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## Leader plants trees to highlight natural resources

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## Non-oil exports rise 5%, hit \$42b

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran exported \$41.69 billion of non-oil goods in the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year ending to February 19. The exports rose by 4.96 percent year on year, according to data released by

the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration.

Exports to China, South Korea, and Turkey rose by 11.29 percent, 41.08 percent, and 30.71 percent respectively, while exports to the United Arab Emirates fell by 14.09 percent, the report added.

## Iran's FM says U.S. blocking EU's adherence to JCPOA

The U.S. is hindering to European Union's adherence to Iran's historic nuclear deal, says Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Zarif made the remark on his official twitter account late on Monday, following a meeting with France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian.

"In meeting today, told France FM: EU should compel US to abide by JCPOA rather than trying to appease it by repeat-

ing its extraneous demands. To defend the nuclear agreement, mere words are not sufficient. Especially since the US is an obstacle to EU's own adherence to JCPOA," he said.

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — the U.S., France, Britain, Russia and China — plus Germany signed the nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015 and started implementing it on January 16, 2016. **→2**

## South, North Korea to hold summit in April

North and South Korea will hold their first summit in more than a decade in late April, the South's presidential office said on Tuesday after a senior delegation returned from a visit to the North where they met leader Kim Jong Un.

North Korea also has agreed to freeze its ongoing nuclear weapons tests, if its security can be guaranteed, South Korea's top security adviser said following his trip to the communist state.

In a press briefing on Tuesday, Chung

Eui-yong also announced that North Korea's Kim Jong-un and his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in will hold a landmark summit in April.

The summit of the two leaders will be held at the joint security area of Panmunjom, according to the official South Korean news agency, Yonhap.

The announcement followed high-level talks in Pyongyang between Chung and top North Korean leaders, including Kim Jong-un. **→13**



### ARTICLE

By Hanif Ghaafari  
Political analyst

## U.S. and the European Troika's new approach against Iran

"Regional negotiations with Iran," is one of the common interests of the United States and the European Union in post-JCPOA period. Meanwhile, France is about to play the role of a "pioneer".

Reuters has recently claimed that European countries have begun negotiations with Iran over this country's regional role, intending to remove Trump's concerns regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

According to Reuters, the talks began on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference with the focus on Yemen and the related issues in the region and it is supposed to continue in the future. Reuters wrote: "European powers and Iran have started talks over Tehran's role in the Middle East and will meet again this month in Italy as part of efforts to prove to U.S. President Donald Trump that they are meeting his concerns over the 2015 nuclear deal.... (And) they are due to meet again in Italy this month."

The report continued: "With Trump warning of a last chance for 'the worst deal ever negotiated', Britain, France and Germany have been working with U.S. officials to draw up a strategy to improve the Iran nuclear deal in return for Trump keeping the pact alive by renewing U.S. sanctions relief on May 12."

The point that needs to be taken into consideration in the Reuters report is that the regional negotiations between Iran and European countries is planned to take place in different stages. According to this news agency, the first round of talks on Yemen conflict has been held on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference last month, and Europeans are hoping to talk about the role of pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon and Syria in the next round of talks.

In this regard, we should carefully pay attention to some important points in these negotiations: Firstly, "regional talks with Iran" are one of the common interests of the United States and the European Union in post-JCPOA time. **→7**

## France's long history of playing with Iran

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — In the following report provided by MNA staff members, a summary of France's playing with Iran at different stages is discussed with the hope that our Foreign Ministry takes a tougher stance against the European country.

■ **French foreign minister has finally arrived in Tehran**

The French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian arrived in Tehran early on Sunday March 5, 2018 and so far, he has met with Iran's SNSC Secretary Ali Shamkhani and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Jean-Yves Le Drian had postponed his trip to Tehran, which had been planned for January 5, 2018.

The decision for postponing the trip came as Iranian President Hassan Rouhani held a phone

conversation with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on January 3, 2018, calling on France to "take its legal responsibility to combat terrorism and violence," criticizing that a terrorist group, called Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), has a base in Paris, operating against the Iranian people and provoking and persuading people to take violent actions in Iran.

■ **France's support for terrorist MKO**  
Mohahedin-e Khalq (MKO) is a terrorist organization in exile that has carried out a lot of brutal attacks against civilian and government officials in Iran killing a large number of them.

The terrorist MKO has been supported by the Western governments since its founding.

The terrorist organization operates freely in France and holds regular conferences in French

capital Paris every year in order to recruit many more terrorists.

They were involved in the recent riots in the Iran. On January 5, 2018, Iran's intelligence ministry said on Friday that a MKO terrorist cell was discovered and dismantled in Boroujerd, Lorestan province, saying they were involved in sabotaging actions during recent protests.

Prior to that on July 2, 2017, Iran's foreign minister had warned against activities of the MKO in France, saying "giving permission to carry out activities to a group which is loathed by the Iranian people, has a dark history of assassinations, had sided with Saddam regime, and has been making attempts to carry out attacks on the Iranian soil leaves a black stain on the countries that cooperate with such groups." **→9**

## How come we are treating trees like intruders?

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

They say trees are lungs of the Earth, so how come we are treating them like intruders?

Over 400 million years ago land plants began to diversify on Earth. However, according to Universe Today our ancestors have been around on Earth for about six million years and the modern form of humans only evolved about 200,000 years ago. Civilization as we know is only about 6,000 years old,

and industrialization started in the earnest only in the 1800s.

Now who is the intruder? Trees have always been generously around and transforming carbon dioxide into the clean, pure oxygen we need to breathe.

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, one mature leafy tree produces enough oxygen for 10 people every year and it is very important to realize that a tree's health is one of the key factors in its

ability to produce oxygen; essentially keeping our trees healthy keeps us healthy.

Additionally trees help cleanse the air of harmful pollutants such as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. This is important because numerous studies have shown that exposure to pollutants can cause a variety of health problems including irregular heartbeats, heart attacks, asthma, decrease lung function and other respiratory ailments. **→12**

## Russian military plane crashes in Syria, 32 dead

A Russian military transport plane crashed in Syria Tuesday, killing all 32 people on board, Russian news agencies quoted the Russian Defense Ministry as saying, an incident that sharply raises the death toll from the Kremlin's Syria operation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is running for re-election later this month, ordered "a significant part" of Moscow's military contingent there to start withdrawing in December, declaring their work largely done.

But casualties continue to mount.

The defense ministry was cited as saying that the plane, an An-26, crashed at Russia's Hmeimim military airport in Latakia Province and that initial information suggested the crash may have been caused by a technical fault.

Twenty-six passengers and six crew members were on board, and all were killed in the crash, the news agencies quoted the ministry as saying.

In December 2016, a plane carrying a Russian military orchestra to Syria crashed in the Black Sea, killing all 92 people on board.

There have also been deaths and injuries among Russian forces in Syria. In one incident, in February this year, Syrian rebels shot down a Russian warplane and killed its pilot on the ground after he ejected. About 300 men working for a Kremlin-linked Russian private military firm were either killed or injured in Syria last month when their column was attacked by U.S.-led coalition forces, according to three sources familiar with the matter.

(Source: Reuters)

### TENDER INVITATION NO. 96/1015

**IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO)**, Would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of 120,000 Alumina on tender basis. Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till

**7-April-2018** based on our required instruction to following address:

NO.49,Mollasadra Ave., VanakS Square,Postal Code: 1991614581

Tehran,Iran.Attention: Ms.Emadi Tel: +982188049046-7 Fax: +982188049045

For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check: [www.iralco.ir](http://www.iralco.ir)  
Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



## KSC Receives Golden Statue for Observing Consumers' Rights

KSC Introduced Excellence Industrial and Production Unit in Country

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### ARTICLE

By Jack Perry  
Author  
From Arizona

## The truth about life in the United States

People in other countries sometimes wonder what it's like to live in the United States. And you can't really get the truth of daily life here from what you see on television and movies made by the United States. I'm just an average guy living here who did everything I was told would pay off in prosperity and good fortune. Yet, I remain poor. So let me fill you in on what the real life is here in America for those of us you don't see with the glamorous houses, cars, and lifestyles.

First off, we struggle to make ends meet. We're constantly behind on bills and always in debt. We borrow from one to pay off another and just transfer debt from one place to another. We often have to pay our last dollar for rent and go to the food bank just to eat because we don't qualify for government assistance. Not that it matters because the United States government is in the process of cutting assistance programs for the poor in order to free up money to spend on more weapons and to pay for the tax cuts the rich just got. If it wasn't for church food banks and charity food banks, people in the United States would literally starve to death. Don't ever let the United States fool you into thinking people don't go hungry here. Because even food banks can't keep up with demand and provide enough food to do more than just keep people alive until next time.

Second, we haven't got health care. We can't just go see a doctor when we are ill. We can't afford it and we haven't got the money. We can't afford the overpriced medications here and you have to go to a doctor to be allowed to obtain it in the first place. America says "But we passed ObamaCare!" Yes, but at least 29 million people remain without health care because they can't afford ObamaCare. The government calls ObamaCare the "Affordable Care Act" but when this is the United States government telling you it's "affordable", it certainly isn't. Just like everything else the American government tells you, such as "working for peace" while bombing cities in Syria like it was World War Two all over again.

Third, you will never be in more peril from being shot and killed in the United States than when stopped by a police officer here. **→7**



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



‘France won’t gain anything against Iran’s interests’

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said on Tuesday that the visiting French foreign minister won’t gain anything against Iranian people’s interests.

“The French foreign minister visited Iran at the official invitation of his Iranian counterpart, and certainly, our officials have explained the Islamic Republic of Iran’s views to him,” Velayati told reporters in Tehran on Tuesday.

He also said the White House is planning to impose defense restrictions on Iran, but the Iranian nation and government will never concede, Mehr reported.



France’s stance ‘irrational’, ‘unacceptable’: former Iranian envoy

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A former Iranian ambassador to Paris has said that France’s stance against Iran is “Irrational” and “unacceptable”.

Speaking with Mehr, Hamid-Reza Assefi criticized French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian for his meddlesome remarks on Iran’s missile program, urging Iranian officials to confront France’s stance.

Assefi’s remarks came after Le Drian said he believed Iran needs to address Europe’s requests over its ballistic missile program or risk new sanctions.

Assefi pointed to Le Drian’s Monday trip to Tehran, saying such visits are necessary as long as mutual respect and understanding exist.



MPs reprove Zarif over Le Drian visit

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Two lawmakers on Tuesday issued a warning to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif over inviting his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian to Tehran.

In an open session of the parliament, Hossein Naqavi Hosseini and Hossein-Ali Haji-Deligani issued the warning, demanding that the foreign minister explains why he had invited Le Drian, ignoring his anti-Iran stance.

A number of MPs also called for revision of ties with France as it has been helping the anti-Iran front, Mehr reported.

Prior to his Tehran visit, Le Drian criticized Iran’s missile program, saying Tehran could risk fresh sanctions if not letting go of its ballistic missiles.



Parliament will never allow missile talks: MP

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The parliament would never allow anyone to hold talks about the country’s missile power, the spokesman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Majlis has said, Tasnim reported on Tuesday.

Hossein Naqavi Hosseini said although there are some differences of opinion among political groups in the parliament, there is a consensus among the lawmakers about issues pertaining to national interests, including the country’s defense power.

The remarks came as French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, who visited Tehran on Monday, threatened ahead of his trip that Iran needed to address international concerns over its ballistic missile program or it risked new sanctions.



Iran, Russia, Turkey to hold Syria meeting in Astana

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The foreign ministers of Iran, Russia and Turkey are set to meet in Kazakhstan next week as the three countries attempt to move forward with a plan to end nearly seven years of war in Syria.

Kazakhstan’s Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that the top diplomats will meet on March 16 in the capital Astana “without observers or Syrian sides”, Anadolu Agency reported.

The statement also said that the United Nations Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura would be invited to the meeting.

The Astana peace talks were launched on Jan. 23-24, 2017 with the aim of putting an end to the Syrian crisis.



U.S. Treasury playing ‘ministry of war’ against Iran: official

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The United States has officially waged an economic war against Iran, with its Treasury Department serving as the war headquarters and dollar being used as a key weapon, the head of Iran’s Civil Defense Organization has said.

Brigadier General Gholam Reza Jalali said on Tuesday that Iran is facing a full-fledged American economic war through various sanction-based strategies to harm Iran’s economy, Tasnim reported.

“The U.S. central bank (Federal Reserve System) has officially announced that it has turned dollar into a weapon for the economic war, and is controlling it via SWIFT,” he added.

# Tehran-Paris ties growing since nuclear deal: diplomat



**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Abolghasem Delfi, Iran’s ambassador to France, has said that Tehran and Paris ties have been on a positive trend since the conclusion of the 2015 nuclear deal.

“After clinching the JCPOA [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action], our relations with France have been expanding and cooperation between the two countries has increased,” he told IRNA in an interview published on Tuesday.

He said that French President Emmanuel Macron plans to visit Iran in 2018.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian visited Tehran on Monday and met separately with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani.

The senior Iranian officials insisted in their meetings with Le Drian on Iran’s long-held policy that Tehran’s missile program is defensive.

Reports have surfaced that European countries, including France, are pressing Iran to limit its missile program in order to keep the White House in the 2015 nuclear deal.

## Trump’s al-Quds move to cost U.S., Israel much: Larijani

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Tuesday that U.S. President Donald Trump’s move in relocating the capital of Israel to al-Quds (Jerusalem) will come at a high price for the U.S. and the Zionist regime of Israel.

“The decision that was taken about The Noble Quds was not accepted and was despised by all Islamic countries. It is not obvious if they can implement this pro-

ject easily, because the decision will cost them much,” Larijani told reporters.

Trump declared on December 6, 2017 that he recognizes al-Quds as the capital of Israel and ordered the relocation of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to al-Quds.

Larijani underlined how Trump sees the destiny of the U.S. and Israel intertwined and even sacrifices the U.S. interests in the benefit of Israel.

“Such moves will prove unwholesome to them, be-

cause there are many factors and elements each playing a role in the region,” he noted.

He expressed hope that the Palestinians would be successful and al-Quds would be liberated from the Zionists.

On December 21, 2017, the United Nations General Assembly delivered a stinging rebuke to Trump, voting by a huge majority to reject his unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

## U.S. Supreme Court rules to seize Bank Melli Iran’s assets



The U.S. Supreme Court has turned down Bank Melli Iran’s appeal against American claims to millions of dollars of the state-owned lender’s frozen assets held abroad.

A number of Americans have been seeking \$17.6 million of Iranian assets which Visa Inc and Franklin Resources Inc owe to Bank Melli.

They are among some 90 Americans who have been granted by a U.S. lower court to seek nearly \$1 billion of Iranian money in compensation for its alleged role in militant attacks.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday upheld court judgments in four lawsuits against Iran for its alleged complicity in various attacks between 1990 and 2002, a report by Reuters said.

The plaintiffs include people injured or relatives of people killed in attacks including the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers residence at a U.S. military base in Saudi Arabia, the 1990 killing of militant U.S. -born rabbi Meir Kahane in New York City, and two bombings in Jerusalem al-Quds in 2001 and 2002, Reuters reported.

In its appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, Bank Melli had argued that its funds frozen due to U.S. sanctions against Iran were owed by Visa and Franklin and could not be seized.

Iran’s assets held in foreign banks have been subject to a witch hunt by the Americans who have used Washington’s animosity toward the Islamic Republic to easily win lawsuits against

the country in U.S. courts.

Last month, a set of “plaintiffs” sought to seize priceless Persian artifacts held at a Chicago museum to satisfy a separate \$71.5 million court judgment against Iran but their bid was blocked on appeal by the Iranian government and University of Chicago.

The antiquities, including a set of 300 ancient Iranian tablets, were loaned to the university for study before the Islamic Revolution in 1979 when Iran and the U.S. were close allies.

Iran has denounced U.S. seizures of its frozen assets as “highway robbery” and pledged to haul the United States before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague.

Last April, a federal judge in New York ordered Tehran to pay \$11 billion in compensation to victim families of 9/11 attack which was allegedly carried out by al-Qaeda – a sworn enemy of Iran and Iranians.

“I have lost every respect for U.S. justice. The judgment by the Supreme Court and the other, even more absurd judgment by a New York circuit court deciding that Iran should pay damages for 9/11 are the height of absurdity,” Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said then.

“How would you explain Iran being held accountable for the damages to the victims of 9/11—and others being absolved of any responsibility, those who were actually responsible for it?” he said apparently referring to Saudi Arabia.

## Iran’s FM says U.S. blocking EU’s adherence to JCPOA



**1 →** Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions imposed against Tehran.

U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly described the JCPOA, which was negotiated under his predecessor, Barack Obama, as “the worst and most one-sided transaction Washington has ever entered into,” a characterization he often used during his presidential campaign, and threatened to tear it up.

Trump has threatened to pull out of the JCPOA unless Congress and America’s European allies help “fix” it with a follow-up agreement within a 120-day deadline.

“US & Europeans should stop pouring hundreds of billions of dollars of weapons into our region instead of questioning Iran’s missiles. Not restricted by UNSC, but necessary to deter repeat of our people’s suffering when Saddam—with western support—showered us with missiles,” Zarif added.

“Iran offered political solutions for Syria and Yemen from the outset, and has always been ready to work for peace in the region, but with serious partners sharing the same objective and not engaged in appeasement gimmicks.”

In September 1980, Iraq’s former dictator Saddam Hussein attacked Iran. The war lasted for 8 years and left hundreds of thousands of victims on both sides.

Zarif added that Tehran’s stance on solving the situations in Yemen and Syria has always been a political one and that

the Islamic Republic has always pushed for peace in the Middle East.

“Iran offered political solutions for Syria and Yemen from the outset, and has always been ready to work for peace in the region, but with serious partners sharing the same objective and not engaged in appeasement gimmicks,” he noted.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country.

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

At least 13,600 people have been killed since the onset of Saudi Arabia’s military campaign against Yemen. Much of the Arabian Peninsula country’s infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and factories, has been reduced to rubble due to the war.

Earlier, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says everyone will regret the possible collapse of the landmark nuclear agreement reached between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries.

“The survival of the JCPOA will prove to the world that negotiations and diplomacy are the best options to solve problems,” said Rouhani during a meeting with Le Drian.

(Source: Press TV)

## JCPOA fall to cause common regret, Iran’s president warns

**TEHRAN** – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani warned against the consequences of a possible breakdown of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying all parties to the deal would regret such event.

Speaking in a Monday meeting with France’s Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian, Rouhani said the JCPOA is a test for all negotiating parties.

“Remaining committed to the accord would prove to the world that the negotiation and diplomacy is the best way to solve problems, but the collapse of the deal means that political talks are a waste of time,” he warned.

The president also stressed that all negotiating parties must adhere to their commitments under the deal, making it clear that Iran will never be the first party to violate the agreement.

The Iranian president further pointed to the common views that Iran and France share on the JCPOA and their common support for the accord, saying, “Fortunately, today, via the nuclear deal a suitable environment has been created for the development of mutual relations and collaborations.

We must move towards achieving the common goals and interests of the two nations in this direction.”

He further referred to the historical and friendly ties between Tehran and Paris in various fields, including trade, economy, industry, agriculture, culture, transportation and energy, adding that the two governments are determined to establish and strengthen mutual friendly ties.

“There are no limits for the Islamic Republic of Iran to develop and boost relations and collaborations with France,” he said, IFP reported. Pointing to the necessity of mutual cooperation between Iran and France on regional stability and security, the president said, “France and the Islamic Republic of Iran have played a positive role in resolving the recent problems in Lebanon, and should collaborate in keeping peace in this country and preparing the grounds for an election that brings about political vitality and stability in the country.”

Pointing to the Yemen crisis, he added, “It is an international and humanitarian responsibility to do our best for the sake of Yemeni people who are suffering from bombardments, diseases and many (other) troubles.”

He noted that these efforts must be made towards the implementation of a ceasefire, ending the war, stopping the massacre of the Yemenis, and delivery of humanitarian aid.

Referring to Syria’s crisis, Rouhani said Iran has been helping Syria in the fight against terrorism at the request of Damascus, but noted that terrorism has not been fully eradicated in the Arab country.

“There is no way but to strengthen the central government in Damascus to resolve the Syrian crisis.”

For his part, Le Drian emphasized his country’s respect for the JCPOA and Paris’s interest in maintaining the nuclear deal.

“The IAEA reports indicate that the Islamic Republic is fully committed to its obligations, and France will do its utmost to preserve the nuclear agreement,” the French diplomat said.

“We are interested in the development and boosting of relations in all fields with the Islamic Republic of Iran. To this end, France has considered some ways to facilitate the expansion of mutual economic cooperation in order to boost the trade dynamism established between the two countries,” Le Drian added.

(Source: Tasnim)



# Russia rejects ‘unfounded’ reports of Syria using chemicals

Russia has rejected allegations that the Syrian government is using chemical weapons, stressing that only an international body can rule on the issue based on an “impartial” probe.

“The provocations are continuing that spawn such insinuations and unfounded accusations against the Syrian leadership,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday.

Last week, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which is sympathetic to the militants operating against the Damascus government, claimed a suspected chlorine attack had taken place in the militant-held al-Shifunyah village of the Eastern Ghouta region on February 25.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov described the alleged chemical attack as “bogus stories in the media.”

Prior to the Observatory’s report, the Russian Defense Ministry had warned that militant groups in Eastern Ghouta were preparing a false flag attack in a bid to blame the Damascus government for using chemical weapons against civilians.

On Monday, The Washington Post quoted U.S. officials as saying that the government was considering new military action against the Syrian government in response to reports of suspected chemical weapons use.

The United Nations Human Rights Council also ordered investigators to examine what it called “the alleged use of chemical weapons in Eastern Ghouta.”

Peskov said, “In Syria the chemical weapons were destroyed. That was verified not only by the Russian side but by the OPCW



(Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons).” He further noted that for Russia, such accusations against the Syrian government need to be based on “the findings of an international commission, an international working group, only the result of an impartial investigation.”

“In the absence of such an investigation, all accusations are nothing but insinuations,” the Kremlin spokesman added.

Syria turned over its entire chemical stockpile under a deal negotiated by Russia and the United States back in 2013.

On April 7, the U.S. launched a missile attack against Shayrat Airbase in Syria’s Homs Province. Washington claimed that the air field targeted in the missile raid was the origin of the April 4, 2017, purported chemical attack on the town of Khan Shaykhun in Syria’s Idlib Province.

Damascus denied the accusation of being behind the alleged gas attack and described it as a “fabrication” to justify the subsequent U.S. missile strike.

**■ Safe passage**  
Russia says it has offered anti-Damascus

militants safe passage out of the Eastern Ghouta region, which they have been using as a launch pad for deadly terrorist attacks on civilians in the Syrian capital.

Major-General Yuri Yevtushenko, head of the Russian peace and reconciliation center in Syria, announced in a statement on Tuesday that Moscow would provide transport and a secure corridor for those militants who agree to leave Eastern Ghouta.

“If you do not wish to let the civilians out from the held areas, we are ready to guarantee a safe passage from Eastern Ghouta for you and your families. For that purpose there will be enough transport provided as well as security will be guaranteed along the whole route,” he said.

The militants leaving Eastern Ghouta with personal weapons and with their families would be guaranteed immunity from prosecution, he added.

“We call upon the leaders of all illegal armed groups to make everything possible to as soon as possible release the civilians from suffering and secure unobstructed delivery of humanitarian aid to Eastern Ghouta,” Yevtushenko said.

From inside the region, foreign-backed militants have been launching indiscriminate mortar and rocket attacks on Damascus, which have resulted in many civilian deaths.

The Syrian army, backed by Russian air force, has launched an operation to liberate the region from a host of militant groups, the strongest of which is the Takfiri Jaish al-Islam outfit.

(Source: agencies)

## Syrian Kurdish militias move to fighters Afrin from ISIL frontlines

### Turkey expects U.S. to take back weapons handed to Syria-based Kurdish militants

Kurdish-allied Syrian Arab militias are redeploying 1,700 fighters from frontlines with ISIL (Daesh) to the Afrin region to help fend off a Turkish offensive against the northwestern region, their spokesperson told Reuters Tuesday.

“We have taken out 1,700 fighters ... to defend Afrin against terrorism,” Abu Omar al-Edilbi said, the spokesman for the militias that have been fighting Daesh in eastern Syria as part of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

Speaking to Reuters in Raqqa after announcing the redeployment, he said that 700 of the fighters had already moved to Afrin.

Meanwhile, Turkey says it wants the United States to take back the weapons it has given to Syria-based Kurdish militants, whom Ankara considers a threat to its security, and will discuss the issue with American officials in an upcoming meeting.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hami Aksoy told a news conference in Ankara on Tuesday that Turkey would tell U.S. authorities during meetings on March 8-9 that it expected Washington to take concrete steps on retrieving the weapons it has provided to the so-called Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG).

Aksoy also said that Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu is scheduled to visit Russia between March 12 and 14, and later meet with his U.S. counterpart Rex Tillerson in Washington on March 19.

Regarded by Ankara as a terrorist organization and the Syrian branch of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), the YPG forms the largest part of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a U.S.-backed anti-Damascus militant group.



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

The offensive came after the U.S. said it would set up a 30,000-strong militant border force at Turkish doorstep.

Turkey is wary of the presence of Kurdish militants close to its borders in Syria, and has been opposed to Washington’s efforts to train and arm them in the Arab country.

Earlier this month, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused U.S. President Donald Trump and his predecessor Barack Obama of failing to tell the truth over U.S. support for the YPG.

Erdogan had earlier said the YPG is trying to establish a “terror corridor” on Turkey’s southern border, linking Syria’s northern city of Afrin with a large Kurdish-controlled area to the east.

Senior authorities in Ankara have warned Washington that there could be a confrontation between Turkish and American troops in northern Syria if arms transfer to the Kurds was not stopped.

**■ Syria summit**  
During his Tuesday press conference, Aksoy said that the presidents of Russia, Iran and Turkey are expected to hold a summit in April to discuss Syria and potential steps in the region.

Russia, Iran, and Turkey have been organizing peace talks for Syria in the Kazakh capital of Astana since January 2017. Together, the three countries have been acting as guarantor states for the peace process.

Capitalizing on the achievements of Astana, Russia on January 29-30 convened a high-profile meeting on Syria — the Syrian Congress of National Dialog — in the Russian city of Sochi. Around 1,600 delegates representing a wide range of Syrian political factions attended the Sochi talks.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman also said that Turkey would set up camp for 170,000 people in nine locations near Syria’s Idlib, and in the area Ankara controls by further east in northern Syria.

Turkey controls a swathe of land further east in Syria stretching from the area around Azaz to the Euphrates River, which was taken during its “Euphrates Shield” operation that ended in early 2017.

(Source: agencies)

## Leaked emails: UAE lobbied U.S. to sack Tillerson for backing Qatar

Leaked emails reveal the United Arab Emirates (UAE) lobbied the U.S. last year to sack Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for failing to side with Abu Dhabi against regional rival Qatar amid a diplomatic rift between the two Persian Gulf countries.

The emails obtained by the BBC Monday showed that UAE-linked businessman Elliott Broidy, who was a fundraiser for U.S. President Donald Trump, met him in October 2017 and urged him to fire Tillerson.

According to the BBC article, the emails are an account of what Broidy told Trump during that meeting.

Broidy called the top U.S. diplomat “a tower of Jello,” “weak” and said he “needs to be slammed.”

He said that Tillerson was “performing poorly and should be fired at a politically convenient time.”

According to a memorandum he prepared of the meeting, Broidy urged Trump to support the UAE and Saudi Arabia, advising the U.S. president against getting involved in the row with Qatar.

Broidy also said Qatar was “a television station with a country,” referring to the Doha-based Al Jazeera broadcaster, which has routinely aired critical coverage of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, most recently of their military campaign against Yemen.

Broidy emailed a detailed account of his meeting with the president to George Nader, a Lebanese-American businessman with decades of experience serving as an interlocutor



between the Middle East and Washington.

According to The New York Times, Broidy’s defense company Circinus has hundreds of millions of dollars worth of contracts with the UAE. He had recently returned from the UAE when he met Trump at the White House in October.

The paper reported on Sunday that both Broidy and Nader are people of interest in US special counsel Robert Mueller’s probe into whether Trump illegally collaborated with foreign countries during the presidential campaign.

“Mueller’s investigators have questioned

Nader and have pressed witnesses for information about any possible attempts by the Emiratis to buy political influence by directing money to support Trump during the presidential campaign, according to people with knowledge of the discussions,” the paper reported.

The UAE, Bahrain and Egypt led by Saudi Arabia severed their diplomatic relations with Qatar on June 5, 2017, accusing Doha of sponsoring “terrorism” and destabilizing the region, 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.

Tillerson has criticized the embargo, saying it was “impairing U.S. and other international business activities in the region and has created a hardship on the people of Qatar and the people whose livelihoods depend on commerce with Qatar.”

During the Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq last month, Tillerson also called on Arab monarchies to resolve their diplomatic dispute with Qatar.

Amid the diplomatic crisis, Abu Dhabi has taken an especially tough line towards Doha.

Last month, Qatar’s Defense Minister Khalid bin Mohammad al-Attiyah said Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had planned a military invasion of his country at the beginning of a diplomatic crisis that erupted last year.

A series of leaked documents revealed in November 2017 that the UAE had a stunning detailed plot to launch an economic war on Qatar.

Dubai security chief Dhahi Khalfan also called on the Saudi-led coalition attacking Yemen since 2015 to bomb the Qatari media network Al Jazeera.

(Source: BBC)

## NATO staying in Iraq at Baghdad request



The NATO chief said the Western military alliance will stay in Iraq at its government’s request “as long as necessary” just days after the Arab country’s lawmakers called for the withdrawal of foreign troops following the defeat of Daesh terrorists.

“We are here because Iraq wants us to be here, we are not here without the consent and without an invitation from Iraq,” Jens Stoltenberg told AFP on Monday during a surprise visit to the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. He said the alliance had received a “written request” from Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to keep the troops on Iraqi soil. “We should not stay longer than necessary, we will train the trainers as long as necessary to make sure IS (Daesh) does not reemerge,” Stoltenberg added.

On Thursday, the Iraqi Parliament issued statement, calling on the government “to draw up a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops.”

A day later, Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari said the country would under no circumstances permit the United States to build permanent military bases on its soil, which would be a violation of its sovereignty.

The Iraqi army, backed by popular volunteer forces, managed last December to rid their homeland of the Takfiri Daesh outfit, which had captured large swathes of land in Iraq’s north and West at the onset of its campaign of terror back in 2014.

In September 2014, the U.S. and its allies, including those from NATO, launched an aerial campaign against purported Daesh targets in Iraq. Those airstrikes, however, did little to help the Iraqi forces and led, instead, to heavy civilian casualties and damage to the country’s infrastructure. The volunteer forces helping the Iraqi army said on numerous occasions that they have documented evidence showing the U.S. provides Daesh with weapons and military support.

Both the coalition and NATO forces, including around 9,000 Americans, retain their presence in Iraq.

During a summit in mid-February, NATO member states agreed to a U.S. demand for the deployment of a larger military mission to post-Daesh Iraq. Stoltenberg claimed back then that not maintaining such mission on the ground would open the doors for resurgent terrorism. However, European members of NATO have reportedly been reluctant, fearing another open-ended assignment after more than a decade in Afghanistan.

Some 17 years into the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, the local Taliban militant group has only boosted its campaign of deadly violence there. More recently, the Daesh terrorist group has established a foothold in eastern and northern Afghanistan and stepped up its attacks.

(Source: al Alaam)

## Rohingya ‘ethnic cleansing in Myanmar continues’: UN

Myanmar is continuing its “ethnic cleansing” of Rohingya, while claiming it is ready to receive them back from Bangladesh, according to a UN human rights envoy.

Andrew Gilmour, UN assistant secretary-general for human rights, made the remarks in a statement on Tuesday after speaking to newly-arrived Rohingya in Bangladesh’s refugee camps on his four-day visit to Cox’s Bazar district.

“The ethnic cleansing of Rohingya from Myanmar continues. I don’t think we can draw any other conclusion from what I have seen and heard in Cox’s Bazar,” he said.

“It appears that widespread and systematic violence against the Rohingya persists,” the statement said.

His statement also said it was “inconceivable” that any Rohingya would be able to return to Myanmar in the near future, despite Myanmar’s pledges to start taking back some refugees.

“The Government of Myanmar is busy telling the world that it is ready to receive Rohingya returnees, while at the same time its forces are continuing to drive them into Bangladesh,” Gilmour said. “Safe, dignified and sustainable returns are of course impossible under current conditions.”

“The nature of the violence has changed from the frenzied blood-letting and mass rape of last year to a lower intensity campaign of terror and forced starvation that seems to be designed to drive the remaining Rohingya from their homes and into Bangladesh.”

**■ Persecuted community**

The Rohingya, one of the most persecuted communities in the world, are not recognized as citizens of Myanmar and face widespread discrimination from the authorities.

Prior to the current exodus, tens of thousands of Rohingya have already been living as refugees in several neighboring countries.

The plight of the Rohingya reached its peak in Myanmar six months ago when the country’s military cracked down on the minority group in Rakhine State, sparking a mass exodus.

About 700,000 Rohingya have fled over the border to Bangladesh since the violence erupted in August, bringing with them consistent testimony of murder, rape and arson by soldiers and vigilante mobs.

Doctors Without Borders (known by its French acronym, MSF) has estimated that at least 6,700 Rohingya were killed in the first month of the crackdown alone.

Hundreds of Rohingya villages were torched, and recent satellite imagery showed at least 55 villages have since been completely bulldozed, removing all traces of buildings, wells and vegetation.

Myanmar’s military says its crackdown was needed to root out Rohingya armed rebels who attacked border police posts in August, killing about a dozen people.

In January, Myanmar and Bangladesh announced a repatriation deal, but rights groups and Rohingya have raised concerns about the agreement, saying it does not guarantee full citizenship, or safety, for those who return.

(SOURCE: Al Jazeera)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	96991.0
IFX	1081.2

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	44,820 rials
EUR	55,440 rials
GBP	68,720 rials
AED	13,450 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	63.02/b
Brent	65.91/b
OPEC Basket	61.58/b
Gold	\$1,332.85/oz
Silver	\$16.68/oz
Platinum	\$970.70/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Over \$2.3b required to complete mining projects**

ECONOMY  
d e s k

**TEHRAN**— Underway mining and related industries projects require 104 trillion rials (about \$2.311 billion) of investment to be completed, according to Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian.

The official also said that exploration plans should be seriously followed up in order to discover new mines and stressed the necessity of applying modern technology in this due, IRNA reported.



**There are 3.226m unemployed people in Iran: SCI**

ECONOMY  
d e s k

**TEHRAN** — The Head of Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) Omid Ali Parsa put the number of jobless people at 3.226 million in the country, IRIB news reported on Tuesday.

The official said that unemployment rate during the nine-month period ended on December 21, 2017 fell 0.3 percent compared to the figure of the same period of time in the preceding year.

The youth unemployment rate also witnessed a 1.3-percent decrease in the mentioned nine-month period on year, he added.

France rules out UK bid to include banks in EU trade deal

UK Chancellor Philip Hammond is heading for a showdown with his French counterpart over whether financial services can be part of a free-trade deal with the European Union after Brexit.

Hammond told lawmakers on Monday that a fair and appealing agreement would have to include services, and is expected to make the same argument in a keynote speech on Brexit on Wednesday. It's in nobody's interest to break up London's financial services sector, which "simply can't be relocated or replicated," Hammond told Parliament's Brexit scrutiny committee. (Source: Bloomberg)

Indian company inks MOU in Iran to cooperate in oilfield development

ENERGY  
d e s k

**TEHRAN** — Indian ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Tuesday with Gostaresh Iranian Oil and Gas Industries Development Company (also known as IDRO Oil) for cooperation in developing Susangerd oil field in south-west Iran.

"Since IDRO Oil has inked a similar MOU with Russia's Zarubezhneft, the aim of this new MOU with the Indian side is to consider the possibility of forming a consortium to develop the field," IRNA quoted IDRO Oil's

Managing Director Nasrolah Zareie as saying after the signing ceremony.

Earlier in January, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) awarded the study of Susangerd field to IDRO Oil and a few days after, IDRO Oil inked a consultancy contract with Austrian Hot Engineering Group to cooperate in preparing the Measure Development Plan (MDP).

According to IDRO Oil's managing director, in the past few months the company has held talks with several companies, in order to attract necessary funds and technology

Iran calls for preparing economic co-op roadmap with Iraq

ECONOMY  
d e s k

**TEHRAN**- Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari urged preparation of Iran-Iraq economic cooperation roadmap during his visit to Iraq, Shata news agency reported on Tuesday.

Referring to Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri's imminent visit to Iraq,

Shariatmadari hoped that the trip will ease preparation of the roadmap in near future.

In his meeting with Iraqi Minister of Housing and Construction Anne Nafi Aussi on Monday evening, the Iranian minister noted that the existing barriers on the way to boost mutual banking ties will be removed via establishment of new credit lines.

Europe is reportedly going after U.S. steel and other goods in retaliation to Trump's tariffs

The European Commission has reportedly proposed tariffs of 25 percent on imports of U.S. steel, clothing and other industrial goods in retaliation to President Donald Trump's proposed tariffs on steel and aluminum.

The executive arm of the European Union reportedly plans to target \$3.5 billion of goods imported from the U.S., including T-shirts, whisky, motorcycles and ladders, if Trump decides to implement international duties on steel and aluminum.

The list of goods was revealed in a report by Bloomberg on Tuesday, which cited a draft list drawn up by the commission. According to the report, the commission discussed the retaliatory levy on U.S. goods with representatives of

EU governments on Monday evening.

A spokesperson for the European Commission declined to comment, and said that a list is being prepared but is not yet public.

America is home to iconic motorcycle brand Harley Davidson and clothing firm Levi Strauss & Co. It is also home to steel titan Nucor, whose CEO told CNBC last week that the president's proposal was about treating Europe "exactly as they treat us."

■ Juncker: EU will 'not sit idly'

Last week, Trump announced tariffs of 25 percent on imports of steel and 10 percent for aluminum imports. The president is unhappy with what he perceives to be imbal-

Trump faces pushback on tariffs but says he will not back down

U.S. President Donald Trump faced growing pressure on Monday from political and diplomatic allies as well as U.S. companies urging him to pull back from proposed steel and aluminum tariffs, although he said he would stick to his guns.

Inside the White House, there still appeared to be confusion about the timing and extent of the planned tariffs, which would hit allies like Canada and Mexico hard.

Efforts by Trump and U.S. trade negotiators to link the NAFTA trade pact talks to the duties received short shrift from Ottawa and Mexico City.

Leading Republicans turned up the pressure on Trump, with House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan leading the charge. Ryan's home state of Wisconsin would be hit by proposed European counter-measures on Harley-Davidson Inc motorbikes.

Representative Kevin Brady, another top House Republican, called on Trump not to hit America's closest allies.

Business leaders are pressing for a meeting with Trump to brief him on the negative repercussions of the tariffs on

companies that use steel and aluminum, a source familiar with the matter said.

A meeting had not yet been set up, the source said. The White House had no comment.

The planned tariffs have roiled world stock markets as investors worried about the prospect of an escalating trade war that would derail global economic growth. Stocks across the globe rose on Monday, however, after four days in decline as investors saw the tariff threats as a U.S. negotiating tactic and not a done deal and as pressure grew on Trump to back off.

"We're not backing down," Trump said during a White House meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "I don't think you're going to have a trade war," he added, without elaborating.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called Trump on Monday to tell him the tariffs would be an impediment to talks on updating NAFTA, a Canadian government official said.

Canada is the single largest supplier of steel and aluminum to the United States. In the call, Trudeau "forcefully defended"



for development of the field.

"Considering the taken measures, it is expected that the field's MDP will be presented to NIOC by the end of the current Iranian

calendar month (March 20)," Zareie said.

Susangerd Oil Field is located 45 kilometers off northwest of Ahvaz City in Khuzestan province, southwest of Iran.

to have Iraqi companies clear the differed claims of the Iranian companies active in Iraq.

Iranian industry minister, leading a delegation, entered Iraq on Monday evening and met Iraqi Minister of Planning, Labor and Social Affairs Salman al-Jamili and Deputy Minister of Industry and Minerals Mohamed Shia al-Sudani.

anced trade between the U.S. and other countries.

In response, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said the trade bloc would "not sit idly" if Trump goes ahead with his planned tariffs.

Following Juncker's comments, Trump warned the U.S. would apply a tax on European cars if the bloc wants to increase tariffs on American firms, a statement that has rattled European automakers.

The U.S. leader has since clawed back slightly on threats of global tariffs, and said the implementation of such levies could be prevented if a "new and fair NAFTA agreement" is signed.

(Source: CNBC)

First Announcement



ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to purchase 30,000 M/Ts 10 pct M/L, crude degummed soybean oil through single stage international tender.

All of qualified companies and suppliers that are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from 2018/03/07 until 2018/03/17

from the secretary of Trades &Tenders committee located on the 4th floor of GTC building no 2 , Iran, Tehran , Fatmei Ave . opposite of Water and Wastewater Co. along with an official letter of introduction.

The bid participants are required to submit their stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest on 13:00(Tehran time) on 2018/04/17 to the secretariat of tenders committee located on the 7th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on 2018/04/17 at 14:30(Tehran time) with the presence of bidder's representatives in our purchasing committee ( 9th floor, No 12, Jihad Square, Tehran, Iran).

Bid bond: the bid bond worth EUR 348,928 (IRR15,911,104,000) in cash or unconditional bank guarantee with three months validity and extendible for another three months.

For more information, you may refer to our website [WWW.GTC-PORTAL.COM](http://WWW.GTC-PORTAL.COM) or contact us by phoneNo.00982188957477 (foreign trade department) .

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# OPEC says hedge funds lack ‘basic understanding’ of oil

Hedge funds are an important players in the oil market, but some do not comprehend how it works, a senior OPEC official has said.

Mohammad Barkindo, the cartel’s secretary-general, met hedge fund and money managers on Monday in Houston to build a relationship with traders that OPEC once maligned. Funds this year amassed 1bn barrels equivalent of net bets on higher crude oil prices, helping fan bullish market sentiment.

OPEC leaders began such meetings about a year ago as they put in place a historic agreement to remove 1.8m barrels per day of supply from the world oil market. The move buoyed crude prices, revived fortunes for oil producers and lured hedge funds to futures markets.

Barkindo said fund managers have shed light on the complexity of financial markets, but some also revealed they were less savvy than was widely assumed.

“Several of them had little or no experience or even a basic understanding of how the physical oil market works,” he said.



His comments come amid debate about the composition of fund managers in oil markets. With several large specialist com-

modities hedge fund having folded in recent years, analysts point to the influence of funds for whom demand and supply — the latter

regulated by OPEC — matter little. Some use algorithms or models to piggyback on price trends, while some view oil as a proxy for broader economic dynamics.

The OPEC leader was also scheduled to meet Patricia Espinosa, the UN’s top climate official, in Houston on Monday, followed by dinner with executives from the US shale oil industry, whose prolific rises in output are the primary challenge to OPEC’s ability to sway prices. It was to be a second dinner since last year’s CER-AWeek event.

“There’s no harm continuing this dialogue where we exchange views, where we compare notes, where we compare our projections,” Barkindo said. “We are not talking about prices. We are not talking about production cuts.”

He said efforts by OPEC and its allies to reduce stockpiles had revived optimism among producers. West Texas Intermediate crude settled at \$62.57 a barrel Monday, compared with \$53 a year before.

(Source: Financial Times)

## Total CEO says he doesn’t need Permian Basin shale to thrive

Total SA’s chief executive officer may be one of the few major oil heads who isn’t salivating over the booming Permian Basin shale oil field.

“Total today is the most profitable major company without any shale,” Patrick Pouyanne said in an interview Monday on Bloomberg Television. Instead, Pouyanne said his company is focused on five core areas — Africa, the Middle East, the North Sea, deepwater development and liquefied natural gas. “I prefer to play into my strengths,” he said.

Pouyanne spoke a few hours after the International Energy Agency issued a report that said the shale boom will help U.S. supply cover more than half the world’s oil demand growth to 2023. Production from the prolific Permian Basin will double over that period, according to the agency.

The shale boom that helped push the U.S. into the position of one of the largest crude producers caught most major oil companies flat-footed. Instead, it was smaller, independent

exploration and production companies who figured out how to unlock the rock formations to free massive new supplies of oil and natural gas.

The price of drilling rights in the Permian has increased as production soared. Exxon Mobil Corp. has announced plans to triple its output from the Permian by 2025. Total has looked elsewhere, including war-torn Libya, where the French giant last week agreed to buy out Marathon Oil Corp.’s assets. In Monday’s interview, Pouyanne called the \$450 million deal “one of the best I’ve ever done.”

As for investors interested in so-called “short-cycle” oil that can respond quickly to price changes? “Short-cycle means you are able to turn off capex quickly, so it’s a matter of contractual arrangements,” Pouyanne said. Total has 1 billion barrels that he “can turn off” in response to low prices.

“We are the most efficient today. Do we have shale? No. Do we have short-cycle? yes.” (Source: Bloomberg)

## Supermajors showing interest in Greek oil and gas

Offshore oil and gas blocks in Greece are catching the attention of the likes of Total, ExxonMobil, and Repsol, according to a new report by Reuters.

Exxon, Total, and Hellenic Petroleum have teamed up to bid on a block near Crete, while Repsol and Hellenic Petroleum bid on another block in the Ionian Sea.

The tenders went live last year, after several multinationals expressed interest in developing the fields. Energean, one of the offshore area’s original prospectors, has withdrawn from the process.

Greece became enthusiastic about fossil fuel prospects in the eastern Mediterranean after giant fields were found near Israel and Egypt. Exxon and Total are already active explorers in offshore blocks near Cyprus.

Greek energy minister George Stathakis said international interest in the blocks represented “a vote of confidence in the

prospects of the Greek economy and the country’s role as a stabilizing factor in the southeast Mediterranean region.”

Western Greece approved new drilling activity from Total and Edison last month, according to a go-ahead authorized by the nation’s parliament. Four blocks in the area, one offshore and three onshore, had been ratified back in 2016, but gridlock prevented the parliament from ratifying the exploration contracts.

Greece will start opening new onshore oil and gas blocks for exploration in 2018, the head of the Hellenic Hydrocarbons Resources Management (HHRM), Yannis Bassias, told Reuters in an interview published last May.

One of the first areas slated for opening is the region of Grevena in northern Greece, close to the route of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), Bassias said.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Oil steady as rally fizzles, OPEC-led cuts lend support

Oil was broadly unchanged on Tuesday, as a recovery from last week’s lows fizzled out, although ongoing production restrictions by the world’s largest exporters prevented prices from falling back.

The prospect of OPEC and other producers, including Russia, maintaining their crude output cuts in the face of a boom in U.S. shale production has helped to push the oil price back above \$65 a barrel this week, even though the U.S. dollar is not far off two-month highs, often a dampener for the broader commodity markets.

Brent crude futures were down 5 cents at \$65.49 a barrel by 1031 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate futures were up 4 cents at \$62.61 a barrel.

“It’s very hard to see bigger picture as long as you focus on daily headlines, as that creates volatility in the near term ... In the end, you look at the fundamentals and nothing much has changed,” ABN Amro chief energy economist Hans van Cleef said.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Monday global oil demand was expected to grow over the next five years, while output from producers in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would rise at a much slower pace.



This initially gave the oil price a boost on Monday, but the IEA’s caveat that the United States would make up for much of the shortfall in output by OPEC has since acted as a drag.

U.S. crude production has risen to more than 10 million barrels per day (bpd), overtaking top exporter Saudi Arabia. Output hit a record 10.057 million bpd in November, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

“If the production growth in Brazil, Canada and Norway is factored into the equation, these four countries will even exceed demand growth,” Commerzbank analysts said in a note.

“According to the IEA, the call on OPEC is therefore set to decline to 31.8 million barrels per day in 2019, thereby falling below OPEC’s current production level. It is thus an illusion for OPEC to think about abandoning the agreement to cut production and raising production.”

Weekly U.S. crude inventory data is expected to show a second consecutive weekly rise in the week to March 2, according to a Reuters poll.

The American Petroleum Institute (API) will release its weekly inventory data at 4:30 p.m. EST (2130 GMT) on Tuesday, and the U.S. Energy Department’s Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports its data at 10:30 a.m. EST (1530 GMT) on Wednesday.

(Source: Reuters)

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## Sudan-Egypt diplomatic impasse persists, despite return of Khartoum’s ambassador

As Sudan’s ambassador returns to Cairo on 5 March,2018 after a two-month absence, the precise reasons for Abdel-Mahmoud Abdel-Halim’s dramatic withdrawal remains unexplained. Likewise, there is no available information on the changed circumstances that have made his return possible.

Two months ago, troops from Sudan’s Rapid Response Armed forces sealed the country’s eastern border with Eritrea. Today, those troops are still in position and the border remains closed. At the time, Sudan insisted that Egypt (with UAE assistance) had amassed troops and military equipment within the Eritrean Sawa military base. However, the observed movement were denied by both Cairo and Asmara. Fears of a potential military strike against the Renaissance Dam being built by Ethiopia grew amid accusations that Egypt was stealing Sudan’s quota of the Nile waters.



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (R) Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir (L)

Today, Sudan has not publically retracted its accusations, nor has it lowered the security threat levels. Furthermore, some political commentators that I spoke to argue that following the 15 February’s resignation of the Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn the situation has gotten palpably worse. Despite trilateral talks in Addis Ababa last month, the three countries – Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt – have yet to conclude mutually agreeable terms over water shares after the dam becomes functional. In effect, the return of Sudan’s ambassador takes place in a tense and uneasy diplomatic atmosphere not dissimilar to the one that caused his recall to Khartoum in the first instance.

Putting aside official diplomatic doublespeak describing Sudan and Egypt as having a ‘special historical tie,’ the relationship between Cairo and Khartoum has been everything, but ‘special’. In fact, diplomacy has swung from accusations that Sudan financed and orchestrated the attempted assassination of Egypt’s former President Hosni Mubarak back in 1995; to an ideological meeting of minds during the brief term of the first democratically elected President Mohammed Morsi (2011-12); to the ongoing diplomatic relations that have failed to bring about tangible progress on any of the major issues of difference. However, today’s return of the ambassador demonstrates, at the very least, Sudan’s willingness to honor that elusive ‘special historical’ relationship while not wanting to appear responsible for initiating a ‘cold war’.

As always, regional geo-political events particularly as it relates to foreign policy have caused the relationship between the two neighbors to ebb and flow. The ouster of Mohammed Morsi sponsored proactively by the Persian Gulf Arab States and tacitly supported by the silence of Western nations is at the root of Egypt’s continuing claim that Sudan is harboring Egyptian members of the Muslim Brotherhood – a group outlawed by Egypt following the military coup by Egypt’s incumbent President Abdul Fatah Al Sisi.

Just a few days ago, Sudan’s foreign ministry and the new Intelligence Chief Salah Gosh, requested Cairo to provide a list of Brotherhood members thought to be hiding in Sudan with a promise that Khartoum would investigate the matter.

Sudan’s domestic woes following the devaluation of the dollar may also lie behind Khartoum’s decision to re-establish diplomatic ties because the Sudanese public are in no mood for a diplomatic stand-off with Cairo. The appearance of the two sides back on diplomatic speaking terms means that Sudan hopes it can de-escalate the tensions around bilateral disputes such as Egypt’s support for Sudan’s Darfur rebel opposition, a claim that Cairo emphatically denies, and the never-ending dispute over the Halayeb Triangle.

Reactivating bilateral trade also takes on a new sense of urgency given Sudan’s economic woes and the trade restrictions that Sudan placed on some Egyptian goods. Both sides have made another effort this week to play down their diplomatic differences, repeating the need to avoid negative language in the media and to resume using the stock phrase of how the countries used to be a “single nation” and how important historical ties should be respected.

However, there is no escaping the fact that Egypt and Sudan continue to hold divergent positions such as: over the political crisis in Libya where Sudan continues to support the officially recognized government while Egypt continues to work closely with Khalifa Haftar’s self-styled Libya National Army faction. In addition, the two sides are becoming increasingly at odds over the Persian Gulf dispute between Saudi Arabia and Qatar with Sudan appearing to be more firmly in the Qatar camp while trying to maintain a public stance of neutrality.

Added to all that, despite assurances from Ankara and Khartoum, Egypt remains skeptical about the true purpose of the Sawakin port, which the Turkish government has begun to renovate. The door to the strategic location becoming a Turkish military base has been left ajar and to the dismay and displeasure of Egypt and its two allies continues to pursue its own unique foreign policy goals in a bid not to place all its proverbial eggs in one basket.

Contrary to their avowed willingness to resume diplomatic relations, there is clearly no immediate desire on the part of Abdul Fatah Al-Sisi or Omer Al-Bashir, for that matter, to have substantive talks on the major issues of contention. Junior foreign office staff continue to hold low level meetings with the promise that the two leaders will one-day meet to resolves the major issues. That day continues to be distant and elusive. Until then, the two sides will have to be content, for the time being, with a return to the usual, uneasy, stalemate diplomacy.

(Source: Middle East Monitor)

# U.S. hits deadlock in Lebanon-Israel border mediation

By Joe Macaron

When Lebanese Armed Forces commander Gen. Joseph Aoun asked what his troops should do if Israel violated Lebanese waters, Prime Minister Saad Hariri promptly responded, “You shoot at them.” The maritime dispute with Israel is dominating Lebanese politics as the U.S. State Department’s David Satterfield continues his three-week shuttle diplomacy between the two countries to reach a common ground, or at least prevent the dispute from spiraling out of control.

Hariri’s forceful statement should be viewed through a Lebanese lens and seen as a rejoinder to last week’s speech by Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, who offered his armed group as a guarantee that Israel will not intrude in Lebanese waters in the southern border area. Lebanon worries that Israel could use its operations in the Karish gas field to perform directional drilling that would beat Lebanon to the exploration of the adjacent and contested Block 9. Lebanon’s exclusive economic zone map, published in March 2013, includes a small triangular area contested by the two countries, and Beirut prioritized Block 9, which juts into the contested zone, in the first round of offshore licensing. After Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman on Jan. 31 called Lebanese exploration of Block 9 as “provocative,” the two sides began to trade threats.

This heightened level of tension prompted Lebanon to be on Washington’s radar once again with the visit of the first U.S. secretary of state to Beirut since John Kerry in June 2014. It also signaled the resumption of the 2012-16 mediation by the State Department that was led by Frederic Hof and later Amos Hochstein. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson’s visit to Beirut on Feb. 15 seems to be rather motivated by three priorities: securing a smooth flow of Mediterranean gas; protecting U.S. companies in Israel and Cyprus from any potential conflict; and preventing a scenario where Hezbollah takes charge of the maritime dispute with Israel. Tillerson spent five hours in Beirut traveling from one headquarters to the other to meet the “troika” of President Michel Aoun, parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and Hariri, who had to meet numerous times to reach a consensus on how to respond to the U.S. mediation. Berri represents the hawkish voice that focuses on deterring Israel, and Hariri the pragmatic one who said during the press briefing with Tillerson that the Lebanese government is open to a solution “that will be fair to us and fair to everyone.”

However, it is becoming clear that the U.S. mediation has reached an impasse once again. Lebanon’s idea to



U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, left, speaks during a press conference with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, at the Government House, in downtown Beirut, Lebanon, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018.

## The Lebanese waters are not negotiable.

have the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon take the lead on demarcating the maritime border requires a UN Security Council decision to expand the mandate of the UN peacekeeping forces. Israel wants to build a wall according to the Blue Line, or the UN-mediated line of the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, while Beirut wants the land border to be according to the 1923 demarcation line between Lebanon and Palestine. These technical discussions mean that the dispute between the two countries is over 860 square kilometers (330 square miles) of water and 13 points on the land border. The United States agrees with Lebanon that a border deal should be reached before Israel builds a security wall.

Satterfield first offered leaders in Beirut what is known as the “Hof line,” or the deal that Hof shared separately with Lebanese and Israeli delegations in London in April 2012, which gives Lebanon 60% of the disputed 860 square meters. Satterfield then came back with a second offer giving Lebanon 75%. However, the response was that the Lebanese waters are not negotiable. In return, Satterfield carried a counteroffer to Israel this week, which is using the regularly held UN-sponsored tripartite

meeting between the Lebanese and Israeli armies in Ras al-Naqoura as a back channel to demarcate the maritime border, a process that was discussed in December. The Lebanese government suggested that the United States can take part in these meetings as a neutral observer, which might require the attendance of the military attaché in the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon as an option.

While Nasrallah considered that the United States is not an “honest mediator,” he had a subdued tone compared with July 2011, when he said, “Whoever impinges our future oil installations in Lebanese territorial waters, we will impinge their oil facilities.” Nasrallah said Feb. 16, “If Lebanon’s higher defense council asks us to halt the work of Israel’s oil and gas platforms, we could do so within hours.” He basically put the decision of confrontation on the maritime border in the hands of the defense council, where his allies have a clear majority, instead of the Lebanese government, where such a decision might not be made without a political crisis.

Satterfield is not expected back in Washington until early March, which means he has two weeks to push for a potential breakthrough. Next month, or

as soon as a replacement is confirmed, Satterfield is expected to move on from his position as acting secretary of state for Near East affairs. The State Department should be thinking about designating an official with the gravitas of Satterfield to follow up on the mediation since this contentious issue will not go away anytime soon and could escalate if the regional dynamics change at some point.

While this level of diplomatic involvement might not always be needed, the United States should keep these actors engaged and their calculations in check. Hezbollah does not want to give the impression of conceding to Israel, and the Lebanese government wants to avoid the pitfall of directly negotiating with Israel. In return, there are no high stakes in this maritime dispute for Israel, which is not motivated to give a gift to Lebanon with nothing in return. That’s the core of the stalemate. The best-case scenario for the U.S. mediation is to keep the tensions calm and have both sides adhere to the Feb. 9 commitment of France’s Total — which owns 40% of the consortium operating Block 9 — that it will not explore within 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) of the disputed areas. The maritime border has implications on the wider Lebanese-Israeli relations.

(Source: Al Monitor)

## Gentleness as a German export

Chancellor Merkel’s fourth term in office reflects a rare set of qualities in leadership, from patience to tender reason. They help both Germany and Europe find stability in rough times.

Angela Merkel, a pastor’s daughter raised under a communist regime, is set to serve a fourth term as leader of Europe’s largest economy – a feat that reveals a remarkable set of qualities in leadership. On March 4, Germany’s main opposition party, the Social Democrats, voted in favor of another coalition in parliament with Ms. Merkel’s Christian Democrats and its sister party in Bavaria.

The difficult task of negotiating a shared left-right government took six months of patient work and careful listening by Merkel. In the push and pull of electoral politics, the parties had to compromise on issues such as tax cuts, child care, immigration restrictions, and Germany’s role in the European Union.

This renewal of stability in Berlin is a blessing for the Continent. Merkel has shepherded Europe through a decade of upheaval, from a currency crisis to a refugee crush and, soon, Britain’s exit from the EU.

Still, German society, like other Western democracies, is increasingly split along partisan lines. The rise of extremist parties, such as the far-right Alternative for Germany, reflects an unsettling trend. This is why it is important to understand the virtues that Merkel brings to her style of management.

She may be dubbed “the world’s most powerful woman” but, to her, power does not lie in a grand ideology or the force of a dominant personality. She looks relaxed for a reason. As she did in 2005 when she became Germany’s youngest and first female chancellor, she asked voters in last year’s election to choose her for her temperament. Even her blandness – Germans call her “Mutti” or “Mother” – is a powerful draw. It stands out against the bravado of other politicians.

Her Christian faith, as she puts it, is her

“inner compass.” To her, the most important quality in life is humility. According to biographers, she learned how to treat people with respect and equality by growing up in a neighborhood with a high number of people with disabilities. One of her favorite phrases in dealing with a crisis is “step by step.” She often governs by remaining silent in a negotiation and then reframing a conflict of views by identifying the “wiggle room” within each person’s thinking.

In short, she draws people together by gentleness, or what might be called sweet and tender reason. “Fear is not a good adviser in politics,” she says.

She is not without political ambition or playing hardball with political opponents. She was swift to order a closing of Germany’s nuclear power plants. She was forceful in imposing austerity on a bankrupt Greece. When up against the rough personal tactics of Russian President Vladimir Putin, she once said, “He’s afraid of his own weakness. Russia has nothing, no successful politics or economy.”

Yet she knows when to compromise and to delay in order to stay within the mainstream of public opinion. “I am regarded as a permanent delayer sometimes, but I think it is essential and extremely important to take people along and really listen to them in political talks,” she says. Germans have even coined a new word, *merkeln*, or how a person lingers over a decision until it is ripe for action.

Merkel’s reelection as chancellor was achieved by the attractiveness of her patience and openness. Those traits have also helped her in forging a new cross-party coalition. She cultivates in others the qualities that she expresses.

Germany remains a powerful exporter of goods to the world. Merkel’s examples of leadership, such as gentleness, are another type of “good.” They are not for sale. But they are available for leaders to emulate.

(Source: The CSM)

In the Name of God

شركت شهید تندگویان

Shahid Tondgooyan Petrochemical Company

Call for Identify Resources

Shahid Tondgooyan Petrochemical Company (STPC) intends to identify the following chemical suppliers which are qualified.

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2	TITANUM DIOXIDE	600
3	ANTIMONY (III) OXIDE	110
4	ANTIMONY (III) ACETATE	150
5	HYDROBROMIC ACID	250
6	Cobalt Acetate	60
7	CMB	600
8	Terminol 66	Up to process condition
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**General Conditions of Suppliers & Specialized Degree Necessary:**

1. Have at least 2 years relevant experience to chemical
2. License agency or distribution agency
3. Business cards
4. Submit the bid bond for tenders

**Place & Deadline of Receive Evaluation Forms:**

Legal & Contracts Affairs, Phase # 1, (STPC), Site # 4, Petrochemical Economic Special Zone (PESZ), Bandar Imam Khomeini, Khuzestan Province, Iran, **06152172045**

It shall be given latest by 16:00 pm on **14/Mar./18**

Place & Deadline of Submission Evaluation Forms Document:

Legal & Contracts Affairs, Phase # 1, (STPC), Site # 4, Petrochemical Economic Special Zone (PESZ), Bandar Imam Khomeini, Khuzestan Province, Iran.

It should be submitted latest by 16:00 pm on **05/Apr./18**

Contacts: You can contact any of the addresses below:

**Email: Moradpour.a@stpc.ir**

**Tel: 061 521 – 72045 Fax: 061 521 – 72043**



# The truth about life in the United States

**1 →** One wrong move, one failure to do exactly what you are told (and even many cases doing exactly what you are told but not in the way they wanted it done) and you can be instantly riddled with police bullets. You are unarmed, of course, but these heavily-armed police wearing body armor will claim they «feared for their lives». Even when the person they shot was a pregnant woman or a child. This will go on and on unchallenged as the United States government accuses other countries of being police states where governments kill their citizens with impunity.

Fourth, the United States sits and whines about «Sharia law» and the law books here are about 10 to 20 centimeters thick and the paper is thin onion skin. Therefore, there are literally thousands of laws you are expected to know and better not be in violation of. You are not allowed to claim in court you didn't know the law. Thus, the opportunities to go to prison here are enormous. The United States has one of the largest per capita number of people in prison in the world, yet accuses other countries of running forced labor camps and jailing large numbers of people. Many prisons in the United States are privately owned and run, thus, jailing people is very profitable and the emphasis is on jailing people for every minor offense. The inmates are often required to work and, ergo, this is de facto slave labor despite the United States accusing everyone else in the world of doing what it does itself.

Fifth, the rich basically run the government which is how they can influence government to pass laws that jail large numbers of people in the aforementioned privately owned prisons. It is bribery, but the United States government calls this «lobbying» or «campaign contributions» and so on. The rich influence foreign policy decisions and if



missile manufacturers need a boost in profits, you can be certain the United States will find a country offending some minutiae of an arcane law from the 1800s and launch missiles against that country. This way, profits at defense contractors will soar.

Sixth, since the rich own the government, the wages of people working get lower as prices go higher. This is why more people are falling into poverty yearly here than are rising out of it. But thanks to television, people are kept distracted. Or kept numb thanks to the cheap alcoholic beverages flooding the market and for sale in every gas station, drug store, market, and convenience store.

Everywhere you walk in a city, empty liquor bottles are strewn on the ground; a silent indictment that the people of the United States are drowning in a sea of despair and

escape into a bottle.

Seventh, no one knows how many people are homeless in the United States because the government prefers not to know. But in every city, big and small, you will find homeless people camping in city parks, under bridges, and along the riverbanks. Sleeping on sidewalks. There are beggars on every street corner. Go to Tucson, Arizona. You will see beggars on most street corners at major intersections, holding cardboard signs that say «Hungry, Please Help, God Bless». People from teenagers to the elderly. People in wheelchairs. Veterans. The mentally ill. All cast out and cut off. So prevalent that people are used to seeing them and no longer moved with compassion and shaken by the horror of what this country has become. It has become a nightmare where those without

money are forgotten and cut off from the society that values no one for just being a human being. Unless you have money, you are without value here.

The United States cannot sit there and tell you that it values human life because if it did, it would not allow human beings to freeze to death in their homes because they were poor and their heating oil was cut off when they could not pay. This has happened. If the United States valued human life, it would have acted immediately to save its own children from gunmen with access to completely legal military weapons sold in United States gun shops. If the United States valued human life, it would not be building prisons faster than it builds schools. Indeed, in many cities, new schools have not been built for 40 years but there will be three or four new prisons there and close by. The government will argue and wrangle over the cost of new books for schools, but will build a new prison without so much as a look to see why it is so many new prisons are needed in a country allegedly so «great».

This is the truth. This is the reality. America tells you we have «freedom» here. Yes, we have the freedom to live in poverty, to be evicted from our homes, and to lose that freedom in the blink of an eye, jailed over some minutiae in a law book thick as an elephant's leg. No one can tell me this country is great. No one can tell me I should be proud of this place. I cannot be proud of a place that looks the other way to so much human suffering (when it's not busy actually creating human suffering itself) just because there's no profit to be made in helping human beings. We are truly valueless in this country when we are poor. We have no voice heard by our government. We are disposable. And we exist by the grace of God alone.

## Iran follows logical policy in region: analyst

**BEIRUT (IRNA)** — A Lebanese expert said the remarks made by the Iranian president that the regional countries do not need foreigners to defend their security were logical and principled.

In an exclusive interview with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), the Lebanese analyst Michel Nawfal described the region as a triangle that Iran, Turkey and Arab states are its sides.

Of course, there are questions between them, but they should establish an organization comprising the regional powers which would be able to organize the important regional issues, he said.

Referring to the Zionist regime as the main threat to all, the expert said that an influential regional organization should be established to remove the problems between the regional nations and act as a guarantor for the security in the region.

He further stressed that regional problems will be solved



only through dialogue, but the new Arab leaders in Saudi Arabia are against any negotiation because they act within a platform which makes more tensions and has been provided by the US President Donald Trump and his team.

Talking of the July 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the world powers, the Lebanese expert said the Iran Deal is an international agreement to which the US has taken an unreasonable and illogical approach.

Trump is against the JCPOA and has threatened that the US will withdraw from it while many world leaders including the European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini have repeatedly emphasized that the deal should be kept alive.

Although Trump has been insisting that the JCPOA is not fruitful, his move cannot question the deal because the US measure is against the international law, he added.

Referring to the remarks made over and over by top Iranian officials that Tehran will never ask for permission to build missiles, planes and tanks, the analyst said Iran in line with its national security is entitled to build what is needed for defending itself regarding the critical situation in the region.

## U.S. and the European Troika's new approach against Iran

**1 →** At the time of signing the nuclear deal between Iran and members of P5+1 about two and a half years ago, many analysts of international affairs agreed that Washington and the European Troika would be willing to use JCPOA as an entry point for regional negotiations with Iran.

The efforts of the three countries of Germany, Britain and France to negotiate region's affairs with Iran are also to be analyzed in the same vein. Meanwhile, France is about to play the role of a "pioneer" in these negotiations. "Jean-Yves Le Drian", the French Foreign Minister's visit to Tehran (which will take place shortly) is also planned for the same purpose. Paris has promised Washington to do its utmost to negotiate with Iran over the regional policies of our country. In this way, Germany and Britain are also accompanying France.

The second point here is about the significant talks held between US President Donald Trump and senior European officials on Iran's regional policy and its relevance to the JCPOA during the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

In these talks, French President "Emanuel Macron" promised the President of the United States to lead and manage the missile and regional negotiations with Iran.

This is despite the fact that a number of Iranian policies are fixed and are not to change under any circumstances. Some issues, including the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, our country's support for the resistance groups, and most importantly, Iran's strong confrontation against the regional threats of the United States and its allies will be unchangeable no matter what happens in other domains.

The same issue causes the European authorities not to see a positive perspective for their interfering strategies. However, European officials has mentioned that the inception of regional talks with Iran (though unofficially) could be a starting point for "limiting Iran's regional."




The third point is that the insistence and reliance of our country's diplomacy apparatus and foreign policy on our unchangeable regional strategies, including "supporting resistance groups", "promoting resistance discourse" and "counteracting Takfiri Terrorism", play an important role in neutralizing the tricks of the United States and the European Union.

It should not be forgotten that the European Troika is managing the talks on behalf of the United States, and in full coordination with Donald Trump. What will dominate our diplomacy system over the joint game of Washington, Paris, London and Berlin, is our politicians being determined in defending our strategic principles in the region. Obviously, in the shadow of this "decisiveness and clever defense," the United States and the European Troika are not going to achieve any of their goals in limiting the regional


maneuverability of Iran.

The last point is that the United States and the EU are using a leverage called "the JCPOA" to lead regional negotiations with Iran, and press our country to address U.S. regional demands. In other words, the JCPOA, instead of remaining as an independent legal document, has become a political tool to exert pressure on Iran. Here again, the diplomacy apparatus and foreign policy of our country should be very smart.

Meanwhile, we should be extremely careful not to cross the red line of our foreign policy which is "preserving the regional authority of Iran" rather than "preserving the JCPOA." Obviously, no one can bargain on our strategic principles in the region and this should be exactly understood as a definite proposition by the opposite side (Washington and the European Troika).



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غرب تهران جهت اجاره نیازمندیم  
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دفتر: ۲۸۱۴۱ - ۲۲۶۶۲۴۵۴

حدود ۳۰۰۰ متر بنا سند اداری در  
شمال شهر تهران جهت اجاره به یک  
کمپانی اروپایی، فوری نیازمندیم.  
خانم دیا: ۰۹۱۲۸۱۰۳۲۰۶  
دفتر: ۲۸۱۴۱ - ۲۲۶۶۲۴۵۴

مالکین محترم

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# London's Anti-Iran attempts reminder of Iraq War: Prof

**NEW YORK (IRNA)** — The UK government is trying to 'ingratiate itself with its masters and partners in crime once again by doing the dirty work of the United States at the UN and in the region' said a professor of California State University, San Bernardino.

In an interview with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), David Yaghoubian said, 'Regrettably the British approach to the crisis as demonstrated through its failed UN resolution does nothing to alleviate the immense suffering of the Yemeni people, which the British government is itself complicit in by way of its massive, ongoing arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This approach seeks to obfuscate the reality of the ongoing Saudi onslaught on Yemen and the resulting humanitarian crisis by absurdly attempting to shift blame for the conflict to Iran.'

'As Washington's most loyal European vassal, which itself is profiting handsomely from its arms sales that perpetuate this conflict, the British government is ingratiating itself with its masters and partners in crime once again by doing the dirty work of the United States at the UN and in the region. It is a long and shameful track record of fealty dating back to the shift of imperial power from the British to the US after 1956, illustrated most disastrously by Tony Blair and the Iraq debacle.'

Regarding the missiles shot from Yemen, he said the source of the missiles 'supposedly transferred to Ansullah' has not been proven. 'Irrespective of the origins of Yemeni missiles, the fact is that not a single Saudi or [Persian] Gulf citizen has been killed in a Yemeni missile attack, whereas Yemeni civilians are indiscriminately killed and their infrastructure destroyed on a daily basis by the Saudi coalition, which, again, receives arms from Great Britain, and bombs, aerial refueling capacity, and intelligence from the United States.'

Answering a question regarding the UNSC resolution which calls for a 30-day ceasefire and its significance for Syrian people, Yaghoubian said, 'If adhered to by all parties the resolution could enable at least a temporary break from the fighting and



a window for much-needed humanitarian assistance to Syrian civilians.'

'Unfortunately, I see this "save Ghouta" campaign as the latest ploy by the United States to selectively use the suffering of Syrians to ensure that the Syrian government remains threatened in its very capital. Maintaining the threat to Damascus from Ghouta enables the United States to argue that the Syrian government is not in control of its capital city, that Russia hasn't actually been victorious, and that American occupation of portions of the country is necessary.'

'An unstated reason is to save its Daesh and al-Qaeda operatives, who are the unqualified favorites of Israeli officials according to their own public statements. The United States, Israel, and Saudi Arabia are scrambling to find ways to extend

this conflict and to partition Syria, and it is a sad fact that selective outrage over Syrian civilian suffering and casualties serves their Machiavellian agenda,' he said.

Regarding the fact that US President Donald Trump has accused Russia, Iran, and the Syrian government of being 'responsible for a 'humanitarian disgrace' in Syria, he said, 'Trump's accusation is an example of psychological projection, which American political elites are unfortunately prone to. Beyond the fact that Daesh and Syria's al-Qaeda elements are the direct offspring of American policy in Iraq and Syria, in 2017 the United States killed over three thousand civilians in Raqqa with a rain of air strikes and artillery, and rejected a ceasefire for the purpose of evacuating civilians, claiming it had to keep up the pressure on Daesh.'

'After thoroughly destroying the city it subsequently cut a deal with Daesh terrorists so they could evacuate. Of course, the destruction of both Yemen and Iraq, as well as Afghanistan and Libya, has created suffering and vast humanitarian crises for which there is no contemporary parallel, while providing an ongoing rationalization for American military occupation and regional meddling, increasingly in the service of Israeli and Saudi Arabian hegemony rather than to serve any logical or identifiable American security or economic concerns.'

Russia had suggested creating a safe passage for civilians to leave Eastern Ghouta. But, according to media reports, the militants in that area issued a statement that they would not allow civilians to leave the area.

Regarding the above fact, Yaghoubian commented, 'It would not be surprising if the militants or Eastern Ghouta refuse to let the civilians leave.'

'Like in Aleppo, the civilian population of Ghouta serves both as human shields for the militants, as well as their primary source of anti-government propaganda. If the civilian population was evacuated there would be no opportunity for them to hide and maneuver amongst noncombatants, nor the ability to generate global sympathy due to civilian casualties,' he said.

## France's long history of playing with Iran

**1 →** Zarif added that the MKO had become an instruments in the hands of Iran's enemies.

Now with all these in mind, the Iranian policy makers are expected to transfer Iranian people and government's worries about the terrorist MKO's activities in France.

France's playing with the JCPOA

The level of hostility of the current US government towards the nuclear deal with Iran is clear to everyone, but Europeans' position toward the pact is different. Some of them verbally continue to support the implementation process and want to keep things going. In this regard, Tehran has repeatedly stated that oral support is not enough and the Europeans have to take action against US's moves in violation of the JCPOA.

Foad Izadi, professor of American studies at the University of Tehran believes that France has taken a hypocritical stance towards the nuclear deal with Iran and wants to relate the JCPOA with Iran's missile program.

The continuation of making anti-Iran accusations and uncalculated remarks

In the past months, French senior officials including President Emmanuel Macron and Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian has uttered baseless claims and accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran. They have explicitly named Iran as a threat to the region and the world and these claims have been of course condemned by statements issued by the Iranian foreign ministry. However, the effectiveness of these claims, considering their frequent expression, can be sized up.

Speaking to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, Le Drian criticized Iran for destabilizing measures in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

'The other condition for building trust is keeping one's word. The destabilizing actions carried out by Iran in Syria, in Iraq, in Lebanon, in Yemen, or in the Gulf region—whether directly or through the groups it supports—these initiatives cannot be tolerated. And I'm stated this very

bluntly. Likewise, for ballistic activities carried out by Iran, which are incompatible with the resolutions of the Security Council. This attitude runs contrary to our interests, and runs contrary to the U.S.'s interests. This attitude is a threat to the security of countries in the region. We certainly share the objective to curb this policy, because he cannot accept interfering and the desire for hegemony that they testify to.'

While visiting UAE and Saudi Arabia, French President Macron repeated in Dubai that he wanted to keep the landmark 2015 nuclear deal, which Trump has challenged.

But he said he was 'very concerned' by Iran's ballistic missile program, mentioning a missile fired from Yemen and intercepted by Saudi Arabia on Saturday, and raised the prospect of possible sanctions with regard to those activities.

'There are extremely strong concerns about Iran. There are negotiations we need to start on Iran's ballistic missiles,' he said.

'Like what was done in 2015 for the

nuclear activities, it's necessary to put a framework in place for Iran's ballistic activities and open a process, with sanctions if needed, of negotiation that would enable (that).'

It is worth to mention that in the past months, Mr. Macron shared the same views against Iran in his meetings with US President Trump and Israeli PM Netanyahu.

The French Foreign Minister Le Drian has also made threats against Iran saying that if Iran does not take care about the concerns over its missile program, new sanctions may be levied on Iran.

Of course, it is to be borne in mind that the negative report card of the French in dealing with the Iranian nation is not limited to these remarks in regards with the JCPOA, Iran's missile program, and defense capabilities.

HIV-Infected Bloods Case

The case of 'HIV-Infected Bloods' dates back to approximately three decades ago and came to being in the course of Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). However, the case is one

of the other unpleasant and unforgettable measures taken by the French authorities against Iranians.

Mérieux Institute, which currently is at the ownership of French Sanofi-Aventis Company, exported HIV-contaminated coagulation factors, for being used by patients suffering from hemophilia, to some countries including West Germany, Italy, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran.

In the same direction, exporting HIV-infected bloods claimed lives of many patients suffering from hemophilia.

The necessity of Iran's Foreign Ministry taking legal action against France's baseless accusations

With all the above considerations, the widespread accusations made by Paris authorities against Tehran indicate that the approach taken by French authorities after the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is based on double-standard, bias, an unilateral policy.

In this regard, Naqavi Hosseini Spokesman for Parliament National Security

Commission said, 'it has already been reiterated that Iran's defensive power is not negotiable and in my opinion, Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs should take urgent action against the issue seriously.'

'In general, the respected government of the Islamic Republic of Iran should revise its relations with French authorities categorically,' he maintained.

For his part, Ali-Akbar Velayati Senior Advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in International Affairs pointed to baseless remarks raised by French officials with regard to renegotiating with Iran's missile power and said, 'defensive preparedness is of the initial and inalienable rights of any nation and no country is allowed to interfere in internal affairs of other countries.'

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Ghasemi also showed harsh reaction in this respect and said, 'the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will never allow others to undermine its missile power since it is for peaceful purposes.'

## KSC Receives Golden Statue for Observing Consumers' Rights

For the sixth consecutive year, Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) managed to receive golden statue for observing rights of consumers and took giant stride in line with gaining customers' satisfaction.

With due observance to the said issue, Deputy Managing Director of Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) Ali Mosayyebi was awarded with a golden statue on Wednesday Feb. 28 in the 17th National Day to Support Rights of Consumers, held in Tehran. It should be noted that the golden statue for observing rights of consumers was awarded by the Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Shariatmadari to

the Deputy Managing Director of the company Ali Mosayyebi.

By winning this golden statue, Khuzestan Steel Company has presently obtained 10 certificates and eight statues, showing that the company has taken salient achievements during 12 years of activity. The company has also won a number of six golden statues in the field of gaining customers' satisfaction.

It should be noted that a number of 52 leader companies compete with one another in the field of mining and metal products in this edition.

Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Eng. Shariatmadari was the first speaker in this Conference who said, 'all



## KSC Introduced Excellence Industrial and Production Unit in Country



With receiving a Silver Statue in 15th National Seminar of Organizational Excellence for sixth consecutive year, Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) was turned into a leader industrial and production unit in the country.

For his part, Eng. Mohammad Keshani CEO of Khuzestan Steel Company received a Silver Statue of Organizational Excellence from the Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade.

As held at the venue of IRIB Intl. Conferences Center, the 15th Organizational Excellence Seminar was held in the presence of managers and directors of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, Industrial Management Institute (IMI) and a number of senior directors of leading economic enterprises.

Mohammad Keshani CEO of Khuzestan Steel Company, Mohammad Hassan Erfanian Asiaei Member of Board of Directors and a number of senior managers of the organization congratulated winning Silver Statue to the industrial staff and personnel of the company.

CEO of the company expounded on the measures taken by the company in the recent years in the course of moving towards organizational excellence.

With the coordination made in this regard, steel production volume in this company will hit three million and 750,000 tons by the year-end. Of this steel production volume, more than 2,650,000 tons of steel ingot will be exported to other countries in the world.

Turning to the long term outlook of the company on 2025 Vision Plan, he reiterated, 'with the coordination made in this regard, 55 million tons of steel will be produced in the company, 19 million tons of which will be exported.'



industrial and production units will attain success if they meet demand of customers. However, gaining satisfaction of customers should be put atop agenda of all industrial and production unit.'

As repeated by the supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, promotion of policies to support rights of consumers and paying due attention to the standards have been emphasized by the government.'

Moreover, Vice Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iranian Parliament also called Majlis) Masoud Pezeshkian, Deputy Minister of Industry and Head of Organization to Support Rights of Consumers Seyyed Mahmoud Navvabi,

Secretary of Headquarters to Regulate Market Mohsen Bahrami, Chairman of National Association to Support Rights of Consumers, a great number of chief executives and industrialists both in public and private sectors attended this prestigious Conference.

According to the statistics announced, Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) allocated over 70 percent of its products to export activities in the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (started March 21, 2017). Moreover meeting domestic demand, the company exported more than 70 percent of its products to the foreign markets in the same period.

focal attention of media circles in the country.

For his part, Keshani CEO of Khuzestan Steel Company pointed to the customer-oriented features of the company and said, 'over 70 percent productions of the company have been exported to abroad, valued at over \$1 billion, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (started March 21, 2017), relying on gaining satisfaction of customer.'

In conclusion, CEO of the company said, 'relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, the company will take giant strides in line with materializing most of its objectives by the year-end.'





## Your location data is being sold – often without your knowledge

As location-aware advertising goes mainstream—like that Jack in the Box ad that appears whenever you get near one, in whichever app you have open at the time—and as popular apps harvest your lucrative location data, the potential for leaking or exploiting this data has never been higher.

It's true that your smartphone's location-tracking capabilities can be helpful, whether it's alerting you to traffic or inclement weather. That utility is why so many of us are giving away a great deal more location data than we probably realize. Every time you say “yes” to an app that asks to know your location, you are also potentially authorizing that app to sell your data.



Dozens of companies track location and/or serve ads based on this data. They aim to compile a complete record of where everyone in America spends their time, in order to chop those histories into market segments to sell to corporate advertisers.

Marketers spent \$16 billion on location-targeted ads served to mobile devices like smartphones and tablets in 2017. That's 40% of all mobile ad spending, research firm BIA/Kelsey estimates, and it expects spending on these ads to double by 2021.

The data required to serve you any single ad may pass through many companies' systems in milliseconds—from data broker to ad marketplace to an agency's custom system. In part, this is just how online advertising works, where massive marketplaces hold ongoing high-speed auctions for ad space.

But the fragmentation also is due to a very real fear of the public backlash and legal liability that might occur if there were a breach. Imagine the Equifax breach, except instead of your Social Security number, it's everywhere you've been, including your home, your workplace and your children's schools.

The fix, at least for now, is that with most individual data vendors holding only parts of your data, your complete, identifiable profile is never all in one place. Giants like Google and Facebook, who do have all your data in one place, say they are diligent about throwing away or not gathering what they don't need, and eliminating personally identifying information from the remainder.

Yet as the industry and the ways to track us expand, the possibility that our whereabouts will be exposed multiplies.

If you've ever felt clever because an app on your phone asked to track your location and you said no, this should make you feel a little less smug: There are plenty of ways to track you without getting your permission. Some of the most intrusive are the easiest to implement.

Your telco knows where you are at all times, because it knows which cell towers your phone is near. In the U.S., how much data service-providers sell is up to them.

Another way you can be tracked without your knowing it is through any open Wi-Fi hot spot you might pass. If your phone's Wi-Fi is on, you're constantly broadcasting a unique MAC address and a history of past Wi-Fi connections. Retailers sometimes use these addresses to identify repeat customers, and they can also use them to track you as you go from one of their stores to another.

WeatherBug, one of the most popular weather apps for Android and iPhone, is owned by the location advertising company GroundTruth. It's a natural fit: Weather apps need to know where you are and provide value in exchange for that information. But it also means that app is gathering data on your location any time the app is open—and even when it isn't, if you agreed to always let it track your location. That data is resold to others.

GroundTruth also gathers location data from “over a hundred thousand” other apps that have integrated bits of its code, says company president Serge Matta, who declined to disclose which apps. App makers agree to harvest location data because it grants them access to GroundTruth's mobile advertising network.

This data is what enables marketers like Jack in the Box to push an advertiser's message to potential customers near its restaurants. A typical engagement includes pushing location-based promotions or coupons through mobile ads, says Iwona Alter, Chief Marketing Officer of Jack in the Box.

Every month GroundTruth tracks 70 million people in the U.S. as they go to work in the morning, come home at night, surge in and out of public events, take vacations, you name it.

Companies like GroundTruth try to ensure they aren't tracking or storing data on individuals. Most of what they sell are anonymous blobs of people who fit particular descriptions—“soccer moms who intend to buy an SUV,” for example. But they also occasionally hand off location data to a third party, such as LiveRamp, owned by data broker Acxiom, before it's matched up with potentially personally identifying information, such as your complete shopping history at a retailer. LiveRamp is almost like an escrow company for data.

Companies like Acxiom could be prime targets for hackers, said Chandler Givens, chief executive of TrackOff, which develops software to protect user identity and personal information. LiveRamp goes to great lengths to mathematically obfuscate our individual identities, said Sheila Colclasure, chief data ethics officer at LiveRamp and Acxiom. But some security researchers fear data brokers like Acxiom may be compromised already, or could be someday.

Acxiom and LiveRamp in the U.S. are governed by federal and state laws that regulate the collection and use of data in the particular businesses their clients are involved in, Ms. Colclasure said. Nearly every year, a bill comes up in the Senate or House that would regulate our data privacy—the most recent was in the wake of the Equifax breach—but none has passed. In some respects, the U.S. appears to be moving backward on privacy protections.

There might never be a breach of our location data. But given the drumbeat of hacks of both companies and governments, it's hard to believe hackers aren't at least trying to compromise such a high-value target.

(Source: msn.com)

# Will 2018 be the year of the neo-luddite?

One of the great paradoxes of digital life – understood and exploited by the tech giants – is that we never do what we say. Poll after poll in the past few years has found that people are worried about online privacy and do not trust big tech firms with their data. But they carry on clicking and sharing and posting, preferring speed and convenience above all else. Last year was Silicon Valley's annus horribilis: a year of bots, sexism, monopolistic practice and tax-minimising. But I think 2018 might be worse still: the year of the neo-luddite, when anti-tech words turn into deeds.

The caricature of machine-wrecking mobs doesn't capture our new approach to tech. A better phrase is what the writer Blake Snow has called “reformed luddism”: a society that views tech with a sceptical eye, noting the benefits while recognising that it causes problems, too. And more importantly, thinks that something can be done about it.

One expression of reformed luddism is already causing a headache for the tech titans. Facebook and Google are essentially huge advertising firms. Ad-blocking software is their kryptonite. Yet millions of people downloaded these plug-ins to stop ads chasing them across the web last year, and their use has been growing (on desktops at least) close to 20% each year, indiscriminately hitting smaller publishers, too.

More significantly, the whole of society seems to have woken up to the fact there is a psychological cost to constant checking, swiping and staring. A growing number of my friends now have “no phone” times, don't instantly sign into the cafe wifi, or have weekends away without their computers. This behaviour is no longer confined to intellectuals and academics, part of some clever critique of modernity. Every single parent I know frets about “screen time”, and most are engaged in a struggle with a toddler over how much iPad is allowed. The alternative is “slow living” or “slow tech”. “Want to become a slow-tech family?” writes Janell Burley Hoffmann, one of its proponents. “Wait! Just wait – in line, at the doctor's, for the bus, at the school pickup – just sit and wait.” Turning what used to be ordinary behaviour into a “movement” is a very modern way to go about it. But it's probably necessary.

I would add to this the ever-growing craze for yoga, meditation, reiki and all those other things that promise inner peace and meaning – except for the fact all the techies do it, too. Maybe that's why they do it. Either way, there is a palpable demand for anything that involves less tech, a fetish for back-to-basics. Innocent Drinks have held two “Unplugged Festivals”, offering the chance of “switching off for the weekend ... No wifi, no 3G, no traditional electricity”. Others take off-grid living much further. There has been an uptick in “back to the land” movements: communes and self-sustaining communities that prefer the low-tech life. According to the Intentional Community Directory, which measures the spread of alternative lifestyles, 300 eco-villages were founded in the first 10 months of 2016, the most since the 1970s. I spent some time in 2016 living in an off-grid community where no one seemed to suffer mobile phone separation anxiety. No one was frantically checking if their last tweet went viral and we all felt better for it.

Even insiders are starting to wonder what monsters they've unleashed. Former Google “design ethicist” Tristan Harris recently founded the nonprofit organisation Time Well Spent in order to push back against



Taxi drivers protest against Uber in Paris

what he calls a “digital attention crisis” of our hijacked minds. Most of the tech conferences I'm invited to these days include this sort of introspection: is it all going too far? Are we really the good guys?

That tech firms are responding is proof they see this is a serious threat: many more are building in extra parental controls, and Facebook admitted last year that too much time on their site was bad for your health, and promised to do something. Apple investors recently wrote to the company, suggesting the company do more to “ensure that young consumers are using your products in an optimal manner” – a bleak word combination to describe phone-addled children, but still.

It's worth reflecting what a radical change all this is. That economic growth isn't everything, that tech means harm as well as good – this is not the escape velocity, you-can't-stop-progress thinking that has colonised our minds in the past decade. Serious writers now say things that would have been unthinkable until last year: even the FT calls for more regulation and the Economist asks if social media is bad for democracy.

This reformed luddism does not however mean the end of good, old-fashioned machine-smashing. The original luddites did not dislike machines per se, rather what they were doing to their livelihoods and way of life. It's hard not to see the anti-Uber protests in a similar light. Over the past couple of years, there have been something approaching anti-Uber riots in Paris; in Hyderabad, India, drivers took to the streets to vent their rage against unmet promises of lucrative salaries; angry taxi drivers blocked roads last year across Croatia, Hungary and Poland. In Colombia, there were clashes with police, while two Uber vehicles were torched in Johannesburg and 30 metered taxi drivers arrested.

Imagine what might happen when driverless cars turn up. The chancellor has recently bet on them, promising investment and encouraging real road testing; he wants autonomous vehicles on our streets by 2021. The industry will create lots of new and very well-paid jobs, especially in robotics, machine learning and engineering. For people with the right qualifications, that's great. And for the existing lorry and taxi drivers? There will still

be some jobs, since even Google tech won't be able to handle Swindon's magic roundabout for a while. But we will need far fewer of them. A handful might retrain, and claw their way up to the winner's table. I am told repeatedly in the tech startup bubble that unemployed truckers in their 50s should retrain as web developers and machine-learning specialists, which is a convenient self-delusion. Far more likely is that, as the tech-savvy do better than ever, many truckers or taxi drivers without the necessary skills will drift off to more precarious, piecemeal, low-paid work.

Does anyone seriously think that drivers will passively let this happen, consoled that their great-grandchildren may be richer and less likely to die in a car crash? And what about when Donald Trump's promised jobs don't rematerialise, because of automation rather than offshoring and immigration? Given the endless articles outlining how “robots are coming for your jobs”, it would be extremely odd if people didn't blame the robots, and take it out on them, too.

Once people start believing that machines are a force of oppression rather than liberation, there will be no stopping it. Between 1978 and 1995, the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, sent 16 bombs to targets including universities and airlines, killing three people and injuring 23. Kaczynski, a Harvard maths prodigy who began to live off-grid in his 20s, was motivated by a belief that technological change was destroying human civilisation, ushering in a period of dehumanised tyranny and control. Once you get past Kaczynski's casual racism and calls for violent revolution, his writings on digital technology now seem uncomfortably prescient. He predicted super-intelligent machines dictating society, the psychological ill-effects of tech-reliance and the prospect of obscene inequality as an elite of techno-savvies run the world.

The American philosopher John Zerzan is considered the intellectual heavyweight for the anarcho-primitivist movement, whose adherents believe that technology enslaves us. They aren't violent, but boy do they do hate tech. During the Unabomber's trial, Zerzan became a confidant to Kaczynski, offering support for his ideas while condemning his actions. Zerzan is finding himself invited to

speak at many more events, and the magazine he edits has seen a boost in sales. “Something's going on,” he tells me – by phone, ironically. “The negative of technology is now taken as a given.” I ask if he could foresee the emergence of another Unabomber. “I think it's inevitable,” he says. “As things get worse, you're not going to stop it any other way,” although he adds that he hopes it doesn't involve violence against people.

There are signs that full-blown neo-luddism is already here. In November last year, La Casemate, a tech “fab lab” based in Grenoble, France, was vandalised and burned. The attackers called it “a notoriously harmful institution by its diffusion of digital culture”. The previous year, a similar place in Nantes was targeted. Aside from an isolated incident in Mexico in 2011, this is, as far as I can tell, the first case since the Unabomber of an act of violence targeting technology explicitly as technology, rather than just a proxy for some other problem. The French attackers' commune was published by the environmentalist/anarchist journal Earth First! and explained how the internet's promise of liberation for anticapitalists has evaporated amid more surveillance, more control, more capitalism. “Tonight, we burned the Casemate,” it concludes. “Tomorrow, it will be something else, and our lives will be too short, in prison or in free air, because everything we hate can burn.”

If the recent speculation about jobs and AI is even close to being correct, then fairly soon “luddite” will join far-right and Islamist on the list of government-defined extremists. Perhaps anti-tech movements will even qualify for the anti-radicalisation Prevent programme.

No one wants machines smashed or letter bombs. The wreckers failed 200 years ago and will fail again now. But a little luddism in our lives won't hurt. The realisation that technological change isn't always beneficial nor inevitable is long overdue, and that doesn't mean jettisoning all the joys associated with modern technology. You're not a fogey for thinking there are times where being disconnected is good for you. You're just not a machine.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Why technology is now more important than capital

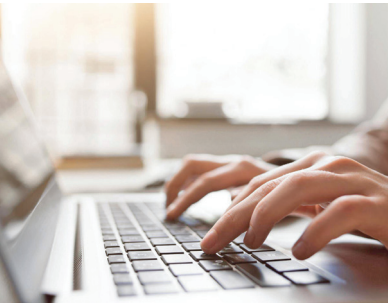
Business 4.0 – also known as the fourth industrial revolution for the digital age – has upended much of what we thought we knew about industries. It is an era marked by big leaps in technology, significant upswings in data, hyperconnectivity, the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, automation and the rapid and agile development of products and solutions.

The last time we experienced a tectonic shift like this was during the computer age (Business 3.0), defined by the advent of the internet, the ascent of large globalized businesses and interlinked financial systems.

Today's teeming tech environment has created a level playing field. As such, how you leverage technology is even more important to success than your ability to access capital.

Victory will belong to the enterprises that make the right investments and embrace what the digital age really means: mass personalization, creating exponential value, leveraging ecosystems and embracing risk. Using technology to satisfy these Business 4.0 demands will have more of an impact on a company's long-term viability than any temporary infusion of cash.

The proliferation of interconnected data channels has enabled access to knowledge at a never-before-seen scale. This democratization of information, so to speak, has created unprecedented opportunities for entrepreneurs. Take the sensational success of the free messaging platform WhatsApp, which currently has more than 1.3 billion users – three times that of Twitter. Its co-founder, Jan Koum, certainly didn't have much in the



way of capital – and, for a brief period, lived off welfare. What he did have was an idea and self-taught technical skills that he gleaned from available sources. In 2014, he and his co-founder, Brian Acton, sold WhatsApp to Facebook for US\$19-billion.

The emergence of cloud computing is another example of how businesses today require less capital to compete. It has afforded them the opportunity to tap into a wealth of resources at a fraction of the cost. Everything from data storage to operational software can be accessed through the cloud. It also makes it far easier for organizations to scale up when – and not a moment before – they need to.

For software companies, the cloud has fundamentally changed the speed at which products are created. Leading organizations are using the cloud to develop and upgrade software in an agile and interactive manner. What once took at least six months to develop is being deployed to consumers in a matter of days or weeks.

(Source: theglobeandmail.com)

## Your smart TV is watching you watching TV, Consumer Reports finds

Millions of smart TVs sitting in family living rooms are vulnerable to hackers taking control – and could be tracking the household's personal viewing habits much more closely than their owners realize, according to a new Consumer Reports investigation.

The non-profit consumer product testing organization examined five of the top smart TVs on the market and found that in several of them, “a relatively unsophisticated hacker” could conduct remote hijinks like cranking the volume to a roar, knocking the TV off the Wi-Fi network, quickly changing channels or forcing it to play objectionable YouTube content.

The vulnerability was found in sets by Samsung, TCL, and devices using the Roku TV platform, which can include brands like Philips, RCA, Hisense, Hitachi, Insignia, and Sharp, along with some of Roku's own streaming players.

Testing found the televisions were also constantly tracking what their owners were watching and relaying it back to the TV maker and/or its business partners, using a technology called ACR, or “automated content recognition.”

ACR helps the TV recommend other shows you might enjoy watching, but can also be used to target your families with advertising. The data can also be combined with other aspects of your personal information to help build profiles on your behavior that are sold to other marketers.

“For years, consumers have had their behavior tracked when they're online or using their smartphones,” Justin Brook-



man, director of privacy and technology at Consumers Union, the advocacy arm of Consumer Reports, told the magazine. “But I don't think a lot of people expect their television to be watching what they do.”

The smart TVs typically ask for users' permission during initial setup to collect their viewing data, while also warning they may miss out on some functionality, like being told if they watch one show they may also enjoy another, if they decline. Unaware or impatient consumers may breeze through the setup without reading or understanding what they're agreeing to.

“Our Smart TVs include a number of features that combine data security with the best possible user experience,” a Samsung spokesperson told NBC News in an emailed statement. “Before collecting any information from consumers, we always ask for their consent, and we make every effort to ensure that data is handled with the utmost care.”

(Source: nbnews.com)



# Scientists create 'artificial photosynthesis' to generate clean energy

There's a race going on at the moment in the science world. Various teams around the globe are all competing to be the first to produce a solid, stable form of artificial photosynthesis that functions exactly like the real deal in plants.

Solar panels are fine and all (they're certainly a lot better than they were a few decades ago) but this form of solar energy collection and storage is inherently flawed. Despite their growing popularity, solar panels are nowhere near as efficient as, say, living plants at turning sunlight into power. For one thing, solar panels are utterly useless when in low light situations, and it's tricky finding ways to adequately store energy from solar cells without too much electricity seeping away over time.

Thus, teams like the one headed by Boston College professor Dunwei Wang are rushing to be the first to find a form of artificial photosynthesis that matches up to the organic alternative.

## More stability

Wang's team now believe that they've cracked the formula, thanks to a special catalyst that - in theory at least - should allow their version of photosynthesis a lot more stability.

Artificial photosynthesis, like the real stuff, relies on more than just collecting sunlight. Water and carbon dioxide are used alongside



solar energy in order to produce fuel that can be used to power devices, or stored for later use, depending on the circumstances.

While most attempts at photosynthesis use

a catalyst of some form, they're traditionally single atom structures that often can't withstand the process that they're put through with any degree of longevity. Wang's team

**For one thing, solar panels are utterly useless when in low light situations, and it's tricky finding ways to adequately store energy from solar cells without too much electricity seeping away over time.**

used a special two-atom catalyst made from iridium that, essentially, is capable of putting up with more strain without wearing out.

## Harvesting solar energy

The result should be a tougher, more durable catalyst, and as such, a more efficient artificial

"Our research concerns the technology for direct solar energy storage. It addresses the critical challenge that solar energy is intermittent. It does so by directly harvesting solar energy and storing the energy in chemical bonds, similar to how photosynthesis is performed but with higher efficiencies and lower cost."

It seems that this new potential fuel source will enable a more cost-effective artificial photosynthesis process. While this is bad news for solar farms that already exist, it's fantastic news for our planet's growing energy crisis and for the environment itself.

The nice thing about artificial photosynthesis over other forms of solar power is that the process of creating energy actually uses up carbon dioxide - something that, considering the amount of greenhouse gases we're currently pumping into the atmosphere, will hopefully be able to at least slow the negative effects that we're having on the environment.

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

## A mysterious anomaly under Africa radically weakening Earth's magnetic field

Above our heads, something is not right. Earth's magnetic field is in a state of dramatic weakening - and according to mind-boggling new research, this phenomenal disruption is part of a pattern lasting for over 1,000 years.

Earth's magnetic field doesn't just give us our north and south poles; it's also what protects us from solar winds and cosmic radiation - but this invisible force field is rapidly weakening, to the point scientists think it could actually flip, with our magnetic poles reversing.

As crazy as that sounds, this actually does happen over vast stretches of time. The last time it occurred was about 780,000 years ago, although it got close again around 40,000 years back.

## Polarity reversal

When it takes place, it's not quick, with the polarity reversal slowly occurring over thousands of years.

Nobody knows for sure if another such flip is imminent, and one of the reasons for that is a lack of hard data.

The region that concerns scientists the



most at the moment is called the South Atlantic Anomaly - a huge expanse of the field stretching from Chile to Zimbabwe. The field is so weak within the anomaly that it's hazardous for Earth's satellites to enter it, because the additional radiation it's letting through could disrupt their electronics.

"We've known for quite some time that the magnetic field has been changing, but we didn't really know if this was unusual for this region on a longer timescale, or whether it was normal," says physicist Vincent Hare

from the University of Rochester in New York.

One of the reasons scientists don't know much about the magnetic history of this region of Earth is it lacks what's called archeomagnetic data - physical evidence of magnetism in Earth's past, preserved in archaeological relics from bygone ages.

One such bygone age belonged to a group of ancient Africans, who lived in the Limpopo River Valley - which borders Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Botswana: regions that fall within the South Atlantic Anomaly of today.

Approximately 1,000 years ago, these

Bantu peoples observed an elaborate, superstitious ritual in times of environmental hardship.

## Scientific fieldwork

During times of drought, they would burn down their clay huts and grain bins, in a sacred cleansing rite to make the rains come again - never knowing they were performing a kind of preparatory scientific fieldwork for researchers centuries later.

"When you burn clay at very high temperatures, you actually stabilize the magnetic minerals, and when they cool from these very high temperatures, they lock in a record of the earth's magnetic field," one of the team, geophysicist John Tarduno explains.

As such, an analysis of the ancient artefacts that survived these burnings reveals much more than just the cultural practices of the ancestors of today's southern Africans.

"We were looking for recurrent behaviour of anomalies because we think that's what is happening today and causing the South Atlantic Anomaly," Tarduno says.

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

## Fajr Petrochemical Co. Wins Silver Statue at 8th National Financial Management Award

FAJR Petrochemical Company managed to win silver statue at the 8th edition of National Financial Management Award, the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

After studying and evaluating performance of the company at Arbitration Committee, silver statue of this edition of Iran National Financial Management Award was granted to FAJR Petrochemical Company due to the merited and favorable performance of the complex in the fields of optimal and efficient management of cash resources, transparency of financial reports for beneficiaries and shareholders, optimal management of tax costs and obtaining favorable viewpoints for financial statement approved by the independent auditor and legal inspector of the company.

The positive trend of indicator to covering efficiency costs and finance, application of efficient financial software confirmed and approved by Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), making effort to increase owner's equity through studying

and concentrating on the budget and plans, managing working capital and correcting financial structure of the country through establishing balance between assets and liabilities, etc. are considered as the other approaches of financial management of FAJR Petrochemical Company.

For his part, Seyed Javad Kazemi Member of Board of Directors and Finance Manager of FAJR Petrochemical Company said, "the flow of efficient and proper liquidity is a sign of financial health of an industrial and production unit."

As one of stock-paneled company, Financial Department of the company has always devised an accurate planning from flow of liquidity in the best form possible, he maintained.

Turning to the transparency of financial reports and trustability for beneficiaries and shareholders, he said, "winning second rank, confirmed by Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) among top 302 companies paneled at TSE is of the other credits of the company in



terms of transparency, dissemination of information and capability of relying on the financial statements' budget."

## Iran's Mining and Mineral Ranking to Promote: IMIDRO Chief

Mehdi Karbasian Chief Executive of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) said, "by commissioning current projects in the mining and mineral sector, the country will witness the promotion of Iran's global ranking in the production of mines and mineral."

According to a report released by the Public Relations Department of IMIDRO, Iran's mining and mineral sector will be promoted in the international level.

Speaking in 5th Conference of Productivity of Iranian Mines and Mining, held at Jaber ibn Hayyan Amphitheater of Tarbiat Modares University, the IMIDRO chief put Iran's current mining and mineral rank at 15 among world countries and said, "commissioning current mining and mineral projects will promote the current status of the country in the relevant field."



## 19th CEO of NICICO Appointed

By the decision of the Board of Directors of the National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO), Mohammad-Reza Bani-Asadirad was appointed as the 19th Chief Executive of the company, Public Relations Dept. of the National Iranian Copper Industries Company reported.

The meeting of the new Board of Directors of the company was held in the presence of members of the Board including "Reza Rahmani", "Mohammad-Reza Bani-Asadirad", "Abdol-Hossein Sabet", "Ali Mohammadi" and "Mohammad-Ali Ahmadzadeh Asl".

In this meeting, salient measures taken by the former Chief Executive of the company Ahmad Morad-Alizadeh

were appreciated.

Given the above issue, Mohammad-Reza Bani-Asadirad replaced the Ahmad Morad-Alizadeh as the new chief executive of the company.

It should be noted that Mohammad-Reza Bani-Asadirad had earlier served in the following positions: manager of Kaveh Jonoob Kish Steel Company, as one of subsidiaries to Kaveh Pars Holding Company, for a period of eight years.

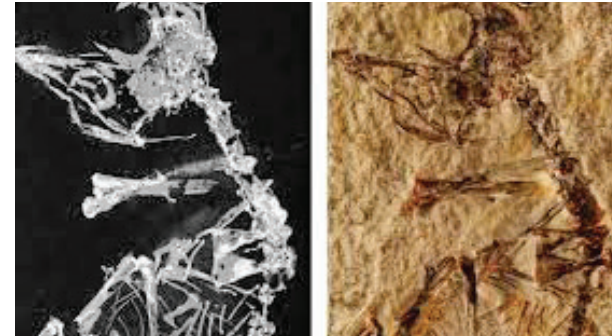
Ahmad Morad-Alizadeh took the helm of the National Iranian Copper Industries Company in two periods i.e. from 2001 to 2015 and from 2013 to 2017, the Public Relations Dept. of the company concluded.



## 127-million-year-old baby bird fossil sheds light on avian evolution

The tiny fossil of a prehistoric baby bird is helping scientists understand how early avians came into the world in the Age of Dinosaurs.

The fossil, which dates back to the Mesozoic Era (250-65 million years ago), is a chick from a group of prehistoric birds called, Enantiornithes. Made up of a nearly complete skeleton, the specimen is amongst the smallest known Mesozoic avian fossils ever discovered.



It measures less than five centimeters - smaller than the little finger on an average human hand - and would have weighed just three ounces when it was alive. What makes this fossil so important and unique is the fact it died not long after its birth. This is a critical stage in a bird's skeletal formation. That means this bird's extremely short life has given researchers a rare chance to analyze the species' bone structure and development.

Studying and analyzing ossification - the process of bone development - can explain a lot about a young bird's life the researchers say. It can help them understand everything from whether it could fly or if it needed to stay with its parents after hatching or could survive on its own.

The lead author of the study, Fabien Knoll, from The University of Manchester's Interdisciplinary Center for Ancient Life (ICAL), School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and the ARAID--Dinopolis in Spain explains: "The evolutionary diversification of birds has resulted in a wide range of hatchling developmental strategies and important differences in their growth rates. By analyzing bone development we can look at a whole host of evolutionary traits."

With the fossil being so small the team used synchrotron radiation to picture the tiny specimen at a 'submicron' level, observing the bones' microstructures in extreme detail.

(Source: [eurekalert.org](#))

## Sealed Apollo moon sample to be investigated soon, scientists say

It's been almost half a century since humans last set foot on the moon - but in all that time, we still haven't unwrapped all the souvenirs astronauts brought us from their lunar excursions. Now, scientists say, it may be time to change that.

The Apollo missions brought home nine boxes full of moon rock and dust, and those materials have been scientifically priceless ever since. But researchers have been careful to dole them out, keeping three of the nine containers unopened, according to space.com.

That decision wasn't governed by laziness or a lack of curiosity - it was to maximize the value of the samples, saving some for when scientists had invented better tools to study them. "Samples were intentionally saved for a time when technology and instrumentation had advanced to the point that we could maximize the scientific return on these unique samples," Ryan Zeigler, Apollo sample curator and manager of the Astromaterials Acquisition and Curation Office in Houston, told space.com.

There are two compelling reasons to open up one of those precious containers soon. The first, of course, is that there's plenty of new technology to analyze them. But the second is that President Trump has directed NASA to work on putting humans back on the Moon.

The sealed samples are particularly valuable because scientists are interested in what they call volatiles within the moon rock, or regolith. Those volatiles float away soon after the container is opened. There's a chance the seals have weakened over the decades, but until we get back to the moon, the three sealed containers are our only option right now for studying the volatiles.

(Source: [Newsweek](#))

## Teen who created toxin-detecting molecule wants to inspire others in STEM

Keiana Cavé is already a game-changer in the world of STEM. The 19-year-old is the brains behind a toxin-detecting molecule that could help change the way oil spills are handled.

In the wake of the 2010 BP oil spill, Cavé, then a 15-year-old high school sophomore, went on a research mission. Her goal was to prove that oil sitting on the ocean's surface was doing more damage than previously believed.

"I remember watching the news and the news anchor was talking about the after effects of the BP oil spill and I remember thinking there are probably some issues left (unsolved)," the New Orleans, Louisiana, native said.

Cavé eventually discovered that when UV rays from the sun mixed with the oil on the ocean's surface, the result was carcinogenic.

She entered her findings in a science fair in her hometown and said she was shocked when she took home a prize for her research.

"It was a complete shock to me," she recalled. "It was also the first time I realized people might actually care about the problem I'm trying to solve."

Cavé said she had no idea science fairs existed outside of the movies and was encouraged by her high school biology teacher to pursue her research.

Now a sophomore at the University of Michigan, Cavé is still innovating. Named one of Forbes' 30 Under 30 Class of 2017 members in the energy category, the chemical engineering major has published two research papers and holds two patents for her methods of detecting toxins in the ocean water. She is working to create a new dispersant to neutralize these cancer-causing chemicals.

(Source: [Good Morning America](#))



## Leader plants saplings to highlight natural resources

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday planted two fruit saplings, urging officials to take measures for increasing green spaces as it can prevent floods and curb sand and dust storms.

He made the remarks on the occasion of the National Week of Natural Resources (March 6-13) and concurrent with the National Tree Planting Day after having planted two fruit saplings.

The leader deemed the National Tree Planting Day as an auspicious occasion and highlighted the numerous importance of the plants, forests and rangelands in cleansing the air, embellishing the living environment, and producing useful products for the human beings urging the officials to stop urban vegetation destruction.

Many are trying to exploit and trespass gardens in Tehran and it should be prevented as it can inflict harm on the urban life, he noted.

■ **1200-hectar green belt in Tehran**

A 1200-hectar green belt around Tehran was opened in President Hassan Rouhani's presence on Tuesday to celebrate Natural Resources Week.

With the aforesaid project, the area of the green belt around Tehran reached more than 40 thousand hectares.

"Unfortunately, millions of meters of forest and pastures have been destroyed in the past years," president regretted.

Underlining the fact that Iran's per capita forests and pastures is less than world average, Rouhani stated that "We need to make more efforts to eliminate these shortcomings."

"The implementation of this project is of great importance and is very effective in protecting the environment and preventing the undue expansion of Tehran," he highlighted

"Deforestation has a great impact on the environment and is a major contributor to air pollution, sand and dust storms and desertification," he pointed.

He went on to say that "to deal with the dust storms we can plant trees, I invite people from all walks of life and environmentalists to participate in planting trees and encourage people to do so in a variety of ways."

The President also planted a sapling in north-eastern Tehran to mark the National Tree Planting Day.

## How come we are treating trees like intruders?

➔ Relatively speaking over our short-term presence on Earth we have seriously harmed trees and take advantage of them to accelerate development.

We have simply cut down trees to build roads and settlements because they were on our way. Overgrazing, land clearance for agriculture, illegal and legal logging activities are other instances of human inferences with the once-pristine nature.

Wildfires, in most cases started by human beings, either intentionally or unintentionally are also speeding deforestation.

■ **Global forest loss**

As per a UN report published by the Guardian in September 2015 the rate at which the world is losing its forests has been halved, but an area of woodland covering some 129m hectares-the size of South Africa -has been lost since 1990.

In 1990 the world had 4,128 million hectares of forest covering 31.6% of the global land area, the report said, however, by 2015 this had decreased to 3,999 million hectares, covering 30.6% – a net loss of some 129 million hectares. The biggest loss of forests happened in the tropics, particularly in South America and Africa.

According to Global Forest Watch (GFW) countries with greatest tree cover loss (2001-2016) are Russia, Brazil, Canada, U.S., Indonesia, Congo, China, Malaysia, Argentina, and Paraguay.

Losing 49.5 million hectares of forest area in 15 years Russia tops the list. GFW is an open-source web application to monitor global forests in near real-time. GFW is an initiative of the World Resources Institute (WRI), with partners including Google, USAID, the University of Maryland (UMD), Esri, and many other academic, non-profit, public, and private organizations.

■ **What's going on in Iran?**

Some 11 million hectares of Iran's land area constituting to about 7 percent of the country is covered with forests.

For one Hyrcanian forest, one of the most ancient forest worldwide, which has granted the areas with unique richness of biological diversity, its endemic and endangered species, and its natural beauty, used to stretch over 2.3 million hectares of land in northern Iran while they have shrunk to 1.18 million hectares in the past 25-30 years.

According to an infographic by IRNA news agency some 15,000 hectares of forest burn in wildfires annually. Moreover, over 797 million saplings are destroyed to feed the livestock.

■ **We are letting forests to disappear**

Forest are home to 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, and they also form the source of livelihood for many different human settlements, including 60 million indigenous people, a report by World Wildlife Fund said.

Forests provide us with food and air we breathe. They provide habitats for animals, prevent soil erosion, and mitigate climate change, yet despite the fact that we are crucially depend on the forest we are letting them to disappear.

Wherever we live we should collectively attempt to build a future where we live in harmony with nature; trees, rivers, oceans, etc. have been living here long before us. They are the open-handed landlords and it's unfair to be ungrateful to them.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Cancelled Flight

A: Good afternoon Sir, may I please see your passport and **reservation**?  
B: Here you go.  
A: I'm sorry sir, this flight has been **cancelled** due to some mechanical problems.  
B: Cancelled! So what am I supposed to do now?  
A: We apologize for any **inconveniences** that may be caused by this. If your flight is **urgent**, I can put you on a waiting list for another flight this evening, but it's on a first come first served basis, so there is no guarantee that you will be able to take that flight.  
B: What's my other option?  
A: If you can wait until tomorrow, we will put you up in a hotel for today and you can take **scheduled** flight for tomorrow morning.  
B: That's fine. I'll do that then.  
A: Thank you for your understanding sir. I will book your flight now.

■ **Key vocabulary**

**reservation:** an arrangement to secure accommodations at a restaurant or hotel

**cancel:** to decide that something will not happen

**inconvenience:** he quality or state of being inconvenient

**urgent:** important

**scheduled:** planned at a specific time

(Source: irlanguage.com)

# Low genetic diversity biggest threat to Asiatic cheetahs: academic

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** – Asiatic cheetahs are more threatened by low genetic diversity than by humans, roads or other dangers, said Mohammad Sadeq Farhadinia, a member of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Cat Specialist Group.

Due to the decline in the number of Asiatic cheetahs in the region, their genetic diversity is decreasing which is a great danger for their survival, Mehr quoted him as saying on Tuesday.

The main aim of Asiatic cheetahs conservation programs will not be "increasing" the number of cheetahs, rather trying to fight their complete extinction, he highlighted.

He described the chance for saving Asiatic cheetahs as "low", adding, "We should be happy that the chance is still above zero."

The sole solution for saving this species is following a definite captive breeding program, Farhadinia added.

"We should maintain the available genes; meaning more cheetahs should be captivated and if captivation is not possible, their sperms should be collected," he said, adding, "Once a gene is destroyed, it cannot be invented."

After captive breeding, the animals should be gradually taken back to their natural habitats, he noted.

"We have tried hard to save Asiatic cheetah in Iran but the result is not as expected," Farhadinia emphasized.

■ **The importance of genetic diversity**

According to Greentumble, genetic diversity of plants, animals and other living organisms is what enables them to survive and thrive in this world.

The capacity of species to adapt to new circumstances, whether this is resource scarcity, a changing environment or other disturbances to their natural environment, depends on



© Ehsan Jannati

One of the Asiatic cheetahs living in captivity in Tehran's Pardisan Park

genetic diversity. Essentially, genetic diversity is the total number of characteristics in the genetic makeup of a species.

The greater the variation in genes, the more likely is that individuals in a population will possess the differentiated genes which are needed to adapt to an environment.

■ **Captive breeding**

The issue of captive breeding is one the controversial topics among environmentalists and is defined as the process of breeding animals in controlled environments within well-defined settings, such as wildlife reserves, zoos and other commercial and

## Number of cars in Tehran 5 times above capacity: police chief

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** – The number of vehicles that ply in Tehran are 5 times above the capacity of the megacity's streets, said Tehran's police chief General Hossein Rahimi.

This is the main reason for the city's heavy traffic congestion especially in mornings and evenings, Mehr quoted him as saying on Monday.

Rahimi also touched on the fact that the number of vehicles has increased by 30 percent during recent days because citizens are going out shopping for Noruz, the Iranian new year, starting March 21.

Car breakdowns, crashes and raining are among other causes for traffic,



he added.

In a bid to promote the culture of safe driving, Tehran's police department will send some lawful drivers to Russia 2018 World Cup, Rahimi concluded.

## Tehran's city council to adopt law on supporting startups

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** – The city council of Tehran plans to pass a comprehensive law on supporting startups in the next [Iranian calendar] year 1397 (March 2018–March 2019), councilor Majid Farahani said.

He made the remarks on a sideline event of 'Smart Tehran Congress 2018' held in Tehran on March 4-5. Tehran has no regulations on supporting startups, he regretted, adding that a special committee for smartification has been established in the council in this regard.

Without providing true support for startups, smartification will not be achieved, he highlighted.

Referring to 2.5 trillion rials (nearly \$55 million) which has been allocated to smartification



## Start-Up

in the next years' budget bill of the city, Farahani described this budget as "not significant".

However, he added, the field of smartification is one of the few fields which will enjoy success in the new urban management.

## S. Korea donates \$300,000 to Iran's quake-hit victims



Korean Ambassador Kim Seung-Ho (R) and IRCS Secretary General Mahmoud Mohammadi Nasab


The Government of the Republic of Korea donated USD 300,000 (including USD 200,000 of cash donation and USD 100,000 value of winterization kits) to support the earthquake recovery operation plan 2018 which has been going on under the initiative of Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

In this regard, Korean Ambassador Kim Seung-Ho had a meeting with Secretary General of IRCS Mahmoud Mohammadi Nasab and handed over the certificate of donation at the head office of IRCS on Monday.


On November 12, 2017 the western province of Kermanshah was struck by a deadly magnitude 7.3 earthquake. The tremor claimed hundreds of lives and left thousands injured and displaced. It was so strong that razed some 19,000 houses to the ground and caused damage to 56,000 others in 1,900 villages.

The Republic of Korea extended its deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of Iran on the devastating loss of lives and properties caused by the earthquakes in the Kermanshah province in November hoping that the ongoing recovery efforts are successful and those who were affected can make a full recovery.

Second Announcement



N.I.O.C  
1396. 5717



National Iranian  
Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First Publish/Seconed Publish)- Retender						
One-Stage(compressed)						
TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
15,420	647,000,000	12,929,208,383	<b>PARTS FOR NATIONAL DRAWWORKS MODEL 1320</b>	<b>3,154,884</b>	Tender No.: FP/17-96/062 Indent No.: 48-22-9622004	1

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

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

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

**Receiving of documents:**  
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN  
Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurement department in due date and participates in tenderwill be known as tenderer from tender committee.

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

**D) Tender Guarantee:**  
**Type of guarantee:**  
A)Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activites licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.  
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to National Iranain Drilling Company.

**Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:**  
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.  
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR

Foreign Procurement Dept  
National Iranian Drilling Company

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۱۲/۱۵نوبت دوم ۹۶/۱۲/۱۶







## South Korea to honor Bach for Pyeongchang contribution

The South Korean government is to award International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach with the country's highest sporting honor for his role in helping make the Pyeongchang Winter Games a success, the sports ministry said on Tuesday.

The ministry added that no date had been set yet for Bach to receive the Cheongryong Medal.

Pyeongchang brought the curtain down on Asia's first Winter Games outside Japan on Feb. 25. Despite issues such as a norovirus outbreak and extreme temperatures in the first week of competition, organizers were widely praised for running a polished Games.

Other former recipients of the Cheongryong (blue dragon) honor include 2010 Olympic figure skating gold medalist Kim Yuna and Dutchman Guus Hiddink, who coached the Korean national soccer team to the semi-finals of the 2002 World Cup. *(Source: Reuters)*

## Fiorentina, Cagliari retire number 13 shirt in memory of Astori

Fiorentina and Cagliari will retire the number 13 shirt worn by defender Davide Astori after the Italy international died of a sudden illness over the weekend at the age of 31, the Italian clubs said on Tuesday.

Astori, who made 289 Serie A appearances in 10 seasons and played 14 times for the national team, joined Fiorentina on loan in 2015. The club signed him outright one year later and he went on to become their captain.

He previously spent six seasons at Cagliari and one on loan at AS Roma.

"In honour of Davide #Astori's memory, @CagliariCalcio and #ACFFiorentina have decided to retire the No. 13 shirt. #DA13," Fiorentina said on Twitter. Cagliari posted a similar message.

Astori was found dead in his hotel room on Sunday in Udine where Fiorentina had been due to play Udinese. Serie A postponed all Sunday's matches.

Italian public prosecutors said on Monday they are to open proceedings to determine whether Astori's death could be considered as manslaughter.

*(Source: Four Four Two)*

## Wagner: I´m the best German striker

Sandro Wagner is convinced he should be part of Germany's World Cup squad, claiming his country has no better option at center-forward.

Wagner has scored three times in as many starts since joining Bayern Munich from Hoffenheim during the mid-season transfer window, although his status as back-up to Robert Lewandowski means playing time could be limited for the 30-year-old.

His selection prospects are possibly complicated by Mario Gomez's impressive return to Stuttgart, where – as a first-choice starter – the experienced striker has scored four times and laid on two more goals, completing 90 minutes seven times.

"I do not think it's very important for the national coach if I score five or 10 goals. It's about having the maximum condition," Gomez told Welt am Sonntag last month.

"[Germany boss] Jogi Low can assess the situation very well. He knows he can count on me."

RB Leipzig's Timo Werner has been Low's preferred striker when fit this season but Wagner – who has five goals in seven Germany appearances since making his debut last June – is also not lacking in confidence after netting in Bayern's 4-0 rout of Freiburg.

"I only look at myself, in principle I do not care who [else] does what. I look at me," he told reporters, before seemingly poking fun at Gomez's convictions over the latter's standing with Low.

"I have worked well in the last few years and scored many goals. One or the other has apparently already given his media adviser a World Cup advance. I am convinced of myself."

"I have scored goals in every club - for Darmstadt in the relegation battle, at Hoffenheim, in the Europa League and now for Bayern."

"That's why I think I deserve it. I'm feeling good. In my eyes, I'm the best German striker, I've said that a thousand times. That will not change either."

"Jogi Low decides I accept every decision. But I am very positive." *(Sorce: Daily Star)*

## Barca name Dembele in Supercopa de Catalunya squad

Ousmane Dembele will have the chance to push for greater involvement at Barcelona after being named in the Supercopa de Catalunya squad to face Espanyol.

The France winger is included alongside the likes of Andre Gomes, Yerry Mina and Aleix Vidal for Wednesday's exhibition match at Camp d'Esports in Lleida.

Dembele, 20, has only managed four competitive starts in an injury-hit campaign since joining the Blaugrana in a big-money move from Borussia Dortmund.

He started the 6-1 thrashing of Girona last month before being dropped back to the bench against Las Palmas and was not needed for the vital victory over Atletico Madrid on Sunday.

Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Philippe Coutinho are among a host of senior stars rested, despite the latter being ineligible for next week's Champions League clash with Chelsea.

*(Source: Goal)*

# Serena ready for long-awaited return at Indian Wells



Serena Williams believes now is the "perfect time" to return to the WTA Tour in order to gauge her progress ahead of the year's remaining grand slam tournaments.

Williams, who claimed a 23rd grand slam title at last year's Australian Open before hanging up her racket for the season upon discovering she was pregnant with her first child, also skipped this year's tournament in Melbourne.

After using the time to work on her fitness, Williams featured in a Fed Cup doubles match for the United States last month and is scheduled to play at the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells which starts this week.

"My expectations, I don't know what they are," the 36-year-old American told the BBC.

"I can't go and say I expect to lose because that is something I will never say. It's just a little different. I'm just expecting to see where I am more than anything."

"This is a good time to start for the summer. If I want to play in those grand slams (the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open) and play well, I think now is the perfect time to start."

Williams remains motivated to chase down Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 grand slam singles titles but is also hoping to give her now six-month-old daughter a chance to have some memories of watching her mother in action.

"I've always been an extremely motivated person, but my main thing is that I would love for my daughter to be around with me doing great, and playing amazing, so that definitely gives me some motivation," she added.

"I would have thought I would have retired six years ago, but I'm still here and I'm playing great, and I think I'll still be playing good."

Unseeded Williams is scheduled to open her Indian Wells campaign with a first round tie against Zarina Diyas of Kazakhstan on Thursday.

Williams last appeared in a Grand Slam at the 2017 Australian Open. Victory over sister Venus in the final left her just one behind Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles.

She has made no secret of the fact she is motivated by the thought of winning 25. And also by giving her daughter a meaningful chance to watch her play.

"I don't need any more motivation," Williams said. "I have the best thing I could ever want right now. I've always been an extremely motivated person, but my main thing is that I would love for my daughter to be around with me doing great, and playing amazing, so that definitely gives me some motivation."

"I would have thought I would have retired

six years ago, but I'm still here and I'm playing great, and I think I'll still be playing good."

She added it was "impossible" to say how long she would continue to play for.

Williams, who is unranked as she has spent more than 12 months away from the tour, has been drawn to play Zarina Diyas of Kazakhstan in the first round in Indian Wells. The match is likely to be played on Thursday evening, Californian time.

She could play her sister Venus in the third round, but has understandably sounded a note of caution.

After all, the former world number one only gave birth six months ago, and six weeks of that time was spent in bed as she recovered from emergency surgery.

"My expectations, I don't know what they are," said Williams.

"I can't go and say I expect to lose because that is something I will never say. It's just a little different. I'm just expecting to see where I am more than anything."

"This is a good time to start for the summer. If I want to play in those Grand Slams (the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open) and play well, I think now is the perfect time to start."

The only mother to have won the Wimbledon singles title since World War One was Australia's Evonne Cawley (nee Goolagong) in 1980. Another motivating factor, should Williams ever need one.

*(Source: Staff & Agency)*

## José Mourinho will earn £400,000 a day as World Cup pundit



Jose Mourinho is already guaranteed to be one of the big winners at the World Cup – earning £1.71million for spending just four days in Russia during the tournament.

Mourinho, who was being chased by the BBC and ITV, has signed up for Russia's international news channel RT, who have no live rights. Mourinho is going to Russia for the World Cup to provide analysis for RT, a Kremlin-funded news channel branded a "foreign agent" in the United States.

RT television announced the signing on Monday without disclosing the payment Mourinho will receive for appearing on a broadcaster that pushes Russia's take on news to a foreign audience.

The international channel does not have the television rights to show World Cup matches but says it will provide "live text commentary" and reports.

The Manchester United boss appeared in a jaunty video accompanying the announcement in which he pretends to coach an RT crew about how to cover the World Cup.

"Guys, I know you are nervous. This is a huge tournament and a huge amount

of pressure," Mourinho said to the stunned-looking RT journalists. "We will show the world a great game – the greatest game," Mourinho added in a statement that he was "very happy to join the team at RT" and share his insights into the five weeks of matches that kick off in Moscow on 14 June. The signing is set to give RT a ratings boost at a difficult time for the Kremlin-backed project that was launched in 2005 and originally called Russia Today.

RT has been dropped by a number of American TV providers after being wrapped up in the controversy surrounding the investigation into Russia's alleged meddling in the 2016 US election.

It was forced to register as a "foreign agent" by the US Justice Department in November for being part of "Russia's state-run propaganda machine" – a charge RT denies. Russia forced nine smaller US media outlets to register as "foreign agents" in retaliation. RT has several foreign language services besides English and is particularly active on YouTube.

*(Source: Telegraph)*

## Arsenal fans´ group votes overwhelmingly for Wenger to go



An overwhelming majority of voters in an Arsenal Supporters' Trust poll have called for long-serving manager Arsene Wenger to leave the club at the end of the season.

Following a run of four consecutive defeats across three competitions for the Gunners, 88 per cent of AST members at a meeting on Monday called for Wenger's tenure to end when his position is reviewed after the current campaign.

Seven per cent of members voted for Wenger to stay, with five per cent undecided.

Uncertainty over Wenger's future dominated the second half of last season but the 68-year-old Frenchman, who became Arsenal boss back in 1996, penned a two-year contract extension on the back of the superb 2-1 FA Cup final win over Premier League champions Chelsea.

However, Arsenal's progress has been familiarly stunted this time around, with the January arrivals of club-record signing Pierre-Emerick Aubamey and Henrikh Mkhitaryan – the latter in a swap deal that saw Alexis Sanchez join Manchester United

– doing nothing to prevent dwindling form.

Wenger's side lie sixth in the Premier League after Sunday's 2-1 defeat at Brighton and Hove Albion, 13 points shy of fourth-placed Tottenham, with nine games remaining this season.

They progressed to the last 16 of the Europa League, where AC Milan lie in wait this week, despite a 2-1 second-leg loss to Swedish minnows Ostersunds.

Manchester City followed up a 3-0 EFL Cup final victory over Arsenal at Wembley nine days ago with an emphatic Premier League triumph by the same scoreline at Emirates Stadium last Thursday.

Various former Gunners have added their voice to those calling for Wenger to leave of late, with Lee Dixon among those of the opinion that a fresh start is required.

He was in attendance at Monday's AGM and said of recent transfer dealings: "I didn't think the players that Wenger bringing in are good enough. Six of the current starting XI aren't good enough."

*(Source: The Sun)*

## Guardiola claims Glenn didn´t understand meaning of yellow ribbon

Pep Guardiola believes a lack of understanding caused Football Association chief executive Martin Glenn's haphazard remarks about the Manchester City manager's yellow ribbon.

Guardiola on Monday accepted an FA charge of "wearing a political message", putting him in breach of the organization's kit and advertising regulations.

The City boss began wearing the pin in support of pro-independence politicians Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sanchez, who were imprisoned as part of the crackdown that followed last October's referendum in Catalonia and remain in custody.

Over the weekend Glenn refuted Guardiola's viewpoint that the ribbon was a humanitarian symbol as opposed to a political one, but the remarkable nature of the FA chief's response courted controversy.

"We have re-written Law 4 of the game so that things like a poppy are okay," he said. "But things that are going to be highly divisive, and that could be strong religious symbols, it could be the Star of David, it could be the hammer and sickle, it could be a swastika, anything like [former Zim-



babwe president] Robert Mugabe on your shirt, these are the things we don't want."

"You say extraordinary comments," Guardiola said, with a chuckle, when the issue was raised at a news conference ahead of the second leg of the Champions League round-of-16 tie against Basel.

"Mr Glenn has apologized, so all is well, but the first

impression when I heard that was he does not understand what the yellow ribbon means.

"He made comments that are far away from that. Maybe now he will realize it is not the same."

"It is not about independence or no independence. It is about people who are in jail when they didn't do absolutely anything to be in jail."

"I think now he is going to understand... the comments were because he did not understand the reality. But now I am pretty sure he will."

Guardiola will stop wearing the ribbon if requested to as an outcome of the FA hearing and, in a further observation on Glenn's words, he added: "Many times I speak for myself and after I say 'why did I say that?'. I have regrets over what I said. Sometime that happens."

Meanwhile, Professional Match Officials Group Limited (PGMOL) chief Mike Riley attended a meeting with City's director of football Txiki Begiristain on Tuesday following Guardiola's request for talks over protecting players from serious foul play.

*(Source: Guardian)*



# Morocco midfielder Boussoufa wary of Iran

2017 was quite a year for Mbark Boussoufa, one in which the Moroccan international played a big part in his country's qualification for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia and one that ended with him helping Al Jazira of the United Arab Emirates take fourth place at the FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2017.

The 33-year-old midfielder featured in all the Atlas Lions' matches in the final round of the African qualifiers for Russia 2018, and is hoping to do the same when his side takes on Portugal, Spain and IR Iran in the group phase at this year's world finals.

FIFA.com sat down with Boussoufa to ask him about Morocco's chances at Russia 2018 and his return to a country where he spent six seasons playing for Anzhi Makhachkala and then Lokomotiv Moscow, before packing his bags for Abu Dhabi in 2016.

■ **FIFA.com:** What's your take on the Final Draw for Russia 2018? What are Morocco chances against Portugal, Spain and IR Iran?

Mbark Boussoufa: It's a tough group but we have to give it our very best shot. The team will be ready to put in a good performance. We're going to come up against some great teams and we know what to expect. We'll just have to wait and see what happens.

■ **What goals do you have at Russia 2018?**

If we're not setting our sights on a place in the second round, then we might as well stay at home. We're not going to the World Cup just to take part but to show what we're capable of. We're going to do all we can to get past the first round.

■ **What's your view on your opening game, against IR Iran?**

IR Iran won't be easy opponents. The Iranians finished top of their group in the Asian qualifiers and let very few goals in. Everyone will be focusing on the competition and even more on that group. We have to be ready to take on any team, from the first match to the last. The opening match is going to be decisive in terms of what lies ahead.

■ **You were only two years old when Morocco produced their best ever World Cup performance at Mexico 1986. What do you remember of that competition?**

There are a lot of great stories about that 1986 team. It was one of Moroccan football's finest generations. They reached



the second round but lost narrowly to West Germany (to a goal scored in the 88th minute). It was a great performance for Morocco, and though I don't remember that much about the competition, I do know the players. I've seen the photos and videos, and I've met some of the players from the time, like Aziz Bouderbala, who's currently with the national team.

■ **Morocco beat Portugal 3-1 at Mexico 1986. Can you produce the same performance this year?**

It's hard to say because Portugal are the European champions and have one of the best players in the world. They are a very good side and they have a good coach. It'll be a different game to the one in Mexico. On paper, they're better than the 1986 team, but we'll see what happens. In any case, we'll be ready to take on anyone.

■ **What memories do you have of France 1998, which was Morocco's last World Cup appearance?**

I remember it well even if I was only 13 at the time, and I can still recall the exploits of Mustapha Hadji and Salaheddine Bassir, though they failed to reach the second

round. Hadji is now an assistant to the national team head coach and shares his experience with us. Obviously we've watched videos of that team.

■ **You faced the Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo and several members of the Spain team at last year's Club World Cup. Did that give you a taste of what to expect against Portugal and Spain?**

The World Cup is a different competition, though Real Madrid are one of the best clubs in the world. You can't always use club performances to predict what's going to happen in internationals. Cristiano Ronaldo is an amazing champion, but it's a different story with the national team.

■ **You played in Russia for six seasons. What's your view of that whole experience?**

I enjoyed six amazing years in Moscow. It's a beautiful city and one of the biggest in Europe. The Russian league is one of the best too. At the time there were eight clubs fighting it out for the title, with some great foreign players around too. I learned a lot on a personal and professional level.

■ **What are your expectations of Russia 2018?**

The country has invested a lot in football in these last few years and has put in a huge effort to develop the sport. Personally, I'm delighted that the World Cup is being held in Russia to give Russian football support.

■ **Can you tell us more about your nickname, "The King of the Assists"?**

I got it in Belgium, because I had a lot of assists every season there. I like scoring but setting up other players is what I'm best at. I find it a lot nicer than scoring myself. I hope to set up a lot in Russia.

■ **Talking of your gift for giving, you have a foundation in your own name. Can you tell us more about it?**

We set up the foundation when I was in Belgium to help people in need. A lot of people don't have the chance to be football players like us and we have to help them. I grew up in a society that encourages people to help others, and it's also because of my religious beliefs that I like others and want to help them. I hope to help out with a number of humanitarian projects in the future.

(Source: FIFA)

## Matchday Three: Iran's Esteghlal held by Al Ain of UAE

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** – Esteghlal football team of Iran were held to a 2-2 draw by Al Ain of the UAE in Matchday Three of the AFC Champions League in Group D.

Omar Abdulrahman left-footed shot from the left side of the box was saved by Esteghlal goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini in the 31st minute.

Seven minutes into second half, Mame Thiam opened the scoring for Esteghlal after receiving a pass from Farshid Esmaeili.

Marcus Berg equalized the match in the 63rd minute with a pass from Hussein El Shahat in the six yards.

Berg missed a penalty in the 76th minute and Thiam was on target once again two minutes later.

With one minute remaining, substitute Ahmed Khalil found the back of the Esteghlal's net from penalty spot.

Esteghlal will host Al Ain next week in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, while Al Rayyan of Qatar will play Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal in Doha's Jassim bin Hamad Stadium.



## Women's futsal team taking nothing for granted: coach

**TASNIM** — Iran's women's futsal coach Shahrzad Mozaffar says they will not take nothing for granted when Team Melli plays in the 2018 AFC Women's Futsal Championship.

Defending champions Iran have been pitted against Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in an all Central Asian affair in Group D.

"Asian women's futsal teams have improved in the recent years. The first edition gathered nine teams together in Malaysia but in the second edition a total of 15 teams will take part at the competition," Mozaffar said.

"Thailand as a host country have progressed a lot and countries including Macau, Bangladesh, Turkmenistan and Hong Kong have improved as well," she added.

"We are preparing well for the competition and are determined to defend our title. Iran will not take nothing for granted any team," Mozaffar concluded.

The 2018 AFC Women's Futsal Championship will be the second edition of the AFC Women's Futsal Championship, the biennial international futsal championship organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for the women's national teams of Asia.

## Iran wheelchair basketball team defeat Thailand

**Press TV** — The Iranian women's national wheelchair basketball team have earned their first win in the qualification round of the 2018 Asian Para Games, also known as the third edition of Asian Para Games, overcoming the Thai side.

On Monday, the Iranian physically-challenged athletes beat their Southeast Asian counterparts 45-30.

Iran are scheduled to take on India in its next showdown on Wednesday.

The qualification round of the 2018 Asian Para Games will determine the women's national wheelchair basketball teams that will participate in the 2018 Asian Para Games.

The 2018 Asian Para Games will be held in the Indonesian capital city of Jakarta between October 6 and October 13, 2018.

## Sauber F1 team appoint female test driver

Sauber have promoted female Colombian racer Tatiana Calderon to the role of Formula One test driver after a year in a development role.

The 24-year-old, who is backed by the team's Mexican sponsor Telmex, is competing in the GP3 series again this season after finishing 18th overall last year.

Swiss-based Sauber were the first Formula One team to have a female principal, although Monisha Kaltenborn departed last year. They also had Swiss racer Simona de Silvestro as an 'affiliated driver' in 2014.

Italian Antonio Giovinazzi, who raced for Ferrari-powered Sauber as a stand-in last year, is the reserve driver.

Formula One has not had a woman driver start a grand prix since 1976.

(Source: Reuters)

## Zidane should be next PSG boss - Ginola

David Ginola has said Real Madrid's Zinedine Zidane would be an "ideal" coach for Paris Saint-Germain.

Zidane, in his first senior managerial job, guided Madrid to back-to-back Champions League trophies and last season's La Liga title. However, there has been speculation over his future after a difficult season that has left the Champions League as the club's only chance of silverware.

PSG have spent more than €1 billion attempting to bring European success to the Parc des Princes, but have yet to make it past the Champions League quarterfinals.

And speaking to El Pais, Ginola said his former France teammate would be the right man for the challenge.

"I see Zidane as the ideal next PSG coach," he said. "To win the Champions League with PSG should be his next objective. Then he will have time, in the future, to coach the France national team."

Ginola said PSG coach Unai Emery should be replaced if his team fails win this season's Champions League.

(Source: ESPN)

## Matchday Three: Zob Ahan defeat UAE's Al Wahda

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — A Morteza Tabrizi brace fired Iran's Zob Ahan to a 2-0 home win over Al Wahda of the UAE on Matchday Three of the 2018 AFC Champions League Group B on Tuesday.

A lively start to the game saw the two sides exchange attempts inside the first five minutes. Al Wahda goalkeeper Mohammed Al Shamsi was forced into a reflex save after Bakhtiar Rahmani's side-footed effort from inside the box.

In the 34th minute of the match Tabrizi opened the scoring from Sayed Hosseini's cross. The striker was well positioned at the far post to head home the cross for his second goal of the campaign, the-afc wrote.

Tabrizi doubled the host's lead in the 72nd minute, benefitting from a defensive lapse that allowed Kiro to get on the end of a long pass and set up his teammate behind Al Wahda's defense. Tabrizi then deftly attempted a placed shot from 30 yards out that



nested into the back of the net.

Zob Ahan will go into next week's Matchday Four fixture in Abu Dhabi with six points to its name, while Al Wahda will look to avenge its defeat and end its winless run in the competition which now stands at four games.

## Mahdavikia demonstrates football skills on FIFA video

**S P O R T S** With 100 days left to the start of the FIFA World Cup in Russia on June 14, the International Football Federation released a promotional video for the championship featuring Iranian football legend Mehdi Mahdavikia.

The video, which was published on FIFA's website, also shows Vladimir Putin playing football with current FIFA Director Gianni Infantino in the green hall of the Kremlin. In the video, the Russian president makes several passes and even takes the ball with his head, demonstrating unusual football skills, Sputnik reported.

The footage also features retired Mexican goalkeeper and striker Jorge Campos, Nigerian midfielder Jay-Jay Okocha, Australian football coach Garry Kewell, Japanese midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata and English forward Wayne Rooney as well as Brazilian striker Ronaldo.



Russia will host its first FIFA World Cup from June 14 to July 15. Matches will be played in Kaliningrad, Kazan, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Samara, Saransk, Sochi, St. Petersburg, Volgograd and Yekaterinburg.

## Iran and United States plan women's weightlifting international match

In a week when three Americans are making an historic sporting visit to Iran, plans have been announced for a groundbreaking women's international match between Iran and the United States later this year.

The likelihood is that the match will take place in Turkmenistan, host nation for this year's International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Championships in November.

Details will be discussed in Ahvaz, south-west Iran, in the next few days by Ursula Garza Papandrea and Ali Moradi, Presidents respectively of USA Weightlifting (USAW) and the Islamic Republic of Iran Weightlifting Federation (IRIWF).

Garza Papandrea, the highest-qualified female coach in the sport in the US, is "honored beyond words" to be in Ahvaz this week, alongside American technical official Sally Van De Water and national 62 kilograms champion Derrick Johnson.

Johnson, 33, who is coached by Garza Papandrea, is competing in the third Fajr Cup, an international invitation competition which, perhaps for the last time, is open to men only.

Johnson is the first American weightlifter to compete in Iran since 1965, the last time the IWF World Championships were held there.

Despite the popularity and international success of weightlifting in Iran it has until now been a men-only sport.

Moradi spoke of his plans for women to be allowed into international weightlifting at the IWF World Champion-



ships in Anaheim, California, last December, when he had productive meetings with the Americans.

There had been cultural objections by the state, partly because of the Islamic dress code, but the IRIWF was given permission to go ahead with the women's program provided the athletes wore approved clothing and sports hijabs.

"Our joint goal is to see Iran competing in women's weightlifting at the World Championships," said Phil Andrews, chief executive of USAW.

Moradi hopes Iranian women will compete at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

This week Garza Papandrea, in coaching, and Van De

Water, in officiating, will give advice at a women's camp in Ahvaz, timed to run alongside the Fajr Cup.

"It is a great honor to be able to run this camp for these fellow women athletes," said Garza Papandrea, a vice-president of the IWF.

"I look forward to meeting with them and helping them on the road to success."

Andrews added: "We at USA Weightlifting are very proud of Ursula and Sally."

"Their historic work will place sport above politics and, we hope, continue to assist IR Iran's women's program."

In a statement through USAW, Garza Papandrea said before flying to Iran that sport was partly "about representing your country, and making your country proud on the international stage".

She said: "It's about seeing the world, learning about people and cultures and expanding your viewpoint so that you don't live in a myopic mindset."

"So I am extremely humbled and honored to be a guest and to learn about Iran and the Iranian culture."

"And I am honored to be selected to spend time with the Iranian women weightlifters."

"I cannot wait to see how the sport progresses in Iran."

"I am sure given the amazing success of Iranian men's weightlifting, it won't be long before we see an Iranian woman stand atop an Olympic podium."

(Source: Insidethegames.biz)



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## “Train to Pakistan” arrives in Iran

**CULTURE d e s k** TEHRAN – A Persian translation of Indian author Khushwant Singh’s novel “Train to Pakistan” by Nozar Niazi has been published in Tehran. The book has been published by Morvarid Publications in Tehran. The story of the novel is set in 1947, a turbulent time in India as the British Raj ends, and the partition of Pakistan from India takes place. Although inequality was a way of life in India with their caste system and the various religions, the violence that came about as Muslims were forced to flee east to Pakistan and Hindus west toward India was unprecedented.



The front cover of the Persian translation of Indian author Khushwant Singh’s novel “Train to Pakistan”

## Oscars draw smallest-ever U.S. television audience

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — The Academy Awards attracted its smallest U.S. television audience ever on Sunday, according to Nielsen data reported by Walt Disney Co’s (DIS.N) ABC network, tracking a similar slide for other recent award shows and sports events. Live TV broadcasts remain relatively attractive for advertisers because watchers cannot skip commercials, with prices for Oscars ad spots climbing despite 2017 viewership, which was the smallest in nine years. The nearly four-hour live show averaged 26.5 million total viewers, according to Nielsen data in an ABC statement, down from 32.9 million in 2017 and below the 32 million in 2008, now the second-least watched year. The figures do not include digital and mobile viewing. Advertisers covet live audiences because they are more likely to view commercials than those watching recorded shows and events, driving pricing higher even as viewership shrinks. ABC owns broadcast rights for the Oscars through 2028. The 90th Oscars, still expected to be 2018’s most-watched non-sporting U.S. television event, honored romantic fantasy “The Shape of Water” as best picture. The event built on the socially conscious tone of its past few years with themes of female empowerment and activism, but lacked any shocking moments like 2017’s best picture mix-up. Late night talk show host Jimmy Kimmel, host for the past two years, skewered industry-roiling sexual misconduct allegations and reports of gender-based pay disparities, while best actress winner Frances McDormand called for “inclusion riders” to boost Hollywood diversity. ABC sold out its ad inventory for Sunday’s Oscars broadcast and charged \$2.6 million on average for a 30-second spot, a person with knowledge of the matter said. That was a jump from \$1.91 million in 2017, according to research firm Kantar Media, which said ABC generated \$128 million from the 2017 telecast. The Grammy Awards in January attracted 26.1 million television viewers, its smallest audience since 2006. February’s Super Bowl professional football championship, the most-watched telecast of the year, saw its viewership decline 7 percent from a year earlier to 103.4 million.

## Cosby’s lawyers try to block 19 accusers from next assault trial

**NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Reuters)** — Comedian Bill Cosby’s defense team urged a Pennsylvania judge on Tuesday to bar 19 women accusing him of sexual assault from testifying at his upcoming retrial on charges he abused a former friend. A smiling, laughing Cosby arrived at court in Norristown, Pennsylvania, minutes before the scheduled start of the second day of a pretrial hearing. He hugged his defense lawyers, who aimed to convince Judge Steven O’Neill that Cosby would be denied a fair trial if the multiple accusers were permitted to take the witness stand in the retrial, slated to begin with jury selection on March 29. Cosby, 80, is charged with drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand, 44, a former administrator of the women’s basketball team at his alma mater, Temple University, at the television star’s home near Philadelphia between Dec. 30, 2003, and Jan. 20, 2004. The actor/comedian, best known as the wise and witty father on TV’s “The Cosby Show”, has repeatedly denied wrongdoing, saying that any sexual encounter was consensual. Cosby’s first criminal trial ended in a mistrial in June when jurors failed to reach a unanimous verdict in the same court. Before the first trial, prosecutors asked Judge O’Neill to allow 13 of the 19 women to testify against Cosby, but he allowed only one to do so because, in general, a defendant’s history is not admissible as evidence that he or she committed a particular crime. The Cosby case qualifies as an exception, prosecutors told the judge on Monday, on the first day of the pre-trial hearing, because the way he abused the 19 women was repetitive and consistent.

# Ankara fair to showcase works by Iranian artists

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN – ArtAnkara, a major international contemporary art fair in the Turkish capital, is scheduled to exhibit a collection of works from Iranian artists. Paintings by Nazar Musavinia, Ahmad Tak, Maryam Moqaddam and Kaveh Kavusi, and sculptures by Leila Alikhani, selected by Tehran’s Farda Gallery, will be put on display at the fair, the gallery announced on Tuesday. The 4th edition of ArtAnkara will take place at ATO Congressum from March 15 to 18. The organizers have said that ArtAnkara is a platform to strengthen and develop the art environment and



An ArtAnkara curator (L) briefs visitors during the third edition of the international art fair in Ankara on March 17, 2017. (ArtAnkara)

art market of the region and neighboring countries. Paintings, sculptures, photographs, sets of video and digital art and installation and many other forms of artistic expression will be showcased at the fair.

## “Artists of Tomorrow” coming to Tehran Book Garden

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN – The Tehran Book Garden will be playing host to an exhibition entitled “Artists of Tomorrow”, which will showcase artworks from across Iran. The exhibition that will open on March 9 and will run until April 14 is scheduled to display works by 150 promising young artists, the organizers announced on Tuesday. The exhibit has been organized in collaboration with the Art Center, a major gallery in Tehran, to discover new talent across Iran. The Art Center will dedicate a solo exhibition to a top artist of the exhibition, and the top ten artists of the exhibition will be granted a privilege to showcase their artworks during an exhibition at the center.



A poster for the Artists of Tomorrow exhibition at the Tehran Book Garden

## Iran’s Rudaki Foundation, Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory ink MOU

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN – Iran’s Rudaki Foundation and the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in Moscow to enhance bilateral cooperation. The MOU was inked on Monday by Rudaki Foundation Managing Director Ali-Akbar Safipur and the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory rector Alexander Sokolov, on the sidelines of the 14th Iran-Russia Joint Economic and Trade Cooperation Commission, the foundation announced in a press release on Tuesday. Based on the MOU, the two sides agreed to develop educational collaboration and concentrate on joint productions. They also agreed to organize workshops in Iran and Russia, and exchange composers and students. The Rudaki Foundation is the organizer of concerts by major Iranian and international orchestras in the country. Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Masoud Karbasian at the head of a delegation attended the 14th Iran-Russia Joint Economic and Trade Cooperation Commission meeting in Moscow on March 5 and 6.

## Frances McDormand wins, loses and reunites with best actress Oscar

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** - Like a scene from a Hollywood caper film, a tuxedo-clad photographer foiled another man’s attempt to make off with Frances McDormand’s Oscar from an official Academy Awards after-party on Sunday. Los Angeles police said on Monday that party-goer Terry Bryant was arrested on a grand theft charge and was being held on \$20,000 bond. It was unclear if he had an attorney. Bryant was arrested after McDormand’s best actress Oscar went missing briefly at the lavish Governor’s Ball party in Hollywood, where Academy Award winners have their statuettes engraved following the annual ceremony. McDormand, 60, won the award for her role as an angry, grieving mother in “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”. “I lost my Oscar”, the two-time Oscar winner said, shrugging her shoulders as she left the party, according to video recorded by Reuters Television. The Reuters video captured Bryant leaving the ball holding the Oscar and saying, “We got it. We did it. We did it. I got to go.” The Los Angeles police department said in a statement that the photographer, whom they did not identify, grew suspicious when he failed to “recognize Bryant as a recipient from the awards show.” He followed Bryant out of the party “and without any resistance from Bryant took the Oscar from him,” the statement said. It was not clear how Bryant took possession of the Oscar, or in what capacity he was attending the event, but police said he had a ticket to enter. Bryant also posted a video on social media of himself at the event holding an



Terry Bryant, accused of stealing Frances McDormand’s best actress Oscar at the lavish Governor’s Ball party, is seen in this still image from Reuters video in Hollywood, California, U.S., March 4, 2018. (Reuters/Reuters TV)

## Paintings by Hassan Ruholamin on display at Paris exhibit

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN – An exhibition of paintings by the young artist, Hassan Ruholamin, is currently underway at Iran’s cultural office in Paris. The exhibit has been arranged to mark the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatima (AS), daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S), which falls on Friday this year. “Reason for the Creation” on the birth of Hazrat Fatima (AS) is a highlight of the exhibit. In his brief remarks at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Ruholamin said that he intends to introduce Islamic culture through art to individuals not familiar with Islamic issues.



Hassan Ruholamin poses for a photo at an exhibition of his paintings underway at Iran’s cultural office in Paris.



Rudaki Foundation Managing Director Ali-Akbar Safipur (L) and Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory rector Alexander Sokolov sign MOU in Moscow on March 5, 2018. (Rudaki Foundation)

## Mexicans hail Oscars as sign of cultural sway despite Trump

**MEXICO CITY (Reuters)** — Mexican director Guillermo del Toro’s Oscars triumph and a win by animated film “Coco” were hailed by Mexicans on Monday as a sign of their nation’s cultural sway in the United States despite growing tensions under U.S. President Donald Trump. Del Toro’s best director win for his “The Shape of Water”, a fable about the mistreatment of the powerless, marked the fourth time a Mexican had taken home the award in the last five years, following the success of Alfonso Cuaron and Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu. The accolades from Hollywood for Mexican filmmakers stands in contrast to Trump’s repeated attacks on the United States’ southern neighbor, which began when he launched his campaign by saying Mexican immigrants were murderers. In Mexico, news headlines boasted “Mexico sweeps the Oscars”, “Oscar 2018: Mexico’s Night” and “Del Toro Paints the Oscars Green, White and Red”, the colors of the Mexican flag. In his acceptance speech, Del Toro celebrated his immigrant heritage and took a veiled dig at Trump, who wants to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border to stem illegal immigration. “The greatest thing our art does and our industry does is to erase the lines in the sand,” del Toro said. “We should continue doing that when the world tells us to make them deeper.” Latinos in the United States and Mexicans back home cheered his win. “It was exhilarating to see,” said Gaz Alazraki, a Mexican filmmaker who produces Mexican Netflix series “Club of Crows.” “Guillermo spoke on behalf of all dreamers. With his success, he is a symbol of what the United States has meant for foreigners for forever,” Alazraki told Reuters. Mexicans make up about four-fifths of the so-called Dreamers - hundreds of



Gael Garcia Bernal (L) congratulates Guillermo del Toro as he stands to accept the Oscar for Best Director for “The Shape of Water”. (Reuters/Lucas Jackson)

thousands of young people whose parents brought them to the United States illegally and whose fate is now uncertain after Trump moved to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Former Mexican President Vicente Fox, who has blasted Trump’s plan for a border wall, took to Twitter after del Toro’s win to needle the U.S. president. “The Mexican Power at the #Oscars is raw talent, which is not there illegally or stealing jobs, as @realDonaldTrump claims. You see, Donald, talent is not limited by borders,” Fox said. “The Shape of Water” had 13 nominations and won a total of four Academy Awards, including best picture. The success of animated feature “Coco” was also celebrated as a breakthrough for putting Mexican traditions and life in poor villages at the center of the Disney pantheon. The Disney-Pixar film was a box office smash, raking in more than \$700 million worldwide. The film follows a boy named Miguel who finds himself in the land of the dead during the Mexican celebration of the Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead.