philippines and Singapore. Pool 'C' features Oman, Iran, Malaysia and Pacific Oceania while Pool 'D' has Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and hosts Bahrain.

The Fed Cup will run from Feb. 6 to 10 and Iran is one of the 16 teams vying for the promotional slot to Group I.

The Iranian team consist of Sara Azaddoost, Shahrzad Banisaeid, Kimiya Asbaghipour and Sadaf Sadeghvaziri.

## Former Juventus striker Baba Thiam to join Esteghlal

**IRNA** — Senegalese striker Mame Baba Thiam has reportedly reached an agreement with Iranian football club Esteghlal.

The 25-year-old player has traveled to Tehran to finalize his contract with the Blues.

Mame Baba Thiam started his playing career at Italian giant Inter Milan in 2011 and has also played at Avellino, South Tyrol, Lanciano, Juventus and Empoli.

Esteghlal also completed the signing of Macedonian central midfielder Bojan Najdenov on Monday.

The Blues are going to strengthen for the 2018 AFC Champions League.

Esteghlal have been drawn along with Al Rayyan of Qatar, Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia and Al Ain of the UAE in Group D of the competition.

Esteghlal will meet Al Rayyan of Qatar on Feb. 13 in Doha in their opening match.

Winfried Schafer's team also sit sixth in Iran Professional League, 19 points behind pacesetters Persepolis.

## Playing against Iran is the biggest challenge, Thailand futsal coach says

Thailand futsal coach Jose Maria Pazos says to play Iran in the 2018 AFC Futsal Championship's quarter-final is the biggest challenge.

Thailand advanced to the quarters as the Group D runners-up after Lebanon.

The Team will face 11-time champion Iran on Thursday.

"We have the biggest challenge in the quarter-final now. For me, the third best team in the world. If Iran play at 100 percent, no one in Asia can beat them. But if they don't play at their top level, and we play like we did against Kyrgyzstan, then we are one of the teams that can beat them," Jose Maria Pazos told the-afc.com.

(Source: the-afc)

## D.C. United agrees deals to sign Asad

Yamil Asad is heading for a return to Major League Soccer with D.C. United, sources with knowledge of the deal told ESPN FC.

D.C. United has agreements with Argentina club Velez Sarsfield to acquire Asad on an initial loan with an option to buy, as well as with Atlanta United, where Asad played last season on loan.

D.C. will send at least \$500,000 in allocation money to Atlanta for Asad's MLS rights, sources said. D.C. will also pay \$300,000 in loan fees to Velez for Asad, with an option to make it a full transfer for another \$700,000 at the end of the season -- matching the \$1 million buy option on Asad's contract with Atlanta last year.

D.C. United will use targeted allocation money to buy down Asad's cap hit this season.

Asad scored seven goals and added 13 assists for Atlanta United last season in its debut year in MLS, becoming a key piece of an attacking line that featured MLS Newcomer of the Year Miguel Almiron and star striker Josef Martinez.

(Source: Soccer.net)



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

Tehran exhibition displays photos of 1979 revolution

**A R T** TEHRAN – An exhibition opened at the Iran Photographers House in Tehran on Monday displaying rarely seen photos of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.



An art lover takes photos as she visits an exhibition of photos by Qasem Haj-Mohammadi at the Iran Photographers House in Tehran on February 5, 2018. (Tasnim/Mohammad-Ali Asadi)

A total of 65 photos by Qasem Haj-Mohammadi who worked for the Persian daily Ettela'at in 1979 has been selected for the exhibition entitled "Season of Awakening", the organizers announced on Tuesday.

The negatives have been damaged over the past four decades therefor some of the pictures have been retouched for the exhibition, which has been organized in collaboration with the Art Bureau.

The showcase will run until February 21 at the center located on the western end of Somayyeh Street.

"Nobody's Daughter Haewon" coming to Tehran museum

**A R T** TEHRAN — "Nobody's Daughter Haewon", a 2013 South Korean drama film written and directed by Hong Sang-soo will be screened at the Cinematheque of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art this afternoon.



A scene from "Nobody's Daughter Haewon"

The film will go on screen in the original language with Persian subtitles.

The narrative chronicles a few days in the life of a young woman who spins into depression following the departure of her mother to Canada.

Paul Simon is Homeward Bound after 50-year touring career

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Singer-songwriter Paul Simon announced on Monday he is quitting touring, saying it felt "a touch exhilarating, and something of a relief" to bring his 50-year performing career to an end.

In a Facebook posting, Simon, 76, said he would make a final tour - "Homeward Bound - The Farewell Tour" - of North America and Europe later this year. After that, the "Sounds of Silence" singer said he would do an occasional performance "in a (hopefully) acoustically pristine hall."

"I've often wondered what it would feel like to reach the point where I'd consider bringing my performing career to a natural end. Now I know: it feels a little unsettling, a touch exhilarating, and something of a relief," he wrote.

New York-based Simon said he came to the decision mostly because "I feel the travel and time away from my wife and family takes a toll that detracts from the joy of playing."

Simon's award-winning career includes a legendary partnership with singer Art Garfunkel. They released their first album in 1964 and went on to record classics including "Mrs. Robinson", "The Boxer" and "Bridge Over Troubled Water".

The duo split in 1970 and Simon launched a successful solo career with Grammy-winning albums like "Still Crazy After All These Years" and "Graceland".

Simon is the latest pop artist from the 1960s and 1970s to step back from touring. Elton John announced last month that he would be making a final three-year farewell tour, and Neil Diamond announced he was suffering from Parkinson's disease and would retire from touring.

"At Damascus Time" director wants Middle East to see his film

**1 →** "At Damascus Time" recounts the story of an Iranian pilot and his copilot son who are seized by Daesh forces in Syria when they are in the country to deliver a cargo of humanitarian relief supplies to people in a war-torn region.

Starring Hadi Hejazifar and Babak Hamidian, the film was financed by the Owj Arts and Media Organization, a Tehran-based institution producing revolutionary works in art and cinema.

A number of Syrian and Iraqi actors also collaborated in the project that was shot on location in Iran and Syria.

"At Damascus Time" was made by a soldier," Hatamikia said at the beginning of the press conference.

"I consider myself a soldier for the country and the system and my heart beats for those who engage in jihad," he added.

"I feel proud that all the technical stages of the film's production were implemented by my fellow Iranian colleagues in the country," he noted.

In response to a journalist who criticized the film's characters, calling them unbelievable, Hatamikia said, "One day, I gathered my team and screened videos issued by Daesh, showing their militants beheading or drowning men... I have not lived with the Daesh militants, but I did my best to present a proper image of them."

About the violent scenes of the movie, he said, "There was no way we could avoid making these scenes."

"I have never killed even a chicken in my life. Therefore making these scenes put me under intolerable mental pressure."



Director Ebrahim Hatamikia flashes a victory sign as he poses during a photocall for "At Damascus Time" at the 36th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran on February 5, 2018. (FFF/Moein Baqeri)

The technical aspects of "At Damascus Time" were also challenged at the press conference.

"I talked about Daesh, which eventually came into our country, please get it!" he answered.

"Are you asleep that you have forgotten Daesh and are talking about the technical aspects of my film?" he asked.

Majid Majidi hails drama on Iran-Iraq war

**A R T** TEHRAN — Majid Majidi, the director of the acclaimed movie "Muhammad, the Messenger of God", has praised his fellow director Bahram Tavakkoli for the accurate depiction of a true tragedy from the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war in his latest movie, "The Lost Strait".

"I praise Tavakkoli's honesty. He was not in the war, but has depicted the sincerity and purity of our soldiers in the best way through his movie," Majidi said after watching the film at the 36th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran on Monday.

The story of the film is set in the last days of the war just before Iran accepted UN Resolution 598, which



Javad Ezzati acts in a scene from "The Lost Strait" by Bahram Tavakkoli.

Maryam Najafi's "Flower and Bird" selected for W&N competition in London

**A R T** TEHRAN — "Flower and Bird", an oil painting by Iranian artist Maryam Najafi, has been selected for the Winsor & Newton Student Painting Competition in London.

The Damonfar Visual Arts Festival in Iran organized a competition on the national level to select works for the international contest, Damonfar director Seifollah Puya-Rad said in a press release on Tuesday.

Najafi, 32, also received \$500 worth

of W&N products for "Flower and Bird", which is from her series "Breathing Is Easier in Sleep".

"Flower and Bird" depicts the face of a woman in profile with a crow on her head against a background of floral motifs.

The painting was selected from numerous works judged by a jury of Masumeh Mozaffari, Behrang Samadzadegan and Maryam Khansari.

All the top winners from different countries will be taking part in the final

competition in London.

The final winner will have a three-day trip to England along with a companion and will pay a visit to the Winsor & Newton Headquarters in London.

The Damonfar Visual Arts Festival is organized biennially in Iran by the Damonfar Company, which is the Iranian representative of France's Pebeo and Germany's Faber-Castell, two companies that manufacture art materials. The company also represents W&N in Iran.



"Flower and Bird" from Maryam Najafi's series "Breathing Is Easier in Sleep"

Hugh Grant settles phone-hacking claim against Mirror newspapers

**LONDON (Reuters)** — British actor Hugh Grant has settled a legal case against Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) after the company admitted that reporters at its three tabloid titles had hacked into his voicemails over a 10-year period to get scoops, he said on Monday.

Grant, who is known internationally for roles in films such as "Four Weddings and a Funeral" and "Notting Hill", won substantial damages from MGN and will donate them to Hacked Off, a group that campaigns against press intrusion.

Grant was one of the highest profile victims of phone-hacking by reporters, a practice that became widespread at some of Britain's fiercely competitive tabloids but was exposed during a major scandal in 2011.

Most of the focus at the time was on the News of the World, a Sunday tabloid owned by Rupert Murdoch which the media mogul shut down at the height of the scandal.

Later, it emerged that phone-hacking had also occurred at the Sun, another Murdoch title, and at the Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror and Sunday People, all owned by MGN which is part of Trinity Mirror.

"This newspaper group has misled the public and its shareholders for many years; and it has let down its readers and its hard-working journalists," Grant said in a statement after his lawyers announced in court that the case had been settled.

"Those journalists have paid the price for the wrongdoing of executives who have left with large pay-offs and share options," he said, naming several former editors of the three Trinity Mirror titles.

During a short hearing to inform the London High Court that the case had



British actor Hugh Grant arrives at the Leveson Inquiry at the High Court in central London, Britain November 21, 2011. (Reuters/Andrew Winning)

been settled, a lawyer for MGN said the company acknowledged phone-hacking was morally wrong and deeply regretted the acts of its former employees.

"MGN accepts that the unlawful interception of voicemail messages and procurement of private information about the Claimant and others should never have happened," the lawyer said.

A Trinity Mirror spokesman said the company had no further comment beyond what was said in court.

Grant's complaint related not just to phone-hacking but also to surveillance and blagging, a method whereby reporters would pose as other people to coax private information out of sources who did not realize they were speaking to the press.

Oscars chief says Hollywood abuses being sunk into oblivion

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — The president of the group that hands out the annual Oscars declared on Monday that some of the worst abuses in the movie industry were finally being "jack-hammered into oblivion."

John Bailey, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, told more than 200 Oscar nominees that the Academy was working hard toward a greater diversity.

The Oscars, the highest honors in the movie business, have been criticized in recent years for excluding people of color from nominations. In response to the #OscarsSoWhite social media campaign, it has broadened its white, old and male-dominated membership to invite more women and people of color into its 8,000-strong ranks.

Addressing the class of 2018 nominees at an annual luncheon, Bailey said the 90-year-old Academy was reinventing itself with programs committed to inclusion and diversity "in today's era of a greater awareness and responsibility in balancing gender, race, ethnicity and religion."

As a 75-year old white man, Bailey said he was gratified that "the fossilized bedrock of many of Hollywood's worst abuses are being jack-hammered into oblivion."

Nominees for this year's Oscars, to be handed out in March, include female director Greta Gerwig and African-American director Jordan Peele, Rachel Morrison as the first Oscar-nominated female cinematographer, four black actors, and movies that range from female-driven stories to romantic fantasy, war films and contemporary reflections on race.



President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences John Bailey arrives at the 90th Oscars Nominees Luncheon in Los Angeles, California, February 05, 2018. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

Bailey did not directly refer to the sexual misconduct scandal that has jolted Hollywood and led to dozens of actors, directors, producers and agents being fired, forced to step down or dropped from creative projects.

The Hollywood awards season has consequently been dominated by passionate speeches about female empowerment, calls for equal pay and better opportunities for women in front of and behind the camera, and solidarity with victims of sexual harassment.

The Oscar winners are voted on by the 8,000 members of the Academy of Motion Pictures and will be handed out at a ceremony in Hollywood on March 4.