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ARTICLE

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

Head of the Tehran Times social desk

## Messy air pollution: Transport sector largely at fault

Air pollution is the bane of urban dwellers. The suffocating air which is hard to breathe has actually caused a great deal of discomfort for the citizens in big cities around the world and is linked with serious and adverse health effects on top of everything.

Among numerous reasons behind air pollution the transport sector, mainly buses operating on fossil fuels, can be deemed as the main guilty party.

Globally transportation accounts for about 21 percent of greenhouse gasses. The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicated that transport sector emissions of carbon dioxide will increase by 92 percent between 1990 and 2020. Most importantly the age of the transport fleet, the technology used within it and the extent to which such vehicles are maintained as well as the availability of appropriate fuel can decide the amount of emission attributed to the transport sector.

According to news pieces quoted from various health or environmental officials over 70 percent of pollutants in Iran’s capital, Tehran, is produced by clunker buses. In a press conference held on January 13 in Tehran, deputy environment chief Masoud Tajrishi said that some 97 percent of buses in Tehran are old.

Moreover, on February 7 Mohammad Javad Heshmati, deputy prosecutor general, said that more than 80 percent of the air pollution in metropolises is caused by low quality fuel.

So it is not so farfetched to conclude that air pollution in Tehran and other metropolises of Iran are derived from low quality fuel and the old transportation system.

To every sound mind the only way to address this problem is to increase fuel quality to meet international standards and renovating the public transport which entails budget allocation. This is while Majlis (the Iranian parliament) has sharply trimmed the budget proposed for the development of public transit by 50 percent last week. ➔12

## Former defense minister says Iran is a big help in push to eliminate ISIL

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
By Mohammad Ghaderi

TEHRAN — Iran’s ex-defense minister says that Iran’s engagement in the fight against ISIL in the Middle East has been a wakeup call to the world about the menace of this and other terrorist groups.

Hussein Dehghan in his recent conversation with the Tehran Times believes that terrorist groups are the root cause of regional and global insecurity and instability.

Below is part two of the interview with Iran’s former defense minister Dehghan:

Washington did achieve its objectives and

gained control in many countries, except for a short time in Tunisia and in Egypt when the Muslim Brotherhood was in power. The Egyptian revolution of 2011 was the first experience for the Muslim Brotherhood’s in power, but they soon faced the U.S. and Zionist plots.

With the presence of the U.S. military in Iraq, Daesh or ISIL first appeared in Fallujah, a city that had come under heavy attack by U.S. forces. Initially, ISIL operatives were mainly from the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party, but over time others, actually trained by the U.S. in various parts of the world, joined them.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was a prisoner of the U.S. in Iraq for a while, was chosen and

trained by the U.S. government to create chaos in Syria and the region. The While House had few clear objectives in mind except chaos, earning the moniker “Empire of Chaos”. First, they wanted to destroy the infrastructures of Arab countries in the Middle East, except the Arab states along the Persian Gulf. Many people were uprooted by the conflicts and many martyred.

The aftermath of a war doesn’t just end with one generation, but it affects generations to come. A war can destroy cultural heritages, old traditions and many aspects of civilization. Daesh had planned to ruin the holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala, but the Islamic Republic at the request of the Iraqis and Syrians entered the fray in the fight against ISIL. ➔7

## Iran crowned AFC futsal champion for 12th time

Iran eased past Japan 4-0 in the AFC Futsal Championship final and emerged winners for the 12th time.

On Sunday at the Xinzhuang Gymnasium in Taipei, Ali Asghar Hassanzadeh gave Iran the lead in the first half, and further goals from Farhad Tavakoli, Hossein Tayebi and Hassanzadeh again secured them a second consecutive title.

The battle between the Continent’s two futsal giants began as expected, with both sides playing

a high pressure game with intense marking from the first blow of the whistle, and Mahdi Javid came dangerously close for Iran in the opening minutes when his effort struck the goal frame.

Japan head coach Bruno Garcia kept his players fully charged with flying substitutions which forced Iran to constantly adapt to the changing formations, the-afc.com reported.

Both sides were evenly matched and had their fair share of possession, but Japan had the upper

hand in shots on target, and after 17 minutes of play, Ryosuke Nishitani came closest for the East Asians with his effort from a difficult angle rocking the bar.

But a minute from the half-time whistle, Tavakoli intercepted Japan goalkeeper Igor Pires’ long range pass, and surged down the left flank before sending a neat pass to skipper Hassanzadeh for a fine shot to the bottom right to break the deadlock at the Xinzhuang Gymnasium. ➔15

## U.S. exit from JCPOA will be ‘big strategic mistake’: Rouhani

POLITICS DESK TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that the United States will make a “big strategic mistake” if it decides to pull out of the 2015 multilateral nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Rouhani made the remarks while speaking in a gathering of a group of ambassadors and heads of foreign organizations in Tehran.

According to Press TV, Rouhani said withdrawal from the accord, would be “America’s biggest folly in its political relations with the world, particularly with our region.”

He emphasized that Iran has never violated its commitments under the JCPOA and expressed hope the nuclear deal would remain solid and turn into an appropriate model for resolving regional and international issues.

Rouhani said Iran will not be the first to violate the landmark accord, but it has appropriate plans should the U.S. decides to exit the JCPOA.

The Trump administration has been seeking to link the nuclear deal to Iran’s missile program which Tehran insists is purely for defensive purposes. In remarks on January 6, Trump also gave the U.S. Congress and

the European Union 120 days to fix what he called “disastrous flaws” in the deal otherwise he would pull out of it.

Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution on international affairs, reiterated the Islamic Republic’s “legitimate” right to develop missiles for its defense, saying the country does not need permission from any state to bolster its missile program.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran will not seek anybody’s permission to develop its missile capabilities and will use missiles in any way and quantity it deems necessary, and this is a legitimate right of Iran,” Velayati remarked.

## Russian passenger plane crashes near Moscow; 71 feared dead

A Russian passenger plane crashed near Moscow after take-off on Sunday and the Kremlin said all 71 people on board were feared dead.

It was not immediately clear what had caused the crash, which happened as temperatures hovered around minus 5 degrees Celsius with periodic snowfalls.

Investigators said they had opened a criminal case into the incident and were looking at all possibilities.

The plane, a short-haul AN-148 operated by Russia’s Saratov Airlines, was en route from Moscow to the provincial city of Orsk in the Orenburg region about 900 miles (1,500 km) southeast of the Russian capital.

President Vladimir Putin offered his condolences to those who had lost relatives and ordered a special investigative commission to be set up.

“According to preliminary information, nobody survived,” the Kremlin said in a statement. TV images of the crash site showed wreckage of the plane, including at least one engine, lying in fields covered with thick snow.

Helicopters were at the scene as well as rescuers on snowmobiles. An official of the Emergency Situations Ministry said two bodies had been found at the site.

The plane, manufactured in 2010, had been carrying 65 passengers and six crew. It disappeared from radar screens shortly after taking

off from Moscow’s Domodedovo airport.

“Debris has been found, there are no survivors,” the TASS news agency quoted an unnamed emergency service source as saying.

Elena Voronova, a spokeswoman for Saratov Airlines, said there had been no concerns about the technical condition of the plane, which had went into service with her company in 2016.

Images broadcast on state TV showed relatives waiting at Orsk airport, some with their heads in their hands.

The city’s mayor told the Rossiya 24 TV channel a team of psychologists was working at the airport to comfort people.

(Source: Reuters)

## Iran dismisses Israeli drone claim as ‘ridiculous’

POLITICS DESK TEHRAN — Iran on Saturday rejected as “ridiculous” claims by the Israeli regime that it had intercepted an Iranian drone launched from Syria, stressing the Islamic Republic’s military advisory presence in Syria is at the request of the “legitimate” Syrian government.

“Claims about the flight of an Iranian drone ... are too ridiculous to be addressed because the Islamic Republic of Iran has advisory presence in Syria at the request of the country’s legitimate and constitutional government,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said.

“The government and army of Syria as an independent country have a legitimate right to defend [the country’s] territorial integrity and counter any type of foreign aggression,” Qassemi added, Press TV reported.

### Blame game

The spokesperson further said that the “illegitimate” Israeli regime cannot cover up its atrocities and crimes against Muslim nations in the region by playing a blame game and spreading lies.

On Sunday, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani also rejected the Israeli claims as a lie.

“The claim by the Zionists to damage Iranian bases in Syria is a lie,” Ali Shamkhani told reporters in Tehran on the sidelines of the rallies marking the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution victory.

Iran has “advisory, not military presence” in Syria, the top security official emphasized.

The remarks came after the Syrian military said it had hit at least one intruding Israeli F-16 warplane that attacked positions inside Syrian territory, sending it down in flames and smoke.

### ‘Era of hit and run is over’

“The Syrian nation proved this time that it will respond to any act of aggression, as the era of hit and run is over,” Shamkhani pointed out.

Syrian TV cited a Syrian military official as saying that Syrian aerial defense had responded to Israeli “aggression” against an army base in central Syria.

The Israeli military confirmed that one F-16 had gone down in northern Israel, and that its two pilots had ejected and had been located and transferred to hospital.

The Israeli army said later that one of the pilots was in serious condition, according to The Jerusalem Post. ➔13



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



### IRGC continues to monitor ISIL: general

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says it is continuing to closely monitor the activities of Daesh (ISIL) even as the terror group has lost all of the territory that it once held in Iraq and Syria.

The IRGC “has monitored Daesh’s strategies and geographical scope, and its observation is still ongoing,” IRGC spokesman Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif told IRNA news agency on Saturday.

He said the IRGC has now obtained “a good knowledge” of the terrorist group, adding that the IRGC would never allow the re-emergence of Daesh in Iran’s surroundings.



### Iran exhibits ballistic missile on revolution anniversary

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran unveiled its Ghadr ballistic missile in central Tehran on Sunday, the date marking the 39th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

The Ghadr ballistic missile is capable of hitting targets at a range of 2,000 km.

The showcase of the missile is considered a show of defiance by the Islamic Republic against Western pressure to curb its ballistic missile program.

Tehran has repeatedly said that its missile program is solely defensive and it does not pose any threat to other countries in the region and beyond.



### Hackers from U.S., UK targeted Iranian media websites: ICT Ministry

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — On Sunday the Information and Communications Technology Ministry issued a report on the Saturday night cyber-attacks against several Iranian media outlets, saying the websites were attacked from the United States and Britain.

According to the report, the websites of Ghanoon, Arman and Setare Sobh newspapers were targeted on Saturday night, and the three websites can be targeted again.

The report said security issues were one of the important factors that led to the attacks. It also published the names of 27 more websites with similar issues.



### We are not too friendly to Iran, Qatari FM says

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani has said that his country is “not too friendly to Iran,” adding that Qatar only wants a “peaceful neighborhood”.

Speaking with CNN’s Fareed Zakaria, Al Thani said, “We are sharing borders with Iran as we are sharing borders with Saudi.”

“We have differences with Iran’s policies... but those differences and conflicts won’t be solved in a battlefield. They will be solved by dialogue.”

He also said Saudi Arabia’s accusations that Qatar supports terrorism are baseless.



### Jahangir, UN special rapporteur on Iran, dies

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Asma Jahangir, the chair of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, has died of a heart attack, her daughter Muneze Jahangir said.

Jahangir, 66, suffered a cardiac arrest in Lahore on Saturday night and died the following day, the Guardian reported.

She was also the president of the Supreme Court bar association and had served as the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Iran since 2016.

Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi led tributes to Jahangir, saying her death was a great loss for the legal fraternity, and praying for her and her family.



### Tehran prosecutor confirms Seyed-Emami’s suicide

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Abbas Jafari-Dolatabadi, Tehran’s prosecutor general, on Sunday confirmed suicide of Kavous Seyed-Emami, a sociology professor at Imam Sadiq University.

The professor’s suicide was first announced by his son through Instagram on Saturday.

The prosecutor said Seyed-Emami, also an environmentalist, was accused of espionage and committed suicide after confessing his crimes while in prison.

Along with Seyed-Emami and other board members of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, a hunter-businessman named Morad Tahbaz was also arrested. Tahbaz, who was famous for hunting rams, deer and red deer through a private company called “Iran Safari”, became a member of the Strategic Committee of Protecting Iranian Cheetah last year.

# Spectacular march



By Negar Asadi

**TEHRAN** — Iranians poured into the streets in large numbers on Sunday to mark the 39th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution and express their loyalty to the Islamic republic system.

The people from all walks of life took part in the rallies in more than 1000 cities and towns across the country.

The Bahman 22 in the Iranian calendar year, which mostly fall on Feb. 11, is synonymous with the Islamic Revolution. On this date in 1979, after a long struggle, Iranians succeeded to overthrow the dictatorial regime of Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi, the last monarch of Iran, and establish a democratic government instead.

The massive marches in this year’s rallies were highly significant especially after U.S. President Donald used the nearly one-week protests in Iran in late December and early January as a pretext to divide the Iranian nation through his inflammatory tweets.

Trump and some other U.S. officials misused the situation to incite more protests and fuel the unrest. However, the massive rallies on Sunday put on show national unity and send a message to the ill-wishers that the Iranians are united despite grievances against shortcomings mismanagement, discrimination and corruption.

On Thursday, February 8, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the participation of the people in

this year’s rallies would be greater and more fervid than ever.

“Due to the nonsense words and blabber of some U.S. and non-U.S. statesmen this year, the people sense that the enemy is setting up an ambush and seeks to carry out hostile acts and, therefore, by the grace of God, the participation of the people in the Bahman 22 rallies this year will be greater and more fervid than ever and everyone will attend,” he said.

In Tehran, people and officials descended on the iconic Azadi Square where President Hassan Rouhani delivered a speech.

Rouhani said that all the Iranians have one common goal and that’s the “greatness” of the country.

“We are entering the 40th year of the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Next year of the revolution should be the year of the maturity of this revolution in the strict sense of the term and we should witness more national unity,” Rouhani stated.

He also said, “When the revolution achieved victory, we were all together. There were many passengers in the train of the revolution. Some, naturally, got off the revolution’s train by their own choice and some of them were made get off by us.”

The president noted that all should be invited to get on the “train of the victory and success of the revolution” again.

The president said efforts by principals, reformists, moderates and all who

respect the constitution are required on the path to national development.

Commenting on the Trump administration’s stance against the 2015 nuclear deal, Rouhani said that pulling out of the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, will be “harmful” to the U.S.

“I announce that our nation will be committed to its obligations as long as the other side remains committed and once again, I stress that if they want to pull out of the deal, they will see the harms soon,” the president warned.

**■ Zarif says all officials are duty bound to meet people’s demands**

Speaking on the sidelines of the rallies in Tehran, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said all officials are duty bound to meet the people’s demands.

“The people have rightful demands some of which come from deficiencies and problems in the country and it is all the officials’ duty to pay attention to the people’s rightful demands as the greatest strategic capital of the system,” he said.

He also praised the people’s participation in the rallies.

First Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri said that the people’s participation in the rallies is very “effective” for the vitality of the Islamic republic system.

Jahangiri noted that more actions should be taken to solve the people’s problems and meet their demands.

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on the sidelines of the rallies in Shiraz that the

enemies made the most efforts to affect this year’s rallies negatively, however the people attended the rallies “gloriously”.

He also noted that the revolution belongs to all the people and political factions.

**■ People are real hero: Shamkhani**

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said the people are the real “hero” and their participation in the rallies disappointed the enemies. He said that the people are main guarantors of national security and power.

Mohammad Baqer Nobakht, the government spokesman and director of Budget and Planning Organization, said unity is the secret of the revolution’s victory. Nobakht said the people has never stopped supporting the revolution in spite of all difficulties.

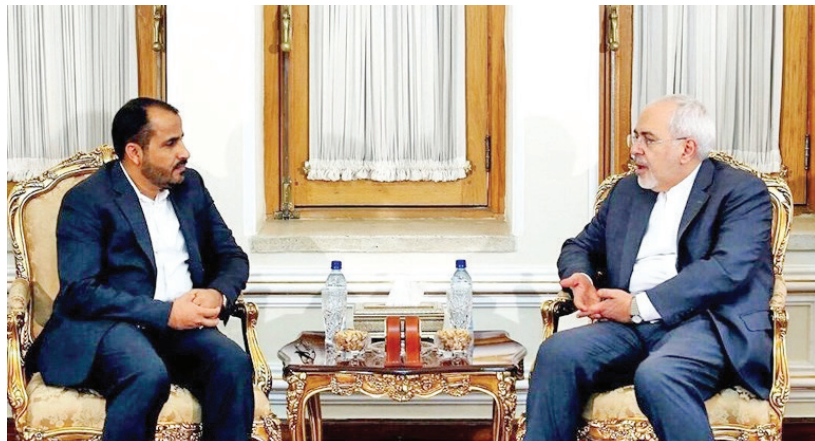
**■ Major Soleimani ‘We are astonished by people’**

Major General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the IRGC Quds Force, said he was surprised by the people’s huge turnout in rallies. “We are astonished by the people and their commitment to the principles.”

He described the Iranians as a “loyal” and “great” nation who should be highly respected.

Mohsen Rezaee, secretary of the Expediency Council, also told reporters that the people’s participation is the best proof of the revolution’s stability. The people proved that they remain committed to the revolution’s causes, Rezaee added.

## Zarif, Ansarullah spokesman discuss Yemen crisis



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and the spokesman for Yemen’s Houthi Ansarullah Movement held talks on Saturday on the latest developments in Yemen and the ongoing human tragedy caused by the Saudi-led war on the country.

Zarif pointed to Iran’s four-point peace plan for Yemen and stressed the need for an immediate stop to the war and bombing of the country by the Saudi-led coalition.

He said given the human catastrophe in Yemen caused by the

relentless airstrikes on the country, it is necessary that the international community send humanitarian aid to Yemen immediately.

During the meeting, Mohammed Abdulsalam briefed the Iranian top diplomat about the current situation and the ongoing human tragedy in his country.

Yemen’s defenseless people have been under massive attacks by the coalition for nearly three years but Riyadh has reached none of its objectives in Yemen so far.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Foreign leaders congratulate Iran on revolution anniversary



**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Top officials from many countries have congratulated Iran on the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution falling on February 11.

Writing a letter to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh extended his greetings on the 39th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

Also, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier wrote a congratulatory letter to President Hassan Rouhani on the occasion. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

has also sent a congratulatory letter to his Iranian counterpart.

Kuwaiti Emir Sabah IV Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani also wrote similar letters to Rouhani.

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Mauritania President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz also extended their greetings to Rouhani in congratulatory letters.

Speaker of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic Vasif Talibov also in a message offered his congratulations to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

## Uzbek FM meets Rouhani, Zarif

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov on Saturday held meetings in Tehran with President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, according to the press service of the Uzbek Foreign Ministry.

The Uzbek foreign minister thanked the Iranian president for the meeting and the opportunity to discuss issues of the Uzbek-Iranian dialogue and conveyed the best wishes of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Rouhani and the Iranian people, the report said.

During the meeting, the sides discussed prospects for the development of bilateral relations in the context of the imple-

mentation of agreements reached at the meeting of the two countries’ presidents in Astana on September 10, 2017.

They sides also exchanged views on a number of regional problems, including the situation in Afghanistan. The two sides noted the importance of joint international efforts to start settling the Afghan crisis politically.

The Iranian president supported the initiative by Uzbekistan to hold an international conference on Afghanistan under the title of “Peace process, cooperation in the field of security and regional cooperation on Afghanistan”.

Other political and economic issues of mutual interest were also discussed at the meeting.



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# UN calls for immediate de-escalation in Syria

## Russia: endangering forces unacceptable after Israeli military aggression in Syria

By staff & agencies

The United Nations chief has called “for an immediate and unconditional de-escalation of violence” after Israel launched intensive air raids on what it called Iranian bases in Syria, raising tensions in the region.

“[A]ll concerned in Syria and the region have a responsibility and must abide by international law and relevant Security Council resolutions,” Antonio Guterres said in a statement on Saturday.

“The secretary-general is following closely the alarming military escalation throughout Syria and the dangerous spill-over across its borders,” the UN chief’s spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. The Israeli army on Saturday launched “large-scale” attacks inside Syria after intercepting what it said was an Iranian drone that entered occupied Golan Heights and the subsequent downing of an Israeli fighter jet by Syrian air defense forces.

### Russia seriously concerned

The UN chief’s reaction came after Russia, which intervened in support of Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad in 2015, said they were “seriously concerned” by the confrontation.

“We urge all parties involved to exercise restraint and to avoid any actions that could lead to an even greater complication of the situation,” Russia’s foreign ministry said in a statement.

“We consider it necessary to unconditionally respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and other countries of the region,” it added.

### U.S. support

Elsewhere, the White House expressed its support for Israel after the hostilities.

“Israel is a staunch ally of the United States, and we support its right to defend itself from the Iranian-backed Syrian and militia forces in southern Syria,” the White House statement released late on Saturday read.

“We call on Iran and its allies to cease provocative actions and work toward regional peace.”

The Pentagon and the Department of State made similar comments earlier on Saturday.

The Syrian military and its allies denied that the drone violated Israel’s airspace, Syria’s state-run SANA news agency reported. The joint operations room, run by Syria, Iran, Russia and the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah, said the aircraft was on a regular mission gathering



intelligence on fighters of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Sources in Damascus said there were casualties among Syrian forces.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a Britain-based monitor, said Israel had targeted several bases in the east of the central province of Homs.

It said the bases are used by both Iranians and Russians deployed in support of the Syrian government.

Israel is technically at war with Syria and occupies a swath of the strategic Golan Heights that it seized in the Six Day War of 1967 and later annexed in a move never recognized by the international community.

Israel has sought to avoid direct involvement in the Syria conflict but acknowledges carrying out dozens of air raids there to stop what it calls deliveries of advanced weaponry to Hezbollah.

### Putin urges Netanyahu to avoid any steps that lead to regional confrontation

Separately, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin has urged the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to avoid any steps that would lead to a new confrontation in the region, following Israeli airstrikes on Syria.

During a phone call on Saturday, Putin and Netanyahu discussed the latest developments in Syria, both concurring that interaction between the two countries’ militaries would be continued.

“They discussed the situation around the actions of the Israeli air force, which carried our missile strikes on targets in Syria,” Interfax quoted the Kremlin as saying.

### Russia: endangering forces unacceptable after Israeli military aggression in Syria

The Russian Foreign Ministry has also called on all the parties involved in the ongoing military conflict in Syria to respect the territorial integrity of the country after Israel attacked positions inside the country, saying that the creation of threats in Syria, where Russia is militarily present, is unacceptable.

“Moscow is deeply concerned with the latest developments and attacks on Syria. The danger of the escalation of tensions within and around the de-escalation zones, which have become an important factor in reducing violence in Syria, is of particular concern,” the ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

Syrian government forces “are complying with the existing arrangements to provide the consistent functioning of the de-escalation zone in the southwest of the country,” it added.

## Two Turkish troops killed as helicopter downed

Two Turkish soldiers have died after their helicopter was shot down during Ankara’s military operation against Syrian Kurdish fighters in northern Syria.

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim announced the deaths in a televised address on Saturday. Earlier, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had said an army helicopter had been “shot down” near the southern Hatay province. “These things will happen, we are in a war ... We might lose a helicopter, but they’ll pay the price for this,” he said in Istanbul.

The state-run Anadolu agency, citing the Turkish army, said the ATAK aircraft crashed at around 1pm local time (10:00 GMT).

Mustafa Bali, a spokesman for the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG/Yekineyên Parastina Gel) armed group, told the AP news



agency that his fighters downed the helicopter in Raju, northwest of the Syrian city of Afrin.

Turkey opened a new front in the multi-sided Syrian foreign instigated war, when it

launched an air and ground offensive against YPG fighters on its southern border with Syria last month. The YPG - trained, armed and supported by the United States to fight against

the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit - controls a swath of land in northern Syria.

Turkey considers the YPG as an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê), which has fought a bloody, decades-long armed campaign.

### Frankfurt’s Kurds condemn Turkish military operations in Afrin

Meantime, the Kurdish community in Frankfurt took to the streets to condemn Turkish military operations in Syria’s Afrin.

The protesters carried a range of banners and symbols, as they marched from Frankfurt’s main railway station to the European Central Bank.

(Source: agencies)

## Egyptian army ‘kills 16 terrorists’ in operations in north

The Egyptian army says it has killed 16 “terrorist elements” during military operations in the restive Sinai Peninsula and nearby areas.

The military made the announcement in a statement on Sunday, saying that the fatalities had taken place two days earlier during a major security operation in the volatile northern region as well as parts of the Nile Delta and the Western Desert. “The air force targeted and destroyed 66 targets used by terrorist elements to hide from air and artillery attacks, and to escape from their bases during raids,” the statement said. It added that forces involved in the operation found a media center with computers, communication equipment, and books and documents related to extremist ideology.

The Egyptian military also said that 34 militants had been arrested during a “sweep and raids... in northern and central Sinai.”

The security operations involved troops from Egypt’s air force, navy, and ground forces as well as police and border



guards. The Egyptian military announces the launch of a sweeping operation against the militants active in North Sinai Province in its extreme northwest and the nearby Nile Delta.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who is preparing to seek a second term in elections in March, has vowed that the army will employ “absolute force” to eliminate terrorism

in the Sinai Peninsula. The Sinai Peninsula has been under a state of emergency since October 2014, after a deadly terrorist attack left 33 Egyptian soldiers dead.

Over the past few years, terrorists have been carrying out anti-government activities and fatal attacks, taking advantage of the turmoil in Egypt that erupted after the country’s first democratically-elected president, Mohamed Morsi, was ousted in a military coup in July 2013.

The Velayat Sinai group, which is affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorists, has claimed responsibility for most of the assaults.

An American daily revealed last week that Israel has been using unmarked warplanes and drones and unconventional flight routes to stage airstrikes against targets in the peninsula at least since 2014. The New York Times said the airstrikes, allegedly more than 100, are being conducted secretly and with Sisi’s approval.

(Source: Press TV)

## Indian PM vows commitment to Palestine’s interests

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pledged India’s commitment to the Palestinian people’s interests during a visit to the West Bank, the first by an Indian premier.

“I have once again assured President Abbas that India is bound by a promise to take care of the Palestinian people’s interests,” Modi said following a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah on Saturday. Modi also hailed India and Palestine’s “historic relations” and expressed hope that Palestine will soon “become a free country in a peaceful manner.”

“Palestinian interests have always got our support and remained at the top in our

foreign policy,” he added during a joint press conference with Abbas.

The Indian prime minister visited Palestine as part of a four-nation regional tour that has already taken him to Jordan, with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman his next destinations. Elsewhere in his remarks, Modi stressed that New Delhi “hopes for peace and stability in this region,” noting, “We believe a permanent solution to Palestine is possible through dialogue.”

Abbas, for his part, said he had exchanged views with Modi on “bringing the political process out of the deadlock due to the continued Israeli occupation of our land and the

political impasse following [U.S. President Donald] Trump’s decision on Jerusalem al-Quds and the refugees.”

The Palestinian president described India as “an international force of great prestige and weight,” which could “contribute to the achievement of a just peace in our region.”

Historically, Palestine has been a major recipient of Indian aid since the 1990s.

Modi’s visit follows his trip to Israel last July and comes less than a month after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s six-day visit to India.

India was one of the 128 countries that voted in favor of a United Nations General

Assembly resolution last December that called on the United States to withdraw its recognition of al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the “capital” of Israel.

Earlier Modi he met Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and visited the Yasser Arafat Museum where he laid a wreath.

India is currently the biggest buyer of Israeli weaponry, spending an average \$1bn annually on military equipment in recent years.

Modi’s right-wing government has been working to boost its relations with Israel giving rise to fears that it might abandon its support to the Palestinian cause.

(Source: agencies)

## Saudi regime scholar: Women do not need to wear abaya robes

A senior religious scholar in Saudi Arabia has said women should not have to wear the loose-fitting abaya robe to cover up their bodies in public.

Sheikh Abdullah al-Mutlaq, a member of the Council of Senior Scholars - the highest religious body in the country, made the remark in an interview with a local broadcaster on Friday.

“More than 90 percent of pious Muslim women in the Muslim world do not wear abayas. So we should not force

people to wear abayas,” he said.

The call was received with mixed reaction on social media. Currently, the robe is mandatory for women and there is no indication from that the custom might change.

The House of Saud regime has some of the world’s tightest restrictions on women, despite ambitious government reforms aimed at boosting female employment.

Last month women were allowed to watch football in stadiums in some cities, and a driving ban was lifted last

year, but women are still unable to do many things without their male guardian’s permission.

Some of the restrictions include applying for a passport, travelling abroad, enrolling in university and getting married, as well as opening a bank account, starting certain businesses and getting optional surgeries.

According to the law, they must also be accompanied by a guardian at all times when in public.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## British FM calls on Myanmar’s leader to allow ‘independent’ probe into Rohingya crisis



Britain’s Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has strongly urged Myanmar’s State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi to allow an independent investigation into the violence in troubled Rakhine state, as the Southeast Asian country faces increasing pressure to bring to justice the troops who have been accused of committing atrocities against Rohingya Muslims.

The top British diplomat met with embattled Suu Kyi in the country’s capital Naypyidaw on Sunday while on a four-day tour in Asia, a day after he visited a refugee camp in Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar district, where nearly 700,000 Rohingya have already took refuge following a campaign of killing, mass rape and arson launched by Myanmar’s army in Rakhine that has continued since August last year.

According to a Facebook post by Myanmar’s Foreign Ministry, the pair “discussed in an open and friendly manner the latest developments in Rakhine State, including planning for the reception of returnees who fled.”

Myanmar and neighboring Bangladesh have already sealed an accord to bring back refugees, but repatriation has yet to begin. However, a majority of the refugees does not still feel secure enough to venture to go back to their home country, where they have faced violent persecution and decades of discrimination at the hands of a state that has denied them citizenship.

The government in Myanmar is using food as a quiet weapon against minority Rohingya Muslims in the country’s troubled west, new reports reveal.

Johnson, who later flew to Rakhine, wrote on Twitter that, in meeting with Nobel laureate Suu Kyi, he had stressed the “importance of (Myanmar) authorities in carrying out full & independent investigation into the violence in Rakhine” and the “urgent need to create the right conditions for Rohingya refugees to return to their homes” in the volatile state.

The United Nations has accused Myanmar’s security forces of driving the Muslim minority to take a perilous cross-border journey into Bangladesh in a campaign of ethnic cleansing. Figures provided by the Doctors Without Borders (MSF/Médecins Sans Frontières) show that at least 6,700 Rohingya Muslims lost their lives in the first month of violence. The Asian country has staunchly rejected the charges and barred UN investigators from entering the conflict zone, a move that strained its relations with a host of Western allies. Fresh reports of the discovery of mass graves in Rakhine and the arrest of two Reuters journalists probing an alleged massacre have heightened pressure on Suu Kyi to condemn the military for the atrocities. Suu Kyi, who is in a delicate power-sharing arrangement with the army, has already seen her reputation crumbled among the international community over her controversial handling of the Rohingya crisis.

Upon visiting the refugee camp in Bangladesh on Saturday, Johnson wrote on Twitter that he had met with Rohingya families there and heard “firsthand the persecution they have suffered”, strengthening his “commitment to work with international partners to improve their lives.”

Myanmar brands more than one million Rohingya Muslims in the country as “illegal immigrants” from Bangladesh, refusing to accept them as citizens despite the fact that they have lived in the country for many generations.

The Rohingya are considered by the UN as the “most persecuted minority group in the world”.

(Source: agencies)

## For African Jews, deportations reveal Israel’s racist face

Thousands of immigrants and rights activists have rallied in al-Quds (Jerusalem) to protest an Israeli plan to deport 38,000 African asylum-seekers in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The protesters also included Israelis opposed to the deportation, holding signs with slogans such as “We are willing to accept refugees” and “Deportation kills”.

Many of the immigrants crossed into Israel through the Sinai desert between 2006 and 2012, fleeing the harsh political conditions in Eritrea or genocide and war in Sudan. The Tel Aviv regime has argued that these migrants are simply in Israel looking for work but human rights organizations say they are there out of fear of persecution in their home countries. Israel has been promising mass deportations of African migrants for years but at the beginning of January it set a deadline, saying they had to either leave or face jail.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel deported approximately 4,000 immigrants last year and the major plan is to deport most of those who remain.

The Israeli regime reportedly struck a deal with Rwanda to accept the returning migrants, although the African country has denied this.

For years, Israel has played a double game around deportations. Even though the regime argues that the Eritrean and Sudanese migrants are not real refugees, it has not sent them back to their country of origin, likely knowing that doing so might violate international conventions around refugee rights.

The deportations of the immigrants - almost all African Jews - are creating a religious controversy in Israel, in addition to an outcry from international rights groups.

As Israel prepares to send them back to Africa, it is facing serious questions about the meaning and purpose of the regime, itself created allegedly as a harbor for Jews fleeing persecution in Europe.

Netanyahu has long referred to the African migrants as “infiltrators”, claiming that they pose a threat to Israel. The migrants known as Mizrahi, or Jews of Middle Eastern or North African descent, see the treatment as a form of racism.

(Source: Press TV)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	97782.7
IFX	1097.63

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	45,350 rials
EUR	60,290 rials
GBP	67,800 rials
AED	13,240 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	59.20/b
Brent	62.79/b
OPEC Basket	62.69/b
Gold	\$1,318.25/oz
Silver	\$16.41/oz
Platinum	\$969.70/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



CBI opens 5 new foreign bank accounts

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has opened accounts in five new foreign banks in different countries in the recent months, IRNA reported. The new accounts have been opened in Oman’s Bank Sohar, Russia’s VTB Bank, Austria’s Raiffeisen Bank International (RBI), Qatar National Bank (QNB), and Switzerland’s Gazprombank, the same report confirmed.



BAIEX 2018 to open in Tehran today

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The ninth edition of International Bitumen, Asphalt, Insulation and Related Machinery Exhibition of Iran (BAIEX 2018) will open at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds today, IRIB news reported. Besides Iranian companies, foreign ones from Germany, China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Azerbaijan, and Turkey will showcase their latest products in this event, the exhibition’s Executive Manager Maryam Tavakolian said. The exhibition will wrap up on Thursday.



ICCIMA head to lead delegation to India this week

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie will lead a delegation of Iranian traders and businessmen to New Delhi this week, the portal of ICCIMA reported. The delegation will make its four-day trip on February 14 to 18 to attend a business forum and joint meetings with Indian counterparts. The Iranian delegation is comprised of businessmen from various sectors including petrochemicals, chemical materials, bitumen, steel, and agriculture.



Annual growth in agricultural sector projected to hit 3.8%

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — According to the predictions made by Iranian Agriculture Ministry and the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), domestic agriculture sector’s value added by the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 20, 2018), according to the fixed prices of the base year 1390 (ended on March 19, 2012), is planned to reach 450 trillion rials (about \$9.5 billion), showing 3.8 percent annual growth. The sector’s growth in the preceding year 1395 stood at 4.2 percent, Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday. Iranian agricultural sector’s average growth rate during the past five years has been 4.7 percent according to CBI.

Abu Dhabi awards offshore oil concession to India’s ONGC

Abu Dhabi has awarded an Indian consortium a 10 percent stake in one of its offshore oil concession areas, marking India’s first entry into the oil-rich Persian Gulf emirate’s upstream hydrocarbons sector. State-run Abu Dhabi National Oil Company late on Saturday signed the 40-year deal with the consortium led by ONGC Videsh, the overseas arm of India’s state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation. The consortium, which also includes the Indian Oil Corporation and a unit of Bharat Petroleum, paid a participation fee of 2.2 billion dirhams (\$600m) for the 10 percent stake in the Lower Zakum offshore concession.

(Source: Financial Times)

Iran’s January LPG export highest since sanctions removal

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s export of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in January 2018 hit the highest amount since removal of the West-led sanctions against the country in January 2016, according to the data released by shipping sources in last week. The country exported 520,000 million tons of LPG in January, making a strong start in

2018, the data showed. The latest volume is 146,000 million tons more than initial figures published in mid-January, according to shipping sources. It is also up 39.4% from 373,000 million tons in December 2017. Iranian exports are helping to fill shortfalls of spot supply from the Middle East, as major

Work starts on Australia’s biggest wind farm

Two hundred jobs will be created during construction of the facility. Energy Minister Anthony Lynham endorsed the project, turning the first sod on Wednesday. “Together, they represent more than 2000 megawatts of renewable energy that will help power Queensland’s electricity grid and its regional economies, and help us meet our international emissions reduction commitments,” Dr. Lynham said. Far North Queensland’s new 100MW wind farm On site located 8.5 kilometers north-west of the Lakeland township in Cook Shire, a \$200 million wind farm, which includes 30 wind turbines that will generate 100MW



producers Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait are exporting less spot cargoes as they focus on fulfilling term contracts and meeting domestic petrochemical demand,

Platts reported. Preliminary figures so far showed 132,000 million tons fixed for lifting in February in three cargoes, shipping sources said.

Bank of England chief economist says “no rush” to raise rates

The Bank of England is likely to need to raise interest rates again to tackle inflation but will not do so aggressively, the central bank’s chief economist said in a newspaper article published on Sunday. Andy Haldane, on a visit to northeast England, referred to the BoE’s statement after its policy meeting on Thursday that interest rates were likely to need to rise somewhat faster and to a somewhat greater extent than it had previously thought. “We have a very strong eye on inflationary developments, and they’re currently ahead



of our target,” the Newcastle Chronicle newspaper reported him as saying.

“That’s why we’ve raised rates once already and why ... we said that, on the balance of probabilities, it seems likely that some further tightening of policy might be needed over the period ahead,” he added. The central bank raised interest rates for the first time in over a decade in November, and financial markets now see a roughly 70 percent chance of a further 25 basis point increase in May, which would take the BoE’s main rate to 0.75 percent. Any interest rate rises over the coming year would be minor, the paper reported

Haldane as saying. “We’re in no rush, rates won’t remotely go back to levels we’ve seen in the past, but nonetheless keeping the cost of living under control is, we think, the single best and most important thing we can do to help the economy,” he was quoted as saying. British consumer price inflation touched its highest in more than five years at 3.1 percent in November and the central bank forecasts that it will take more than three years to return to its 2 percent target if it does not raise rates. (Source: Reuters)

Investors brace for more swings as U.S. inflation specter rises

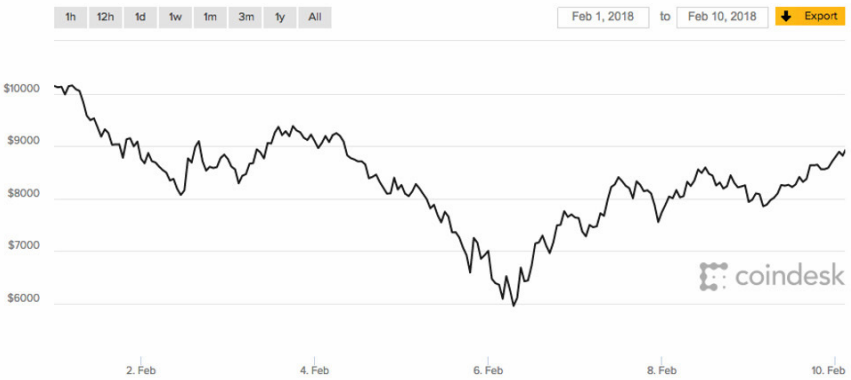
The inflation bogeyman has reared its ugly head and sent U.S. stock investors racing for the hills in recent days. Next week, coming off one of the most volatile stretches in years, two important readings on U.S. inflation could help determine whether the stock market begins to settle or if another bout of volatility is in store. If the January’s U.S. consumer price index due next Wednesday from the U.S. Labor Department, and the producer price index the next day, come in higher than the market anticipates, brace for more selling and gyrations for stocks. U.S. consumer prices rose 2.1 percent year-on-year in December and is forecast to stay around that pace this month. “If we get a hot CPI print it will insert additional uncertainty, but if we get a quiet, below-consensus print, you may see yields down and equities rally,” said Jason Ware, Chief Investment Officer & Chief Economist at Albion Financial Group in Salt Lake City, Utah. The equity market has become highly sensitive to inflation this month. A selloff in U.S. stocks earlier this week was in large part sparked by the Feb. 2 monthly U.S. employment report which showed the largest year-on-year increase in average hourly earnings since June 2009.

Recent U.S. tax cuts that may spur economic growth, the prospect of more government borrowing to fund a widening fiscal deficit, and rising wages, have all pushed up benchmark U.S. Treasury yields to near four year highs. “This is how we started, go back to Friday and this is exactly where we were,” said Art Hogan, chief market strategist at B. Riley FBR in New York. “The conversation about equity risk premium, interest rates and inflation, we are coming full circle.” The jump in wage inflation pushed yields on the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury note US10YT=RR closer to the 3.0 percent mark last seen four years ago, denting the attractiveness of equities, and unnerving investors fearful inflation will force the U.S. Federal Reserve to raises short term interest rates at a faster pace than is currently priced into the market. The current earnings yield for the S&P 500 index companies stands at 5.4 percent, below the 6.4 percent average of the past 20 years. As bond yields rise the spread between the two narrows, prompting asset allocation changes between equities and fixed income. Investor concerns over inflation was reflected in Lipper funds data on Thursday, which showed U.S.-based inflation-

protected bond funds attracted \$859 million over the weekly period, the largest inflows since November 2016. On Thursday, New York Federal Reserve President William Dudley said the central bank’s forecast of three rate hikes still seemed a “very reasonable projection” but added there was a potential for more, should the economy look stronger. Traders are currently putting the chances of a 25 basis point hike by the Fed at its March meeting at 84.5 percent, according to Thomson Reuters data. Benchmark 10-year note yields US10YT=RR rose as high as 2.884 percent on Thursday, just below Monday’s four-year high of 2.885 percent. The notes ended down 6/32 in price to yield 2.853 percent. While many analysts were predicting bond yields to rise this year as global economies improve, the suddenness of the move was a large factor in the recent stock market selloff. The 10-day correlation between the S&P 500 index and yields on the 10-year note stands at a negative 0.79. Both the Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500 index were on track on Thursday for their biggest two-week percentage declines since August 2011. (Source: Reuters)

Bitcoin became a safety trade last week

**By Chuck Jones** Bitcoin started its free-fall in mid-December when it traded just under \$20,000 until a few days ago when it bottomed right around \$6,000. The 70% drop ended just after the Dow 30 Industrials had its first 1,000 point plus decline last week. If there ever was a time for Bitcoin to continue its slide to \$1,000 or less this seemed like this was the “right” time. However, Bitcoin outperformed not just the equity markets from Tuesday to Friday but also gold and the U.S. 10 year Treasury bond. **■ The equity markets had one of the wildest trading weeks in years** The equity markets were on a roller coaster last week with the Dow 30 having two 1,000 plus point drops that were 4.6% and 4.1%. Two of the other days saw increases of 330 and 567 points or 1.4% and 2.3%. For the week the Dow was down 5.2% or 1,330 points. It also “moved” over 22,000 points from its peaks to troughs and back again over the five days. The S&P 500 and the NASDAQ saw similar trading patterns with declines last week of 5.2% and 5.1%, respectively. Before the equity markets rallied on Friday the Dow, and probably the other Indexes, were on track for their worst week since October 2008. **■ Something that only Bitcoin bulls thought could happen did** Bitcoin has typically been more volatile then the equity markets. Deutsche Bank’s Global Financial Strategist, Masao Muraki, published a report showing how Bitcoin’s price is inversely related to the Chicago Board of Exchange’s VIX index (nicknamed the Fear Index). The VIX uses options to calculate near term volatility for the S&P 500 and is a good gauge of investor sentiment. Muraki’s graph starting on December 1 last year until January 18 shows that as the



Bitcoin’s price from February 1 to 10

VIX decreases, the white line, Bitcoin’s price moves higher, the orange line. This is the Risk On trade. Conversely as the VIX increases Bitcoin’s price tends to fall. This is the Risk Off trade. However, the VIX jumped to levels not seen since August 2015. If Bitcoin had followed its previous patterns the cryptocurrency should have been hit hard. Instead it rallied and outperformed the equity indexes all four days starting on Tuesday. After falling on Monday Bitcoin more than just held its own. Bitcoin vs. the Dow last week: 

- Monday: Bitcoin down 16.8% vs. the Dow down 4.6%
- Tuesday: Bitcoin up 8.4% vs. the Dow up 2.3%
- Wednesday: Bitcoin up 4.4% vs. the Dow down 0.1%

- Thursday: Bitcoin up 1.4% vs. the Dow down 4.1%
- Friday: Bitcoin up 4.2% vs. the Dow up 1.4%
- For the week: Bitcoin down 0.4% vs. the Dow down 5.2%
- From Tuesday to Friday: Bitcoin up 19.6% vs. the Dow down 0.6%

Other cryptocurrencies such as Ethereum, Ripple and Litecoin also saw similar trading patterns last week as Bitcoin’s. **■ Gold didn’t move very much last week** Gold can be a safe haven when there is a lot of volatility in the equity markets, especially when inflation becomes a potential issue. For the week gold fell \$22 to \$1,316, or 1.6%, which is not what you would expect. Bitcoin also outperformed it every day starting on Tuesday. (Source: The Forbes)



VIX vs. S&P 500



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## Germany’s Social Democrats meet their day of reckoning

By E. Wayne Merry

Government formation in Germany is approaching a crunch point. The main center-right (CDU/CSU) and center-left (SPD) parties have reached an agreement on a new grand-coalition government, similar to that which preceded inconclusive national elections last September. The crunch point will be a referendum on that agreement by the dues-paying, card-carrying membership of the Social Democratic Party.

While many Germans vote SPD, only about 460,000 of them shell out real money to have a party card in their wallets and hence a chance to vote on the proposed coalition agreement of their leadership with Christian Democratic Party leader and chancellor Angela Merkel. This is an event without precedent.

German political culture is top down: institutional leaders decide and the rank and file follow. The SPD recently held a national-party convention that narrowly gave party leader Martin Schulz a go-ahead to complete coalition negotiations with Merkel. By German political tradition, this should have been enough to bring about actual coalition and government formation within days.

However, German politics today do not conform to postwar traditions, as the September elections demonstrated. Politics are increasingly fragmented, with party loyalties at record lows. The CDU/CSU and SPD once shared 90 percent of the vote; in September they won only 53 percent, the worst showing since the war for both. The Alternative for Germany achieved national stature with 13 percent, to become an established political voice on the far right, something German leaders had promised Europe would not happen. Several parties have faced near-death experiences recently, including the Free Democrats (FDP) who came back from the brink in September, and the Bavarian Christian Socialists (CSU) who in September looked over the brink by almost failing to achieve the threshold of 5 percent of the national vote needed for party-list representation in the national legislature, the Bundestag.

### ■ Younger voters

These are things which are not supposed to happen in Germany, but now they do. Younger voters and voters of all generations in the east (the former German Democratic Republic) simply do not care what is “supposed” to happen. They are angry about mass migration from outside Europe, the erosion of public education and infrastructure, a two-tier job system, which deprives younger workers of the perks of their parents, and paying for European Union programs. This anger may appear curious to outsiders as Germany today enjoys employment levels, public services and prosperity beyond the expectations even of other European countries. However, many German voters are simply tired of the same old national political leadership. While broad confidence in Angela Merkel remains high after twelve years in power, enthusiasm for another term with her as chancellor is low, and very low among SPD members.

Americans watching this process should keep four things in mind.

First, as there is no precedent for a party referendum on a coalition agreement, predicting an outcome is something of a mug’s game.

Second, the SPD leadership agreed to this referendum gamble with reluctance, as it knows the party rank and file do not want a renewed Grand Coalition. The referendum is therefore a confidence vote in Martin Schulz, who has been something of a fizzle as party leader. In addition, referenda are often high-risk political maneuvers because they generate negativity. The “yes/no” options encourage frustrations and anger among voters without compelling them to choose an alternative and its consequences (as BREXIT demonstrated).

Third, many SPD members are very frustrated and angry. They regard recent party leaders as pale echoes of such stalwarts of the past as Willy Brandt or Helmut Schmidt. They believe that two periods in coalition governments as second fiddle under Merkel have been disastrous for SPD identity, cohesion and morale. They resent the encroachment on traditional SPD voters from both the Left Party and the right-wing Alternative for Germany, which they attribute to the years in coalition. Above all, they regard Angela Merkel as toxic for her political partners (including the CSU and FDP). Many SPD members—and especially the youth wing JUSOS — believe their party needs years in opposition to restore its purpose and appeal to voters. Taking a lesson from the UK Labour Party’s election of Jeremy Corbyn, JUSOS is encouraging young people outside the party to purchase short-term SPD membership solely to vote “no” in the referendum.

### ■ Fate of coalition

Fourth, party membership in Germany has no true analogue in America. The SPD members who will decide the fate of the coalition agreement literally carry cards. They pay good money year in and year

**The Alternative for Germany achieved national stature with 13 percent, to become an established political voice on the far right, something German leaders had promised Europe would not happen.**

SPD members will approach the referendum with alternate visions of their party’s future: first, a period in the wilderness to restore its strength and integrity, probably after a generational leadership shakeout; or, second, a more dynamic coalition role than in the past while looking to pre-term elections rather than a full four years in office. The first option would likely trigger new elections this year, with the popular credibility of the SPD lower than it was in September. Both options are high risk, and demonstrate how far the party has fallen even in the eyes of its faithful.

For Washington, the lesson from these developments is that easy assumptions about Germany under Angela Merkel’s leadership are obsolete. Even with the same face in the chancellery in Berlin, Germany is losing political predictability — and perhaps its reliability. many SPD stalwarts, the issue is “we survived Bismarck, Hitler, two world wars, Stalin and finance capitalism; now we must survive Angela Merkel.”

(Source: The National Interest)

# May and the crown prince: Beware Saudi authoritarianism in liberal disguise

By Madawi Al-Rasheed

The controversy surrounding Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s visit to Downing Street this spring is symptomatic of the rift between a British public eager to maintain a moral foreign policy and successive British governments ignoring loud critical voices.

With the exception of the Liberal Democrats, both main political parties have always cherished close relations with the most autocratic leaders in the Arab world (although that appears to have changed under Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who has called for an end to arms sales to Saudi Arabia).

Recently, with a shaky economy and a deep nostalgia for empire that has yet to vanish among the governing elite, Prime Minister Theresa May announced plans to welcome the crown prince amidst loud protest from a wide range of British civil society groups.

She probably hopes the initial public offering of 5 percent of the Saudi oil company Aramco will take place in London. Should this happen this year, it will create a bonanza for financial and service institutions, above all banks, consultants and lawyers.

### ■ Neither ideology nor values

As a rule of thumb, with few exceptions, almost all controversial authoritarian rulers have been welcome in London. British foreign policy rests on neither ideology nor values. Common British wisdom tells us that engaging the dictators is better and more productive than shunning them.

After all one cannot expect British governments to boycott all dictators as they won’t have any leaders to talk to, especially in the Arab world. For several reasons, the British government, however, should not continue to ignore the loud critical voices when it rolls out the red carpet for the crown prince’s visit.

First, Britain provides Saudi Arabia with a whole range of jetfighters, surveillance technology and military training, all having been deployed in destabilizing the Arab world under the leadership of Mohammed bin Salman.

In the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi military interventions have suffocated a pro-democracy movement in Bahrain and totally destroyed another poor country, Yemen.

In the ex-British colony of Bahrain, now a Saudi satellite state, the local monarch, Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, can only rule by detention and repression. Direct Saudi intervention since 2011 succeeded in creating a volatile island on the verge of implosion.

In Yemen, Saudi air strikes since 2015 contributed to a serious humanitarian crisis. Under Saudi-UAE military intervention, Yemen is now even more fragmented and divided, with separatist movements in the north and south getting stronger, al-Qaeda affiliates operating under the nose of the intervening regional powers, and new unruly militia forming everywhere.

Just recently one such separatist movement supported by the UAE, the other Saudi partner in this war, raided Aden, the temporary capital of exiled Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, further eroding the authority of this government that now exists only on paper.

While British manufactured weapons are not the only ones that the Saudis use, Britain



**Mohammed bin Salman’s embrace of moderate Islam conceals a nasty agenda that has so far resulted in the incarceration of hundreds of innocent people dubbed as radical Islamists.**

provides a large number of the jetfighters that are deployed in Yemen. Can Britain be held responsible for selling the very tools that have destroyed one of the poorest Arab countries?

Can Britain be taken to the International Court of Justice for its contribution to an unjust war, fought by the Saudi crown prince under the pretext of supporting the Yemeni central government against separatist movements?

So far, it seems not. Under pressure from several anti-war and anti-armaments NGOs, a British court absolved Britain from any wrong doing. However, the controversy continues and will inevitably lead to massive protest when the prince arrives in London next month.

### ■ A new Saudi authoritarianism

Second, the British government should be wary of the new Saudi authoritarianism in liberal disguise. Allowing women to drive, promoting dancing in the streets, curbing the powers of the infamous religious police all sound good and promising. Yet, Mohammed Bin Salman is not a religious, economic, or political reformer.

The crown prince’s embrace of moderate Islam conceals a nasty agenda that has so far resulted in the incarceration of hundreds of innocent people dubbed as radical, Islamists, or simply critical of his glamorous plans to break from the past and transform Saudi Arabia.

Economically, the prince is often painted as a neoliberal crusader, a believer in free trade and a worshipper of the market, who promises to revolutionize a state capitalist economy still dependent on oil, and riddled with corruption and favoritism.

But in truth, he is a populist, ready to play the xenophobic nationalist card to secure popularity among the disenfranchised and unemployed youth. History suggests that appeasing such forces comes at a high price.

### ■ The guise of fighting corruption

His latest anti-corruption campaign was

planned to purge rivals and illegally appropriate funds from wealthy crony entrepreneurs such as Alwaleed bin Talal, Saleh Kamel and Waleed Al-Ibrahim among others. The Ritz Carlton detainees amassed wealth over several decades simply because they were so close to previous kings. They were connected and as such they were the financial ancient regime.

Under the guise of fighting corruption, Mohammed Bin Salman found the ideal and quick recipe to fill his coffers. Detaining old wealth and nouveaux riches in the Ritz Carlton for several months, while negotiating secret deals, then releasing several - but not all - detainees was an unusual strategy to say the least.

Certainly this is not the way to fight corruption, reassure foreign investors, or initiate long-lasting economic reforms. It is a purge, a daring coup by someone who now has all power in his hand and with no checks - moral, legal or even religious.

The Ritz Carlton drama was a theatrical performance designed to intimidate and amplify the power of a young hawkish prince who has already decided to be the undisputed head of the Saudi state - rather than simply primus inter pares, as previous monarchs had led people to believe. With Mohammad bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has entered the realm of naked power.

But why should the British government worry about such devious methods of confiscating wealth, eliminating rivals and exercising power? Shouldn’t this be a purely Saudi domestic issue?

Well, the problem is not only a Saudi one. A recent BBC documentary revealed the degree to which British officials and personalities are implicated in the Saudi corruption scandals. For many British viewers, it was not shocking to learn that Saudi royals are corrupt. They were shocked as they learned how successive

British governments are implicated in the corruption of those princes.

In Britain, a democratic government, a transparent political culture, and a pervasive rule of law have all failed to expose the degree to which the British establishment is implicated in dodgy deals with the Saudi regime in which bribes are common. The documentary revealed how far British officials are prepared to go to protect Saudi royals from the rule of law.

The most recent case was former Prime Minister Tony Blair’s decision to halt the special investigation in the infamous Al-Yamama arm deal in 2008. In 2013, a quick agreement between Britain and Saudi Arabia to exchange prisoners signed immediately after a prince murdered his slave servant in a London hotel resulted in the prince being put on a plane and sent to Riyadh to serve a life sentence, perhaps in the comfort of a secret villa.

### ■ Covering up Saudi scandals

British officials may have succeeded in concealing their role in covering up Saudi scandals but for how long can they maintain their silence? No doubt the expected visit of the Saudi crown prince will open new files and inquires. British civil society is determined not to let the event pass without scoring goals against a government that has paid lip service to values it claims to cherish.

By unequivocally supporting a regimes like the Saudi one, Britain loses the moral high ground. Why should anyone listen when British politicians flaunt their so-called values in the context of new immigrants? The latter would not miss the hypocrisy and complicity of the British government. Our so-called British values have becomes a cliché.

In fact many immigrants and refugees have fled their countries because the British government and other Western countries have continuously supported the autocrats whose violence, oppression and corruption resulted in the flood of refugees and asylum-seekers that all of Europe, above all Britain, complains about.

Mohammed bin Salman’s repression is already generating a new wave of dissidents seeking exile. This included a number of activists, religious minorities, princesses and students who have applied for asylum in Britain. Saudis who have recently fled the repression of bin Salman now join old Saudi dissidents who arrived in London in the 1990s.

A new wave of so-called Saudi women runaways apply for asylum on the basis of being oppressed, forced into unwanted marriages, or prevented from living their life as they choose, all under the nose of Mohammed Bin Salman and his reformist agenda. If the state cannot protect abused women, who can?

Should all the critical voices raised over the royal visit come together in a massive demonstration and disrupt the pomp, it would be rather difficult for Prime Minister Theresa May to convince her audiences that there are merits in engaging and endearing autocrats.

Perhaps she should make at least some noise about the merit of a transparent Saudi political system and the rule of law before signing future lucrative deals with Saudi Arabia. She should at least reread George Orwell’s Shooting an Elephant to understand that when a white woman endears tyrants, it is her freedom that she destroys.

(Source: The Middle East Eye)

## North and South Korea must seize this political moment

It is vital that the goodwill does not melt after the competition



By Ban Ki-moon

Former UN Secretary-General

As athletes and fans gather in the South Korean city of Pyeongchang for the Winter Olympics, the words of Pierre du Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympic Games, have a particular resonance that goes far beyond the sporting arena: “L’important, c’est de participer.” — “It’s the taking part that counts.” North and South Korean athletes will march together in the opening ceremony under a neutral banner called the Korean Peninsula flag and a joint women’s ice hockey team will compete in the games. This symbolic gesture of reconciliation and joint teamwork is powerful in itself, but it also offers a unique chance for meaningful progress behind the scenes to help resolve the nuclear tensions on the Korean peninsula. North Korea’s decision to send Kim Jong Un’s sister, Kim Yo Jong, to the opening ceremony, together with Kim Yong-nam, the chair of the Supreme People’s Assembly, is encouraging for hopes of diplomatic engagement and rapprochement.

The need could not be more acute. For the past quarter of a century, the focus of the international community’s efforts has been on preventing North Korea becoming a nuclear-armed state. But it may now be the case that the North has entered the final stage of completing the intercontinental ballistic

missile technology that can reach and hit the continental U.S. loaded with a miniaturized nuclear warhead.

The objective is unchanged: achieving complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of North Korean nuclear weapons and programs. But the immediate challenge is to achieve that objective in a way that avoids conflict and further nuclear proliferation in the region and beyond. There is also a longer-term need for a new, regional security framework in North-East Asia to replace the fragile, temporary peacekeeping arrangements that have existed since the end of the Korean war. Diplomats and security experts worldwide warn that the risk of a devastating war is unprecedented. Last month, the Doomsday Clock was reset at two minutes to midnight — the closest to midnight it has been in 65 years. We know from experience how critical it is to recognize — and then seize — unexpected moments to try and change a dangerous trajectory of events. The Olympic detente could be such a moment. We welcome the gesture of bilateral North-South talks that Kim offered in his annual New Year’s Day address. While the three rounds of talks held so far have mainly focused on the modalities of the North’s participation in the Winter

**All parties must use this Olympic moment to nurture a positive atmosphere that enables a genuine dialogue to continue, including bilateral military talks.**

Olympics, further talks on security-related confidence-building measures have also been agreed. All parties must use this Olympic moment to nurture a positive atmosphere that enables a genuine dialogue to continue, including bilateral military talks. We must make sure that after the Paralympics end, in March, the goodwill does not disappear as fast as the winter snow melts. In this regard, North Korea’s military parade on the eve of the opening ceremony of the games was provocative, harming the positive mood. At this critical time, all concerned must avoid inflammatory rhetoric and military activities. Patient diplomacy and sustained engagement can yield results, as we have seen with the Iran nuclear agreement. We continue to believe that the Iran deal is the best way to prevent nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, and that it can serve as an inspiration for developing a comparable diplomatic process to resolve the current tensions on the Korean peninsula. A permanent peace treaty requiring North Korea to fully comply with UN Security Council Resolution 2397, to “immediately abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner”, beginning with unfettered access of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the nuclear facilities, would be the ideal outcome. The path to such an accord will be long and arduous, requiring stamina and discipline from all sides. Let us hope that leaders on both sides of the 38th parallel, as well as the international community, will follow the example of their Olympic athletes in striving for the greatest prize of all: a lasting, not temporary, peace on the Korean peninsula.

(Source: FT)

## Syria resolved to confront Israeli aggression: Ex-general

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — The Syrian Army’s move to shoot down an Israeli fighter jet or its interception of Israeli missiles being fired into Syria indicate the Damascus government’s strategic decision to fight off the Israeli aggression in all shapes, a retired Syrian general said.

Speaking to Tasnim on Saturday, Yahya Suleiman hailed the Syrian Army for downing

an Israeli F-16 fighter jet earlier in the day.

The shooting down of the Israeli warplane or the Syrian Air Defense’s interception of Israeli missiles being fired at the Syrian targets show that the Damascus government is resolved to counter the Zionist regime, he added.

Suleiman also noted that the downing of the Israeli jet would shape the next

phase of confrontation with the Tel Aviv regime.

The ball is now in Israel’s court, he added, stressing that Syria is prepared to confront any Israeli plan for fueling tensions.

An Israeli F-16 fighter jet was shot down by Syrian military on Saturday while targeting what it called Iranian sites responsible for launching a drone

into occupied Golan Heights.

Pro-government military alliance in Syria said in a statement on Saturday that Israel would see a severe and serious response to its “terrorism” from now on.

The statement also said the drones —one of which Israel claims to have shot down— were being used against Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group.



# No 'oil for goods' agreement with Russia: Sanaei

**TEHRAN - (MNA)** — In an interview with Russian reporters on the occasion of 39th anniversary of victory of Islamic Revolution, Iran's Ambassador to Russia commented on Iran and Russia relations, their relations with Turkey, JCPOA and Syrian issue, also saying that there is no 'oil for goods' agreement between Iran and Russia.

The text of the interview of Iran's Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanaei with Rosia Sudenya is presented below. The interview was widely quoted by Russian news media.

■ What is your opinion about the current level of cooperation between Iran and Russia? can it be said that last year (2017) was a year in which strategic cooperation between Tehran and Moscow leaped forward?

A: Our political relations are developing excellently. Our cooperation at the regional and international levels have also developed very well. Both countries in have almost triumphed against terrorism in Syria. We worked together within the Astana framework and created zones of reduction of tensions which were a great achievement.

Iranian President visit Russia last year. Putin visited Iran one time. The two countries' foreign ministers met last year. The two countries' officials have spoken telephone many times. Last year, there were many exchanges of delegations between the two countries. Iranian Parliament Speaker visited Russia two times. For this reason, the year 2017 can be called a year without any reference in the bilateral relations between Tehran and Moscow.

However, I believe that the bilateral economic-business relations have grown at a modest pace. Last year, economic relations between the two countries grew less as compared to 2016. The exchange of goods between the two countries grew by 70% in 2016, excluding technical and military cooperation. This occurred after all the necessary diplomatic steps took place.

All relevant documents have been signed and all necessary requirements observed. There are also many government projects awaiting execution. This is due to the slow administrative bureaucracy that exists in both countries. On the other hand, this could be due to weak presence of our private sector and the weak interaction between the private sector of the two countries. The private sector needs to be more active. I hope that as government projects are implemented and private sector becomes more active, we will witness further development of bilateral economic relations in the future.

All in all, our officials are expressing their satisfaction with the way bilateral relations are developing. They believe that relations between Iran-Russia relations will pave the way for peace and stability in the region.

■ St. Petersburg's economic summit is a good opportunity for the development of bilateral relations. Will Iranian delegations visit the summit and at what level?

A: Iran participated in the economic conference in St Petersburg for two years at an excellent level. I think that Iran will also attend this event this year. We have received invitation. I would like to add that we are looking to hosting a conference on the topic of the Southern Economic Summit in one



of the southern cities of Russia, in collaboration with the Russians.

St. Petersburg conference and the economic summit of the East already take place. A conference takes place in Arkhangelsk. The southern summit can unite Russia with Iran and the Persian Gulf states, India and Turkey. We have raised this plan with the Russians and we are working on it.

■ Will this conference be held this year?

A: No, I don't think so. The Iran and Russia conference could be held in the first half of current year. We are working on it. I hope that this conference could be the basis of an international conference.

■ The situation in Syria has become extremely tense due to the Turkish operations in the northern part of the country. Wouldn't the Turkish actions against the Kurds cause further inflame the Syrian problem? What is Iran's stance on this issue?

A: I would like to say that the Congress of Syrian National Dialogue held in Sochi was a very good event in its own right. Representatives of various parties, tribes, and religions in Syria participated in this congress. In my opinion, this is a big step towards a political resolution of the Syrian crisis, while we see little movement in the Geneva talks. That is why the agreements reached during the congress and the documents that were approved are very important.

The Astana process had certain goals that included creating zones of reduction of tensions, which were create. After that, Sochi meeting was held. I think there were no realistic views at the Geneva meetings. Naturally, that is why there have

been no big gains. We hope that the experience gained with the help of the Astana framework and the Sochi Congress will help solve this problem.

Concerning Afrin, in line with the United Nations Charter and international law, Islamic Republic of Iran has called for the preservation of the territorial integrity of Syria. Iran believes that any action and military presence in Syria should be carried out in coordination with the Syrian Arab Republic government.

Iran, Russia and Turkey have a good experience in the tripartite framework in the Astana process. For this reason, if these three countries have concerns, it is better to address these concerns within the framework of the trilateral Astana process, because a military solution makes it harder to solve the problem.

■ What is the status of joint Russian-Iranian cooperation in Syria?

A: Officials of the two countries are engaged in serious consultations. The Foreign Ministry has held several meetings in this regard in recent months, the Foreign Ministers of the two countries have also met to discuss this matter. Russian President's special envoy [for Syria] Alexander Lavrentiev has traveled to Iran several times. He has met and talked with Iranian officials on this matter. For this reason, I believe that the achievements we made last year are the result of close and permanent cooperation between the political and military officials of the two countries. A recent quartet between Iran, Russia, Syria and Iraq was held in Baghdad.

■ U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly

said that if JCPOA is not renegotiated, U.S. will exit the deal and has called for the deal to be reviewed. How does Iran assess its requests to other parties about the nuclear deal?

A: JCPOA is an international agreement. This is not a bilateral agreement. I would like to emphasize its international aspect. It took a long time to reach this agreement. JCPOA is the result of a long process of negotiations between Iran and the major superpowers and the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. If JCPOA is questioned, this indicates, first of all, that, unfortunately Americans are still pursuing unilateralist viewpoint in resolving of various issues. Of course, this would fail. Of course this is a bad experience. As Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said, if JCPOA is questioned, what other method can one trust to solve various problems? If the president of one of these countries is changed, and in line with this change, the existing agreements will change, then there will be lawlessness.

Of course, Iran will try to cooperate with Russia and China, as well as with European countries, and will strive to maintain JCPOA. Even if JCPOA is violated, Iran will also have various scenarios of actions. At the same time, I must add that Iranian officials are always grateful to their Russian colleagues for their very true and fair position regarding JCPOA.

■ What are Iran's scenarios? One of the issues raised in Iran is that if JPOCA is violated then Tehran can increase the number of centrifuges to previous level. What will Iran respond to if the United States takes action?

A: Of course, Iran will respond.

■ Iran's concrete response measures will not be coordinated with its partners, for example, with Russia?

A: We always consult with Russia. Iran has informed Russia about its possible scenarios.

■ What are the joint projects with Russia in the field of oil and gas for this year (2018)? In particular, at what level is Gazprom's project to produce "liquefied natural gas" (LNG) in Iran?

A: Last year, it was a good year for the development of bilateral energy relations. It witnessed considerable growth. A common understanding was reached between Russian oil and gas companies and the Iranian Oil Ministry. I must emphasize that the six major Russian oil and gas companies have a mutual understanding on MoUs. Some of them have presented their research results. I hope that all of this will pave the way for signing contracts in 2018. The Iranian side believes that the implementation of some of these contracts will begin in the first half of 2018. These companies are studying oil wells, but some of them are closer to signing agreement. For example, "Rosneft" is going ahead very well. Gazprom is in serious negotiations about LNG. Zarubezhneft has signed a pre-contract. Gazprom Oil also has good interactions with the Iranian side. Lukoil is also in high-level talks with Iranian parties.

■ Will Gazprom Neft agreement on natural gas be signed in the first half of the year?

A: The Iranian side is optimistic this will happen. I want the Russians companies to hurry up and sign the relevant agreements. The progress of companies such as Rosneft, Gazprom Oil and the Iranian side is noteworthy. I am very hopeful that contracts will be signed between these companies and Iranian parties in 2018. In terms of volume of investments, these values will be specified in the contracts.

■ Has Russia purchased oil from Iran this year in the oil-for-product deal? What amount and at what price?

A: We have no contract named as "Oil for product". The correct name is contract for purchasing oil. It is written in the agreement that 50% of the proceeds from oil sales will be spent on joint projects. Another part of the money will be deposited with the Central Bank of Iran. From this perspective, 2017 was a good year, because the contract was executed and I hope very much that its implementation will continue in 2018. This agreement has special importance. On the one hand, it will bring our energy cooperation closer, and on the other hand, it will help solve one of the most important problems in Iran-Russia relations, the problem of lack of financial resources. The implementation of this agreement will help to create financial resources for the implementation of our joint projects. The implementation of this agreement will help to create financial resources for the implementation of our joint projects. This was one of the good developments between the two countries in 2017.

Nongovernmental projects have also begun. Axar Company has signed several big agreements. Banks such as Exim Bank, Sberbank of Russia and Gazprombank have started in investing in joint projects.

## Iran a big help in push to eliminate ISIL



➔ First, Iran provided military advisory assistance for the two countries and later it supported the two states with military supplies and weapons.

Iran's involvement in the fight against terrorism in Iraq and Syria demonstrated that the world had yet to fully wake up to the extreme dangers these terrorist groups posed. Also, in combating such madness and extremism, Iran could show off its willingness to aid embattled neighbors.

Malicious people from many countries had come together in Iraq and Syria to loot, slaughter, and seize territory, and today, the same terrorists are still committing crimes in every corner of the globe, creating a climate of insecurity, but the Islamic Republic stepped in to defend legitimate governments in the region.

The U.S., taking advantage of and assisting terrorist groups, continues its support for extremists with weapons and advice.

Meanwhile, Iran, after the victory of the revolution, has never invaded any country for its own territorial expansion and resources. Iran's Islamic Republic has long

sided with oppressed nations and stood against the domination of arrogant Western powers and their proxies, particularly in Iraq and Syria. Iran has sacrificed to keep the Resistance Front intact, because otherwise the Zionist regime would have its way in the Mideast.

In recent crises, the Zionist regime has profited from the mayhem at little cost as it watched the bloodshed. Today, although Daesh has literally lost ground in the region, its ideology lingers on. Daesh is a terribly irrational and radical take on Islam, and in fact is not truly Islamic at all.

For now, Daesh has been reduced by not entirely eliminated. Islamic states from the Caucasus to Central Asia to Malaysia and Southeast Asia still consider themselves threatened by ISIL. But the threat is not limited to them. Europe, too, is at risk. The U.S., the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia are all still pushing ISIL.


Iran has no underlying agenda in the reconstruction of post-war Syria, but is experienced in war reconstruction projects, and if the Syrian government puts in a

request, Iran will certainly lend a helping hand. Damascus could provide conditions for Iranian private sectors to help rebuild Syria. There have been talks about giving Iranian construction companies priority to help Syria rebuild.


As for Israel, there is no need to try to destroy the Zionist regime as it may eventually destroy itself. As Iran's Supreme Leader said, "Israel will no longer exist in 25 years". Today, Israelis are grappling with an identity crisis as many Jews, especially outside Israel, don't identify with the current political stance in Occupied Palestine.

The Zionist regime no longer retains the image and power that it possessed before the 33-day war on Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the 22-day war on the Gaza Strip. Many Palestinians and Lebanese are in high spirits in the fight against the Zionist regime, and the regime may be apprehensive about any full scale aggressions.

Today, the Zionists must face the harsh reality that emerging trends could eventually bring an end to Israeli aggression in and beyond Palestine.



**N.I.O.C**  
1396.5303



**National Iranian Drilling Company**

PUBLIC CALL FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF TENDERERS (FIRST/SECOND TURN)

TWO PHASES TENDER NO. 5136-33/06-KB/96 IN SEMI-COMPRESSED METHOD

Tender No.	Record No. <a href="https://iets.mporg.ir">https://iets.mporg.ir</a>	Record No. <a href="https://iets.mporg.ir">https://iets.mporg.ir</a>	First Estimation Cost
5136-33/06-KB/96	3150808	Provision (Rent) of 3 Cargo Vessels made in year 1990 or above to support Drilling Projects located in Persian Gulf	23,608,200 (AED)

### Service summary to be executed:

National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) a wholly subsidiary of National Oil Company (NIOC) intends to grant the provision of above-mentioned services to a well-known and qualified contractor through the public call for Tenderer's pre-qualification & signing the related rental contract based on following terms and condition.

### Quality Evaluation Criteria of Tenderers:

- 1- This pre-qualification shall be made according to Article 12-3 of the Iranian Tenders Law and based on the sheets of the Tenderer's pre-qualification as attached to the Tender – documents.
- 2- The minimum acceptable qualitative score in 60. Therefore tenderers who obtained this minimum qualitative score (60) are invited in writing to participate in the Tender.

### Receipt of Tender Documents:

Applicants intend to participate in the process of services award are supposed to deposit the amount of IRR 990,000 in MELLI Bank account No. 2174652205004 in favor of National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC).

### Documents Receipt:

All applicants legal and real persons may obtain pre-qualification and Tender Draft documents by sending their formal application to the NIDC's Contracts Department and refer to NIDC Contracts Department – First Floor – Operational Building – Koyee Mellat – Ahvaz – Iran within 7 days from the date of the issuance of this advertisement dated on February 13, 2018 until end of working time of Monday dated February 19, 2018.

### Important Points:

- 1- Legal and none legal persons who applied within valid time mentioned in this advertisement can be called as tenderers.
- 2- The Tenderers which have more than four active contracts with NIDC, have no right to participate in the present Tender or any other Tenders and submitted Pre-Qualification documents and envelopes of the companies which may not have this essential and indispensable condition will not be reviewed and evaluated and these companies have no right for objection.

### Method of Quality Assessment Document Delivery:

Pre-qualification forms shall be filled in and signed and sealed by competent persons and within 14 days from Wednesday dated on February 21, 2018 until the end of working time of Tuesday dated on March 6, 2018 accompanied with necessary documents (experience records according to the assessment forms available on C.D) deliver to NIDC Tender Committee Department Room No.107 – Part B – First Floor – Operational Building – Koyee Mellat – Ahvaz – Iran

### Guarantee for Tender:

Price of Tender Guarantee is IRR 6,015,000,000 or EURO 135,050 or AED 605,009.

### Guarantee Type:

- Bank Guarantee and or Guarantee issued by non-bank credit institute which has permission from central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Original receipt of cash payment to deposited in NIDC account.

### Tender Guarantee validity Period:

This period (along with tenderers offers validity period) is 90 days and it is extendable for once based on the original validity.



# What Trump gets wrong about Mexico

By Andrés Martínez

Mexico has long been a good neighbor to the United States, and in more recent years a good ally – which is why it's more than a little absurd that a false narrative about our relationship with Mexico contributed to shutting down the federal government last month, and threatened to do so again this week.

The two crucial unresolved issues in the partisan brinkmanship of the moment – quarrels over whether to provide permanent relief to the “Dreamer” young immigrants covered by DACA, and whether to fund the building of a border wall – reflect an underlying anxiety about trends in Mexico and along the border. So too, for that matter, does the ongoing renegotiation of the NAFTA trade agreement.

President Donald Trump is not known for the constancy or coherence of his positions, but sadly,

when it comes to Mexico, he has been remarkably clear and consistent in the story he tells about our almost 2,000-mile southern border – and our neighbor on the other side of it. It's an inaccurate story, but he has clung to it since the day he announced his candidacy back in the summer of 2015, thereby legitimizing it to a large segment of the electorate.

It's a story of a desperately poor neighbor taking advantage of Americans by luring their jobs away, and dumping millions of its people across a chaotic border that Washington has refused to police for decades, until now.

## Policy mistakes

Political leaders typically minimize, or rationalize, policy mistakes and resulting problems, but Mexico is a curious case of the exact opposite – a largely positive story, and arguably a major U.S.

policy win, portrayed inaccurately as a disaster.

The United States first pressed Mexico to become bound to North America by a free-trade agreement during the Reagan administration. U.S. motives always transcended the purely commercial: NAFTA would strengthen the rule of law in Mexico, advance that country's democratization, and provide the United States with a more stable partner on its southern flank. NAFTA has exceeded expectations on all those fronts, especially in democratizing Mexico and setting it on a more stable path of growth, and not at the expense of the U.S. economy.

Bilateral trade between the two countries increased more than six-fold since NAFTA went into effect in 1994, and the growing middle class in Mexico has become a massive consumer of American products, buying more from the United States than any country besides Canada. Mexico imports

more from the United States than China and the United Kingdom put together.

Mexico has changed dramatically in the two decades since NAFTA went into effect, largely in accordance with Washington's proposed vision. Both Mexico's conservative National Action Party (PAN) and once hyper-nationalist Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) administrations abandoned the country's traditional anti-American outlook and rhetoric, and compromised former sovereignty concerns to collaborate closely with Washington on everything from national security to energy policy.

When I travel in other parts of the world, where borders are truly fraught with tension, people express a wistful jealousy for the cross-border harmony the United States has enjoyed with both Canada and Mexico. Mexicans and Canadians don't harbor zealous anti-U.S. designs. When they do cross

our border, it's out of admiration and a desire to advance themselves while contributing to the American economy and society.

Our southern border, contrary to what Trump and many of his supporters appear to believe, is hardly an out-of-control security threat to the United States.

Billions of taxpayer dollars have been spent in the past two decades hardening security; unauthorized crossings and the number of undocumented immigrants from Mexico are declining. Studies estimate there has been a net emigration back to Mexico in recent years, and demographic trends in that country add to worries of potential labor shortages in our economy over the long run. What's more, cities near the border, including El Paso and San Diego, consistently rank among the safest in the country. ➔13

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# Heart disease: men vs. women

By Leslie Cho

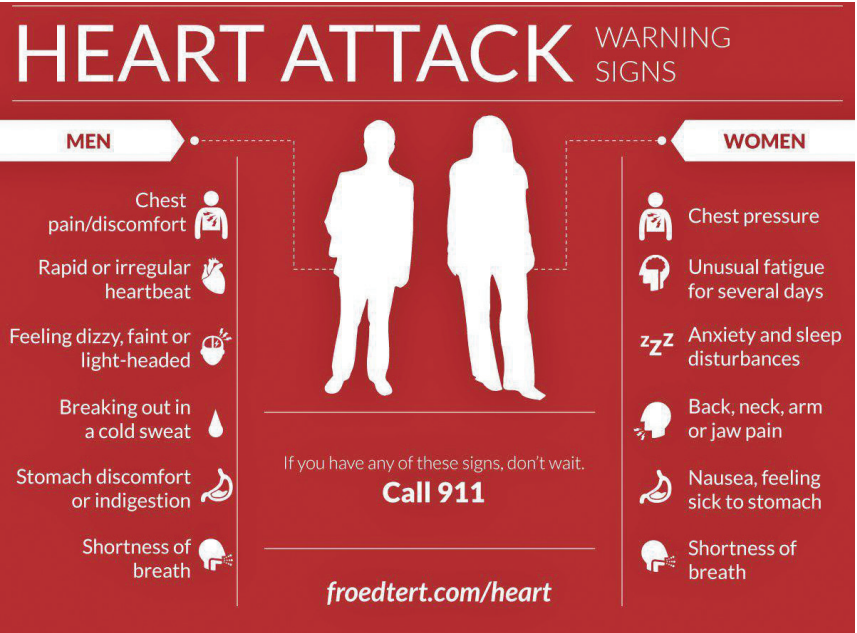
A woman’s heart looks just like a man’s, but there are significant differences. For example, a woman’s heart is usually smaller as are some of its interior chambers. The walls that divide some of these chambers are thinner. A woman’s heart pumps faster than a man’s, but ejects about 10 percent less blood with each squeeze. When a woman is stressed, her pulse rate rises and her heart ejects more blood. When a man is stressed, the arteries of his heart constrict, raising his blood pressure. Why do these differences matter? They matter because gender plays a role in the symptoms, treatments, and outcomes of some common heart diseases.

■ **Coronary artery disease (CAD)**  
CAD, the leading cause of heart attack, is the same process in men and women. Extra fats circulating in the blood are deposited in the walls of the heart’s arteries, forming deposits called plaques. When these plaques grow slowly, they become hard and gradually narrow the artery, interfering with blood flow. More often the plaques remain soft and become unstable and rupture. This triggers a cascade of events that produces a blood clot that stops blood flow. Either way, the result is a heart attack.

Despite this process, women have risk factors for CAD that men don’t have. They also tend to have different symptoms of heart attack. When symptoms appear, CAD may be more difficult to diagnose using conventional testing methods.

After a heart attack, women don’t always do as well as men. Sometimes, it’s because women don’t always receive the best treatment for their disease. Other times, it’s because they didn’t know they were at risk until it was too late. Here are six ways that CAD differs in men and women:

- Women have risk factors men don’t have. Certain diseases found only in women increase the risk of CAD. These include endometriosis, polycystic ovary disease (PCOS), diabetes, and high blood pressure that develops during pregnancy. Endometriosis has been found to raise the risk of developing CAD by 400 percent in women under age 40. Women also share traditional risk factors with men, such as high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels, high cholesterol levels, smoking, and obesity. Like men, women can be impacted by a family history of heart disease, particularly when a father or brother was diagnosed with CAD before age 55 or a mother or sister was diagnosed before age 65.
- Women are generally older when they



## Estrogen offers women some protection from heart disease until after menopause, when estrogen levels drop.

have their first heart attack. Men are at risk for heart attack much earlier in life than women. Estrogen offers women some protection from heart disease until after menopause, when estrogen levels drop. This is why the average age for a heart attack in women is 70, but 66 in men.

- The symptoms of heart attack can be different in women. Chest pain (also described as a crushing weight on the chest) is the most common symptom of heart attack in men. Some women also experience chest pain, but they are more likely to have different symptoms. Unlike the dramatic, chest-clutching pain seen in the movies, women often experience subtler symptoms for three or four weeks before a heart attack. Red flags include:
  - New or dramatic fatigue. You aren’t exerting yourself, but you feel deeply fatigued, but can’t sleep, or have a “heavy” chest. For example, a simple activity like making the bed makes you feel unusually tired or you are suddenly worn out after your normal exercise routine.
  - Shortness of breath or sweating. Look out for when either symptom occurs without exertion, is accompanied by a symptom such as chest pain or fatigue, worsens over time after

exertion, or sparks a cold, clammy feeling that occurs without cause. Also, if shortness of breath worsens when lying down and is relieved when you sit up.

- Pain in the neck, back, or jaw. Look out for when there is no specific muscle or joint that aches or when the discomfort worsens when you are exerting yourself and stops when you stop. The pain can be in either arm, whereas it’s usually the left arm in men. Also, pay attention to pain that starts in the chest and spreads to the back, pain that occurs suddenly and may awaken you at night, or pain in the lower left side of the jaw.
- CAD in women is sometimes hard to diagnose. An X-ray movie (angiogram) taken during a cardiac catheterization is the gold standard test for finding narrowings or blockages in the heart’s large arteries. But CAD in women often affects the small arteries which cannot be clearly seen on an angiogram. That’s why any woman who is given the “all clear” signal after an angiogram and continues to have symptoms should see a cardiologist who specializes in women with heart disease.
  - A heart attack is harder on a woman than a man. Women don’t tend to do as well

as men after a heart attack. They often require a longer hospital stay and are more likely to die before leaving the hospital. This may be due to the fact that women who suffer a heart attack have more untreated risk factors, such as diabetes or high blood pressure. Sometimes, it’s because they put their families first and don’t take care of themselves.

- Women don’t always get the proper medications after a heart attack. After a heart attack, women are at greater risk of developing a blood clot that can cause another heart attack. For unknown reasons, they are not as likely to be given a drug to prevent such blood clots. This could explain why women are more likely than men to have a second heart attack within 12 months.

■ **Heart failure**  
Heart failure in men is usually caused by damage from a heart attack that prevents the muscle from contracting as forcefully as it should. On the other hand, women are more likely to develop heart failure when high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, or other condition prevents their heart muscle from relaxing properly between beats. Women with this type of heart failure generally live longer than men with heart failure. But, they need frequent hospitalizations for shortness of breath, have limited physical ability, and are more likely to need nursing home care.

■ **Atrial fibrillation**  
Atrial fibrillation (afib) is a condition that causes the heart to beat in an irregular, often rapid, rhythm. Recent studies have found that women with afib have more symptoms, a worse quality of life, a higher likelihood of stroke, and worse outcomes than men. They also are more likely to be treated for afib with catheter ablation, but more likely to be re-hospitalized for afib after the procedure than men. Despite these problems, women who receive treatment for afib are more likely to survive longer and are less likely to die from a heart problem than men with afib.

■ **Protect yourself**  
Whether you are a man or a woman, it’s never too late to lower your chance of experiencing a heart attack. Here is what you need to do:

- Quit smoking or don’t start
- Get regular exercise (at minimum, walk 30 minutes a day)
- Eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fish and low in animal products, simple carbohydrates, and processed foods.
- Maintain a normal weight, blood pressure, blood lipid, and blood sugar levels.

(Source: [verywell.com](#))

## Natural health benefits of honey



By Marissa Laliberte

One of the top benefits of honey? It can help you out in a pinch. This natural sweetener has been found to be just as effective as a typical over-the-counter dosage of dextromethorphan in suppressing coughs, possibly because honey acts as a demulcent, forming a film in the throat to provide relief from the irritation that causes coughing. Take 2 teaspoons before bed to ease nighttime coughing and help you sleep.

■ **Improve your cholesterol profile**  
A Dubai study found that compared to participants who took a glucose solution, those consuming 250 milliliters of water with 75 grams of natural honey for 15 days lowered their total and “bad” low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, while raising “good” high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol.

■ **Moisturize skin**  
Honey acts as a natural moisturizer because the sugar molecules hold water in the skin, says dermatologist Patricia Farris, MD. Honey leaves a film on the skin to seal in water and increase moisture, adds dermatologist Zoe Diana Draelos, MD, who recommends skin-care products containing honey extract.

■ **Treat acne**  
Honey’s antimicrobial properties may reduce inflammation from acne, according to Joey Green, author of Joey Green’s Magic Health Remedies. For a perfect acne home remedy, mix equal parts honey and ground nutmeg, then leave on the pimple for 20 minutes before washing off.

■ In addition to quelling coughs, honey can act as a mild antibacterial that can benefit you if you have a sore throat. Pour 1/2 cup of water over 1 teaspoon grated ginger, then add the juice of 1/2 of a lemon and 1 teaspoon of honey. Gargle the mixture for relief. That’s not the only natural gargle that can soothe a sore throat.

■ **Heal burns the sore throats**  
One classic study found that burns treated with honey healed faster and showed less inflammation than silver sulfadiazine, a common burn treatment. Here are more surprising home remedies for burns.

■ **Raise low blood sugar**  
Honey powder increased and maintained glucose levels more effectively than sucrose or maltodextrin, according to a study from the Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition. Large amounts of carbs and protein after exercise could cause hypoglycemia in some people, but the researchers concluded that honey could prevent such reactions. Patients with hypoglycemia can use honey’s high sugar content to give low blood glucose levels a boost. You should also know these tricks to treat low blood sugar.

■ **Eliminate dandruff**  
Using a honey hair wash can soothe your scalp and help fight dandruff. (It’s just one of the scalp conditions you should never ignore.) Researchers studied the use of honey on patients suffering from seborrheic dermatitis and dandruff and found that using a honey wash relieved itching and improved scaling. Even if you only have occasional dandruff, washing with honey can help. Honey has anti-fungal properties and moisturizes the scalp. Dilute honey with a bit of warm water and massage into scalp for 2-3 minutes. These natural treatments can help you get rid of dandruff, too.

■ **Use as a body wash**  
Used as a body wash in the shower, honey will moisturize dry skin and kill bacteria that can cause acne or body odor. To make the bodywash, combine two teaspoons of honey with a tablespoon of olive oil. To increase the spa experience, add essential oils such as lavender, almond oil, or vitamin E oil. These oils are soothing and provide a pleasant smell. If you’d like to turn your body wash into a scrub, combine with 1/2 cup of brown sugar. Make sure that your body wash does not contain water--honey itself has a very long shelf life, but adding water can contribute to mold growth, spoiling the wash quickly.

(Source: [rd.com](#))

## The one drink you should always order on an airplane

By Brooke Nelson

There are so many plane-related health risks that it’s hard to keep track of them all. Not only would the bacteria on your tray table make you cringe, but you’ll want to think twice before using the blankets, as well. As for the menu? Let’s just say that you should only order one thing when the beverage cart rolls up to your seat. While it’s tempting to take advantage of the free airline perks, consider skipping the soft drinks and juice. A better option is plain old water, experts say. (You might want to avoid drinking tea or coffee on planes for this gross reason, too.)

Why? Turns out, those cold, dry airplane cabins can wreak havoc on your body—causing fatigue, swelling, and most importantly, dehydration. Once you get dehydrated, you are also more vulnerable to air sickness, jet lag, and headaches while flying at 35,000 feet. A glass of H<sub>2</sub>O can combat the worst of your dehydration before it even sets in.

One more tip: Make sure your flight attendant serves you water from a bottle rather than the tap. A 2012 EPA report found that 12 percent of commercial planes tested positively for coliform bacteria in their water supplies, according to NBC 5.

If water is too boring for your tastebuds, ordering seltzer water mixed with a bit of cranberry juice. It’s a great substitute for the fizzy and flavorful taste of soft drinks—without the extra sugar, calories, and chemicals found in soda.

Staying hydrated shouldn’t be exclusively reserved for your travels, of course. These genius tricks will guarantee you’ll drink your recommended two liters of water every single day.

(Source: [Southern Living](#))

# Human eggs grown in lab offer ‘promising’ insight into fertility

By Jacqueline Howard

Scientists from the United States and the United Kingdom have revealed, in a first-of-its-kind study, that they were able to grow human eggs in a lab. Their achievement could someday lead to new fertility treatments.

The eggs were developed from an early stage in ovarian tissue to a mature stage in which they could have been ready for fertilization, according to the study, published last week in the journal Molecular Human Reproduction.

However, the eggs appeared to have many abnormalities, said David Albertini, a co-author of the study and director of the Division of Laboratories at the Center for Human Reproduction in New York.

More research needs to be done before the technique behind these lab-grown eggs could be used to help women facing certain fertility concerns, such as young cancer patients whose fertility has been compromised by treatments, he said.

“It was pretty amazing that we got any eggs out of this at the end of the day, and what that tells us as scientists is that we’re beginning to understand exactly what the limitations are,” Albertini said.

“When we really examine these eggs, we could tell that there were a lot of things wrong with them, but by knowing what’s wrong with them, then that allows us to go back and refine the technology.

“Hopefully, as this work continues, we will see some of these abnormalities disappear in terms of the quality of the eggs that we get,” he said.

In general, infertility can be defined as not being able to get pregnant after a year or more of having unprotected sex, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For a pregnancy, an egg from ovaries should be fertilized and it then must go through a fallopian tube and get attached to the inside of the uterus.

About 12% of all women ages 15 to 44 in the US have difficulty getting pregnant or carrying a pregnancy to term, according to the CDC. In the UK, about one in seven couples may have difficulty conceiving, according to the National Health Service.

In developing countries, it’s estimated that one in every four couples could be affected by infertility, according to the World Health Organization.

The WHO has called infertility a “global public health issue” and has calculated that more than 10% of women around the world are affected.

For the new study, tissue samples were collected from the ovaries of 10 women who were undergoing elective cesarean sections.

“All tissue came from women within a similar age range and at the end of pregnancy,” the researchers wrote in the study.

Then, 48 early-stage eggs were isolated from the follicles of the ovarian tissue fragments. They were cultured in a lab, and nine reached the final stages of development, according to the study.



“This is a technological breakthrough for those of us who are interested in understanding how the ovary works and how it impacts a woman’s fertility,” Albertini said. “This is a research triumph that opens new doors for us to understand how a human egg develops.”

“I think we’re a good five to 10 years away from seeing this applied clinically,” he added. “We have a lot of work to do to -- number one, improve the efficiency of this procedure, that is the in-vitro development of human eggs -- but we also have a lot of work to do in terms of improving the quality of the eggs that come out.”

Until the new study, human eggs have been grown only from a relatively late stage of development, and mostly mouse eggs have been grown from early stages.

Last year, a separate research team cultivated two types of mouse stem cells in a Petri dish and watched an early-stage embryo grow, closely resembling a natural mouse embryo in its architecture, development process and ability to assemble. That artificial embryo, however, was unable to continue developing into a fetus.

The new study offers novel findings for humans, Albertini said. The research appears to be “incredibly creative” and “forward-thinking” and suggests a potential way for women facing fertility concerns to use their immature eggs during certain fertility treatments, such as in vitro fertilization or IVF, said Dr. Aimee Eyvazzadeh, a San Francisco-based reproductive endocrinologist who was not involved in the new study.

“Right now, when a woman goes through IVF, immature

eggs are discarded. The reason is that there is no scientific evidence published that has been replicated to show that germinal vesicles (or immature eggs) can be frozen and then thawed and then cultured to maturity. We can’t even culture germinal vesicles now that are fresh. If we could, this would be a huge game-changer,” Eyvazzadeh said.

“Ovarian tissue biopsy could replace what we now know as IVF,” she said. “I really hope that this proof-of-concept study is replicated and that these scientists are wildly successful. “Women no longer would have to take fertility drugs if this technology turned out to be a reliable, consistent and an effective way to mature eggs.”

Dr. Ali Abbbara, a senior clinical lecturer in endocrinology at Imperial College London and a member of the Society for Endocrinology, called the new research “exciting” and “promising” in a statement Friday.

“It suggests that we may be able to grow eggs from ovarian tissue, all the way from early stages to later development stages, ready for fertilization by sperm; and that this process could be achieved outside of the human body,” said Abbbara, who was not involved in the new study.

“However, the technology remains at an early stage, and much more work is needed to make sure that the technique is safe and optimised before we ascertain whether these eggs remain normal during the process, and can be fertilized to form embryos that could lead to healthy babies,” he said. “Still, this early data suggests that this may well be feasible in the future.”

(Source: [CNN](#))



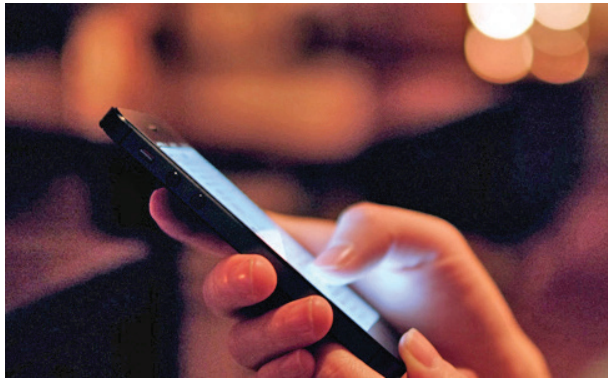
## Our digital devices may be revealing more about us than we realize

The digital footprints we leave behind as we go about our Internet-browsing, cellphone-calling, app-using lives may be revealing more about us than we realize — and opening us up to some surprising risks.

The potential pitfalls were highlighted recently when an Australian college student discovered that maps released by the fitness-tracking app Strava could be used to identify U.S. military bases.

The company had used anonymized GPS data from its users' jogging and cycling routes to create a global "heat map" of activity. But because the app is popular with military personnel, the maps revealed the locations of bases as well as sensitive details about their layouts and even service members' routines.

It was even possible to identify individual military personnel by uploading routes to Strava's website to see who had the fastest times at these locations.



"It really demonstrates our inability to comprehend the consequences of what we're sharing," says Dr. Mani Srivastava, a UCLA professor with a special interest in security and privacy issues arising from the use of mobile devices.

### ■ Revealing your location

Military personnel aren't the only ones at risk. Unless you opt out of publicly sharing your location data, other Strava users who exercise in the same area can pull up your profile details and see when and where you're working out. That opens up the possibility that someone could find you during a workout — and that burglars might be able to tell when you're away from home.

Even if you don't use a fitness tracker, you may be unwittingly revealing your location to others.

Twitter lets users stamp tweets with a location, and researchers at MIT and Oxford University showed in 2016 that even non-experts could use a day's worth of tweets to identify someone's home with 65 percent accuracy.

Facebook also allows users to "check-in" to locations, and Snapchat's SnapMap function broadcasts your location each time you open the app. Both reveal the information only to your friend list, but security researchers showed in 2011 that one-fifth of Facebook users accepted friend requests from strangers.

In a 2011 survey of 50 convicted burglars in the U.K., four fifths said thieves use social media to case their targets. Three burglars robbed at least 18 homes in New Hampshire in 2010 after checking Facebook for people announcing they weren't home.

Even when our data isn't public, we may be sharing more than we realize. Location data tracked by smartphone apps can reveal our shopping habits and how and where we drive, as well as which place of worship we visit, says Srivastava, while motion sensors in fitness-tracking wristbands can show everything from sleep patterns to hand movements that suggest we're smoking or eating.

In his own house, Srivastava has an internet-connected thermostat that tracks people from room to room to help optimize the settings. "Maybe they could tell I'm a late-night eater because I spent some time in the kitchen at 1 a.m.," he says.

### ■ Who wants your data?

Personal data is valuable to advertisers, and some tech companies' business models rely on harvesting it. "Many services are only available with your data as your currency," says Srivastava.

Digital assistants like Amazon Echo and Google Home, which record voice data when users speak to them, could prove particularly intrusive. Dr. Joseph Turow, a University of Pennsylvania professor who specializes in marketing and privacy, says Amazon's privacy policy gives it wide latitude in determining how it will use user data.

"How they build that into their model of who you are I don't know," he says, "but I don't think most people who have Echoes understand it's certainly a possibility."

These profiles can be turned against consumers. In 2012, online travel agency Orbitz acknowledged that it showed Apple Mac users different, often more expensive, options compared to Microsoft Windows users — because data showed Mac users were bigger spenders.

A 2012 Wall Street Journal investigation found that online retailers adjusted prices based on users' browsing history and location. Displayed prices were higher in areas with little competition from brick-and-mortar stores, which often overlapped with rural and poor areas.

British car insurer Admiral even announced plans in 2016 to assess customer's personalities by analyzing their Facebook posts, though Facebook forced them to scrap the scheme. It would have denied discounts to motorists whose posts suggested they might be comparatively reckless behind the wheel.

### ■ Social credit scores

Emerging "social credit scores" in China may be a harbinger of where this kind of profiling might lead, says Turow.

Sesame Credit combines credit history, shopping habits, and social media data to assign consumers a "trustworthiness" score that governs their access to loans and fast-track visas as well as VIP treatment at hotels. A government-run system scheduled to go online by 2020 would go further, giving users with low scores slower internet speeds, restricted travel, reduced employment opportunities, and limited access to insurance and loans.

"That may seem absurd to us," says Turow. "But the distance between social credit scores and behavioral activity tracking that today's marketers use is not necessarily all that large."

Want to do more to limit your digital footprint and plug as many data leaks as possible? Slate's Futurography project has useful tips. Both Apple iOS and Android version 6.0 allow you to switch off apps' access to data streams like location (check the privacy settings). Privacy-protecting apps like Signal can also help by encrypting text and voice calls. And DuckDuckGo is one search engine that doesn't collect user data.

Experts say you should also delete apps you don't use.

(Source: nbcnews.com)

# Technology, social networks, kids: dangers vs. opportunities

Are social networks a plague or an opportunity for children? Advantages, disadvantages, dangers, opportunities — they are what you see and what you show to your child.

### ■ Social networks and kids

So many words have been told about social media and children. So many articles have been written. Essay writing help about this topic is available almost on every website offering writing services. They all highlight one thing: parents should protect their children from social networks. All networks should be banned. If not all are banned, then they should be controlled.

What do these thoughts mean? Are they the fears of older generation of technology or a wish to control at least somebody, at least a child? Probably both.

However, times are changing. We live in a new era with new opportunities. Social networks are the kind of technology that has changed the world and the way of communication. Moreover, they are changing the world every second.

### ■ Social networks vs. medicine: feel the difference?

What would you think of people who are forbidding to treat their sick kids with medicine just because they are too old-fashioned to perceive the development of medicine in the right way? The situation with social networks is not by much different.

### ■ Social networks are good

Social networks give us unlimited opportunities:

Communication with people from different parts of the world. On social networking sites people find friends, colleagues, those who share their interests and ideas;

Help in criminal cases. Sometimes people make posts in social media that can help to investigate the criminal cases. Moreover,



such networks help finding people, lost animals etc., as they reach the great part of the population;

The way to help shy people to communicate. Writing is always easier than speaking. If a person is too shy to communicate in, say, a class, then chatting shouldn't be a problem. So even very shy people find friends.

However, there are reasons why some parents forbid their children using social networks.

### ■ Social networks are bad

Cyber bullying. People are different, there are good and bad people in the web as well. With the emergence of social networks bullying has moved to entirely different level. It can be absolutely anonymous and continue 24/7, whenever the bullied person logs in;

Easy surveillance. Function of location detection can be useful, though a criminal can

detect your child easier when this function is on. A criminal can track the child's movements and plan the crime more properly;

Less communication with real people. People replace real communication with communication in social networks. Virtual communication requires less efforts. A person can pretend to be anybody, even his favourite superhero. That can give confidence, though there are dangers as well.

### ■ Hence, plague or blessing?

The forbidden is more attractive. This is what you should remember when deciding whether to allow your child to use social networks or not. Yes, there are dangers. Though your child will face them anyway with or without your help.

### ■ What to do?

Technology is something that cannot be stopped whether we want it or not. However,

what we can do is to teach our children how to avoid problems or cope with them, if they get into a trouble.

Here are some tips that will help to prevent the most dangerous situations:

Tell your child that maniacs look like the kindest people in the world. There is nothing to do for an adult person in a chat with a child.

Virtual communication is just virtual communication, there is always an option to block the person and forget about him forever if he is abusive or intrusive.

Threats are not an option whatever the situation is. If somebody threatens your child, he or she shall block the person and notify parents and the website administration. If necessary, parents can and must go to the police. Telling "No" is ok whenever the child feels inconvenient. Doesn't matter what others think or speak, safety should be the priority.

Dangers can come not only from strangers. If a close person or a family friend tries to press the child, the reaction should be similar to the case with a stranger. There should be no exceptions for anybody.

Parents are always there, not to judge but to help and support. Whatever happens, the child should know that he or she can come to parents and they will do everything to help.

### ■ Conclusions

Social networks are becoming more and more integrated in our lives and in the lives of our children. Being wise and understanding will help to avoid dangers and get the best out of social networking. Teach your child how to use this technology correctly, how to discover new things with it. If your child is older, show which options for career and earnings social networks open for him.

Technology itself is neither good nor bad, it is about how we use and perceive it.

(Source: augustafreepress.com)

## A look at some possible modern-day monsters in the tech world

It's one of the most famous cases of mistaken identity in the literary world: Frankenstein. When the name comes up, a majority of people think of a tall, green fellow with a flat head and bolts in his neck — an image that began with the original "Frankenstein" movie in 1910. Or you may think of the 1931 film with the title character played by Boris Karloff.

Ask any literary enthusiast and they will tell you that in the original book, Victor Frankenstein is the creator of the being known mostly through the book as "the monster" — an amalgamation of body parts fused to form a new entity that eventually goes on a murderous rampage after being shunned by the world.

That novel, written by Mary Shelley 200 years ago, has been used as a metaphor for science for years and years when referring to everything from artificial intelligence to genetic editing.

Silicon Valley has also been associated with the name as small startup tech companies have grown up to be, well, monsters in their own right that have become unstoppable forces in our daily lives. You may know them by such names as Facebook, Twitter and Google.

Adam Briggie, an associate professor of philosophy and religion at the University of North Texas, wrote a piece in The Conversation about these modern-day Frankensteins last month.

"Everybody talks about how he was a mishmash of these parts, but he's actually in a sense too pure because he stayed on the edges of society. Nobody commercialized him. Nobody needed him. Nobody's livelihood depended on this monster, whereas the monsters we're talking about today have become needs," Briggie says of Frankenstein's monster, who actually taught himself how to read and to speak two languages.

"Silicon Valley I think is a good topic to talk about because it's not just needs but even addictions. These things are designed to be not repulsive like Frankenstein's monster but all too attractive, kind of pulling on our strings when we'd rather have them not to do that."

Briggie also points out that Victor Frankenstein was the "original lone wolf" in literature, making it easy to put the burden of responsibility on his shoulders for the monster's actions. This idea stands in stark contrast to numerous players



that empower big science and big networks of innovation that spur on these modern-day monsters.

In terms of those who could be called modern-day Victor Frankensteins, Briggie mentions Justin Rosenstein, a software programmer who is credited with leading the charge for Facebook's like button — among other digital staples.

He also names Tristan Harris, a former design ethicist at Google who tried to figure out how to ethically steer the thoughts and actions of billions of users for three years. Harris now runs a non-profit organization called Time Well Spent, which hopes to bring out change from tech companies through a framework of ethical design standards, public advocacy, design education and policy recommendations.

"So I think there's a whole bunch of these people who are involved on the inside who are now doing the Frankenstein thing, which is to kind of have regret," Briggie says, "and in a way hunt after their monsters to try to either kill them, which would be like unplugging ... or find a way to modify and educate their behavior."

Erin Griffith is a senior writer at Wired magazine who has written extensively on the topic of Silicon Valley being this generation's new Wall Street brokers. She says just as many people in the '80s viewed the iconic film "Wall Street" as "rallying cry that 'greed is good,'" many tech startups have been built on the idea of growing as fast as they could, feeling that they were already climbing a mountain when being compared to the Facebooks and Googles.

## Researchers build alien ocean to test NASA outer space submarine

Building a submarine gets tricky when the temperature drops to -300 Fahrenheit and the ocean is made of methane and ethane. Researchers are working to determine how a submarine might work on Titan, the largest of Saturn's many moons and the second largest in the solar system. The space agency plans to launch a real submarine into Titan seas in the next 20 years.

Engineers know how to design submarines on Earth, but building one gets a lot trickier when the temperature drops to -300 Fahrenheit and the ocean is made of methane and ethane.

Washington State University researchers are working with NASA to determine how a submarine might work on Titan, the largest of Saturn's many moons and the second largest in the solar system. The space agency plans to launch a real submarine into Titan seas in the next 20 years.

The researchers re-created a Titan ocean in a laboratory. They have published a paper on their work in the journal, Fluid Phase Equilibria.

Titan is of particular interest to researchers because it is similar to earth in one important way, it holds liquid. Unlike almost anywhere else in the solar system, the moon's surface

includes oceans, rivers and clouds, and like on earth, it can rain. But, instead of water, the hydrological cycle is based on methane.

Because of the possible lessons it could provide here on Earth, NASA has been studying Saturn and its moons for more than a decade with data collected from the Cassini spacecraft.

The submarine that the agency is designing will have to operate autonomously. It will need to study atmospheric and ocean conditions, move around sea beds, and hover at or below the surface. The engineering is even trickier because, unlike the nearly homogeneous water in earth-based oceans, the concentration of ethane and methane can vary dramatically in the Titan oceans and change the liquid's density properties.

### ■ NASA invitation

Ian Richardson, a former graduate student in the School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering, got the chance to tackle how NASA might build a submarine for the extreme conditions. In WSU's cryogenic lab, which studies materials at very cold temperatures, Richardson re-created the atmosphere of Titan and tested how a small heated machine might work under such conditions.

Richardson, who holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from WSU, has

had a longtime interest in space and space exploration technologies. He was WSU's first-ever recipient of a NASA Space Technology Research Fellowship, which included an internship at NASA's Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio. It was while working as an intern on a separate problem that a NASA scientist approached him with the problem of designing a submarine for Titan.

"My research just took a right turn, and I went with it," said Richardson. "It's a crazy experiment, and I never thought I would have had this opportunity. It's been a very fun and challenging experimental design problem."

### ■ Simulating Titan seas

The WSU research team built a test chamber that housed the liquid mixture at very cold temperatures to simulate the seas of Titan. They added a two-inch, cylinder-shaped cartridge heater that would approximate the heat that a submarine would create.

One of the biggest challenges for researchers was understanding bubbles in the Titan seas. Add a submarine powered by a heat-producing machine into the very cold Titan liquid, and nitrogen bubbles will form. Too many bubbles would make it hard to maneuver the ship, see, take data and manage ballast systems.

### ■ Shooting video at -300 degrees

The next big problem, said Richardson, was getting a video in difficult conditions. Their study was conducted at 60 pounds per square inch of pressure and nearly -300 degrees Fahrenheit. Richardson's group engineered a solution using an optical device called a borescope and video camera that could withstand the low temperatures and high pressures to visualize what was going on within the test chamber.

"Those aren't the friendliest conditions," he said. "You have to come up with creative solutions."

The researchers succeeded and took video footage of ethane-methane rain and snow. The group also studied the freezing temperatures for methane and ethane lakes and determined that, because of a small amount of nitrogen in the liquid, the lakes freeze at lower temperatures than would be expected: 75 Kelvin, or -324 degrees Fahrenheit, instead of 90.5 Kelvin.

"That's a big deal," said Richardson. "That means you don't have to worry about icebergs."

The researchers are looking to continue the work with NASA to update the Titan Submarine design.

(Source: Science Daily)



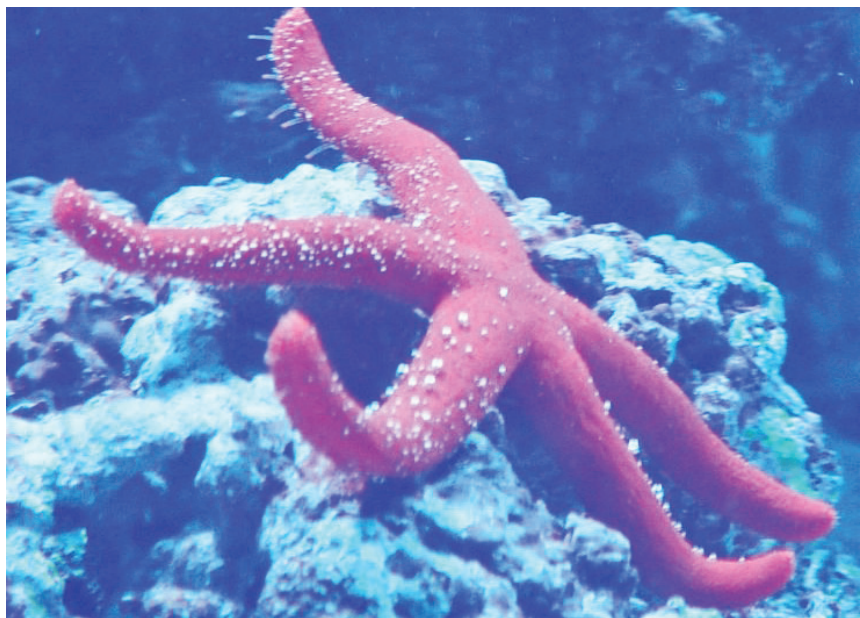
# Starfish in the deep sea can see, researchers say

Some animals that spend their whole lives in the dark — species of fish that thrive in caves, for instance —have dispensed with eyes all together. But in a study published on February 7 in Proceedings of the Royal Society B, researchers have shown that several types of starfish that live in the deep ocean have working compound eyes at the tips of their arms, much like related species that dwell in shallower water.

“There’s been a lot of work over the years on vision in a variety of fish from shallow water to the deep sea, but there hasn’t been much at all done on vision in animals that sit on the bottom,” says Thomas Cronin, a biologist at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, who did not participate in the work. “It’s been a question for a long time, what exactly are eyes used for down in these great depths?”

## Compound eyes

While earlier studies had shown that some starfish that live in shallower, brighter water have and use compound eyes, no one had previously looked at animals occupying the sea floor. “What you see in many other animal groups is that, when you venture deeper into the sea and light intensities get low, either they lose eyes and rely on other senses or the eyes are modified in ways where they are optimized to be very sensitive to low light intensities but with low spatial resolution,” says coauthor Anders Garm, a marine biologist at the University of Copenhagen.



**Among the animals with compound eyes, the researchers observed, the starfish left their eyes uncovered and bent the ends of their arms to varying degrees, sending their gaze in different directions.**

To investigate starfish visual capacity, Garm and colleagues collected hundreds of the animals, representing 13 different species living just under the surface to more than 1,000 meters deep in the North Atlantic off the Greenland coast, using large, wide-mouth nets dragged behind research vessels. They examined the echinoderms and found that 12 of the 13 species had compound eyes on the undersides of the tips of their arms, similar to what had been shown for other starfish previously.

## Burrowing species

The only starfish without eyes was a burrowing species that lives in shallower waters.

Among the animals with compound eyes, the researchers observed, the starfish left their eyes uncovered and bent the ends of their arms to varying degrees, sending their gaze in different directions. One of the deep-water dwellers, *Novodinia americana*, had the largest visual field and had sharp acuity, among the sharpest observed in a starfish.

“There’s vanishingly little known about vision on the sea floor in the deep sea,” says Sönke Johnsen, a biologist at Duke University who did not participate in the study. “For the longest time, most vision research — really all of it — was about insects and vertebrates. It’s been fun now that people are getting into all kinds of other (animals) and seeing what their capabilities are.

(Source: The Scientist)

## Venus flytraps don’t eat the insects that pollinate them

While most people are familiar with Venus flytraps and their snapping jaws, there is still a lot that scientists don’t know about the biology of these carnivorous plants. Researchers have for the first time discovered which insects pollinate the rare plants in their native habitat -- and discovered that the flytraps don’t dine on these pollinator species.

A recent study from NC State University finds that the checkered beetle is one of several insects that plays an important role in pollinating Venus flytraps. The study also found that Venus flytraps do not prey on these pollinator species.

With Venus flytraps and their snapping jaws, there is still a lot that scientists don’t know about the biology of these carnivorous plants. Researchers have for the first time discovered which insects pollinate the rare plants in their native habitat -- and discovered that the flytraps don’t dine on these pollinator species.

## Preserving a plant

“These findings answer basic questions about the ecology of Venus flytraps, which is important for understanding how to preserve a plant that is native to such a small, threatened ecosystem,” says Elsa Youngsteadt, a research associate at North Carolina State University and lead author of a paper on the work. “It also illustrates the fascinating suite of traits that help



this plant interact with insects as both pollinators and prey.”

“Everybody’s heard of Venus flytraps, but nobody knew what pollinated them -- so we decided to find out,” says Clyde Sorenson, co-author of a paper describing the work and Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor of Entomology at NC State.

To that end, researchers captured insects found on Venus

flytrap flowers at several sites during the plant’s five-week flowering season. The researchers identified each insect and checked to see if they were carrying Venus flytrap pollen -- and, if they were carrying pollen, how much.

## Types of insects

Out of about 100 types of insects found on the flowers, only a few were both common and carrying a lot of pollen: a green sweat bee (*Augochlorella graticiosa*), a checkered beetle (*Trichodes apivorus*) and the notch-tipped flower longhorn beetle (*Typocerus sinuatus*).

The researchers also retrieved prey from more than 200 flytraps at the study sites. The three most important pollinator species -- despite being found so often on the flowers -- were never found in the traps.

“One potential reason for this is the architecture of the plants themselves,” Youngsteadt says. “Venus flytrap flowers are elevated on stems that stand fairly high above the snap traps of the plant, and we found that 87 percent of the flower-visiting individuals we captured -- including all three of the most important species -- could fly. But only 20 percent of the prey could fly. The pollinator species may simply be staying above the danger zone as they go from flower to flower, making them less likely to be eaten.”

(Source: Science Daily)

## CEO Terms Bank Mellat a Bridge Linking Students to Holy Places

Dr. Hamid Tajik Member of Board of Directors of Bank Mellat said that the bank plays the role of a bridge linking students for spiritual trip to the holy places, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Speaking in a conference held in Tehran University before dispatching students to the holy places, he stated, “It is hoped that these spiritual trips will be in line with

materializing sublime religious objectives of the Islamic Revolution in society.”

Member of Board of Directors of Bank Mellat said: “We are very glad that the bank will take a partial spiritual move to bond and familiarize students with the holy places.”

The Islamic Revolution owes its achievements to the infallible imams of Household

of Holy Prophet, he said, adding: “we hope that the bank will accelerate its spiritual and cultural activities consecutively.”

The bank tries to carry out its social responsibility in the best form possible in line with materialization of economic objectives of the country, he opined.

The banking system of the country burdens great responsibility, he said, add-

ing: “in the year named after resistance economy, production and job creation, the management of the bank will make its utmost efforts to realize most economic objectives.”

In the end, he called on the government and people to cooperate with the bank to fulfill its responsibility in the country in the best form possible.

## Shimi Exir Boostan Company Inaugurated Using BIM Finance Scheme

Concurrent with the glorious victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, Shimi Exir Boostan Company was put into operation in the presence of Salehnia Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Sadeghi Governor General of Qom Province, Amirabadi Parliament Deputy and a number of provincial officials, using facilities and loans offered by the Bank of Industry & Mine (BIM), the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

This industrial and production unit became operational in Mahmoudabad Industrial Township, Qom Province.

Shimi Exir Boostan Company was commissioned, costing 8 billion tomans, with the annual production of 10,000 tons of potassium sulfate and 12,000 tons of chloride acid.

This industrial and production unit has generated employment for 30 people, bringing about positive impact in business environment of the region.

It should be noted that Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Qom Province have received 170 billion tomans facilities and loans from the Bank of Industry

& Mine to boom production.

In addition, Poly Resin Company was put into operation in Alborz Province concurrent with the glorious 39th victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, using facilities and loans offered by Bank of Industry & Mine.

This industrial and production unit was launched, costing five million euro, with the aim of producing various types of solid & liquid powdered resins.

It should be noted that the unit generated employment for 117 people, the report concluded.

## Karun Oil & Gas Co. Tries to Boost Daily Production Capacity by 1.5m Oil Barrels

Over the past 10 months, Karun Oil and Gas Operation Company has taken quality technical and engineering services in line with producing 1.5 million oil barrels per day (bpd), the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

Launching developmental and repairing wells and fulfilling restorative and reconstructive measures on the wells are of the effective steps in materialization of produc-

tion plans of this company, the report added.

In this period, 11 developmental wells with daily production of 11.8 thousand oil barrels and 24 repairing wells with the production of 36,000 oil barrels were launched, so that restorative measures were done on 179 wells.

For his part, Eng. Mohsen Dehanzadeh Chief Executive of Karun Oil & Gas Operation Company hailed the operational and

technical teams in line with materializing production plans of the company, the most important of which are as follows: injection and supplying pressure by Truck Pump Device, 17 operations to apply mobile production package, injecting nitrogen without core pipe device with constructing 85 masts/day for revival of wells, conducting 422 technical wellhead services and 66 pressurizing operation from walls, etc.

In the end, the Chief Executive of the company placed special emphasis on the necessity of safeguarding and preserving environment and added: “in the mentioned period, mobile oil processing device was used for conducting 96 engineering operations. Moreover preventing environmental pollutions, using mobile oil processing device can avoid burning of about 77,000 oil barrels, the CEO of the company concluded.

## Iranian Parl. Research Center Hails Salient Achievements of Ayandeh Bank

Iranian Parliament Research Center praised outstanding achievements of Ayandeh Bank and introduced it as the most successful bank in implementation of a plan on integrating finance and credit associations, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

In a comprehensive report provided by the Economic Research Deputy Office, the Center evaluated the successful performance of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) in reorganizing uncertified finance and credit associations.

Accordingly, plan on merging and integrating uncertified finance and credit association led to removal of some uncertified finance and credit associations, the issue of which has caused correction of financial and banking infrastructures.

Assessment of performance of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) with relation to the uncertified finance and credit associations indicates that these uncertified associations have not been monitored strictly until 2015.

Following the efforts taken in this regard and after the approval of Article 14 of the 6th Five-Year Socioeconomic and Cultural Development Plan, Central Bank of Iran managed to monitor and supervise performance of the banks, finance and credit associations and exchanges.

Of total 21 active banks in the country, only one uncertified bank is on the very of obtaining authorized license from CBI, the report added.

Of total nine finance and credit associations, five of which

have been licensed while four of which have been receiving authorized licenses, the report added.

Iranian Parliament Research Center put the total deposits of banks and finance-credit associations since issuance date of licenses up to the end of the last Iranian calendar year in 1395h (ended March 20, 2017) at about 700,000 billion rials, showing a considerable 3.150 thousand billion rials increase.

Merging the finance and credit associations has been launched in order to organize national and banking activities of the country, create transparency in performance of banks and also strengthen the financial backbone of the organized banks, the Center concluded.

## Researchers compare pollution levels before and after Hurricane Harvey

Recent years have seen rising interest in improving post-disaster research, with calls for more and better studies coming from the academic community and agencies such as the National Institutes of Health. Although understanding the wide-ranging effects of disasters is vital for an effective public health response, a lack of baseline data has made it difficult to attribute post-disaster changes in environmental conditions to the impacts of disasters.

In a new study published in the journal PLOS One, Jennifer Horney, PhD, associate professor and head of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the Texas A&M School of Public Health, along with researchers from Texas A&M and the Pacific Northwest National Lab, examined concentrations of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) before and after Hurricane Harvey in the Houston environmental justice neighborhood of Manchester. Manchester, which is located near refineries and other industrial sites along the Houston Ship Channel, is a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood where residents face disproportionate health risks due to pollution and other environmental hazards.

As disasters become more frequent and populations living in vulnerable areas increase, interest in the health effects of exposure to the combination of natural and technological disasters has grown.

Flooding and disaster-related equipment failures can lead to far greater exposure to environmental health risks.

Since 2016, researchers from Texas A&M and the Texas Environment Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS), along with neighborhood residents, worked to collect data on resident’s domestic exposure to PAHs by collecting and testing household dust.

“This project was only possible due to the ongoing partnership between Texas A&M, residents of Manchester, and community group TEJAS, who contacted us after Hurricane Harvey to return to Manchester to collect samples,” Horney said.

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

## Are the male and female brain really different?

Male and female brains are hardwired to be different. Men are programmed to be aggressive, assertive and strong, while women are emotional, nurturing and compassionate — right?

Well, maybe not, according to the most recent scientific evidence. You wouldn’t know, however, from Hollywood’s latest pop-science flick.

Friday saw the U.S. release of *The Female Brain* — a movie based on Louann Brizendine’s best-selling but widely criticized 2006 book of the same name. Documenting the “science” behind heterosexual relationship woes, both the movie and book tread some pretty familiar gender-stereotyping ground.

The *Female Brain* movie follows the fictionalized “Julia” Brizendine: a neuroscientist who explains the relationship dynamics of her friends through her research. But how accurate is the science in the film?

Newsweek spoke to five experts from the fields of neuroscience, psychology and even social neuroendocrinology to get to the bottom of the question: are female and male brains really that different?

According to the movie version of Brizendine, women are “hypervigilant.” This mean they have a heightened ability to spot errors. The reason, she says, is that the area of the brain responsible for this activity is larger in women.

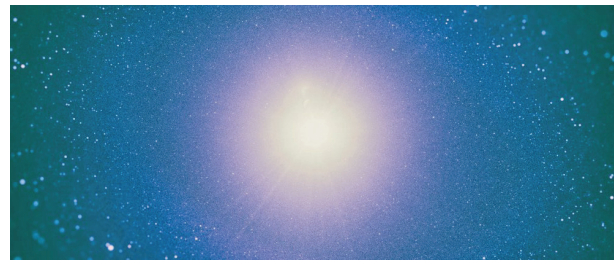
The area of the brain is not named in the movie, but it is likely the anterior cingulate, neuroscientist Gina Rippon said. There is no evidence, she said, that this part of the brain is “larger” in women. In fact, there is no contemporary scientific evidence that a bigger area in any part of the brain might elicit a “heightened” behavioral response, she added.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Mind-bending new approach could explain Solar System’s ‘random’ patterns

There’s a strange pattern in our Solar System – if you look at the orbits of the first seven planets, each one gets increasingly distant from the Sun in a predictable and quantifiable regularity.

This coincidence was noticed in the 18th century and further explored by astronomers Johann Titius and Johann Bode. It was named the Titius-Bode Law, or regularity, and it was later used to predict the position of Uranus and dwarf planet, Ceres.



The reason you’ve probably never heard of it is because it can’t be explained by our current understanding of general relativity or Newtonian physics.

It’s also not perfect - Titius-Bode Law failed to predict the orbit of Neptune in 1846. Since then, many researchers have dismissed it as nothing more than an odd coincidence.

But a group of physicists now say there might be something more to it. Their work shows that something called ‘pilot wave gravity’ could explain the pattern. In fact, it could replace the concept of gravity altogether.

Okay, so it’s not so much a replacement as it is an update on the gravity we know and love, based on an often overlooked interpretation of quantum mechanics, called pilot wave theory.

Currently, the majority of physicists subscribe to the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, which states that particles do not have defined locations until they are observed.

Pilot wave theory, on the other hand, suggests that particles do have precise positions at all times, but in order for this to be the case, the world must also be strange in other ways – which is why many physicists have dismissed the idea.

Now, researchers from the Centre for Philosophy of Sciences of the University of Lisbon in Portugal have taken the idea and expanded it into the macro world, by applying it to the arrangement of planets.

(Source: sciencealert.com)



## Iran’s first water ambulance operational

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The first water ambulance in **d e s k** Iran was launched in the southern province of Hormozgan on Saturday with Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh Hashemi in attendance, Tasnim reported.

Costing nearly 33 billion rials (around \$750,000) the water ambulance is bought with the contributions made by benefactors active in the health sector and equipped by Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences.



Some 3.73 billion rials (nearly \$77,000) was spent to equip the aforesaid water ambulance.

The ambulance is equipped with 4 beds and intensive care unit (ICU). Three more high-tech water ambulances are being bought from European countries and will be added to the sector by the next year (March 21), the minister said on the sidelines of the event.

He expressed hope that importing these ambulances can be a start for their domestic production.

Calling for more support for marine ambulances, Qazizadeh Hashemi highlighted that air medical services are also needed since water ambulances cannot provide services during sea storms.

As far as medical manpower is concerned, Hormozgan Province is 30 percent below standards, he added.

“Iran has 17 islands, 14 of which are situated in the beautiful Hormozgan Province,” said the minister, adding that medical services in these areas should be improved.

Concurrently, 20 ambulances entered the medical fleet of the province.

## Tabriz to host intl. symposium on regenerative nanotechnology

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The 3rd international symposium **d e s k** of regenerative nanotechnology will be held in the northwestern city of Tabriz on February 18.

The event will take place with the cooperation of the council for stem cells sciences and technologies, stem cell and regenerative medicine institute and Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Nasimonline reported on Sunday.

The conference will focus on topics such as the application of nanotechnology in tissue engineering, stem cell technology and regenerative medicine among others.

The explosion in the number of papers dedicated to nanotechnology and regenerative medicine combined with the proliferation of journals that focus explicitly on this topic demonstrate that nanotechnology has been advancing in recent years at an exponential rate.

From nanoscale drug delivery to biologically-inspired materials for medicine, nanotechnology and regenerative medicine is poised to address human diseases in the 21st century.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### I Love That Song!

Host: Welcome back, music lovers, to “I Love That Song”! The game show where we test your musical knowledge **to the extreme!** Let’s get started! Team A ... Guess this tune:

Team A: Carrying Your Love With Me by George Straight! The **genre** is country music!

Host: You are right! One hundred points to team A! Now, for our next cut.

Team B: Thong Song by Sissoq! I believe the genre is R&B? Host: One hundred big points for team B! For all our viewers the **acronym** R&B stands for Rhythm and Blues. On that note, DJ, play our next song!

Team B: Superstar by The Carpenters! Host: And the genre?

Team B: Um... Um... Adult Contemporary? Host: That’s right! A hundred points! Uh oh! That sound means it’s **double or nothing!** The songs are more difficult and the points are doubled! Let’s hear our next song!

Team A: Too easy! That song is Kinslayer by the Finnish power metal group, Nightwish!

Host: You are correct! Very **impressive** team A! And it seems we have a **tie!** It’s time now for the **tie-breaker** round! Each team will be played three songs and they must tell us the genre of each song in less than five seconds!

Team A, are you ready? Team A: Ready!

Host: Let’s hear it! Team A: Hip Hop, Classical and Gothic metal!

Host: You are right! Team B, **the pressure is on**, if you get all of them right, we will move on to **sudden death**. If you miss one, you lose! DJ, Let’s hear it!

Team B: Rap, Disco and... And...

■ **Key vocabulary**  
**to the extreme:** if someone does something to extremes, they do it to a point beyond what is normal or acceptable  
**genre:** a kind of literary or artistic work  
**acronym:** abbreviations  
**double or nothing:** used when you want to bet twice as much  
**impressive:** something that is impressive makes you admire it because it is very good, large, important etc.

**tie:** the result of a game, competition, or election when two or more people or teams get the same number of points, votes etc.  
**tie-breaker:** an extra question in a game, used to decide who will win when two people have the same number of points

**the pressure is on:** the outcome or result depends on you  
**sudden death:** a way of deciding the winner of a game when the scores are equal at the end. The game goes on until one player or team gains the lead

■ **Supplementary vocabulary**  
**air guitar:** when a person pretends to play the guitar when listening to music  
**a cappella:** to sing without any instruments or music  
**encore:** a demand by an audience for an additional performance at the end of a concert  
**chorus:** a part of a song repeated after each verse  
**hit:** a person or thing that gains wide appeal or fame

(Source: [irlanguage.com](http://irlanguage.com))

# Messy air pollution: Transport sector largely at fault

1 →

## Cleaner buses in megacities

According to a press release published by United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) in November 2017, four bus and engine manufacturers have committed to facilitate purchasing buses equipped with low emission technologies in order to target air pollution and climate change.

The Global Industry Partnership on Soot-Free Clean Bus Fleets is an initiative being led by C40 Cities, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), and International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), Centro Mario Molina Chile and UN Environment. The commitment was announced at the CCAC Clean Buses for Clean Air Workshop in Paris.

Beginning in 2018 BYD, Cummins, Scania and Volvo Buses will ensure soot-free engine technology for 20 megacities worldwide. Abidjan, Accra, Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Casablanca, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka, Istanbul, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Lagos, Lima, Manila, Mexico City, Nairobi, Santiago, Sao Paulo, and Sydney are the cities involved in this scheme to tackle air pollution.

Soot free is defined as including any engine that meets Euro VI norms and diesel engine



with a diesel particulate filter, gas-powered engine, or a dedicated electric drive engine.

Less than 20 percent of all buses sold globally meet the definition of soot-free with the

vast majority being diesel-powered. Such buses produce high levels of black carbon emissions or soot which are among the most dangerous pollutants for public health and a

## Noise pollution in Iran’s megacities 20 times above standards: academic

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Noise pollution in **d e s k** metropolises of Iran is 20 times acuter than standards, said Mohammad-Reza Esmailpour, occupational health and safety professor at Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

A major part of noise pollution is produced by cars and traffic jams, said Esmailpour, adding that motorcycles have the most significant share among vehicles.

Noise pollution is being neglected since it doesn’t claim lives, however, it has major negative psychological and physical effects on humans, he added.

This kind of environmental pollution can lead to miscarriage, hypertension, heart attack, hearing loss and reducing efficiency in workspace, highlighted the professor.



He further referred to ‘comprehensive noise pollution plan’ which has been sent to Tehran’s city council, hoping that it would be hammered out and implemented in all cities of Iran. The most important parts of this plan is reducing the noise produced by motorcycles in vehicle inspection procedures and achieving the required standards in buildings, he noted.

Noise pollution is an unwanted or disturbing sound which can interfere with normal activities for humans and wildlife, such as sleeping, communication, or disrupt or diminish one’s quality of life. It can come from many sources, such as automobiles, motorcycles, aircraft, ships, trucks, buses, jet planes, construction equipment, electrical machinery, lawn mowers and leaf blowers, to name a few.

## Cloud seeding: Should we be playing God and controlling the weather?

If you wanted a guarantee that it wouldn’t rain on your wedding day in 2015, you could have done so for the small price of £100,000. That’s what Luxury holiday company Oliver’s Travels offered with a promise of “fair weather and blue skies”, which may sound like just a gimmick to get the loved-up to cough up, but behind its grand promise was the same technology being used by governments around the world to control rain.

Droughts are becoming more commonplace due to climate change, and according to the UN, almost half of the world’s population will be at risk from high water stress by 2030. Countries are trying to mitigate some of this by inducing rainfall with a method called cloud seeding.

Supercooled water in the sky needs particles such as dust or salt (with an ice crystal structure) so they can condense and subsequently fall as rain – but these can often be lacking in the atmosphere. Cloud seeding triggers this process by taking substances up in aircrafts to drop onto clouds.

Playing with the weather might sound like something from the future, but governments have been implementing cloud seeding operations for decades. The method was discovered in 1946 by Dr. Vincent Schaefer, who, as Bruce Lambert wrote in his obituary of him, was “hailed as the first person to actually do something about the weather and not just talk about it”.

Schaefer was working for the U.S. General Electric company, conducting an experiment in a cloud chamber containing a supercooled liquid cloud, as part of his research into creating artificial clouds. On deciding the chamber was too warm, Schaefer placed dry ice inside, and watched as water vapor formed a cloud around it – subsequently, and accidentally, discovering cloud seeding.

Then Schaefer and his colleague, Bernard Vonnegut, discovered that silver iodide, which is structurally similar to ice, also did the job. Now, cloud seeding uses magnesium, sodium chloride and potassium chloride.

In 2016, 56 countries had cloud seeding operations, compared to 42 in 2011, as estimated by the World Meteorological Association. China even turned to cloud seeding to keep rain away from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, by inducing rain come before opening ceremonies.

But most of the time, the desired effect is more rain, not less. The Wyoming Weather Modification program concluded that cloud seeding can boost precipitation by 5 to 15 per cent, and in its summary of cloud seeding activities in 2015, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation reported that seeded thunderstorms in the state lasted 20 minutes longer than untreated ones, and rain from seeded storms was almost one-and-a-half times that of nearby storms that weren’t treated.

Cloud seeding has also had some unforeseen and undesirable effects. China used cloud seeding in 2009 to attempt to end a drought, but it led to a sudden temperature drop, causing closed highways and road and traffic delays in Beijing. And in 1947, a hurricane on the east coast of the U.S. was seeded with 102kg of dry ice, before going from a northeasterly to a westerly direction into Georgia, where it caused severe damage. The General Electric corporation was sued for damages.

One of the concerns surrounding cloud seeding is its history with warfare. It’s rumored that the U.S. military used cloud seeding during the Vietnam War to cause a monsoon over the Ho Chi Minh trail, calling it Operation Popeye.

And in 2001 a BBC Radio 4 history investigation broadcast previously unreleased

findings showing that rain experiments were going on between 1949 and 1955, despite previous denials they had occurred before 1955. This included Operation Cumulus, which occurred between 4 August and 15 August 1952, the day flash floods across the Devon village of Lynmouth killed 35 people.

Nothing has been proven, but the two have been linked. Aeronautical engineer and glider pilot, Alan Yates (who was involved in the operation) said after being told the cloud seeding operation had produced rain that it was not until the BBC news bulletin [about the Lynmouth flood] was read later on, that a stony silence fell on the company.

According to an article by John Vidal for The Guardian, declassified minutes from a British air ministry meeting in 1953 showed discussions about cloud seeding having the potential to “explode an atomic weapon in a seeded storm system or cloud.... [which] would produce a far wider area of radioactive contamination than in a normal atomic explosion”.

But despite some countries agreeing to the UN’s Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques in 1977, the UK government still thinks cloud seeding “may be a factor in conflict situations or a reason to precipitate conflict”.

A 2010 report by the Science and Technology Committee states that the line between peaceful and hostile usage of cloud seeding is “very thin,” and a country facing drought and humanitarian crisis, for example, may perceive a lack of rain as theft by a neighboring country.

Some say cloud seeding is playing god, but Darin Langerud, director of North Dakota water commission’s atmospheric resource board, says messing with weather isn’t an

major contributor to climate change. However, the cleanest buses today reduce these emissions by more than 99 percent.

As Ahmad Taheri an official with Tehran Air Quality Control Company said on Friday some 60 percent of PM 2.5 fine particles in the city of Tehran are comprised of black carbon produced from fuel combustion in diesel-powered engines.

Black carbon is the sooty black material emitted from gas and diesel engines and other sources that burn fossil fuel. It accounts for a significant portion of particulate matter or PM.

Black carbon is a global environmental challenge that has negative impacts both on human health and climate. Inhalation of black carbon is linked with health problems including respiratory and cardiovascular disease, cancer, and even birth defects. Black carbon also contributes to climate change by causing changes in patterns of rain and clouds.

While eco-friendly buses are available to obtain cutting national budget for replacing the old and inefficient public transport is holding us back from using the world’s most recent technology to abate and mitigate air pollution in the country. The greener options are available and what is more important than citizens’ health?

othing new. “All humans influence nature in some fashion, whether its driving a car and emitting pollutants, adding fertilizers to crops, or flipping on a light switch that’s powered by natural resources,” he says; although whether two wrongs making a right stands as a valid argument remains to be seen.

And in response to concerns over the danger of spraying chemicals into the air, Langerud says, “Cloud seeding chemicals such as silver iodide have been proven not to have negative impacts on the environment in the small concentrations being used”.

Aside from worries about its misuse, many doubt whether it works at all. US researchers concluded in 2003 that there was little evidence to suggest cloud seeding actually works, and said more researched was needed. And 15 years on, the evidence is still relatively scarce.

One country undeterred by such concerns, and leading the way with international cloud seeding research is the United Arab Emirates, whose government has just launched a \$5m (£3.6m) program, the UAE Research Program for Rain Enhancement Science (UAEREP), to research rain enhancement.

Most of the Arab countries are classified as having “extreme water scarcity” according to the UN, and the UAE has been using cloud seeding since the 1990s to keep up with increased demand for fresh water, due to population growth, economic development and lifestyle changes.

The country is now one of the world’s biggest per capita consumers of water, and without cloud seeding, the only other water source, apart from low levels of natural rainfall, is desalination, a process requiring 10 times more power than treating surface fresh water.

(Source: *Independent*)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Intl. science Olympiad opens today in Tehran

An international Olympiad of math, chemistry and statistics will open today in Tehran’s Shahid Beheshti University, Tasnim news agency reported. Starting from Sunday the event will last for five days and students from Russia, Tatarstan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Aljazeera, India, Iraq, Poland, and Slovenia along with Iranian students will compete against one another for the first three places.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### -ant

■ **Meaning:** a person who

■ **For example:** He was one of 30 **applicants** for the manager’s job.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Get through

■ **Meaning:** to be successful in a test or competition, or to make sure that someone or something is successful

■ **For example:** I finally managed to get through my driving test.

## IDIOM

### A hot potato

■ **Explanation:** a subject or problem that no one wants to deal with, because it is difficult and any decision might make people angry

■ **For example:** The issue has become a political hot potato.



# Nine more Yemeni civilians fall victim to Saudi regime airstrikes

Nearly a dozen people have lost their lives when Saudi military aircraft carried out two airstrikes against a residential area in Yemen's western coastal province of Hudaydah as Riyadh pushes ahead its devastating aerial bombardment campaign against its crisis-hit southern neighbor.

Local sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network that the fighter jets struck a number of houses in Sharjah area of al-Garrahi district on Sunday afternoon, leaving nine civilians, including five women, dead.

Separately, Yemeni army forces and allied fighters from Popular Committees launched a salvo of artillery rounds at the position of the Saudi regime troopers in Raqabah al-Salah area of the kingdom's southwestern border region of Najran, located 844 kilometers (524 miles) south of the capital Riyadh, killing and injuring scores of them.

Yemeni artillery units and their allies also launched separate attacks against Jabal al-Dukhan, Hamezah village and al-Qern base



in the same Saudi region, causing extensive damage in the targeted areas.

At least 13,600 people have been killed since the onset of the House of Saud regime's

military campaign against Yemen in 2015. Much of the country's infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and factories, has been reduced to rubble due to the war.

The Saudi regime-led war has also triggered a deadly cholera epidemic across Yemen.

According to the World Health Organization's latest tally, the cholera outbreak has killed 2,167 people since the end of April 2017 and is suspected to have infected 841,906.

In November 2017, the United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, said more than 11 million children in Yemen were in acute need of aid, stressing that it was estimated that every 10 minutes a child died of a preventable disease there.

Additionally, the UN has described the current level of hunger in Yemen as "unprecedented," emphasizing that 17 million people were food insecure in the country.

The world body says that 6.8 million, meaning almost one in four people, do not have enough food and rely entirely on external assistance.

(Source: Press TV)

## Sri Lanka coalition suffers humiliation at local vote

Sri Lanka's ruling alliance was humiliated in local elections seen as a test of its leadership and the party of ex-president Mahinda Rajapakse was on track for a shock landslide victory, early results showed on Sunday.

The mid-term polls further strained the uneasy coalition between President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as they faced a resurgent challenger in Rajapakse's new party.

Official results showed Rajapakse's Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna -- SLPP or People's Front -- had won 160 of the 241 councils counted so far, out of a total of 340.

Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP) was a distant second with 30 councils while Sirisena's Freedom Alliance languished with just 10.

Unofficial results showed Rajapakse's party comfortably leading in all regions bar the battled-scarred north and east where, as president, he brutally crushed a separatist movement to end the island's ethnic war in 2009.

His SLPP was predicted to wrest control of more than two-thirds of the local government bodies, according to unofficial tallies kept by both the ruling party and opposition.



"I earnestly request all those who contested under the SLPP to celebrate this hard-won victory peacefully and with restraint and in a manner that will not inconvenience the defeated side," Rajapakse said in a statement.

The vote affects only the lowest rung of politics but the result is being seen as a stinging rebuke to the ruling coalition,

which has struggled to pass promised post-war reforms.

The alliance between Sirisena and Wickremesinghe -- who teamed up to defeat Rajapakse in a presidential election in 2015 -- has frayed as both men have levelled allegations of corruption and backstabbing against the other.

Wickremesinghe's UNP had been expected to lead Saturday's poll while the parties led by Sirisena and Rajapakse were expected to fight for second.

Rajapakse's surprise dominance was proof the people no longer had faith in the tattered ruling alliance, said SLPP spokesman Gamini Lakshman Peiris.

"This was a referendum on the government. It has no legal or democratic right to remain in power," Peiris told reporters.

Neither the president nor prime minister were commenting on the result. Official sources said both men -- who campaigned separately for their respective parties -- were meeting senior aides to discuss the next moves.

The UNP had indicated it may go it alone in the next general election in 2020 as the rift between Wickremesinghe and Sirisena and their supporters deepened.

(Source: AFP)

## 6 dead in militant attack on Indian army base in Kashmir

A fierce gun battle at an army base in Jammu city of Indian-administered Kashmir has entered the second day leaving at least six people, including five soldiers, dead, officials said.

Official figures released on Sunday said that three attackers have been killed and 11 people have been wounded in the ongoing attack on Sunjuwan army camp.

Indian Army chief Bipin Rawat has also rushed to Jammu to monitor the situation.

Officials said an unknown number of attackers are cornered inside the residential

complex of the camp, where they are locked in a fierce standoff.

Hundreds of police, army and paramilitary soldiers were called in to dislodge the fighters, who have barricaded themselves inside multi-storey buildings.

The vast army installation located in the city of Jammu is located close to several shopping centers and schools.

Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh said he was closely monitoring the situation.

The attackers are suspected to be affiliated with Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), a

Pakistan-based group which has launched similar raids in recent years against the army and paramilitary installations across the region.

Jammu is the main city in the southern part of the disputed state, claimed by both India and Pakistan in full. The archrivals control parts of the Muslim-majority Himalayan region.

Cross-border firing in violation of a 2003 ceasefire agreement has gone up in the past months leading to casualties, with more than a dozen people killed on the Indian

side since the beginning of this year.

The two nuclear-armed neighbors have been at loggerheads since an attack on an army camp in Kashmir's Uri left 18 Indian soldiers dead in 2016.

New Delhi regularly accuses Islamabad of aiding fighters in crossing the de facto border (Line of Control) to attack targets inside India.

Pakistan denies the allegations and stresses that it only lends moral and diplomatic support to Kashmiris.

(Source: agencies)

## Netanyahu stirring regional war to deflect attention from corruption probe: Israeli lawmaker

An Israeli lawmaker says Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is seeking to instigate a regional war to deflect attention from an ongoing investigation into his suspicious corrupt practices.

Aida Touma-Sliman from the Joint List, which comprises Arab representatives at the Israeli parliament (Knesset), made the remarks after Israel seriously escalated its intervention in the Syria war on Saturday.

Netanyahu and his regime "are submerged up to their necks in corruption affairs, on the eve of the publication of the [police] recommendations," said the lawmaker.

"Netanyahu is willing to instigate a regional war in which the peoples of the region will pay a heavy price just for his political survival," she added.

Netanyahu is the subject of two high-profile graft cases. In Case 1000, he is suspected of having received

gifts from businessmen overseas. He is also being investigated in Case 2000 for an alleged media bribery scheme to help Yediot Aharonot newspaper against its competitor Yisrael Hayom in return for favorable coverage.

Over the past few months, thousands of Israelis have been rallying outside the house of Israeli attorney general Avichai Mandelblit in the city of Petah Tikva every week to call for Netanyahu's prosecution.

In their latest rally, the protesters accused Mandelblit of receiving monetary gifts from a number of businessmen, which may have affected the investigation process.

Police Commissioner Roni Alsheich, meanwhile, said officers investigating Netanyahu had been followed and put under pressure.

(Source: Press TV)



## Woman killed, 12 injured in Beijing mall knife attack

A woman was killed and 12 other people injured after a man carried out a knife attack in a mall in a busy shopping district in the Chinese capital, Beijing, police said on Sunday.

Beijing police said in a short statement they had detained a man over the early afternoon attack at the Joy City Mall in the Xidan district.

Three men and 10 women were sent to hospital after the attack and one woman died of her injuries, police said. The others were

all expected to recover.

Police said they acted quickly in handling the incident and identified the detained man as a 35-year-old surnamed Zhu from the northern province of Henan.

The man had already confessed to carrying out the attack to "express his discontent", they said but did not elaborate.

Beijing radio showed pictures on their WeChat account of blood spattered on the floor in part of the mall and at least one injured person being taken from the scene.

Violent crime is rare in China compared with many other countries, especially in major cities where security is tight, but there has been a series of knife and axe attacks in recent years, many targeting children.

Such attacks are often blamed on people with mental illness or who have personal grievances. Knives are most commonly used because gun controls are extremely strict in China.

However, the government has also

blamed some knife attacks on militants from the violence-prone far western region of Xinjiang, where Beijing says it faces an Islamist insurgency, adding to China's nervousness about such incidents.

Thirty-one people were killed in 2014 during a knife attack at Kunming train station in southwestern China that the government said was the work of Xinjiang militants. Police shot dead four of the attackers.

(Source: Reuters)

## UNICEF: 1 in 4 Iraqi kids in poverty as U.S. denies aid

The United Nations children's agency says one in every four children in is in poverty in Iraq, which seeks urgent international assistance to help it reconstruct after a four-year-long war against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group.

The UNICEF revealed the information in a statement on Sunday, adding that half of Iraq's schools needed repairs and over three million children had had their education interrupted.

"Children are Iraq's future," said Geert Cappelaere, the UNICEF's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa.

Baghdad is demanding \$100 billion in foreign in-

vestment in transport, energy, and agriculture as part of a plan to rebuild parts of the country and revive the economy.

Kuwait will host an international conference on the country's reconstruction on February 12-14.

"The Kuwait Conference for Iraq this week is an opportunity for world leaders to show that we are willing to invest in children - and through investing in children, that we are willing to invest in rebuilding a stable Iraq," the UNICEF official noted.

On Thursday, U.S. and Western officials said Washington had no plan to allocate money to the reconstruction process at the conference.

Former head of the U.S. Agency for International

Development's (USAID) Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, Jeremy Konyndyk, said by not contributing to reconstruction, especially in combat-ravaged areas, the administration of the U.S. President Donald Trump could help set the stage for new militancy.

The UN has verified 150 attacks on education facilities and 50 attacks on health centers and personnel since 2014, the UNICEF statement noted.

The Associated Press also revealed recently that Washington was drawing down its Iraq-based troops now that ISIL has been defeated, relocating them to Afghanistan, where the group is expanding operations.

(Source: agencies)

## Pro-Saudi British MP accepted \$20,000 for anti-Qatari event: report

A British lawmaker, known for entertaining pro-Saudi bias, is revealed to have been paid handsomely to advise and address an anti-Qatar conference in London, also joined by other bribed British figures.



Daniel Kawczynski was paid through an obscure company named Akta Group to the tune of £15,000 (\$20,700) towards assisting the conduct of the so-called "Qatar, Global Security & Stability Conference," American media firm BuzzFeed revealed on Sunday.

Last March, Riyadh paid him \$9,200 to spend, while trying to strengthen Saudi-British ties.

The event was held last September. It was organized by an anti-Doha Qatari exile and also joined by Iain Duncan Smith, former Tory leader and minister, former Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown, and BBC World Affairs Editor John Simpson.

The three were also paid thousands to address the event, Simpson receiving a note from the BBC for taking the fee.

The event was supposed to draw in hundreds, but was generally shunned by the Qatari diaspora.

Last June, the House of Saud regime, Egypt, Bahrain, and the UAE imposed a trade and diplomatic embargo on Qatar, accusing it of supporting terrorism, an allegation strongly denied by Doha.

The Saudi-led quartet presented Qatar with a list of demands and gave it an ultimatum to comply with them or face consequences. The demands included closing the Al Jazeera broadcaster, removing Turkish troops from Qatar's soil, scaling back ties with Iran, and ending relations with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood movement.

Doha, however, refused to meet the demands and denounced them as unreasonable.

Last December, the Middle East Eye news portal reported that British Prime Minister Theresa May, whom Saudi Arabia has conferred with the Order of King Abdulaziz Al Saud, has received several gifts from the kingdom, including an ornament, a clock, and a medal.

The Saudi regime, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Jordan, and Oman are the countries which continue to buy lavish gifts for British politicians, newly released British government data show.

Saudi Arabia "has splashed out on 20 luxury Christmas hampers for Conservative Party ministers since 2010," the report said.

Britain has been lending lavish military and logistical support to the Saudi Arabia-led 2015-present war on Yemen.

(Source: Press TV)

## Iran dismisses Israeli drone claim as 'ridiculous'

**I →** Brigadier General Hossein Salami, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)'s second-in-command, also said rejected the Israeli claim, saying "the Israelis are liars."

He stressed that Iran had no military presence in Syria and that the Syrian Army was adequately capable of defending Syrian territory.

Iran can create a hell for the Zionist regime of Israel, the commander said, adding that all American military bases in the region are within range of Iranian strikes.

## What Trump gets wrong about Mexico

**B →** Seemingly everyone in Washington has, at various points, expressed a willingness to provide relief to the "Dreamers," but the question remains at what cost, and in combination with what security measures. And sadly, these deliberations all rely on a false impression of what's actually happening in Mexico, and along the border.

■ **Close partner to U.S.**

Not surprisingly, Mexicans are not amused by this lack of appreciation from the United States. Mexicans' generation-long effort to set aside historical grievances and apprehensions to open their economy to the outside world, and to U.S. investment, and become a closer partner to Washington, has been met with insulting stereotypes, accusations of bad faith, and demands to pay for a wall to keep Mexicans out.

The result has been a sharp U-turn in what had been a steady decline in anti-Americanism in Mexico.

According to a survey conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the polling firm of Buendia and Laredo, two-thirds of Mexicans now hold an unfavorable view of the United States.

The immediate beneficiary of this shift in Mexican public opinion is Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the leftist presidential candidate. The former mayor of Mexico City is the current front-runner in advance of the July election, and his third run for the nation's highest office amounts to an "I told you so" victory lap. As in, I told you what befriending the Americans, and kowtowing to the "Washington consensus," would bring Mexico.

The campaign is in its early stages, and López Obrador -- "AMLO" as he is always referred to in Mexican media -- has reined in some of his more extreme past rhetoric in an effort to reassure middle class voters that he is not another Hugo Chávez, or a Russian stooge. It's not entirely clear how radical AMLO would prove to be in office -- debating the point is a favorite pastime in Mexican cafés and corporate boardrooms these days. But there is no question that his election would prove a dramatic break from the quarter-century consensus across Mexican political forces that an ever-closer relationship with the United States is desirable.

And that would be a shame, forced in part by Washington's flawed narrative of the bilateral relationship, which is poisoning politics in both countries.

(Source: Reuters)



## McMorris ‘stoked’ with slopestyle bronze after injury hell



Canada’s Mark McMorris left everything out on the course during Sunday’s slopestyle final, securing a second Olympic bronze medal and completing a heroic comeback from injury.

Riding in the back country with his brother Craig in March, the then-23-year-old caught an edge as he took off for a jump and spiralled into a tree.

McMorris broke his jaw and left arm, ruptured his spleen, suffered a pelvic fracture, rib fractures and a collapsed lung.

The injuries were so severe that McMorris feared he might lose his life.

Now though he is back on an Olympic podium and the 24-year-old believes this medal means more to him than the bronze from Sochi four years ago.

“It feels pretty special to stand on this podium again after everything,” said McMorris after his final run.

“Not getting to participate much over the past couple of years has been pretty tough but really pumped to land a run that was definitely gold medal worthy if there were a little less sketches but I am stoked to put it down.”

“I need to pinch myself because I should have some permanent damage from what my accident entailed.”

Speaking to Reuters before the Olympics, McMorris had said the injuries had given him a new outlook on life.

These thoughts were still present after Sunday’s final, won by American Redmond Gerard, as McMorris said he was just pleased to be healthy and riding once again.

“I think it doesn’t really matter (what medal you get) as long as you are out here riding and boarding as good as you can,” enthused McMorris.

“There is nothing to worry about. The judging is out of your hands and so you just have to try your best and that is what I did and I was rewarded.”

(Source: Reuters)

## Messi: Barcelona’s Champions League rivals are PSG & Manchester City

Lionel Messi believes Barcelona’s main rivals for the Champions League are Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester City - not Real Madrid.

Madrid face PSG in a blockbuster last-16 tie, with Zinedine Zidane’s men seeking to lift the famous trophy for the third year in a row.

But Messi does not think Madrid - lagging 16 points behind Barca in LaLiga - will challenge due to their surprisingly poor form this season.

“Manchester City are one of the strongest teams around, as well as Paris Saint-Germain,” four-time winner Messi told the Mirror.

“I also do not exclude Real Madrid in terms of quality and experience, even though they have not yet achieved the expected results.

“Then there is Bayern Munich, another great team who will play until the end.

“Today, however, the best are City and PSG.”

Barcelona face Premier League champions Chelsea in the last-16, with the first leg of the tie at Stamford Bridge on February 20.

(Source: Four Four Two)

## Disgraced former gymnastics doctor sent to Arizona federal prison

Former the U.S. Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar has been transferred to a high security federal prison in Tucson, Arizona, after being convicted of molesting scores of young women who went to him for treatment, authorities said on Saturday.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons said the 54-year-old Nassar was at the United States Penitentiary, Tucson, which holds about 1,390 male inmates. The bureau’s website listed his release date as March 23, 2069.

After weeks of horrifying testimony from nearly 200 victims about his decades of abuse, Nassar was sentenced on Monday in Michigan to 40 to 125 years in prison.

He had already received a 40-to-175-year sentence in a neighboring Michigan county, and was sentenced to a 60-year federal term for child pornography convictions.

Prosecutors have said there are about 265 known victims in total, including Olympic gold medalists McKayla Maroney and Aly Raisman.

The Nassar scandal has prompted multiple investigations into why the U.S. Olympic Committee, the sport’s governing body USA Gymnastics, as well as Michigan State University, where Nassar also worked, failed to investigate complaints about him going back years. United States Olympic Committee Board of Directors Chairman Larry Probst said on Friday before the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Winter Games in South Korea that the U.S. Olympic system “failed” the hundreds of young female athletes who were sexually abused by Nassar.

The U.S. Olympic Committee has launched an investigation into its own conduct as well as that of USA Gymnastics and U.S. lawmakers are also investigating.

Senior officials at USA Gymnastics and Michigan State have been forced to resign in recent weeks.

(Source: Reuters)

# Unified Korean ice hockey team proves that ‘winning isn’t everything’

Rarely does sport become secondary on one of the grandest sporting stages of all. Seldom is history made without a medal won or a record broken. But on the Winter Olympics’ first day came a match without compare -- not that anyone will remember the score or what happened on the ice.

On another bone-chilling evening in Gangneung, a city on the east coast of South Korea, a unified Korean ice hockey team made its Olympic debut and in comprehensive defeat sent a message to the world that winning is not always the be all and end all.

“It was a great lesson for my children,” public servant Park Young-sun told CNN. “They learned that winning isn’t everything and you can get more cheers for trying to overcome differences.”

### ■ Rapprochement

This 60-minute match was always going to be significant no matter what the result.

After all, it was not for sporting reasons that this group of 35 women were hastily put together. Ever since it was announced last month that North and South Korea, still technically at war, would unite on the ice, this women’s team became a tool for rapprochement. Their first outing of the Games, against Switzerland -- though the opposition seemed inconsequential -- had captured the imagination and, unsurprisingly, wooed journalists from all over the world to the Kwandong Hockey Centre. Though this was sport, the political message resonated louder than any fan’s roar. Before the match commenced, photographers in the media room were reminded of the importance of the occasion, of the stature of the dignitaries present and were told to retain their equanimity despite the stressful hours ahead.

Outside, on an evening cold enough to freeze breath, South Koreans of all generations gaily waved flags of a unified Korean peninsula. Miniature versions of that carried by North Korean ice hockey player Chung Gum Hwang and South Korean bobsledder Won Yun-jong during the moving opening ceremony the day before.



### ■ Drubbing

After a year of escalating hostility over Pyongyang’s ballistic missile program, this Olympics has given the two countries reason to talk again, but not even the wildest optimist could have predicted recent events.

Only hours before the team took to the ice, South Korean president Moon Jae-in received a formal invitation from the North’s leader, Kim Jong Un, to travel across the border for a meeting which would, were it to happen, be a first between Korean leaders since 2007.

Following the historic meeting at Seoul’s presidential palace, the South Korean president, North Korea’s ceremonial head of state Kim Yong Nam and Kim’s younger sister Kim Yo Jong, the first member of Pyongyang’s ruling dynasty to set foot in the South since the end of the 1950-53 Korean war, traveled north to watch another significant moment

in their countries’ history.

After the match, they exchanged words with the unified team after the match and posed with the team for another in a now long list of noteworthy photographs captured at the Games.

The result of this opening game -- an 8-0 drubbing -- mattered little. No-one expected this combined team to achieve anything on the ice. There have been communication difficulties between the players -- a three-page dictionary was produced to help ease the linguistic differences between those from the north and south -- while there has been some opposition to the team’s formation with some feeling that South Koreans had been forfeited to make way for the 12 North Korean players who had to be added.

Such criticisms decreased as the Olympics neared, and there was little evidence of such

backlash inside the arena on Saturday.

As he made his way to the stadium with his family, his young son waving the now familiar flag of a united Korean peninsula, Jung Jin-suk, from Suwon in the north west, said he hoped the unified team could help improve the South’s understanding of the North.

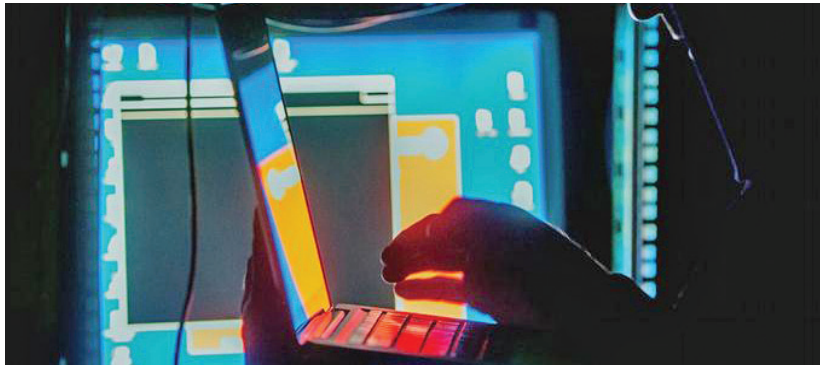
“Many people are excited,” he told CNN Sport. “Maybe 99% of the people will be happy, but 1% aren’t because they have had memory about the Korean War. After this event, I hope that many South Korean people can understand North Korea better.”

Sun Kim-Eun echoed this message of hope. Indeed, it is hope and peace which have been the opening narrative of these Games.

“This match is historic, it’s very meaningful for Korea. We’re happy,” he said.

(Source: CNN)

## Pyeongchang organizers confirm cyber attack, won’t reveal source



Pyeongchang Winter Olympics organizers confirmed on Sunday that the Games had fallen victim to a cyber attack during Friday’s opening ceremony, but they refused to reveal the source. The Games’ systems, including the internet and television services, were affected by the hack two days ago but organizers said it had not compromised any critical part of their operations.

“Maintaining secure operations is our purpose,” said International Olympic Committee (IOC) spokesman Mark Adams.

“We are not going to comment on the issue. It is one we are dealing with. We are making sure our systems are secure and they are secure.” Asked if organizers knew who was behind the attack, Adams said: “I certainly don’t know. But best international practice says that you don’t talk about an attack.” The Winter Games are being staged only 80km (50 miles) from the border with North Korea, which is technically still at war with the South since their 1950-1953 war ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty.

The two teams marched together at an Olympics opening ceremony for the first time since 2006. South Korea has been using the Pyeongchang Games to break the ice with the reclusive North, which has been trading nuclear threats with the United States recently. “All issues were resolved and recovered yesterday morning,” Pyeongchang organizing committee spokesman Sung Baik-you told reporters.

“We know the cause of the problem but that kind of issues occurs frequently during the Games. We decided with the IOC we are not going to reveal the source (of the attack),” he told reporters.

Russia, which has been banned from the Games for doping, said days before the opening ceremony that any allegations linking Russian hackers to attacks on the infrastructure connected to the Pyeongchang Olympic Games were unfounded.

“We know that Western media are planning pseudo-investigations on the theme of ‘Russian fingerprints’ in hacking attacks on information resources related to the hosting of the Winter Olympic Games in the Republic of Korea,” Russia’s foreign ministry said. “Of course, no evidence will be presented to the world.”

Cyber security researchers said in January they had found early indications that Russia-based hackers may be planning attacks against anti-doping and Olympic organizations in retaliation for Russia’s exclusion from the Pyeongchang Games.

Stakeholders of the Olympics have been wary of the threat from hacking and some sponsors have taken out insurance to protect themselves from a cyber attack.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Mourinho: I deserve an award for best-behaved manager



Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho believes he deserves an award for being the best-behaved boss.

Mourinho, whose team visited Newcastle yesterday, has been involved in numerous confrontations with officials during his career.

However, the Portuguese tactician feels he has changed his ways -- and deserves to be rewarded for doing so.

“I’m fully committed to win the award this season of the best-behaved manager on the touchline,” Mourinho said.

“I’m serious -- I prepare myself, I’m really happy. I’m not free of losing my temper, my control, in one match. I’m not perfect. “There are so many awards -- performance of the week, manager of the month and this and that -- they should give one to the guy that behaves best on the touchline and it should be the fourth official to vote.

“I’m pretty sure that I would win.” Mourinho insisted it made “no sense” for the Premier League giants to sell reported Real Madrid target David de Gea.

De Gea, 27, continues to be linked with a switch to the LaLiga giants, having almost joined Madrid in mid-2015.

But Mourinho said he had no plans for United to sell their best players, with De Gea contracted at Old Trafford until next year.

“Do you think a club that is trying to attract the best players is the club that is open to sell the best players? It makes no sense,” he said.

“If you want to go to that level you have to attract the best players like we did with Alexis [Sanchez], [Nemanja] Matic and [Paul] Pogba and so on.

“And don’t let our best players go.”

De Gea has helped Mourinho’s side into second in the Premier League ahead of their trip to Newcastle United on Sunday.

Mourinho was unwilling to criticize officials or call for greater protection of his star attacker, Alexis Sanchez.

“Maybe his manager should cry a little more in situations like that but Alexis is a tough boy, he can cope with that sort of welcome,” he said.

“I think to an extent he is bound to be targeted by defenders because he is a talented player and an obvious danger to opponents. Defenders are not going to let the most skilful players play with freedom, that’s the nature of the game.

“But I don’t like using the word protect because it sounds like I am only concerned about the top players. On the pitch every player is the same and it is the referee’s job to protect them equally.”

(Source: Independent)

## U.S. IOC member suggests joint Korean team for Nobel peace prize

A senior American member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) called on Sunday for North and South Korea’s joint women’s ice hockey team to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Angela Ruggiero, a four-times ice hockey world champion and Olympic gold medalist, told Reuters she would ask others to nominate the team, which included 12 players from North Korea which is still technically at war with the South.

It was the first time an inter-Korean team had competed at an Olympic Games. “I would love the team to get the Nobel Peace Prize,” Ruggiero, a member of the IOC’s executive board said a day after the unified Korean team competed at the Pyeongchang Olympics.

“Seriously, the team. Something that is recognizing the sacrifice they made to adjusting their competitions,” she said.

South Korea suggested the formation of a joint team as part of its efforts to use the Games to re-engage with the



North and pave the way for talks over the North’s weapons programme.

North Korea is subject to heavy U.N. and U.S. sanctions designed to pressure the reclusive, one-party state to abandon

its development of nuclear and ballistic missiles.

“As someone who competed in four Olympics and knows it isn’t about you, your team, or your country, I saw the power of what it did last night,” Ruggiero said.

The team took to the ice for the first time on Saturday, losing to Switzerland but winning over the crowd as North Korean cheerleaders and South Korean fans roared the players on.

The countries are still technically at war since their 1950-53 war ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty.

However, South Korea has been more willing to re-engage with the North than its old U.S. war ally, which wants Seoul to keep piling diplomatic and economic pressure on its neighbor.

Last month, the North agreed with South Korea to send 22 athletes and a 230-strong cheering squad to the winter Games.

(Source: Guardian)



# Iran crowned AFC futsal champion for 12th time



**1 →** Just 20 seconds into the second half, Iran threatened with Javid's cross into the box but Ahmad Esmailpour just failed to connect but two minutes later, Tavakoli made no mistake from close range to double their lead.

Esmailpour displayed spectacular individual skill when he moved on the counter in the 29th minute, dribbling through the Japanese defense before passing it to Hassanzadeh, who finished superbly.

Japan were impressive in moving the ball between tight spaces, but the Iranian defense seemed almost impenetrable, and with five minutes left, they opted for the power play with Kaoru Morioka coming in

as their fifth attacking force.

Despite numerous attempts, it backfired with Tayebi shooting into an unguarded goalmouth in the final minute to claim a convincing victory.

"I want to first say thanks to all those who have helped us reach here. I am the happiest man in the stadium right now. I am proud of my players, but I would also like to state that every team here has our respect," Iran futsal coach Mohammad Nazemasharieh said.

Earlier in the day, Uzbekistan clinched third place after defeating Iraq 2-1 on penalties after both sides had played out a 4-4 draw.

At the end of competition, Hassanzadeh was named as the competition's Most Valuable Player (MVP) and Tayebi became the tournament's top goal scorer with 14 goals.

The 2018 AFC Futsal Championship was the 15th edition of the AFC Futsal Championship, the biennial international futsal championship organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for the men's national teams of Asia.

The AFC appointed Taiwan as hosts on 29 July 2017; the tournament took place between 1 and 11 February 2018. A total of 16 teams played in the tournament.

## Khuzestan wins Iran Weightlifting Championship



**S P O R T S** Khuzestan Province claimed the title of the Iran Weightlifting Championship held in Ahvaz.

Khuzestan won the title with 555 points in the competition held in Ahvaz's Shohada Hall.

Tehran province became runners-up, bagging 490 points and Mazandaran Province came third with 396 points.

Ardabil and Gilan Provinces finished in fourth and fifth places with 374 and 354 points respectively.

The competition brought more than 120 lifters from 24 provinces together.

The domestic competition is a good opportunity for the Iranian talented weightlifters.

The competition was under the supervision of the Islamic Republic of Iran Weightlifting Federation (IRIWF).

IRIWF, which has been established in 1939, organizes the national weightlifting events, and Asian and World championships hosted by Iran.

## Iranian archers to partake at World Archery Indoors C'hips



**S P O R T S** Iran will send nine archers to the U.S. on Tuesday for the 2018 World Archery Indoors Championships.

Esmail Ebadi, Amir Kazempour and Nima Mahboobi will participate in compound men.

Sadeh Ashrafi, Omid Ebrahimi and Armin Akhgari will represent Iran in the recurve men and Reza Shabani, Kian Moradi and Abolfazl

Hosseini will participate at recurve junior men.

The 10th Indoor World Archery Championships will be held in Yankton, South Dakota from Feb. 14 to 19.

The Championships is expected to draw approximately 550 athletes, athlete trainers and officials representing 60 countries national archery teams to compete in the NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Center.

## Nasaf coach Berdiev wary of Persepolis's threat

**S P O R T S** Nasaf Qarshi head coach Ruziql Berdiev has warned his team to expect a tough match when they come up against Iran's Persepolis in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Nasaf Qarshi of Uzbekistan will face Persepolis in Group C of the AFC Champions League.

"After beating Jordan's Al Faisaly in the play-off, we gave some rest to the players, then we started preparations again on February 5. All the players are well, and nobody is injured; I'm happy with that," Berdiev told the-afc.com.

"We accomplished our first mission, which was qualifying to the group stage and we are happy that after a year's break, we are back in the Champions League," he added.

"I can say Persepolis is one of the strongest clubs in



Asia. The team is top of the Iran Pro League and it plays a disciplined style of football. Of course, the first match is always important; in 2012 we played against Esteghlal in Azadi stadium and it ended 0-0. We will try to do our best again in that stadium," Berdiev stated.

"Any team can be favorite in our group. Beside Persepolis, we have to play against Al Wasl from UAE and Al Sadd from Qatar. Everybody knows that Xavi is playing in Al Sadd and he is very dangerous. We watched them play and I can say that they like to control the ball. They are currently second in the Qatar Stars League and it means Al Sadd are stronger than before.

"Unfortunately, we don't have much information about Al Wasl but we know that they have foreign players who can make a difference in any game," he concluded.

## Coleman dominates 60 meters but not close to world record

World outdoor silver medalist Christian Coleman stumbled slightly in his start, then slowed before the finish, as he missed setting a world record in the 60 meters, clocking 6.46 seconds at the Boston Indoor Grand Prix on Saturday.

The race was Coleman's first since he ran a blazing 6.37 seconds last month, 0.02 seconds faster than the existing world record, but that time will not be ratified because electronic starting blocks were not present.

"I just wanted to come out here and execute and make sure everything is go for next week," the young American said.

He will compete in the U.S. indoor cham-

pionships/world trials next weekend in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the rarefied air aids sprinters.

That should give Coleman an even better chance of eclipsing compatriot Maurice Greene's 20-year-old record of 6.39 seconds.

"I'm just looking forward to the competition," said the 21-year-old Coleman, who also has an eye on March's IAAF world indoor championships in Birmingham, England.

Although the fast-starting American quickly pulled away from the field at Boston, he appeared to stumble a couple of steps into his race as he had in last month's eye-catching race in Clemson, South Carolina.

While he ran all the way to the finish in last month's race, on Saturday he backed off the final 10 meters to save himself for the national championships next weekend.

China's Xie Zhenye finished second in 6.54 seconds with U.S. world 300 meters record holder Noah Lyles third in a personal best 6.57 seconds.

Britain's Chris O'Hare, preparing for the Commonwealth Games in April, set a Scottish national indoor record in winning the 1,500 in 3:37.03 and Trinidad and Tobago's Jerem Richards ran the seventh fastest 300 meters, 32.10 seconds.

Kenyan Edward Cheserek took the men's



3,000 meters in 7:38.74 a day after running the second fastest indoor mile, 3:49.44. (Source: Reuters)

## Iran finish third in Indoor Hockey World Cup

**TASNIM** — Iran defeated Australia to finish in third place in the Indoor Hockey World Cup.

Team Melli beat Australian team 5-0 in Berlin's Max-Schmeling-Halle on Sunday.

Reza Norouzzadeh scored three goals for Team Melli and Navid Taherirad and Hamid Noorian scored one goal each in the game.

The 2018 Men's Indoor Hockey World Cup is the fifth edition of this tournament and played from 7 to 11 February 2018 in Berlin, Germany.

The Netherlands is the reigning champion, but was not able to defend its title due to its poor performance at the 2016 European Indoor Championship.

## Reza Enayati steps down as Siahjamegan coach

**TASNIM** — Reza Enayati has announced his retirement from his coaching of Iranian football club Siahjamegan.

On Friday, Siahjamegan lost to Paykan 2-1 in Iran Professional League and Enayati stepped down as his role in Mashhad based team.

Enayati had replaced Alireza Marzban in December. Siahjamegan sit bottom of the table with 15 points from 23 games.

On Thursday, Ali Karimi quit as coach of Sepidrood following a 3-0 defeat against Esteghlal but the club didn't accept his resignation.

## Firmino sees his long-term future with Liverpool

Liverpool striker Roberto Firmino has said that he does not see himself playing for another club "for years to come," and that his recent form has been one of the best spells of his career.

Firmino, 26, currently leads Liverpool's frontline and will record his best scoring tally as a Liverpool player this season, having already netted 19 times in 2017-18 so far.

The Brazilian moved to Anfield from Hoffenheim in the summer of 2015 when Brendan Rodgers was in charge, but he has flourished in a Liverpool shirt under Jurgen Klopp's management.

"Liverpool are one of the greats in Europe and being able to be part of the history of such a great club is gratifying to me," Firmino told Esporte in quotes reported by Sky Sports. "I'm very happy here at Liverpool and I do not see myself out of that club for years to come.

"I believe I am living one of the best phases of my career and I owe much to the trust that the club has placed in me from the beginning.

"The arrival of Jurgen Klopp was very important for my growth within the team. Since he arrived here at Liverpool, he has changed my positioning, put me playing as a forward and that was the watershed for me here at the club.

"Klopp is a fantastic guy. I rate him as an extremely professional coach, a perfectionist, with a winning mentality.

"He came to Liverpool after building a beautiful history in Borussia Dortmund and has done a beautiful job here in England. I'm sure Klopp will be marked in the history of world football for his work and achievements."

When asked about his future, Firmino added: "In every transfer window we hear a lot of speculation, but nothing concrete has come to me until now.

"I am very happy here at Liverpool and my thinking is to build a history with many victories and titles with that club. I have a contract with Liverpool until 2020 and I hope to keep it." (Source: Soccer.net)

## Preview - Group A: Tractor Sazi v Al Ahli Saudi FC

Tractor Sazi Tabriz of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli will open their AFC Champions League Group A accounts at Al Seeb Stadium on Monday as the sides get set to meet for just the third time.

Tractor Sazi reached the last 16 on their most recent appearance in the tournament two years ago, while a year earlier they drew one and lost one against Monday's opponents as Al Ahli topped the group and the Iranian team were eliminated.

Al Ahli enjoyed a strong campaign last season with Syrian striker Omar Al Soma among the goals as they reached the quarter-finals before going down to Iranian opposition in the form of Persepolis.

A runners-up finish in 2012 remains their best run on the continent and the Jeddah-based outfit will start the current campaign regarded as one of the strongest teams in West Asia.

## Preview - Group B: Al Duhail v Zob Ahan

Doha: Al Duhail of Qatar will kick off their AFC Champions League Group B campaign with a home clash against the Islamic Republic of Iran's Zob Ahan at Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium on Monday.

It will be a debut on the continent as Al Duhail, with the club having formed following the merger of Lekhwiya and El Jaish. The former twice reached the quarter-finals on the continent – in 2013 and 2015 – while the latter enjoyed a run to the semi-finals in 2016.

Zob Ahan are competing in their sixth AFC Champions League and no Iranian club has come closer to winning the competition, after the Isfahan team finished as runners-up back in 2010.

Their last trip to Qatar, meanwhile, yielded an impressive 1-0 away victory over Lekhwiya thanks to Mehdi Rajabzadeh's solitary strike. The attacking midfielder, along with many of the other players that were on display that night, is likely to take to the pitch once more come Monday.



INTERNATIONAL DAILY  
www.tehrantimes.com  
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» 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  
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Chicago center hosts Iranian film festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — The 28th Annual Festival of Films from Iran running at the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago is presenting a number of movies by Iranian directors working within and outside of Iran.



Amir-Reza Ranjbaran (L) and Sadaf Asgari act in a scene from “Disappearance”.

Mohsen Qarai’s debut feature “Blockage”, “Negar” by Rambod Javan, and Abbas Kiarostami’s experimental work “24 Frames” are among the films selected to go on screen during the festival, which opened on February 3.

Also included are Ali Asgari’s acclaimed drama “Disappearance” and Mohammad Hamzei’s “Azar”.

The festival will close with the premiere of Chicago-based filmmaker Hossein Khandan’s drama “Waiting for Kiarostami”. The fictional story grew out of the circumstances surrounding a project that Abbas Kiarostami had planned to shoot in China, and serves as an affectionate tribute.

The festival will be running until March 1.

Lisbon festival to screen two animations from Iran

**A R T** TEHRAN — Two Iranian animations will be competing in the Monstra Lisbon Animated Film Festival, which will be held in the Portuguese capital from March 8 to 18.



“Maned & Macho” by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi.

The unexplainable secrets of the universe in “The Third Script”.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iranian shorts to compete in Romanian festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — Movies from Iranian filmmakers will be screened at the ClujShorts International Short Film Festival, which will be held in the northwestern Romanian city of Cluj-Napoca from April 23 to 29.

“Light Sight” by Seyyed Moslem Tabatabai, “Retouch” by Kaveh Mazaheri, “Pet Man” by Marzieh Abrarpaydar, “Turquoise” by Ruzbeh Misaqi and “Dive” Hossein Darabi will compete with 155 other films from around the world.

Patrick Stewart to get techy at academy’s Sci-Tech Awards

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Saturday night is Oscar night for the engineers and inventors who create things that help filmmakers keep audiences riveted.

Actor Patrick Stewart is hosting the film academy’s Scientific and Technical Awards, an annual celebration of innovations that have advanced the art of filmmaking. The Sci-Tech Awards recognize hardware and software developments, from camera dollies to computer programs.

The inventions being recognized this year at an untelevised dinner ceremony at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel include a camera mount that makes aerial shots easier and software programs that instantly render animated characters in 3-D.

Three Oscar statuettes will be presented: Two to the creators of the Houdini system used across the industry to create visual effects, and a third honoring the career achievements of “Star Wars” and “Star Trek” visual effects pioneer Jonathan Erland.

Tehran gallery to make its debut with tribute to Morteza Momayyez

**A R T** TEHRAN — Tehran’s newly-established gallery Naqsh-o-Khat will pay tribute to top graphic designer Morteza Momayyez during its first showcase, which will open on February 16.

Works by his friends and artists from his generation have been selected for display at the exhibition, the director of the gallery, Javad Bakhtiari, who is also an accomplished calligrapher, said in a press release on Sunday.

Among the artist are Abbas Kiarostami, Parviz Tanavoli, Aidin Aghdashlu, Iran Darudi, Bahman Mohasses and Taha Behbahani.

Works by Bakhtiari, who himself was a friend of Momayyez, will also be on view at the exhibit.

“I have always paid due respect to the character and art of Momayyez, and I want to dedicate the first exhibit to the great artist,” Bakhtiari said.

“My main goal in establishing the gallery is to turn it into a good haunt for artists where they can also organize their meetings,” the calligrapher added.

The exhibit will be running until February 27 at the gallery, which is located at 12 Roshanai Alley, Vafamaneh St., Heravi Square.

Momayyez who is considered to be the father of modern graphic design in Iran died of cancer in 2005 at the age of 70.



A poster for debut exhibition of Tehran’s newly-established gallery Naqsh-o-Khat

Aran to perform “Macbeth” opera puppet show

**A R T** TEHRAN — Aran, a theater troupe led by Iranian director Behruz Gharibpur, is planning to perform the “Macbeth” opera puppet show in Tehran.

Ferdowsi Hall will host theatergoers for the opera puppet show for 12 performances, the first of which will be staged tonight, Aran announced in a press release on Saturday.

The voices of Italian singers Giuseppe Taddei, Giovanni Foiani and Brigitte Nielsen from a recording based on a composition by the Italian opera composer Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) will be used for the opera puppet show.

Twenty puppeteers, including Maryam Egbali, Ali Pakdast, Marjan Ahmadi, Sahel Safa and Ali Abolkheirian, will cooperate in the project.



A scene from the “Macbeth” opera puppet show by Iranian director Behruz Gharibpur

Amazon hires NBC executive Salke to run video studio

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O) on Friday said it has hired Jennifer Salke, president of NBC Entertainment, to run its television and movie studio, ending months of limbo as its entertainment division switches from a lineup heavy on art-house fare to broader-appealing hits.

Amazon has been without a permanent studio chief since October, when Roy Price resigned after a sexual harassment allegation. Price has contested the claim.

Salke has overseen the development of comedies and dramas for NBC as president since 2011. She has been behind shows such as “This is Us”, “The Blacklist”, and “Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt”, and previously was executive vice president of creative affairs at Twentieth Century Fox Television.

Salke has “built an impeccable reputation as a big leader who emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and teamwork,” Jeff Blackburn, Amazon’s senior vice president of business development and entertainment, said in a statement.

Amazon’s video budget ballooned to an estimated \$4.5 billion or more in 2017, and the company has said it plans to spend more this year. It is seeking content that can attract viewers to its Prime streaming and shopping service around the world.

Salke’s biggest task may be managing Amazon’s blockbuster bet on a television prequel to “The Lord of the Rings”, a leap away from the niche content the studio was used to producing. People familiar with the matter say the studio offered \$250



Jennifer Salke, president NBC Entertainment, speaks at the Hollywood Radio and Television Society Newsmaker Luncheon featuring the TV network entertainment presidents in Beverly Hills, California October 11, 2011. (Reuters/Fred Prouser)

million for the fantasy series’ rights alone last year. The bill will climb as Amazon invests in production and marketing for multiple seasons.

“The bet Amazon is making is, ‘We need a programing exec who’s going to create content that people watch,’” Wedbush Securities analyst Michael Pachter said.

The television executive will also oversee Amazon’s film strategy. Reuters reported last month that the studio is shifting resources from independent films to more commercial projects.

An Amazon spokesman said Jason Roppel, the vice president running Amazon Studios’ film division, will run the movie unit on a day-to-day basis but report to Salke, as will Albert Cheng, who had been interim studio chief.

Salke’s start date has not yet been decided, the spokesman said.

LA art museum unveils wide-ranging tribute to Jasper Johns

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jasper Johns’ decision more than 60 years ago to paint a picture of an American flag launched what became one of the most heralded artistic careers of modern times.

So it’s fitting The Broad’s latest exhibition, “Jasper Johns: Something Resembling Truth,” begins with a first-floor gallery filled with nearly a dozen of Johns’ most celebrated U.S. flag paintings.

From there, the exhibition goes on to display more than 100 other works, filling gallery after gallery and ranging from paintings and drawings to bronze and metal sculptures to an array of stunning multimedia creations.

The works span more than six decades and compose what Broad officials say is one of the largest retrospectives assembled for the 87-year-old artist, whose work helped launch the pop art movement and later merged it with conceptualism, abstract expressionism and other forms.

“It is well-known that Jasper Johns changed the 20th century artistically,” Broad curator and director Joanne Heyler said before leading a media tour through the exhibition this week. “Johns helped move the conversation of art to a new and exciting place by rejecting the established style of the time, the gestural bravura of abstract expression.”

The exhibition was put together with loans from dozens of museums, private collectors and the artist himself. Although Johns, who lives in Connecticut, hasn’t seen it and museum officials don’t know if he will, Broad co-curator Ed Schadt says the artist was intimately involved in its



Jasper Johns in an undated photo assemblage.

“We sent him a full wooden model of our museum with everything to scale, everything placed, then we went to Sharon, Connecticut, and met with him and worked with him to finalize the exhibition,” he said. “I would absolutely love it if he came to see it.

It opened Saturday and runs through May 13.

Like Andy Warhol, Ed Ruscha and other contemporaries, Johns took art in a different direction in the 1950s and early ’60s with his decision to focus on intricately detailed, finely crafted interpretations of everyday objects.

Although best-known to the general public for his flag paintings and drawings, his other prominent works include numerous interpretations of bull’s-eye-like targets, sculptures of everyday things like numbers and flashlights, painted copies of cross-hatched etchings he saw on a passing car, and stunning mixed-media paintings with the cans, brushes and other objects he used in their making attached to them.

Award-winning composer Johann Johannsson dead at 48

NEW YORK (AP) — Johann Johannsson, an award-winning composer and producer who combined classical sounds and modern electronics on the acclaimed soundtracks to “The Theory of Everything” and “Sicario”, has died at age 48.

His manager Tim Husom announced that Johannsson was found dead Friday in his Berlin apartment. More details were not immediately available.

“Today, I lost my friend who was one of the most talented musicians and intelligent people I knew,” Husom said in a statement Saturday.

Rosalie Voss, who runs the European office of Redbird Music, told The Associated Press that the cause of death was currently unknown and that police were investigating.

“We are waiting to find out more in the coming days,”

Voss said.

Voss said Johannsson is survived by a daughter in Copenhagen, Denmark and family in Iceland.

A native of Reykjavik, Iceland who started out as a rock guitarist, Johannsson won a Golden Globe and received Grammy and Oscar nominations for his score for “The Theory of Everything”, the 2014 film starring Eddie Redmayne as physicist Stephen Hawking.

Johannsson also received an Oscar nomination for the 2015 movie “Sicario”. His score for “Arrival”, a 2016 release, brought him Golden Globe, BAFTA and Grammy nominations. Last year, he worked with Darren Aronofsky on “Mother!” which starred Jennifer Lawrence.

Johannsson also recorded several albums of his own, including “Fordlandia” and “Orphee”.

