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## 'Iran to handle U.S. sanctions on its aviation sector'

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran will properly manage the U.S.-led sanctions on its aviation sector and entities as it did during the past years, the spokesman of Iran Civil Aviation Organization told IRIB.

Iranian aviation industry has been under sanctions during the recent years and could manage the pressures, Reza Jafarzadeh said, adding: "We will rely on our experiences in our onward trend."

The United States imposed a new wave of sanctions on nine individuals and entities accused of skirting sanctions to secure equipment and parts for designated Iranian airlines, the Treasury Department said in a statement on Thursday.

"Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated nine individuals and entities procuring export-controlled, U.S.-origin goods for sanctioned Iranian airlines," the statement said.

## German, Russian, French and Chinese leaders back JCPOA

*By staff and agencies*

Leaders of Russia, France, Germany as well as the Chinese premier have reiterated their support for the 2015 nuclear deal as Donald Trump has exited the U.S. from the internationally backed agreement.

China, Russia, Germany, and France are among the signatories

of the nuclear deal with Iran.

Talking to reporters in St Petersburg on Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron questioned Trump's withdrawal from the international agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and backed by the UN Security Council. ➔2

## Fresh Saudi airstrikes leave civilians killed and injured in Yemen

At least six civilians have been killed when the Saudi regime military aircraft carried out airstrikes against a residential area in Yemen's northwestern province of Sa'ada as Riyadh presses ahead with its atrocious bombardment campaign against its southern neighbor.

The House of Saud regime fighter jets conducted aerial assaults against a house in the Majz district of the province on Friday, leaving six people dead and four others injured, an unnamed local source told Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network. ➔13

## Iran, Poland have potential to benefit from complementary markets: envoy

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**  
**By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh**

**TEHRAN** — Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jaroslaw Marcin Domański believes that Iran and Poland have complementary markets and strong potentials to strengthen mutual economic relations. Making the remarks in an interview with the Tehran Times on May 23, the ambassador underlined all European countries' willingness, including Poland's, to reactivate 'blocking statute' - a 1996 law that would prohibit European companies from complying with U.S. sanctions on Iran. Domański, in addition, voiced Polish companies' readiness for exporting their products to Iran as well as making investments in the Asian country.

Following is the full text of the interview:

**What is the Polish Government's plan to support its firms in Iran, especially under the current condition that the U.S. has withdrawn from Iran's deal (known as the JCPOA) and EU seeks to reactivate 'blocking statute' against U.S. sanctions on Iran for European firms?**

A: First of all, let me tell you that there is a full unity within the EU on preserving the JCPOA. Last week we had a very important summit in Sofia, Bulgaria, the summit of the heads of states and governments of all the 28 member states of the EU. During the summit, the Iranian issue and the JCPOA was very high in the agenda and all the EU Member States unanimously agreed on the importance of JCPOA, on doing all possible

to preserve it and on the measures which the EU is to adopt to protect European companies and preserve the full implementation of the JCPOA if Iran implements its commitments. So far, 10 reports have been released by the International Atomic Energy Agency and according to these reports it is clear that Iran has fulfilled its commitments, therefore, the EU agreed that we will do all possible to fulfill ours. In this respect certain measures have been promised, not yet adopted, since the process takes time and as you correctly mentioned the blocking statute is one of them. According to the political declaration of the summit, to which Poland fully subscribes, the formal process to activate the blocking statute has been launched and the aim is to have that measure in practice before 6 August. ➔4

## Hezbollah's rising power is fomenting panic among Zionists

**By Ramin Hossein Abadian**

**TEHRAN** — For a long time, the threats of the Zionist regime have intensified against the resistance axis in the Mideast, especially against Hezbollah in Lebanon. The Zionists have experienced bitter days from their efforts to confront Hezbollah in Lebanon. One of the most significant of these sour experiences was the 33-day war in 2006, which Hezbollah arguably "won" when the Israelis withdrew.

However, it seems that the Zionists have not learned much from their bitter experiences in the past and they continue to threaten Lebanon, where Hezbollah is an intrinsic part of the government. The Zionists are fully aware Hezbollah's military power, which has increased steadily since 2006 and the 33-day war. Hezbollah is currently strong in the political arena in Lebanon and their victory in the recent par-

liamentary elections alone is testimony to that.

Some 12 years have passed since the Zionist regime's all-out war against Hezbollah in 2006, a war that ended with a victory for Hezbollah's popular resistance forces. The Zionist entity wrongly assumed in few days it would easily be able to take control the southern region of Lebanon. Not only did the IDF fail, but they returned to occupied Palestine empty handed. ➔7



**EDITORIAL**

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## Pompeo's special mission and shadow of U.S. secret diplomacy over Europe

**I**ntense negotiations between the U.S. and Europe over the Iran nuclear deal are ongoing.

And you couldn't be more wrong thinking that with Trump's exit from the Iran nuclear pact, the three European countries -- namely Germany, the UK and France -- wouldn't be holding talks with the U.S. over the JCPOA any longer.

Ever since America's withdrawal from the JCPOA U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has been busy negotiating with his European counterparts over the Iran deal, trying to make them heel to the U.S. move and even threatening European business that trade with Iran with economic sanctions.

Prior to Pompeo's recent speech at the Heritage Foundation, and the patently absurd White House demands over the Iran nuclear deal, the U.S. Department of State announced that Pompeo had already had talks with his British, French, and German counterparts over the JCPOA.

Part of the statement reads: "The United States and its European allies have strong interests and share common ground in preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapon and its destabilizing roles in the region. The Secretary of State has stressed the good measures taken against the common threats in the past few months and hopes to continue our solid partnership and move forward."

What is puzzling here is that the European officials have no interest in revealing the content of the behind the scene talks with their American counterparts on the JCPOA. This is an issue that cannot be overlooked.

The most important fact here is that the output of the US and European Troika negotiations, which have been mostly shaped in the form of hidden diplomacy, points to Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron's stress over the abrogation of the Iran deal with the inclusion of Iranian missiles and regional issues related to Iran. ➔7



**ARTICLE**

**Martin Love**  
Political analyst from North Carolina

## U.S. may be hoisting itself on its own petard

**T**he Chinese suggestion that "May you live in interesting times" is now fulfilled, it appears. Who made current times most interesting, in some respects like never before since World War II, is a lame minded Donald Trump this Spring, plunging the thoughts of many across the world into chaos and trepidation.

In a complete about face to many of his campaign promises in 2016, which arguably got him elected, he has, particularly with regard to the Mideast: Withdrawn the U.S. from the JCPOA, opened a U.S. embassy in Jerusalem, completely ignored grotesque Zionist carnage in Gaza especially, threatened Iran on several fronts, adopted Muhammad ibn Salman (who threw in his fortunes with the U.S. and Israel and may have recently been shot, or perhaps he is dead?), may be planning to officially recognize the Israeli occupied Golan as Israel's, occupied parts of eastern Syria and also attacked Syria with missiles, ramped up support for the Saudi War on Yemen with the installation of Army Green Berets near or in Yemen, is planning massive "sanctions" against Iran and even may be planning, with the Pentagon, a military attack not just on Iran, but also on Syria and Lebanon, too. He has also threatened Europe with sanctions if Europe attempts to maintain growing business with Iran. More could be cited, but this list is quite enough for now. So, what does it all mean exactly?

It means, first of all, that the U.S. had lost, and had been losing, control of the Mideast like never before...and imagines that control can be re-won with the moves he made this Spring in concert with the Saudis and Israelis. The extreme nature of the moves tells the world that the U.S. is desperate, failing and flailing. It is hardly any kind of evidence of strength.

For example, remember 9/11? In the immediate aftermath, the Islamic Republic strongly empathized with America, even though enmity had existed between the two countries for decades. Iran's response was exceptional, and without any gloating whatsoever: President Khatami at the time condemned it, as did Ayatollah Khamenei. ➔7



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## Divine Month Festival celebrates Ramadan

A music group from the northeastern Iranian region of Khorasan performs during the Divine Month Festival at Tehran's Milad Tower on May 24, 2018.

The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization and the Tehran Municipality are organizing the festival to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan.

Musical groups from across Iran are participating in the festival, and exhibitions of Iranian handicrafts are also underway on the sidelines.

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**Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company**





MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Cleric: Ill will against Iran to continue ‘with or without missiles’

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The interim Friday prayer leader of Tehran has condemned the enemies’ hatred towards Iran, saying even if Iran gives up its missile program, the animosity towards it will continue.

“If Iran gives up all weapons and defends itself with rocks like Palestine, does the enemy leave Iran alone? Absolutely not; Have they left Palestine alone?” Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani told worshippers, Mehr reported.

He criticized the enemies for the economic and political pressures they impose on Iran, stressing that the only way to repel their threats is through relying on internal resources.



‘Morocco’s anti-Iran claims intended to please third parties’

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman has dismissed the anti-Iran claims by Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita, who had accused Iran of interference in his country.

In a Thursday statement, Bahram Qassemi said the Moroccan officials’ insistence on repeating false claims are merely a pretext to cut diplomatic relations with Iran and appease third parties.

“The Moroccan foreign minister knows very well that the allegations are totally wrong and based on fantasies written by those who make such provocative moves based on their illegitimate interests and do not care about the real interests of the Moroccan people,” Qassemi said.



Iran to ditch nuclear agreement if talks with EU fails: envoy

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) warned on Friday the UN monitoring body’s latest report on Iran could be the last one if Europe fails to guarantee Iran’s benefits from the 2015 nuclear pact.

Reza Najafi said the new report, which is the 11th of its kind since the JCPOA came into force and the 10th quarterly report to the Board of Governors, reaffirmed that Iran’s nuclear activities are in full compliance with the deal.

On Thursday, the IAEA once again confirmed that Iran has been abiding by its commitments under the deal, also called the JCPOA, despite the U.S. withdrawal from it.



Bipartisan amendment limits U.S. president over striking Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A bipartisan amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday, May 24, stated Congress’s position that no law exists which gives the U.S. president the power to launch a military strike against Iran.

The amendment was introduced by Rep. Keith Ellison and cosponsored by Reps. Barbara Lee, Ro Khanna, Jan Schakowsky, Jim McGovern and Walter Jones, reported Ellison on his website, according to Radio Free Europe.

“The unanimous passage of this bipartisan amendment is a strong and timely counter to the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the Iran deal and its increasingly hostile rhetoric,” Rep. Ellison said, adding, “This amendment sends a powerful message that the American people and Members of Congress do not want a war with Iran.”



IMF to continue cooperation with Iranian central banker

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has announced that it will continue its cooperation with the Central Bank of Iran and its governor Valiollah Seif after the United States slapped sanctions on him.

The IMF further said as Iran is one of its members, it will continue to cooperate with Seif, IRNA reported.

Last week, the U.S. Treasury accused Seif of covertly funneling money on behalf of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) and imposed sanctions on him.

Speaking in Brussels, Foreign Minister Javad Zarif called the sanctions against Seif “illegal”.



Turkey to protect firms against U.S. Iran sanctions

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Ankara will take steps to protect Turkish companies which may suffer as a result of new U.S. sanctions against Iran, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said on Friday.

Aksoy, however, did not disclose any specific plans to protect companies from U.S. sanctions, Trend reported.

Turkey has criticized the anti-Iran sanctions by the U.S. government, with President Erdogan saying the new sanctions will not have any effect.

He added, “The U.S. refusal to stick to the nuclear deal shows that Washington was not sincere in relation to the nuclear agreement with Iran.”

# Iran sets end of May deadline to see EU measures to save nuclear pact

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran wants European powers to present it with measures by the end of May to compensate it for the U.S. decision to abandon the 2015 nuclear deal, a senior official said on Friday, and Tehran would decide within weeks whether to quit the accord.

Nations that remain in the agreement – Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia – began meetings on Friday for the first time since Trump left the pact. Their officials will try to flesh out with Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi a strategy to save the deal by keeping oil and investment flowing.

“To be honest with you, we are not confident,” the unnamed official told reporters on Friday before the talks began, according to Reuters.

“We expect the (economic) package to be given to us by the end of May,” the Iranian official said. “I’m sorry to say that we haven’t (seen) the Plan B yet. The Plan B has just started to be figured out.”

He said European measures would need to ensure that oil exports did not halt, and that Iran would still have access to the SWIFT international bank payments messaging system.

A report by the IRIB said that after the commission’s meeting, the diplomats were



Front row, left to right: EU deputy foreign policy chief Helga Schmid, IAEA chief Yukiya Amano, Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi in Friday’s JCPOA Joint Commission meeting

to hold bilateral or multilateral meetings among them to further discuss the JCPOA’s continuation.

Al-Mayadeen reported that the foreign ministers of the European Union

are going to meet on Monday to discuss the Iran deal.

The finance ministers from France, Germany and the UK were also scheduled to talk about Iranian measures on the

sidelines of a European Union meeting in Brussels, according to participants. The EU pledged May 18 it would find ways to maintain the sanctions relief promised to Iran under the JCPOA.

## Ayatollah Khamenei sets seven conditions for Europe to save Iran deal

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei set out seven conditions for European powers if they want Iran to stay in the nuclear deal after the U.S. exit.

The Leader set the conditions at a meeting with the heads of the three branches of government, ministers top managers, military commanders as well as political and cultural figures late on Wednesday.

These are the list of conditions:

- 1- Given dishonesty of the three European countries [Germany, the UK and France] in the early (13)80s [Iranian calendar years] on the nuclear issue, the Europeans must prove that they do not intend to repeat that dishonesty.
- 2- The three European countries did not complain about the U.S. repeated violations of the spirit and text of the JCPOA and they must make up for this ignorance.
- 3- The U.S. withdrawal is violation of the 2231 resolution of the UN [Security Council]. The Europeans must take a resolution against the U.S. to the UN Security Council and file complaint against the U.S. move.
- 4- The heads of the three European countries must pledge to avoid mentioning Iran’s missile program and presence in the region.
- 5- The Europeans must counter any kind of U.S.

**“The heads of the three European countries must pledge to avoid mentioning Iran’s missile program and presence in the region.”**

sanction against Iran. All must know that the Islamic Republic will not abandon its factors of power especially its defense capabilities.

6- If the U.S. impedes Iran’s sale of oil, the Europeans must guarantee purchasing oil from Iran as much as the country’s needs are met.

7- The European banks must guarantee transactions with Iran.

**■ ‘Iran reserves the right to resume nuclear activities if conditions not met’**

**“The European banks should guarantee transactions with Iran.”**

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader said, “Iran does not seek confrontation with the three European countries, however, we do not trust them based on their record. So, they must give actual guarantees.”

Ayatollah Khamenei said, “Economy of the country cannot be built by European JCPOA.”

Ayatollah Khamenei added Iran has the right to resume its restricted nuclear activities if the Europeans failed to meet the Islamic Republic’s demands.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also called on the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to prepare itself to resume enriching uranium to the purity level of 20 percent if Iran’s conditions are not met.

“We do not resume [uranium] enrichment at 20 percent purity now, however, you should be ready to resume activities which were restricted under the JCPOA if the JCPOA is no more useful,” he said.

On May 8, U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the UN-endorsed nuclear agreement and vowed to reimpose sanctions on Iran.

After the U.S. withdrawal, Iran wants assurances from the remaining parties that its interests are guaranteed or it will resume its nuclear activities with a higher speed.

## Lip service to JCPOA not enough, Iran warns Europe

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A top Iranian diplomat says paying lip service to the 2015 nuclear agreement is not enough, demanding that European countries guarantee Iran’s benefits from the otherwise abandoned Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“We told the Europeans that paying lip service is not enough,” Majid Takht-Ravanchi, the current deputy director of the presidential chief of staff for political affairs, said on Friday, ISNA reported.

Should the European countries fail to provide practical guarantees for the implementation of the JCPOA, Iran would take an alternative measure, he said, suggesting that leaving the historic pact, which was struck back in 2015 between Iran and six world powers, is on the table.

**■ ‘We won’t stay in nuclear at any condition’**

Takht-Ravanchi said Iran will not stay in the deal at any cost

“We will not stay in BARJAM (a Persian acronym for the JCPOA) in any conditions. This has been asserted by the Supreme Leader and the president as well, and the policy of the system is that the dignity of the Iranian nation is above all these things.”

Takht-Ravanchi, who was on Iran’s nuclear negotiating team with big powers, stressed that in the aftermath of the U.S. unilateral exit from the JCPOA, President Rouhani set a deadline of just a few weeks – not months – for talks with other signatories of the deal, warning, especially the European countries, against the protraction of the talks.

He said due to Iran’s full compliance

with its commitments under the JCPOA, all sanctions and restrictions, including banking hurdles, must be lifted.

He added if Washington’s sanctions harm Iran’s oil sale, it would be a clear violation of the JCPOA which Tehran would deem unacceptable.

The diplomat further said the EU policymakers are trying to resurrect the “blocking statute” to resist U.S. sanctions and this shows their determination to support their firms, he stated.

“The reality, however, is that countries cannot force their private sector to have business interactions with other countries,” he added.

Takht-Ravanchi also said since assuming office, U.S. President Donald Trump has tried very hard to deter Iran from the benefits of the nuclear agreement.

## Iran complying with nuclear deal: IAEA

Iran continues to comply with the terms of its nuclear deal with world powers despite the U.S. withdrawal, the UN atomic watchdog policing the accord said on Thursday.

In its first such report since U.S. President Donald Trump announced Washington’s pullout on May 8, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Iran remained within limits on the level to which it can

enrich uranium, its stock of enriched uranium and other items.

“The Agency ... has conducted complementary accesses under the Additional Protocol to all the sites and locations in Iran which it needed to visit,” the IAEA said in a confidential report that was sent to member states and obtained by Reuters.

Diplomats who follow the agency said an inspec-

tion last month went down to the wire, but a senior diplomat also familiar with the IAEA’s work said on Thursday the report was not taking Iran to task.

“There was no problem. It’s just an encouragement. The IAEA wants to make sure that there won’t be any problem,” he said, adding that there had been no change in Iranian behavior either over the first quarter of 2018 or since Trump’s announcement.

## German, Russian, French and Chinese leaders back JCPOA

Putin warns of ‘lamentable consequences’ if nuclear agreement falls apart

**1 ->** “I was personally assured that Iran is fulfilling all its obligations, so the question arises what grounds there were to exit this agreement,” Putin said, Telegraph reported.

“We welcome the efforts of Iran and Europe to preserve this deal, while understanding that it will be hard,” he added.



“Russia has never approved unilateral actions,” he said, referring to the renewed U.S. sanctions against Iran.

He noted, “Any action against a sovereign government can be taken only by United Nations Security Council, all the rest are illegitimate.”

Trump pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA on May 8 and vowed to reimpose sanctions against Iran.

Since Trump’s withdrawal, Iran has been seeking guarantees that its economic interests are protected otherwise it will resume nuclear activities at a greater speed.

Putin also warned of “lamentable consequences” if the nuclear deal was not preserved.

Speaking at a joint news briefing at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang also defended the nuclear deal on Thursday, The Nation reported.

Li warned that abandoning the deal with Tehran “will not just impact Iran, but also have a negative impact on (the ability) to solve other hot international issues through peaceful negotiations”.

The German leader also sounded the alarm about the economic impact of the move on Europe.

Merkel said that if European companies pull out or shrink operations in Iran to avoid falling foul of U.S. law, it would “create an opportunity for businesses in other countries to step in and play a greater role”.

The backing for the nuclear agreement by Merkel came hours after Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei issued a set of demands from Europe to save the nuclear deal. He warned that Iran would restart its nuclear activities if they failed to act swiftly.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the JCPOA

could only continue if the Europeans fulfill these conditions including: Promising not to ask Iran about its ballistic missile program or its regional activities; guaranteeing that Iran’s oil will continue to be sold; and having European banks guarantee financial transactions with Iran.





# Netherlands, Australia formally accuse Russia of downing MH17

The Netherlands and Australia have formally accused Russia of being responsible for the 2014 downing of a Malaysia Airlines passenger jet in 2014 that killed 298 people.

The move on Friday came a day after international investigators concluded that the missile which smashed into the flight MH17 came from a Russian military brigade in Kursk.

At the time of the incident on July 17, 2014, pro-Russian separatists were fighting Ukrainian government forces in the region.

The Boeing 777 broke apart in midair, flinging wreckage over several kilometers of fields in rebel-held territory.

The two countries "hold Russia responsible for its part in the downing" of the Malaysia Airlines flight, the Dutch government said in a statement on Friday.

They may now move towards submitting the complex dossier to an international judge or organization, it added.

"Australia and the Netherlands have now informed the Russian Federation that we hold it responsible under international law for its role in the bringing down of MH17," said Julie Bishop, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"Australia and the Netherlands have requested Russia to enter into negotiations to open up a dialogue about its conduct and to seek reparations."

The Russian foreign ministry has denounced what it called an attempt to "discredit Russia in the eyes of the international community", but investigators, who painstakingly recreated the BUK missile system's route from Kursk across the border into rebel-held eastern Ukraine using videos and photos, stood by their findings.

The team "has come to the conclusion that the BUK-TELAR that shot down MH17 came from 53rd Anti-aircraft Missile Brigade based in Kursk in Russia," top Dutch investigator Wilbert Paulissen said.

"The 53rd Brigade forms part of the Russian armed forces," he told reporters on Thursday.

Prosecutors have said that the BUK missile system was fired from the Ukrainian village of Pervomaysk and later returned to Russian territory.

Investigation officials have not yet said who actually fired the missile, stressing that the probe continues.

But they have appealed for further information, especially from those who know people among the 53rd Brigade, as they seek to bring criminal charges against those who ordered the plane to be shot down.

**■ Russia's Lavrov: 'no facts' support accusations on MH17**

Meantime, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says the



Netherlands has provided "no facts" to support its allegation that Moscow was responsible for the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in 2014.

The top Russian diplomat said on Friday that he had been informed by a Dutch minister that "they have practically no doubt that the BUK (missile) came from Russia." Lavrov added, "I asked him about facts proving these claims. He did not give me any facts."

The Russian foreign minister accused Amsterdam of merely speculating "to achieve their own political goals."

Flight MH17 on a Boeing 777 was blown out of the sky over conflict-hit eastern Ukraine on July 17 that year while en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. Moscow has time and again denied any involvement in the disaster, putting the blame instead on Kiev.

The Russian Defense Ministry has also rejected the findings of the Dutch-led Joint Investigation Team (JIT), saying that although the BUK missile, which the JIT says was allegedly used to down MH17, had indeed been manufactured in the Soviet

Union in 1986, "all the missiles made that year were withdrawn from service in 2011." Those missiles made in 1986 "most likely belong to the Ukrainians," it added.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and "the division of military material," Ukraine which possessed some 20 BUK anti-aircraft systems has "not had one new missile delivered," the ministry said.

**■ Russia mistrusts JIT's conclusions**

Elsewhere, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that Russia mistrusted the findings of the JIT since it had not been invited to participate in the investigation.

"I want to repeat the president's words to you, the investigation was carried out in the Netherlands, this investigation team did not include the Russian side, though the Ukrainian side was represented," Peskov told reporters.

"Certainly, without having the possibility to be a full-fledged party, Russia does not know to what degree the conclusions of this endeavor can be trusted," he added.

(Source: agencies)

## Nearly dozen terrorists slain as Iraqi forces thwart attacks in Kirkuk



Nearly a dozen terrorists of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group have been killed after Iraqi security forces, supported by pro-government fighters from Popular Mobilization Units (PMU/Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi), foiled their attacks in the country's northern oil-rich province of Kirkuk.

Iraqi Joint Operations Command (JOC) spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Rasool said a joint force from Hawija police and voluntary fighters (PMU), repelled militant attacks on the villages of Gharib and Hanaf, south of the provincial capital city of Kirkuk, killing 11 extremists in the process, Arabic-language al-Taghier television network reported.

Rasool added that five Takfiris clad in explosive vests were among the slain militants. A policeman and a PMU fighter were killed during the clashes as well.

Separately, the JOC announced in a statement that Iraqi F-16 fighter jets had bombed ISIL positions and a weapons cache in Syria's Hegeen region, located 40 kilometers from the border town of al-Qa'im in Iraq's western province of al-Anbar.

The statement added that the militant sites were completely destroyed in the aerial attacks.

Iraqi authorities have on occasions stated that they work closely with the Syrian

government to monitor and target terrorist targets based on the efforts of intelligence and information departments of the security coordination committee formed between Baghdad, Damascus, Tehran and Moscow years ago, as well as coordination with the so-called United States-led anti-ISIL coalition.

"If we perform a strike, we will coordinate with the international coalition, the joint security center and all the relevant parties. As we work together, we follow the principle of partnership to ensure safety and harmony between allies," Iraqi Ministry of Defense spokesman Tahseen al-Khafaji said in late April.

On April 23, intelligence sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Arabic-language Shafaqa news agency that ISIL's second-in-command had been killed during an Iraqi airstrike inside the Syrian territory.

The top-ranked extremist, identified by the nom de guerre Abu Luqman al-Suri, was killed in the attack. He was the deputy of purported ISIL leader Ibrahim al-Samarrai aka Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

The sources added that Suri was "in charge of recruiting attackers and dispatching them to Iraq to carry out bomb attacks there."

(Source: Press TV)

## Damascus area residents return home after ISIL purged



The Syrian government troops have raised the Syrian flag over buildings in the Hajar al-Aswad district south of the capital Damascus. The strategic area was retaken from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorists several days ago. As Press TV correspondent Zahra al-Derzi reports, residents who'd fled Hajar al-Aswad long before are now returning to check on their homes.

**■ Syrian air defenses intercept missiles near Homs**

Meantime, Syrian air defense systems have repelled a missile attack on an airport near the western city of Homs, less than a day after the United States-led coalition jets targeted several Syrian military positions in the country's eastern Dayr al-Zawr province.

"One of our military airports in the central region was exposed to a hostile missile attack, and our air defense systems confronted the attack and prevented it from achieving its aim," Syria's official news agency, SANA, reported on Thursday night.

The news agency had earlier said that sounds of explosions were heard near Dabaa airport, which lies about 20 kilometers southwest of Homs near the Lebanese border.

There have been no immediate reports of possible casualties, but Britain-based so-

called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said "six missiles" had targeted the Syrian military airport, which it said stationed fighters from popular defense groups allied with government forces.

"The missiles would have been fired by Israel," the so-called monitoring group added.

AFP quoted a source close to the Lebanese-Syrian border as saying that warplanes had flown over Lebanese airspace and "some people are still expecting new strikes".

Earlier in the day, SANA reported that a number of Syrian military positions between Albu Kamal and Hmeimeh were hit "in an aggression by American coalition warplanes."

When asked about the Thursday night attack, Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Kone Faulkner claimed the strike was not carried out by the United States forces.

The attacks come amid reports of the full liberation of neighborhoods south of the Syrian capital Damascus from the clutches of the ISIL Takfiri terrorist group.

Syrian army troops and pro-government fighters had been fighting since April 19 to recapture the area covering Yarmouk camp and the adjacent districts of Qadam, Tadamon and al-Hajar al-Aswad.

(Source: Press TV)

## HRW urges U.S. to halt arms sale to Bahrain over 'dismal rights record'

Human Rights Watch has called on the United States to put on hold two planned arms sales to its close ally Bahrain in light of "dismal human rights record" in the tiny Persian Gulf state.

The New York-based organization made the plea in a Thursday statement concerning sales of attack helicopters and 3,000 bomb bodies worth around \$1 billion in total.

"These two weapons sales make clear that the Trump administration intends nothing short of a free pass on human rights for Bahrain," said the HRW's Washington director, Sarah Margon.

"In the past year, Bahrain has sharpened its crackdown on activists, lawyers, and journalists," HRW's statement added.

The US has approved the possible sale to Bahrain of thousands of bombs for F-16 fighter jets.

"It has arbitrarily revoked a record number of citizenships of nationals, carried out unfair trials of civilians in military courts, and harassed, intimidated, imprisoned, and prosecuted rights defenders and their family members," the statement noted.



Bahrain has crushed pro-democracy protests since 2011. Scores of people have been killed and many others imprisoned during the ruling House of Khalifah regime's crackdown.

Last week, the kingdom revoked the citizenship of 115 people and gave 53 of them life sentences on terrorism charges.

Since last March, civilians have been tried at military courts, which have been condemned by human rights groups as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law.

Bahrain is also a member of the Saudi regime-led war on Yemen. It has also harbored the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet since 1995.

(Source: Press TV)

## Mike Pompeo: U.S. diplomats 'treated badly' in Pakistan

Diplomats from the United States are being "treated badly" in Pakistan, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has told a U.S. congressional hearing, adding that the South Asian country would continue to receive diminishing U.S. aid.

The remarks from Pompeo, who was testifying before the U.S. house foreign affairs committee on Thursday, come as relations between the two erstwhile allies have continued to deteriorate.

"My officers, our state department officers, are being treated badly as well, folks working in the embassies and councils [and] in other places are not being treated well by the Pakistani government either," Pompeo said, during a debate on the U.S. State Department's budget for the 2019 fiscal year.

Earlier this month, the U.S. issued new restrictions for Pakistani diplomats posted in the country, requiring them to remain within a 25-mile (40.2km) radius of the city to which they are posted.

The State Department said it was taking the measures on a reciprocal basis, as the U.S. diplomats posted in Pakistan face severe restrictions on their ability to travel within the country.

Pakistan says the restrictions are due to security concerns.

**■ Aid cut**

Earlier this year, the United States cut roughly \$1.1bn in security assistance to Pakistan, demanding that the country do more against armed groups - including the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network - that it claims are operating on Pakistani territory.

Pakistan has consistently denied that it allows its territory to be used by armed groups, saying a series of military operations undertaken since 2014 has targeted all groups indiscriminately.

Responding to a question, Pompeo said the United States had released fewer funds in 2018 than they had the previously, and that the reduction in aid was likely to continue.

"The remainder of the funds available are under review. My guess is that that number will be smaller still," he said.

The State Department 2019 budget request includes roughly \$331m in aid programs for Pakistan.

The request includes \$200m for economic support funds, \$25m for narcotics control programs, \$22.5m for USAID-run health programs and \$3.5m in military training.

At least \$80m of the aid, earmarked for foreign military assistance, is contingent on Pakistan taking further action against the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network, according to the budget request.

On Thursday, Pompeo also raised the issue of the continued detention in Pakistan of Dr. Shakil Afridi, a Pakistani doctor who helped the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) track down then al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

"Please be aware that it's in my heart and I know it's important and we can do that. We can achieve [his release]," he added.

Afridi has been in Pakistani custody since 2011, and was convicted the following year by a tribunal to 33 years in prison for aiding the Lashkar-e-Islam armed group, his lawyer, Qamar Nadeem, told Al Jazeera earlier this month.

Afridi has denied the charges and is in the process of appealing the verdict. His sentence was reduced to 23 years in 2014, his lawyer said.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Trump leaves open possibility of June 12 summit with North Korea

The United States President Donald Trump said on Friday it was possible a planned summit with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un could still take place on June 12 as originally planned.

"We're going to see what happens. We're talking to them now," Trump told reporters, one day after he canceled the highly anticipated meeting. "It could even be the 12th ... We'd like to do it."

Earlier, Trump welcomed Pyongyang's response to his decision to call off the high-stakes summit.

The North Korean government said early on Friday it was still willing to talk "at any time," after Trump cancelled the highly anticipated meeting, following what he called "tremendous anger and open hostility" by North Korea toward the United States.

"Very good news to receive the warm and productive



statement from North Korea," Trump tweeted on Friday.

"We will soon see where it will lead, hopefully to long and enduring prosperity and peace. Only time (and talent) will tell!"

Trump also said "Democrats are so obviously rooting against us in our negotiations with North Korea."

Trump also said "Democrats are so obviously rooting against us in our negotiations with North Korea" but he also accused them of "coming to the defense" of members of the gang MS-13, an apparent reference to criticism when Trump recently referred to them as "animals" and "not people."

"The abrupt announcement of the cancellation of the meeting is unexpected for us and we cannot but find it extremely regrettable," Kim Kye-gwan, North Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister, said in a Friday statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"We reiterate to the U.S. that there is a willingness to sit down at any time, in any way, to solve the problem," the North Korean official said.

(Source: agencies)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	95445.1
IFX	1107.04

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,090 rials
EUR	49,258 rials
GBP	56,238 rials
AED	11,461 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	68.85/b
Brent	77.10/b
OPEC Basket	76.43/b
Gold	\$1,305.20 /oz
Silver	\$16.62/oz
Platinum	\$908.05/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Real estate deals up 33% in a month yr/yr**

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The number of real estate deals rose 33 percent in the past Iranian calendar month Ordibehesht (April 21-May 21) from the same month in the previous year, according to Mostafa Qoil Khosravi, the chairman of Real Estate Agencies Union. In an interview with IRNA on Friday, Khosravi said 75,945 deals have been signed during the mentioned month of this year, while the figure was 56,991 in the same month of the preceding year.



**10 railway stations inaugurated in a year**

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The managing director of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC) announced that 10 railway stations were inaugurated in the country during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), IRNA reported. Kheirollah Khademi put the cost of constructing those stations at over 350 billion rials (about \$83.33 million). "Some other stations are under construction at the moment which we hope will be complete by the end of the first half of this calendar year (September 21)", the official added.



**Trade between Iran, Ireland doubles in 2017**

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A recent report released by the Central Statistics Office of Ireland (CSO) shows that the value of trade between Iran and Ireland has doubled in 2017, IRNA reported. Ireland's exports to Iran rose to €143,218 million in 2017 from €71.845 million in 2016 and Iran's exports to Ireland increased to €3.51 million from €1.629 million, according to the CSO report.

China to finance Iran's northeastern railway construction project

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A Chinese company has finalized a deal in Iran to finance Gorgan-Bojnourd-Mashhad railway project in the country's northeast region, ISNA reported on Friday quoting Deputy Transport Minister Kheirollah Khademi as saying. According to the official, the negotiations between the two sides which started in late last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), led to the final agreement in the past few days. The 550-kilometer project needs about 100 trillion rials (near 18 billion yuan or \$2.38 billion) to be completed and the Chinese side is going to finance the project. Khademi believes that the project will be operational in five years provided that the funds are injected on time and everything goes on schedule. In July 2017, in another railway agreement, China's Exim Bank (the Export-Import Bank of China) penned a contract with Iran's Bank of Industry and Mine to finance \$1.5 billion for signaling of Tehran-Mashhad railroad.



Citroën launches Iran car production despite Trump sanctions



French carmaker PSA Group launched its Citroën C3 model in Iran last week despite U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the nuclear agreement with Tehran, brand chief Linda Jackson said on Thursday. PSA, the maker of Peugeot and Citroën cars, sold 2,000 C3 subcompacts in one hour on launch day, Jackson said at a presentation of another model, the C5 Aircross, just outside Paris. The group's strategy in Iran had not changed in the wake of Trump's decision, she said, but added that PSA remains "cautious" about the future of its Iran business. U.S. sanctions against Iran are due to take effect on 6 August and would also apply to companies trading with the Islamic Republic. Jackson said the company is waiting for the European Union to take a clear position

on the sanctions and trade prospects. PSA was one of the first foreign companies to return to Iran after sanctions were lifted under the deal in 2016. The Iranian market could one day become larger than the French one and the country could be a key base for exports to the Middle East and Africa. Citroën has a target of 1.6 million sales by 2020, based on expanding markets outside Europe, which it hopes will account for 45 percent of its sales by then, compared to 26 percent today. The company has sold 40,000 C5 Aircrosses in China since its launch there last September and intends to sell it in France and the rest of the Europe as from the end of this year.

(Source: rfi.fr)

Iran, Poland have potential to benefit from complementary markets: envoy

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

**I →** when the first batch of the U.S. sanctions will take effect. This will require some work at the EU level in Brussels but probably it will also require some legislative work at the national level which means that all countries, including mine, will have to do some legislative legal work in order to make this blocking statue activated and operational. The second measure which we agreed on is to launch the formal process to remove obstacles for the European Investment Bank to finance activities outside the EU-including European investments in Iran. The first steps have been made and the situation looks promising, the next more technical ones are scheduled to be made by 6 August. There is a strong political will and the decision by the 28 head of states and governments to activate this mechanism, which could also provide certain guarantees for the European companies investing in Iran under the EIB financing. The third adopted element included the measures in sectorial cooperation such as energy, including development of renewable energy as well as energy efficiency in Iran, also transfer of innovations. Another sector where Iran could expect the EU assistance is the sector of small and medium-sized companies..... Another important issue on which we will be working is related to guaranteeing the bank transfers, also for oil but not exclusively. So the heads of states and governments mandated the institutions to certain extent its member states to look for a possibility to ensure stable bank transfers and to find a solution which could involve the European Central Bank which could co-operate with the Central Bank of Iran. You know this situation requires non-standard solutions. We have not recently encountered such a complicated situation. So, certain measures which we are developing are willing to implement have not yet been implemented in the past. But there is a strong will to go forward.

■ Receiving a shipment of 130,000 tons of Iranian crude



oil at the Baltic seaport of Gdansk in mid-April, Poland's biggest oil refiner PKN Orlen said in a statement: "Delivery from Iran has become a fact. Oil from the Middle East gives us many opportunities. First of all it enables diversification of delivery directions and increases the energy security of the state." Now, what is Poland's plan for more purchases of oil from Iran?

A: We know that what is important for Iran is to ensure the export of oil and we are fully committed, here, including my country, to continue importing the Iranian oil. We just need, given the new circumstances, to find a mechanism which will be protecting our companies on one hand, and would ensure the banking transfers on the other. Last but not least, we would also have to ensure the security of the crude transport.

■ Last October, the Exports Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI) and Poland's Exports Credit Insurance Corporation Joint Stock Company (KUKE) signed an agreement to bolster banking and insurance cooperation. What achievements have the two sides gained since then?

A: In the framework of this agreement two significant contracts were signed based on that instrument which meant that Iranian companies could apply for credits from one Polish bank. Unfortunately they have not come into fruition, as in both cases Iranian companies did not fulfill the requirements of the banks. These are significant projects but I cannot disclose more details since the negotiations between these companies are conducted under non-disclosure agreements. I can only tell you that we hope it's not over and we do believe that these two agreements will be implemented.

■ In addition to the sectors you named i.e. energy, development of energy efficiency in Iran, development of renewable energy, technologies, development and help in the sector of small and medium-sized enterprises, in which fields Iran and Poland can boost their bilateral trade?

A: I think we have very complementary markets and a strong potential. Let me tell you that Poland is almost 40-million-people country which is very strong and competitive also, given quality price-parity in certain sectors and we could certainly develop our presence in these sectors in Iran. But first of all, on the Iranian side, of course, oil and gas. It perfectly matches our country's strategic policy on energy diversification. We are currently over dependent on the supplies from one country, and the clear policy of our leadership is to change this balance. Iran oil can be easily processed in the Polish refineries and is a perfect product for us, on the one hand. We are also interested to share our experience with Iran in heavy industries sector such as mining of coal and cooper. We are already quite present in the Iranian market in the mining technology sector with the Polish FAMUR Group, which supplies a substantial share of the equipment to the Iranian mining sector. We also have a very strong position in the copper industry and technology. Poland is one of the biggest producers of copper in the world and we have a very advanced experience

in the sector. We are also thinking about agriculture and our experience in this sector would be very important and also in terms of quality and price parity it would be quite attractive for the Iranians. Pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, which is again of high quality and comes in reasonable prices, as well as cosmetics, new technologies, renewable energies, water management, are the sectors in which Poland is very strong and competitive... and here is a very important message I want to pass: all Polish products meet exactly the same standards as the French, Italian, German or any other European products should meet in order to access the EU Single Market but they quite often are cheaper so here we are much more competitive. So, we would encourage Iranian customers to buy Polish products as they are of a good quality and respect high EU standards.

■ Besides the banking transactions, what other impediments do see on the way of expanding our bilateral trade?

A: The main obstacles are certainly related to the fact that Iran is a big, interesting, but still unknown market to our entrepreneurs. I think more time is needed to get familiar with it. Let me tell you that Polish businessmen, during the last 20 years, have been mostly focused on the EU markets, which are relatively easy, there are no problems with standards, borders, taxes, customs, banking transfers, and they have benefited from these markets and have developed their businesses. The time has come to look broader. Also including the investments, we are always talking about investing in Iran and there are some companies which would be ready to invest here. I know that there is a trend in Iran which was launched by the Supreme Leader to foster the domestic products but we are also able to develop these products using our advanced technologies here in Iran. But this new environment for the Polish companies is sometimes a little bit too complicated and looks difficult. So, I think more time is needed, some more assistance from Polish Trade Office in Tehran (which opened last year) but also a substantial help from the Iranian partners is needed.

Then the knowledge of the local reality. It's a very specific market which is different from the EU markets. A little bit of time is needed to explore it better and the Iranian business partners will be perfect facilitators for the Polish companies in this regard.

■ Is the Polish government going to offer any incentive package to the Polish firms which are aimed at cooperating with Iran?

A: This is something which we will have to be thinking in line with these declarations and the new circumstances. We had the state-run Polish bank, BGK, which was able to provide credit lines but given current general circumstances, the situation is unclear. What we expect and what the EU expects from us and what our leaders had agreed upon is to elaborate the new instruments, including at the member states level, not only at Brussels level, before the 6<sup>th</sup> of August we will be thinking on the concrete instruments and measures which we might apply given the new circumstances. So, I will be able to tell you more about this in near future.

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 **Jahad** of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to purchase 30,000 M/Ts 10 pct M/L,crude sunflower seed 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 **27/5/2018 until 9/6/2018**

from the secretary of Trades &Tenders committee located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of GTC building No. 2, Fatmei Ave (opposite of Water and Wastewater Co.), Tehran, Iran along with an official letter of introduction. The bid participants are required to submit their stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest **at 13:00** (Tehran time) **on 10/7/2018** to the secretariat of tenders' committee located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on **10/7/2018 at 14:00** (Tehran time) with the presence of bidder's representatives in **tenders committee** (2<sup>nd</sup> floor of GTC building No 2, Fatmei Ave (opposite of Water and Wastewater Co.),Tehran-Iran).

Bid bond: the bid bond worth EUR 344,525 (IRR. 17,570,740,000) 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 Phone No. 00982188957477**

**(Foreign Trade Department)**



# Oil prices fall as OPEC and Russia weigh output boost

Oil prices fell below \$78 a barrel on Friday as OPEC and Russia considered easing supply curbs to offset disruptions in Venezuela and an expected drop in Iranian exports.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak has had talks with Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih on an easing of the terms of the global oil supply pact that has been in place for 17 months, Novak said on Friday.

The energy ministers of Saudi Arabia, Russia and the United Arab Emirates are discussing an output increase of about 1 million barrels per day (bpd), sources told Reuters.

Speaking in St. Petersburg, Falih told Reuters that "all options are on the table" when asked about the targets on production cuts.

Brent crude futures were down 80 cents at \$77.99 a barrel by 0914 GMT, having hit their highest since late 2014 at \$80.50 this month.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$70.18 a barrel, down 53 cents.

"The debate about a possible relaxation of the production restrictions should preclude any renewed price rise," Commerzbank analysts said.

"The \$80 mark is likely to pose an obstacle that is difficult to overcome because it would significantly raise the probability of



a production increase."

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as well as a group of non-OPEC producers led by Russia started withholding output in 2017 to tighten

the market and prop up prices.

Global crude supplies have tightened sharply over the past year because of the OPEC-led cuts, which were boosted by a dramatic drop in Venezuelan production.

The prospects of renewed sanctions on Iran after U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of an international nuclear deal with Tehran have also boosted prices in recent weeks.

As a result, compliance with the deal to reduce output by 1.8 million bpd by the end of 2018 has been at 152 percent, sources said.

Amrita Sen, chief oil analyst at consultancy Energy Aspects, said: "Addressing over-compliance was always likely to be on the agenda amid a tight market and low inventories, but the volume to bring back is still up for debate."

#### Higher prices at a cost

While Russia and OPEC benefit from higher oil prices, up almost 20 percent since the end of last year, their voluntary output cuts have opened the door to other producers to ramp up production and gain market share.

U.S. crude oil production has risen by more than a quarter in the past two years, to 10.73 million bpd. Only Russia produces more, at about 11 million bpd.

Output from the likes of the United States, Canada and Brazil, which are not bound by the OPEC/Russian-led pact, is likely to rise further as crude prices rise.

(Source: Reuters)

## Crude prices set to soar ahead of shipping revolution

Instead of OPEC, Iran or even Venezuela, the most prominent driver of oil prices over the next two years is likely to come in the shape of a shipping revolution, analysts have warned.

New rules coming into force in approximately 18 months' time are seen as a source of great concern for some of the world's biggest oil producers. That's because global energy and shipping industries are thought to be ill-prepared for the looming sea change.

On January 1, 2020, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) will enforce new emissions standards designed to significantly curb pollution produced by the world's ships.

"It's the biggest (change) in the history of the market," Amrita Sen, chief oil analyst at Energy Aspects, told CNBC's "Squawk Box Europe" this week.

Aimed at a broader push towards cleaner energy markets, the IMO's changes will specifically look to cut back sulfur

emissions. The pollutant is a component of acid rain, which harms vegetation and wildlife, and is blamed for some respiratory illnesses.

The forthcoming measures are widely expected to create an oversupply of high-sulfur fuel oil while sparking demand for IMO-compliant products — thus ratcheting up the pressure on the refining industry to produce substantially more of the latter fuels.

"That is very important because Middle Eastern producers lose out heavily from that because their crude tends to be very high sulfur," Sen said.

In contrast to some of the world's leading oil producers in the Middle East, including OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia, the U.S. is expected to be better-placed to cope with the IMO's measures due to their reputation for producing lighter crude.

Global benchmark Brent crude will climb to \$90 a barrel by 2020 as new international shipping laws overhaul the types of fuels produced by refiners, Morgan Stanley analysts predicted in a research note published last week.

"We expect the crude oil market to remain under-supplied and inventories to continue to draw," the bank said, before adding: "This will likely underpin prices."

To be sure, the IMO's rules will ban ships using fuel with a sulfur content higher than 0.5 percent, compared to 3.5 percent at present, unless ships are fitted with equipment to clean up its sulfur emissions.

Right now, few ships have invested in equipment to scrub pollutants from engines that burn high-sulfur fuel, so many external observers believe the majority of shipping companies are investing in capacity to make low-sulfur fuel.

(Source: CNBC)

## Tesla gets green light to create the world's largest virtual solar plant in South Australia

The government of South Australia, which changed hands after an election this March, just announced that it would move forward with the previous regime's agreement with Tesla to install solar panels on 1,100 houses, according to ABC.

The original deal — to create what's being called the world's largest virtual power plant — was first struck in February between Tesla and South Australia's then-dominant Labor Party. But when Steven Marshall of the Liberal Party was elected Premier of South Australia, it was unclear if the government would honor that agreement, or move forward with the Liberal Party's own plan to subsidize 40 thousand home battery units to bring renewable energy to people who couldn't otherwise afford it.

In good news for clean energy innovation, the government decided to do both.

The Tesla plan, funded by a two million dollar grant and 30 million dollar loan from the Australian state's government, could scale up to 50 thousand solar-powered home batteries if the earlier stages are successful. In addition to the Liberal Party's own 100 million dollar program — which would subsidize about 2,500 dollars of installation costs per household — this means that South Australia may have a grid of some 90 thousand solar-powered homes within the next few years.



If everything goes as planned this could make South Australia a world leader. It could also be a major proving ground, not just for renewable energy, but also for decentralized "virtual" power plants — a new type of energy infrastructure that's gained some popular traction lately.

Right now, almost all of our electricity is generated in real time by power plants that produce enough power to meet demand, but can't really store any extra for later. A distributed network of home-based generators hooked up to batteries would, advocates argue, be able to provide for the energy needs of that community without putting extra demand on the power plants in that area. And doing so with a network of solar panels hooked up to battery units would let them do so without any greenhouse gas emissions, aside from those given off while producing the solar panels themselves.

(Source: futurism.com)

## Oil companies in new rush to secure North Sea drilling rights

The North Sea "is back" after a "transformational" licensing round in which more than 60 companies secured rights to explore for oil and gas in one of the world's most mature basins, the UK industry regulator said.

A total of 123 licenses were offered to 61 companies in the regulator's 30th offshore round to a range of companies including Royal Dutch Shell, BP, France's Total and several smaller groups.

"The UK continental shelf is back," said Andy Samuel, chief executive of the Oil and Gas Authority. "Big questions facing the basin have been answered in this round. Exploration is very much alive, with lots of prospects generated and new wells to be drilled."

The North Sea was hit hard by the oil price crash that began in mid-2014 because it has been one of the most expensive places in the world from which to extract oil and gas. But the basin is rebounding as prices have recovered.

The 30th offshore licensing round focused mainly on previously explored or "mature" areas of the North Sea.

The number of licenses awarded was marginally fewer than in the last round to focus on mature areas, in 2016, but the Oil and Gas Authority described it as "transformational" because companies



have made firm commitments to drill eight exploration or appraisal wells and carry out nine new 3D seismic surveys.

Fourteen of the licenses will be advanced immediately to the field development planning stage.

The Oil and Gas Authority said it hoped the licensing round would unlock 320m barrels of oil equivalent in about a dozen previously "stranded" or undeveloped discoveries.

Although development activity in the North Sea has rebounded and several companies have committed significant capital expenditure to the basin following the price crash of 2014, exploration drilling has slumped until now.

"There is a real sign of confidence," said Samuel. The results of the licensing round had demonstrated that exploration was not dead in the North Sea, he added.

(Source: Financial Times)

## Big oil consumers start to lock-in prices as Brent surges to \$80

The rise in oil prices to \$80 a barrel is starting to cause concern across boardrooms, with some big industrial consumers, including airlines and shipping companies, starting to buy more insurance against rising energy prices.

The increase in so-called discretionary consumer oil hedging, after a three-year period of low prices, is still relatively incipient, but has picked up over the last couple of weeks, according to traders, bankers and consultants familiar with the matter who asked not to be identified discussing private deals.

"Consumers are hedging, which is supporting the back end of the Brent curve," says Thibaut Remoundos, founder of London-based Commodities Trading Corporation Ltd. "They will add to their hedges on price weakness."

The increase in hedging suggests that oil prices are flirting with a pain threshold for consumers, a potentially ominous sign for OPEC, which always keeps a watchful eye on demand growth. Michael O'Leary, the chief executive officer of top European airline Ryanair Holdings Plc, warned this week rising jet fuel prices were hurting his company and its peers.

"Spot prices close to \$80 a barrel are going to lead to a significant shakeout in the industry as early as this winter," he told Bloomberg Television.

Oil consumers that lock in prices -- or hedge -- typically fall in two categories: those who are systematic, and buy insurance regularly regardless of the price of oil, and those who are discretionary, or opportunistic, buying at particular prices. At times, some companies combine both trading styles.

Shares of Norwegian Air Shuttle ASA, which took the bold decision to bet on falling prices, have slumped about 12 percent this month, a period in which jet fuel in northwest Europe jumped 5 percent.



"With the higher fuel price, we would expect some people to trim back fourth-quarter capacity and we'll be looking to do the same," Willie Walsh, the CEO of British Airways owner IAG SA, said on the company's May 4 earnings call.

The increase in consumer hedging helps to explain the increase in long-dated Brent crude futures, which have outperformed a rally in spot prices. Brent for December 2020 has risen by 11 percent so far this month, compared with more than 5 percent gain in the nearest contract. Traders also pointed to deals on the U.S. swap data repository as indicative of an heightened consumer activity.

"We've seen a lot of consumer interest," said Harry Tchilinguirian, head of commodities markets strategy at BNP Paribas. "With oil moving to \$80, that has brought on

the consumer demand."

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies are set to review their production policy June 22 in a meeting in Vienna, trying to balance their desire to completely eliminate a glut in crude markets with the prospect of shortages later this year due to collapsing output in Venezuela and forthcoming U.S. sanctions to Iran.

For the first time in more than five years, Saudi Arabia and other oil producers are feeling the political pressure from consumer nations. U.S. President Donald Trump directed his ire against OPEC last month, saying in a tweet that "oil prices are artificially Very High! No good and will not be accepted!". India's oil minister recently expressed his concern about higher prices to his Saudi counterpart Khalid Al-Falih.

In Washington, Democrats are using high gasoline prices, approaching the \$3 a gallon level for the first time since October 2014, to accuse the Trump administration of not doing enough to shield consumers. And in emerging countries from Brazil to Philippines, drivers are complaining about high prices.

For the last two years, oil prices have slowly recovered, raising from \$40 to \$80 a barrel. Those gains are now translating all the way along the oil futures curve, including contracts for delivery in late 2021, 2022 and 2023. The rise in long-dated futures may suggest that the 'lower for longer' mantra for prices has now come to an end.

"The resumption of consumer hedging and backend buying after several years" is pushing up long-dated oil prices, said Amrita Sen, chief oil analyst at consultants Energy Aspects Ltd. in London.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## OPEC, non-OPEC conformity with output cuts deal reached over 150% in April: UAE

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and 10 other major oil producers reached a conformity level with oil production cuts under the Vienna deal of over 150 percent in April, Energy and Industry Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Suhail Mazroui told Sputnik on Friday.

"A little over 150 percent" Mazroui said on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).

"No, we are not going to discuss things that are related to the market, we have a meeting with His Excellency [Novak, Falih] in June, that's the right platform to discuss actions," Mazroui said, asked if the upcoming trilateral talks on the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) sidelines would touch upon the topic of easing oil cuts due to rising oil prices.

In 2016, OPEC and several oil producing countries outside the cartel agreed to cut oil production by a total of 1.8 million barrels per day in an effort to stabilize global oil prices. Non-OPEC states pledged to jointly decrease oil output by 558,000 barrels per day, with Russia pledging to cut production by 300,000 barrels daily.

SPIEF, held annually in Russia's second largest city of St. Petersburg, is a major global platform for communication between business representatives and the discussion of crucial economic issues. The event started on Thursday and will continue through Saturday. Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency is the official media partner of the forum.

(Source: Sputnik)

## Who's to blame for high gasoline prices?

As retail gasoline prices rise to \$3 per gallon across the United States, gas prices are a hot political topic in Washington once again, with the Democrats hoping to slam Donald Trump for causing pain at the pump and Republicans trying to shift blame back on their opponents.

High gasoline prices have long presented dangers for politicians, particularly for those in power when prices rise. The debates often make for great political theater, although they typically fall far short on the substance.

The spike in crude oil prices in 2008, during the heat of the presidential election, popularized the "drill, baby, drill" slogan and also led to calls from both Senators John McCain and Hillary Clinton for a "gas tax holiday" — a temporary suspension in federal gas taxes.

During the Arab Spring in 2011, and the outage of oil supply in Libya, prices spiked again. Republicans blamed former President Obama for high prices, charging that his refusal to allow more drilling caused prices to rise. His release of oil from the strategic petroleum reserve also came under criticism. Years later, when prices crashed because of the oil market downturn, Obama took credit for low gasoline prices.

We haven't heard much about gas prices since 2014, but with WTI over \$70 and gasoline back to \$3 per gallon, suddenly it is a hot topic again.

The Democrats held a press conference on Wednesday in front of an ExxonMobil gas station in Washington to blast the Trump administration for high gasoline prices. "It's time for this president to stand up to OPEC," Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer said. That was accompanied by a letter by several top Democratic Senators asking Trump to "pressure" OPEC to "increase world oil supplies in order to lower prices at the pump during the upcoming summer driving season." They noted that the run up in gas prices could cancel out the benefits of the tax cuts from last year.

The Democrats also blamed Trump's foreign policy for the price increase. "There's a straight line between Trump's policies and the price of gasoline," Sen. Brian Schatz told Politico.

Not to be outdone, the Republicans responded according to the typical script. Senator Lisa Murkowski said the Democrats should support more drilling. "This is pretty simple. If you don't support access, leasing, production, pipelines, refineries, or the reasonable regulation of all of those, you'll be left at the mercy of countries that don't like us."

In California, Republicans are pushing a ballot initiative to repeal a state tax on gasoline and diesel, a move they hope will turn a political weakness into a strength. But any cut in fuel taxes would drain funds for infrastructure. "Folks need to understand what the gas tax dollars are going to be used for," Carl Davis, research director at the left-leaning Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, told E&E News, «and if the repeal happens, what projects won't happen, what roads won't be repaired, what bridges won't be repaired. You have to get specific with people about where the money's going to go or not if there's a repeal.»

The position from both parties is predictable, and a flip of the script from a few years ago when a Democrat was in the White House. Despite what the Democrats say, Trump can't simply order OPEC to increase production. "The influence of the U.S. on an OPEC meeting is basically zero," Thomas Cape, senior analyst at Evercore ISI, told Bloomberg. However, they are right in that Trump has contributed to higher prices by scrapping the Iran nuclear deal, which helped push WTI over \$70 and Brent up to \$80 per barrel.

As for the Republican comments, they are right that higher production has kept prices somewhat in check, and indeed, shale output was a major factor in the oil market meltdown that began in 2014. Yet, it is odd to demand that the Democrats should support more drilling — the Trump administration has already essentially pulled out all the stops to allow drillers unfettered access to every corner of the country. It's way off base to argue that oil prices are going up because the Democrats are not sufficiently supportive of drilling.

In reality, the Trump administration doesn't have much control over the situation, barring a reversal in the belligerent foreign policy towards Iran or a major sale of oil from the strategic petroleum reserve, the latter of which, in any case, would be a one-shot affair. Just about any other policy initiative — whether supporting more supply or trying to curtail demand — not only isn't all that effective in the short run, but would have only marginal impacts on the global price of crude oil.

In that sense, far from having heavy influence over OPEC, the Trump administration will be at OPEC's mercy when it meets in Vienna in a few weeks.

(Source: oilprice.com)



## Erdogan's push for power creates new chaos

By Ishaan Tharoor

Given the Trump administration's recent dramatic moves in the Middle East — its rejection of the Iran nuclear deal and its embrace of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line worldview — it may be easy to overlook what's happening nearby in Turkey.

But that would be mistake, and not only because President Recep Tayyip Erdogan casts a shadow across the looming confrontation with Tehran and is also leading the criticism of President Trump's decision to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

Turkey is now in the middle of both an alarming currency crash and a heated election campaign. The two things are not unrelated. Some observers argue that Erdogan's decision to stage presidential and parliamentary votes on June 24 — months ahead of schedule — and explicitly meddle in monetary policy has contributed to the rapid decline of the Turkish lira, which lost as much as 5.5 percent of its value on Wednesday alone.



As the Turkish president seeks to once more consolidate power in his deeply divided country, the effects of his politicking risk spilling across borders.

On Sunday, for example, Erdogan staged a huge rally in the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. Though it was not formally part of his election campaign, the speech was clearly aimed at a domestic audience. The Turkish leader railed against European countries like Germany, his frequent boogeyman, saying that "European countries claiming to be the cradle of civilization have failed."

Erdogan also extolled the old Ottoman legacy in the Balkans and hyped up the meaning of the coming election. Voters should "not only be choosing a president and deputies" in parliament, he said, but "making a choice for our country's upcoming century."

Critics warned that such grandstanding abroad had grave repercussions. Erdogan likes to cast himself as a leader of the Muslim world, and he received prominent backing during the visit from Bakir Izetbegovic, the Muslim member of Bosnia's tripartite presidency.

But, as political scientist Jasmin Mujanovic observed, the Bosnian trip risked upsetting the already delicate balance of power in a country that is still struggling to fashion a liberal democracy. "It gives fodder to the surging far-right in the EU which wants nothing more than to reject Bosnia's already dubious aspirations for EU membership by claiming, falsely, that the country is a hotbed for Islamists and Muslim radicals," wrote Mujanovic for the Balkan Insight website. "The optics of Erdogan's visit to Sarajevo, in short, were terrible."

Erdogan probably won't be bothered. Much of his foreign policy has been built around boosting his image at home even if it affects ties with other countries, including the United States and other NATO allies. Erdogan's alliance with ultranationalists and battles with Kurdish factions complicate America's ability to help stabilize both Iraq and Syria. And Erdogan has found in the United States a useful political punching bag.

"Turkey is neither an adversary in the conventional sense nor completely an ally," the Center for Strategic and International Studies noted in a new policy brief on how Washington should deal with Ankara. "Ties are unlikely ever to return to the intimacy of the Cold War, and even so, a formal break in the relationship is unlikely."

But things at home aren't rosy, either. More than a decade ago, in the early years of his rule, Erdogan presided over one of the world's greatest economic success stories. Now, credit agencies are cutting the ratings of Turkey's sovereign debt from junk to junkier, while its heavily indebted corporate sector appears increasingly vulnerable to future U.S. interest-rate hikes.

Erdogan's move to call snap elections led to a brief rally in Turkish markets, but a recent set of remarks before investors in London — where he said he wanted to tighten his own grip over monetary policy — sent the lira into a deeper tailspin.

"The president's apparent recklessness with the currency has left many observers baffled," reported Laura Pitel of the Financial Times. "Durmus Yilmaz, a former central bank governor who advises the opposition IYI party, suggested that the president may be deliberately crashing the lira to create a sense of national crisis to boost his support in elections."

In a familiar move, Erdogan's camp has blamed the economic mess on shadowy opponents. On Wednesday, a host of his allies, including his son-in-law and a deputy prime minister, pinned the currency crash on outside actors and enemies of the state. That's standard rhetoric in Erdogan's Turkey, where the president has built a majoritarian government by pandering to nationalist sentiment and bemoaning foreign plots and conspiracies against the nation.

"The opposition groups are 'proxies' for outside actors conspiring to undermine Erdogan's agenda of making Turkey great again," Soner Cagaptay, author of a book on Erdogan's rise to power, told Today's WorldView. "Not even an economic meltdown would change countywide perceptions of Erdogan. Half of the country hates him, and thinks he can do nothing right. But at the same time, the other half adores him, and thinks he can do nothing wrong."

Such tactics may have their limits. Erdogan is no shoe-in for reelection, and most signs point to him amassing at best a razor-thin majority, as he did in a controversial 2017 referendum that further expanded his presidential powers.

In a polarized landscape, analysts warn of Erdogan's overreach. "Erdogan can control many things, but the dollar is one thing he cannot," said Gonul Tul of the Middle East Institute in Washington. "His tendency to monopolize economic financial decision-making has become a liability. Turkish lira's free fall can cost him the elections." (Source: The Washington Post)

**Turkey is now in the middle of both an alarming currency crash and a heated election campaign.**

# A crisis foretold



**Donald Trump's meeting was all about grabbing plaudits for his over-sized ego rather than a serious effort to achieve peace on the Korean peninsula.**

ment of a nuclear program.

Incoherence is nothing new from this administration, but these remarks appeared calculated to provoke. Despite threatening fire and fury again ("You talk about your nuclear capabilities, but ours are so massive and powerful that I pray to God they will never have to be used"), Trump tried to leave the door open for future talks in bizarrely amiable tones: "I felt a wonder-

ful dialogue was building up between us ... please do not hesitate to write and call."

But calling off the summit will make it harder than ever to bridge the gulf — as will doing so hours after the North blew up tunnels at a nuclear test site, albeit that that was a symbolic not substantial measure. What has been lost? Less than Trump claims. The Singapore meeting was welcome because it was better than military

action. But it handed North Koreans an easy victory, granting them status without any concessions on their part. It was likely neither to clear the way for a deal, nor to close one — and it could well have gone badly awry, with even worse results. The real problem is not that the summit is off, but that it was ever scheduled with so little thought and care.

(Source: The Guardian)

## U.S. considers further financial cuts to international bodies to silence Palestinians

By Ramona Wadi

Under U.S. President Donald Trump, international organizations have become targets for repression and vehicles by which Israeli oppression is maintained. Following the financial restrictions it imposed upon the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) last year, Washington has now set its sights on cuts in funding to another three organizations. The move follows the statement by UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Nickolay Mladenov that Palestine has submitted applications to join the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Reports by various media, including Press TV and the Times of Israel, quote an unnamed U.S. official saying that, "It has been the consistent position of the United States that efforts by the Palestinians to join international organizations are premature and counterproductive." Since Trump's election, the U.S.-Israeli alliance has shed its veneer of restraint in terms of how much visible support should be flaunted internationally.

Financial dependence aside, it is clear that the U.S. aims to leave Palestine with mere spectator status across the international community. It goes without saying that access to international organizations does not translate automatically into prominence for the Palestinians.

America's move, therefore, is not only a punitive measure targeting and thus threatening the international organizations but also a means of increasing ways to deter Palestinians from pursuing their options in the international community. Nevertheless, whether or not Palestinians will utilize the international platform is still a contentious issue. Speaking about Palestinian accession to international organizations is



**Trump, in coordination with Israel, is sending a message to Palestinians that their presence on international platforms will be hindered and obscured at all costs.**

still presented mainly from an angle that legitimizes Israel's purported anger, as in the case of the International Criminal Court (ICC). To eclipse Palestinian rights by Israel's anger is a recipe for oblivion.

The same tactic was used when UNRWA faced an existential threat due to the U.S. decision to slash funding. While UNRWA attempted to illustrate how such a decision would

exacerbate the existing limitations on its work in support of Palestinian refugees, it was done from an organizational perspective, shifting the Palestinians in the process to a secondary and less visible position.

If international organizations worked independently of a political agenda, Palestine might have a chance to further its cause and development. UNCTAD has a special unit — the Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit (APPU) — which has the mandate to monitor the socio-economic impact of Israel's military occupation. However, like other organizations, the Palestine issue is restricted to reports that state the obvious. UNCTAD's April 2018 report, for example, said that Palestinians have been denied the human right to development; its conclusions and recommendations, like those of other organizations, are based upon legislation that Israel routinely and blatantly ignores.

The past seven decades have provided enough proof of the futility of the international community's safeguarding of Palestinian rights; it is now ridiculed as the subject of mere rhetoric. It is more likely, therefore, that Trump, in coordination with Israel, is sending a message to Palestinians that their presence on international platforms will be hindered and obscured at all costs. One way to do this is to shift attention from Palestinians onto the organizations that might be affected.

This exposes the static structure of such international organizations which, due to their dependence upon financial aid from oppressive powers, prioritize their existence rather than use their position to safeguard Palestinian rights. If one thing is to be taken from the manipulation of financial aid and international institutions for political purposes, it is how the debate generated will also contribute towards marginalizing and silencing Palestinians.

(Source: Middle East Monitor)

## The populists take Rome



The Five Star Movement leader Luigi Di Maio, center, with party colleagues, after a meeting to form a cabinet.

Trump administration in Washington with faint respect for European allies. Conversely, the prospect of an overtly populist government in a founding member of the European Union was music to the ears of right-wing nationalists, including Stephen Bannon, who declared it "monumental"; France's Marine Le Pen, who saw it as the harbinger of the collapse of the bloc; and Nigel Farage, a leader of the Brexit drive in Britain.

How much damage the coalition can actually do is not clear. Italy's politics are inherently unpredictable and unstable. They are likely to stay that way because of ideological differences between the League, led by Matteo Salvini, a sweatshirt-wearing

member of Parliament who has turned what was the regional Northern League into a national far-right party, and the Five Star Movement, a web-based party whose leader, Luigi Di Maio, 31, is a college dropout from a small town near Naples who became vice president of the lower house of Parliament at 26. Their slender majority in Parliament won't help them, either.

Silvio Berlusconi, the scandal-plagued former prime minister, has already said his party, Forza Italia, which campaigned with the League but was excluded from the government coalition, will vote against the government. The coalition's agenda, moreover, does not call for pulling out of

the European Union or giving up the euro.

Yet the new Italian government cannot be dismissed as just another in Italy's long history of political crises. The shift of a core member of the European Union, one whose allegiance to the "European project" had not been in doubt, toward the new Central European members hostile to Brussels is a serious blow to the deeper European integration championed by President Emmanuel Macron of France and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany.

"Italians must understand that the future of Italy is in Europe and nowhere else, but there are rules to respect," said the French finance minister, Bruno Le Maire. "If the new government takes the risk of not meeting its commitments on the debt, the deficit, but also the cleanup of the banks, it is the entire financial stability of the eurozone which would be threatened."

Imposing stern rules on Greece, and scolding Poland and Hungary for their illiberal policies, were actions taken by established Western nations secure in their roles in Europe. But if Italy, the fourth-largest economy in the European Union, starts defying union rules and demanding a renegotiation of the terms of its membership, it will be far more difficult to hold other members in check.

Still, it is too early for Bannon and his allies to celebrate, or for the champions of the union to panic. The allure of populists can fade rapidly if they fail to come up with concrete solutions to the resentments that brought them to power. The task for Macron and Merkel and their allies is to stay the course on the bloc's values, coherence and rules, but also to recognize and address the anger that has fed the rebellion.

(Source: The NYT)



# Praxis better suits philosophical writing than style: prof.

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW By Javad Heirannia

John Lysaker, Professor of Emory University says “writing should be regarded as a praxis and not a techne, which opens it to the kind of deliberation Aristotle champions in his ethics.”

Author of “Philosophy, Writing, and the Character of Thought” also adds that “praxis better suits philosophical writing than style.”

He also argues that “texts can be written (or read) as wholes if one gathers how they relate to thought’s unfolding, their addressees, and their historical moment.”

Following is the full text of the interview:  
■ What has been your main question in the book of “Philosophy, Writing, and the Character of Thought”?

A: The book takes up several questions along the way, and not always in a linear, let alone systematic fashion. But it does gather at certain key points.

My initial question concerns the literary-rhetorical dimensions of philosophy and results from the following observation. One can write philosophy in multiple ways: aphorisms, autobiography, blogs, dialogues, essays, professional articles, treatises, etc. My book asks: how should one decide among them? If one were to deliberate about such a matter, what would one take into account? But the question does not rest with genre. Most of the genres I’ve named allow for a variety of logical-rhetorical operations like examples, quotation, irony, voice, and formal patterns of argument like *modus ponens*. How does one decide among them? What questions should one ask oneself when electing to write philosophy? (Initially, I was not at all sure how best to reply.)

A second question lurks behind the first, and it also begins with an observation. Many if not most readers take the Socrates of Plato’s dialogues to function as an image of philosophy, one that works by way of exemplification. Socrates’ behavior shows us what philosophy is by showing us what philosophy does. But isn’t this true of all philosophical texts? Doesn’t each one exemplify a certain way of doing philosophy? I thus wanted to think about what we exemplify when we philosophize through particular genres and logical-rhetorical operations, and in a way that would not only make us more deliberate writers -- and that is one thing the book seeks, an account of deliberate writing -- but also more deliberate readers. While this question also concerns the literary-rhetorical dimensions of philosophy, its deeper currents, which concern the conduct of life, flow into ethics and what it means to account for oneself.



A third question also orients the book, and it addresses the history of philosophy. What kind of book would result if I allowed the thematic and performative dispositions of a diverse set of authors to work together in one book? The principal set includes Ralph Waldo Emerson, Georg Lukacs, Walter Benjamin, and Stanley Cavell. But others are also germane such as Friedrich Nietzsche, W.E.B. Du Bois, John Dewey, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Simone de Beauvoir, and Judith Butler. In a way, the book, at least in part, is about each of these authors relative to my first and second questions. I address those questions in part through them. But I also wanted to engage the history of philosophy, to think historically by way of inheritance. In my case, that involves a repetition of various line of thought within an evolving, multifaceted whole. And this led to a book that moves between the essay and the aphorism, but in a manner that tries to establish a whole that is greater than the sum of several parts that nevertheless stand on their own as moments of thought. (I wouldn’t term that whole a «dialogue,» but it tries to harness some of the performative and pedagogical energy of that genre within a voice that aspires to responsiveness.) The book thus embraces an epistemology of the fragment, which simultaneously refuses to subordinate particulars to general types while insisting that each particular has the character it does only because of the relations to which it is bound.

■ What Hypothesis did you use to answer this question? What is your central argument?

A: My first argument is that writing should be regarded as a praxis and not a techne, which opens it to the kind of deliberation Aristotle champions in his ethics. (And I argue that praxis better suits philosophical writing than style.) I then argue that deliberate writing should concern itself with at least three kinds

of questions. First, how will a given genre and/or logical-rhetorical operation influence how one’s thought unfolds? The question arises because philosophical writing does more than report results. It is a process of discovery in its own right, and the process unfolds differently in the aphorism than it does in the essay, and differently through irony than through the counter-example. (Along the way, I argue against strong form-content distinctions, claiming that each influences the other.)

After considering the ways in which various genres and logical-rhetorical operations influence how thought unfolds (with an extended section on irony), I turn to a second question that I find essential to deliberate writing. What kind of relationship does a given genre and/or logical-rhetorical operation establish with regard to addressees? As with thought’s self-relation, different genres and logical-rhetorical operations prompt and solicit different responses from readers, a point I argue in various contexts, including the polemic and the professional article, and with regard to the elusive phenomenon of voice.

Thinking, text, and reader meet in various historical contexts, and thus deliberate writing must ask: how will these acts, namely, genres and logical rhetorical operations, play in my historical moment? Is the footnote elitist or an essential reminder that insights are indebted to others, have histories, and are almost never contested? How might aphorisms function in a period of commodified thought and anti-intellectualism? In developing this point, I stage extended encounters with DuBois’s *Souls of Black Folk* and Benjamin’s *One Way Street* in order to explore books that strove to be «equal to their moments,» to use Benjamin’s phrase? What does this mean as an aspiration for writing? And how we

might gauge the relative success or failure of a venture?

My final argument is that texts can be written (or read) as wholes if one gathers how they relate to thought’s unfolding, their addressees, and their historical moment. When read (or written) in this manner, a text images philosophy. More particularly, it exemplifies a way in which philosophy can inhabit and contest the histories to which it belongs and to which it inevitably contributes. A text is thus something like a character in a discursive and material polis, exemplifying a certain way of life.

■ What was the necessity of writing this book?

A: Few enter philosophy fired by the dream of writing journal articles. Philosophy seems to demand more vital, engaging forms of presentation. Because the journal article is the default mode of professional philosophy, and because it became so through something other than deliberate choice, I wanted to articulate a space in which philosophy might proceed otherwise, and without the conceit of «the general reader,» which I find an abstraction that only finds its home in marketing.

I began this project of performative expansion in *After Emerson* (2017), which tries to offer a kind of essay that embraces the demands of scholarship and rigorous thought within a living, singular voice that proves responsive to its subject matter, its language, the texts it engages, and its various limits. But what began there needed its own manner of presentation, and that lead, after several stops and starts, to *Philosophy, Writing, and the Character of Thought*.

I also wanted to exemplify a particular way of philosophizing that embraces both knowledge of and care for the self in the company of others, which led to a phrase that recurs through the book: you and me in the company of us. In the context of philosophy, this forced a confrontation with writing. Writing is intrinsic to philosophy, and thus I needed to explore that relation, building upon, by presuming, Derrida’s advances, which take «writing» to move within a decentered and disseminating, semiotic field that overtermines authors and readers. But once I acknowledged that result, questions about how to write persisted, and so I took a deliberate turn into the questions that orient *Philosophy, Writing, and the Character of Thought*.

However, I hope that the sense of deliberate writing, which the book outlines and performs, carries with it a kind of responsive polyphony that is recognizably mine while occurring though very concrete relations to others.

## Pompeo’s special mission and shadow of U.S. secret diplomacy over Europe



1 → European officials know all too well that the U.S.’s unilateral exit from the Iran deal will certainly rule out the possibility of any “change to the deal”, but Pompeo and his European counterparts are apparently devising and steering a plan for that purpose.

This time around though, the American, British, French and German authorities, just like in the year before, are putting together a jigsaw puzzle of modifications that its final iteration presents no benefits for our country.

Pompeo has announced that despite Washington’s withdrawal from the JCPOA, the U.S. is willing to work with the Europeans to devise a new plan. In other words, while European officials seem to stand by the Iran pact as it has been and address the consequences of the U.S. exit, they still are negotiating with the White House over formulating a “new deal” with Iran. It does indeed appear that they are running with the hare and hunting with the hounds at the same time.

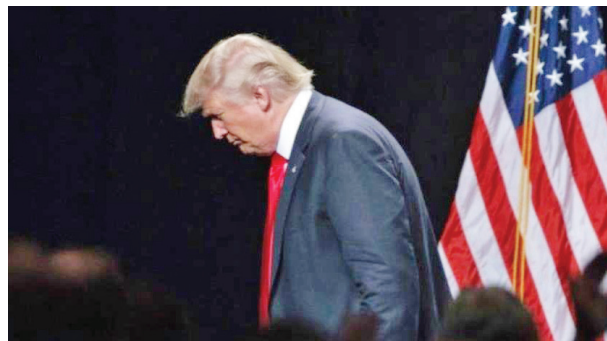
The purpose of such talks is clear: limiting the Iran nuclear deal permanently and threatening Iran’s defensive missile capabilities.

Thus, miscalculations about the realities of the situation and the potential for a widening divide between the U.S. and Europe over the U.S. abrogation, can also damage our realistic sense about what goes on in our country’s foreign policy.

Although maintaining the JCPOA has economic and political benefits for Europe, the White House’s unilateral bullying has practically changed the game.

In any case, although Europe’s extant dependency on the U.S. is nothing new in the international arena, reopening negotiations over the nuclear issue and the prospect of brutal sanctions imposed on Iran won’t be to Iran’s interest as the Supreme Leader has said repeatedly, and plus it does require careful consideration to figure out the best path forward.

## U.S. may be hoisting itself on its own petard



1 → The mayor of Tehran even sent a message to the mayor of New York, and this was the first public, official contact between the U.S. and Iran since the 1979 revolution. Sixty thousand spectators allegedly observed a minute of silence during a soccer match in Azadi stadium, and candle-lit vigils spread across Tehran, and all this should have informed the U.S. about the real character and substance of the Iranian people and their government.

So what did the U.S. do? Rather than take the responses in Iran and elsewhere as opportunities to open up dialogue with alleged enemies, it went on a vengeful military rampage that has continued to this day. A rampage that the U.S. believed would forever cement its control and hegemony in the Mideast. And all this while the official explanation of who was behind 9/11 in New York was never sufficiently uncovered, and left the entire incident full of unanswered questions that have never been officially probed. Had the U.S. truly been a “strong” country, not a shallow military behemoth with little else in its arsenal but anger, it would have literally banked on the goodwill and empathy of the world by reaching out itself to mend divisions, including the divisions with Iran that was extending a gentle hand to an aggrieved America. This must be mentioned because to whom was the U.S. primarily in thrall right after 9/11, aside from the so-called Neocon cabal in the U.S.? Netanyahu and Likud Israel, who pushed the U.S. vehemently to attack Afghanistan and Iraq for starters. Thus, it can be said that:

The same driver of U.S. foreign policy in the Mideast remains Israel, and given Trump’s complete adoption of Netanyahu’s obsessions and Israeli demands like no U.S. President before him, the U.S. has merely tripled down on policies that have quite literally failed since 9/11 in both spirit and substance. And despite what carnage and suffering the Trump administration with Israel and perhaps the Saudis could possibly this year inflict on Iran and Iran’s people, the coming failures could be magnified like never before. To put it simply, the U.S. government under Trump is about to hoist itself on its own petard like never before, but as it does so, it also unfortunately harms not just Iran but many other counties as well as its European allies. This is no solace at all for anyone, but it may, just may reorder and remake the world into a multipolar globe, which it definitely has not been since the dissolution of the USSR. Imagine, for example, a much more unified and ultimately prosperous Eurasia, including Iran, and an America humbled, the U.S. dollar humbled, its war oriented economy humbled, and with far fewer allies. It’s possible that unless and until the U.S. makes amends, even – I daresay – apologizes for the last few decades, it may remain what it seems to be becoming -- a pariah.

## The story of Elysees Palace and nuclear deal with Iran

By Hanif Ghaffari

TEHRAN — The paradoxical Macron game against a nuclear deal with Iran has reduced the credibility of Paris and its role in the international system. Today, few speak of France as an independent player in the world, since after the end of the presidency, Jacques Chirac, all three current French presidents have become one of the White House actors in Europe. Emanuel Macron, the young and new president of France, also goes on to lead his ancestors. He was the main European politician who agreed to “change the nuclear deal with Iran” with the request of Trump. Macron Trump and Netanyahu (prime minister of the occupation regime of Jerusalem) promised to meet all their demands for a nuclear deal. Undoubtedly, this French attitude was contrary to their obligations in the international system.

It was for the first time that “Emanuel Macron” the French President, insisted that the nuclear deal could be amended in some parts, including Iran’s missile power and the introduction of new time limits (after 2025). During the meeting between Macron and Trump in New York (2017) and on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, France’s opposition to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the Islamic Republic of Iran became more and more evident. In the joint project conducted by the White House and the Elysee Palace, the French are tasked with focusing on Iran’s missile power, providing the ground for simultaneous restriction of Iran’s nuclear and missile capabilities. In other words, Paris main goal here was to link Iran’s missile program to the JCPOA and turn the existing equation to a two variable equation. In their latest position against Iran, the French have accused our country of vio-



lating United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231. The French authorities have also explicitly stated that the use of ballistic missiles by the Islamic Republic of Iran is unacceptable and that it should be negotiated with Tehran.

Today, after the departure of the United States of America from a nuclear deal with Iran, Macron continues to play its paradoxical game with Iran. He argued last week that a more complete agreement with Iran (including missile and regional concerns) would be inevitable. However, the French President during a meeting with the Russian president has emphasized the adherence to the current nuclear deal!

At a recent meeting between the Russian and French presidents, Putin stated:

we can not make preserving the Iranian nuclear deal dependent on these three parameters because if we do, it means that we too are withdrawing from the accord because the deal that exists foresees no additional conditions.”

## Hezbollah’s rising power is fomenting panic among the Zionists

1 → Yet to learn from past experiences, the Zionist regime has once again tried new adventures with Hezbollah in recent months. Just recently, the director of Mossad has warned that a new war between the two parties may be brewing.

Hezbollah’s military boost over the past decade has possibly shifted the balance of power in the region in their favor. Presently, Hezbollah has allegedly reached the cutting edge of missile technology with the “Yakhont” missile. This weapon is designed to target warships and vessels as well as aircraft carriers and has the capability to hide from the enemy’s radar. Yakhont has an exceptional speed of 6.5 km per second and can attain significant altitudes in its trajectory towards a target.

The enhancement in Hezbollah’s defens-

es and offensive capabilities over water has enabled the group to destroy extant and prospective Zionist oil drilling rigs in disputed areas of the Mediterranean.

Regarding the strengthening of the Lebanese Hezbollah’s military power since the 33-day war, an Israeli commander, has said that Hezbollah has the eighth place in terms of rocket power globally. Elsewhere during a speech, the Zionist commander also said in the event of any possible war with Hezbollah, Israel will not be able to withstand the massive quantities of rockets fired by the group for several weeks in succession.

A report published in 2011 by U.S. researchers at the Center for International Strategic Research, explicitly stated: “Lebanon’s Hezbollah is considered a major threat

not only to Israel for its very high missile power and advanced weapons, but also a serious threat to the interests of the U.S. in the Middle East.”

In the same vein, about a year ago, a former chairman of the Zionist Army Communication Branch said Hezbollah is an organization that has the same power as a state - if not a more than a government. These remarks clearly signal Tel Aviv’s concern over Hezbollah’s military capabilities.

Zionist officials refer to Hezbollah as a primary reason for recent attacks on Syria and they are trying desperately trying to figure out ways to counter Hezbollah.

The rise of Lebanese Hezbollah’s military power in the missile field is a problem that even the Zionist media have acknowledged.



In this regard, the second television channel of the regime recently announced in a report that Hezbollah, at the beginning of the 2006 war, had 15,000 missiles, a number which fell to 7000 during the war, and that today it may have 150,000 missiles. This number is quite astounding if it is true.



# Boko Haram survivors starved and raped by Nigeria's military

By Lauren Aarons

Shortly after Halima arrived at a displacement camp in northeast Nigeria, a soldier approached her offering chicken and yams. Halima recognized him as one of the men who had beaten her husband and taken him into detention. For days, she had barely eaten so she accepted the food out of desperation. When the soldier returned demanding sex in exchange for the food, Halima was too scared to say "no".

The "soldiers are kings. When you see them, everybody is afraid", said Halima, who arrived at the Bama Hospital camp in late 2015. "They decide, they say nobody should complain. So, I did what he wanted."

Halima is one of thousands of women who, after surviving the brutal rule of the armed group Boko Haram, found themselves trapped in a nightmarish system of sexual violence and exploitation at the hands of the Nigerian military.

A new report by Amnesty International, "They Betrayed Us", documents the plight of women who were forced from their homes, separated from their husbands and confined to remote "satellite camps" in the northeast of Nigeria.

With hunger rife in the camps, military personnel and the militia members working with them used their authority and access to food and other basic necessities to coerce women into sex, which amounts to rape under international law. The soldiers sometimes used force if the women resisted.

Hauwa told us she was raped on several occasions by a militia member after arriving at Bama Hospital Camp. She described being hemmed in by sexual violence and starvation.

## Crimes committed by Boko Haram

The crimes committed by Boko Haram must not blind the outside world to the widespread abuses carried out by the Nigerian military, which is responsible for arbitrary detention, torture and

thousands of unlawful killings

"I arrived with 130 other women and children (in early 2016). Hunger and thirst (killed) 58 from our group in the first four months," Hauwa said.

"You'll see a military man with food in the hand and he'd say, 'If you like me, take this food'. If you accept the food, later, he'd come back to you to have intercourse. If you refuse, he'd rape you (using physical force)."

Amnesty International has collected evidence that thousands of people have starved to death in these camps, mostly in late 2015 and in 2016. Almost half of the women we spoke to in one camp, Bama Hospital camp, said that one or more of their children had died.

While the daily deaths have now abated as humanitarian assistance has scaled up, many women are still restricted from leaving the camps and sometimes go days without food. In these conditions, sexual exploitation has thrived.

Since 2012, when Boko Haram started attacking civilians in northeast Nigeria, Amnesty International has repeatedly denounced abuses carried out by the armed group, which has committed massacres, launched car bomb and gun attacks in cities and abducted thousands of people.

But the crimes committed by Boko Haram must not blind the outside world to the widespread abuses carried out by the Nigerian military, which is responsible for arbitrary detention, torture and thousands of unlawful killings.

Rape and sexual violence are just one of the numerous injustices women have faced at the hands of the military. They described their villages being burned down in military operations and being ordered to leave, and being starved and beaten in the camps while their husbands and sons were detained.

Treated with suspicion by soldiers simply because

they lived under Boko Haram's control, hundreds of women and girls were also detained and transferred to military detention facilities such as the Giwa barracks, where Amnesty International has documented the deaths of at least 37 women and children since 2015 due to the appalling conditions.

## Soldiers flogged women

"They asked us women where our husbands were, then they flogged us with sticks. They beat my children and said they are Boko Haram children... I was pregnant at the time," said 25-year-old Zara, who spent two years in Giwa barracks with her children, and gave birth unassisted in an overcrowded cell.

Some women detained for being so-called "Boko Haram wives" told us that they had been abducted by the armed group and forcibly married to a member. During subsequent military interrogations, they were beaten into silence as they tried to explain this to the soldiers. ➔13

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## Nano Match plan to support Iranian products

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran Nanotechnology Initiative Council performs Nano Match plan to support Iranian nano products.

Companies active in different fields of nanotechnology can submit their plans and introduce their products to the council until May 31, according to the council’s public relations department.

The plan aims to boost wealth creation, develop entrepreneurship and commercialize nano products.



# Nano Match

Nano Match, which is being held for the 6th time, is a permanent plan, which supports startups, researchers, academics as the part which supply the nano products as well as industrial companies, and capital ventures as the part which demand them.

Those nano products which are used in industry, do not have any Iranian rival or are superior in quality and reasonable in price are accepted in this plan.

The submitted works are assessed according to their ability for commercialization, technical feature, nano scale, innovation and marketing capabilities.

The selected products can benefit from facilities and services provided by Iran Nanotechnology Initiative Council as well as other supports for developing their market.

During the past five editions of Nano Match, which started in 2013, a total of 25 nano products were selected by the council and received supports.

Iran boasts its expert human resource and high quality achievements in the field of nanotechnology, however, many of nano products have not been commercialized due to absence of support and knowledge about the market.

## Now you can visit world heritage sites in virtual reality

It’s not quite the same as being there, but now anyone with a web connection or a virtual reality headset can visit some of the world’s most celebrated heritage sites — without leaving home. Depicting famous locations through VR may also help preserve site records or even aid in reconstruction if they undergo future damage.

The Open Heritage project — a collaboration between Google and an Oakland, California-based nonprofit called CyArk — has posted online realistic 3D models of 26 heritage locations in 18 countries, including the 1,000-year-old Temple of Kukulkan in the Mayan city of Chichén Itzá in Mexico; parts of the Roman city of Pompeii, buried by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D.; and the Native American cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde in southern Colorado.

“We’ve been collecting these sites for 15 years,” said CyArk CEO John Ristevski. “Google approached us about opening up our archives to a much broader audience, and we’ve been wanting to do that for a long time.”

The 26 locations are a fraction of more than 200 heritage sites that CyArk has documented around the world since 2003, using digital photography, aerial drones, and a 3D laser scanning technology known as LIDAR (for light detection and ranging).

Detailed 3D models of the unique buildings and ancient artifacts, maps, and high-resolution 360-degree photographs from the 26 locations can be viewed directly on the Open Heritage website with just a web browser, thanks to a new VR interface developed by Google for the project — while those with VR headsets can immerse themselves in a wrap-around view.

The heritage sites range from ancient wonders, like Pompeii and Chichén Itzá, to relatively modern heritage sites like the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, built in the 18th century.

CyArk plans to add nine more locations, including the Washington Monument and the World War I battleground at Flanders Fields in Belgium, in the next few months — with more to come.

Many of the locations in the Open Heritage project can be hard to visit in person, because of their remoteness or because authorities limit access to them. “Many of these places, for whatever reason, are just not open to the public,” Ristevski said.

One of the least accessible is Chavín de Huántar, a pre-Inca religious site in north-central Peru that is situated at an elevation of almost 4,000 meters [13,000 feet]. “That’s a 10-hour bus ride from Lima,” he said. “It does not get many tourists, but it’s an amazing site.”

While the Open Heritage website makes it easier for people to experience heritage sites in virtual reality, CyArk got its start 15 years ago with a different goal — making a permanent record of ancient locations that are under threat from natural events or desecration.

CyArk’s founder, Ben Kacyra, an expatriate Iraqi engineer who now lives in California, learned of the destruction of Afghanistan’s 1,500-year-old Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001, and decided that he wanted to create three-dimensional digital records of the world’s heritage sites in case they were damaged or destroyed.

Kacyra’s foresight has paid off in more than one case.

Shortly after CyArk technicians mapped the ancient Buddhist temples at Bagan in Myanmar in 2016, the temples were badly damaged by a massive earthquake. “One of those temples in Bagan is actually closed to visitors now, so you can’t even go in there,” Ristevski said.

CyArk’s detailed digital records are now being used in reconstruction work at Bagan, and virtual reality versions of the Bagan temples can be seen on the Open Heritage website: “so you’re seeing things that [tourists] can’t even see,” Ristevski said.

(Source: nbcnews.com)

# Space industry development requires national willpower: minister

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Development of space industry requires national willpower, Communications and Information Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi has said.

There are several institutes in Iran who are active in the field of space studies, however, sometimes they are working in parallel due to lack of appropriate connections, ILNA quoted the minister as saying at the Iranian Supreme Council of Space Strategic Committee meeting on Tuesday.

A coherence should be established between space institutes in the future, he said.

Azari Jahromi extolled the young human resources who do their best to boost space industry.

“We should regard the potential capacity of Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) and space diplomacy in order to cooperate with other countries,” he said.

He also talked about the second ten-year program for space development, which



began from 2016.

He defined the value chain of space

industry as one of the main projects for the second ten-year program, which includes

research and development, producers, satellite operators and service suppliers.

Headed by President Hassan Rouhani, the Supreme Council of Space observe activities of Iran Space Agency, which mandated to cover and support all the activities in Iran concerning the peaceful applications of space science and technology.

The Council’s main goals included policy making for the application of space technologies aiming peaceful uses of outer space, manufacturing, launching and use of the national research satellites, approving the space related state and private sector programs, promoting the partnership of the private and cooperative sectors in efficient uses of space, and identifying guidelines concerning the regional and international cooperation in space issues.

To follow and implement the strategies set by the Council, ISA affiliated with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in the form of an autonomous organization, was organized.

## Plan for cooperation with expat experts underway



**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s National Elites Foundation and Science and Technology Vice Presidency plan to expand cooperation with expat experts.

Pardin Technology Park ranks first amongst 67 Iranian academic places, which planned to attract the Iranian elite abroad in the past Iranian calendar year of 1396 (March 2017-March 2018).

A total of 15 Iranian expat experts are working at the Pardin technology Park are working in the center, Science and Technology Vice Presidency public relation announced on Tuesday.

With the support of Iran’s National Elites Foundation and Science and Technology Vice Presidency, a total of 67 universities,

knowledge enterprise, technology parks and incubators performed ‘Cooperation with Iranian expat entrepreneurs and elite’ plan.

The plan aims to attract Iranian abroad to share knowledge, experience and technology ideas in the form of post-doctoral research, research opportunity, visiting fellow, working in knowledge enterprises, business startups and holding workshops at the center.

According to Pardin Technology Park (PTP) website, it is under the auspices of science and technology vice presidency and a fourteen-entity Board of Trustees comprising of corporate and real bodies from ministries, science centers and academies, headed by the First Vice President.

## ‘Internet business in Iran to use fintech soon’



**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Financial technology (fintech) will be used as a part of internet business in the country in coming three months, Communications and Information Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi wrote on his Twitter account on Thursday.

As per an approval by the cabinet of ministers, the central bank is obliged to end PSP (Payment Service Provider) monopoly and create a competitive space for fintech market, the tweet reads.

Up to now, the internet finance in Iran was PSP-based, which offers shops online services for accepting

electronic payments by a variety of payment methods including credit card and bank-based payments.

Fintech is a portmanteau of financial technology that describes an emerging financial services sector in the 21st century.

Originally, the term applied to technology applied to the back-end of established consumer and trade financial institutions. Since the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the term has expanded to include any technological innovation in the financial sector, including innovations in financial literacy and education, retail banking, investment and even crypto-currencies like bitcoin.

## How your web browser tells you when it’s safe

As Google moves to change how its Chrome browser flags insecure websites, rival browsers may be forced to follow suit. Here’s how other browsers currently handle website security and what changes they have coming.

Google last week spelled out the schedule it will use to reverse years of advice from security experts when browsing the Web - to “look for the padlock.” Starting in July, the search giant will mark insecure URLs in its market-dominant Chrome, not those that already are secure. Google’s goal? Pressure all website owners to adopt digital certificates and encrypt the traffic of all their pages.

The decision to tag HTTP sites - those not locked down with a certificate and which don’t encrypt server-to-browser and browser-to-server communications - rather than label the safer HTTPS websites, didn’t come out of nowhere. Google has been promising as much since 2014.

Security pros praised Google’s campaign, and the probable end-game. “I won’t have to tell my mom to look for the padlock,” said Chester Wisniewski, principal research scientist at security firm Sophos, of the switcheroo. “She can just use her computer.”

But what are Chrome’s rivals doing? Marching in step or sticking to tradition? Computerworld fired up the Big Four - Chrome, Mozilla’s Firefox, Apple’s Safari and Microsoft’s Edge - to find out.

### ■ Safari

Apple’s browser currently uses the traditional model of signage: It puts a small padlock icon in the address bar when a page is protected by a digital certificate and traffic between the Mac and site server is encrypted.

No padlock? That means the site does not encrypt traffic.

Recent versions of the browser, however, take additional steps in certain circumstances. If the user is at an insecure site - one not locked down with a certificate and encryption - and attempts tasks such as entering info into log-on fields or those designed to accept credit card numbers, Safari throws up a red text warning in the address bar that starts as Not Secure and then changes to Website Not Secure. Those hard-to-miss alerts debuted with the version of Safari bundled with macOS 10.13.4, an update issued March 29. (Mac owners running OS X



10.11 (El Capitan) or macOS 10.12 (Sierra) got the same functionality in the Safari 11.1 update on the same day.)

### ■ Firefox

Mozilla’s browser is on a path similar to Google’s Chrome; it will eventually tag all sites sans encryption with a distinctive marker. But Firefox is not there yet.

Currently, Firefox shows a padlock with a red strike-through line when the user reaches an HTTP page that contains a username+password log-on combination. Placing the cursor in one of the fields - by clicking in one, for instance - adds a textual warning that reads This connection is not secure. Logins entered here could be compromised.

Otherwise, tradition still rules in Firefox: HTTPS websites are marked by green padlocks in the address bar, while regular HTTP pages are unmarked.

Mozilla has committed to reversing the iconography, though. “Firefox will eventually display the struck-through lock icon for all pages that don’t use HTTPS [emphasis added], to make clear that they are not secure,” wrote Tanvi Vyas and Peter Dolanjski, a security engineer and product manager, respectively, in a blog post over a year ago. “As our plans evolve, we will continue to post updates, but our hope is that all developers are encouraged by these changes to take the necessary steps to protect users of the Web through HTTPS.”

The mark-all-HTTP feature is tucked inside Firefox, but it’s not been enabled in the current production-quality browser, Firefox 60. Users can switch it

on manually, however.

### ■ Chrome

Chrome still uses the usual padlock to mark HTTPS sites and does not call out unencrypted traffic (HTTP), at least at a quick glance to the address bar. (Clicking the information icon in the address bar, the symbol of a lowercase i within a circle, at the left of the URL, displays a drop-down that does call attention to existing insecure connections, however.)

And since 2017, Chrome has tagged sites that transmit either passwords or credit card information over HTTP connections as Not secure using text in the address bar.

But Google has scheduled several additional steps for this year that will move Chrome closer to a goal of overturning decades of visual signals that mark traffic encryption.

The changes begin in July with Chrome 68 - set to ship the week of July 22-28 - that will mark all HTTP sites with text that reads Not Secure preceding the URL in the address bar.

Then in October, Chrome 70 will appear (during the week of Oct. 14-20), labeling any HTTP site with a small red triangle to indicate an insecure connection, along with the text Not secure in the address bar. Those signals show as soon as the user interacts with any input field.

### ■ Edge

In much the same way as Apple’s Safari, Microsoft’s lead browser has stuck with the HTTPS-is-marked, HTTP-is-not model.

Edge displays a padlock icon in the address bar when the page is protected by a digital certificate, and traffic between the Windows 10 PC and server is encrypted. If there is no padlock, the site does not encrypt traffic, relying on HTTP instead. To get the full story, however, users must click on the icon - an i within a circle - and read the text in the ensuing pop-up. “Be careful here,” Edge warns. “Your connection to this website isn’t encrypted. This makes it easier for someone to steal sensitive information like passwords.”

Unlike Safari, Firefox and Chrome, Edge does not proffer special warnings when the user visits an HTTP site sporting important input fields, like those dedicated to passwords or credit card numbers.

(Source: computerworld.com)



# NASA's Mars Curiosity rover successfully drills Duluth rock after a hiatus

NASA's Mars Curiosity rover has been on a drilling hiatus for more than a year but it is now able to drill samples in rocks at the Red Planet's Gale Crater again.

Electrical issues have caused problems with the rover's hammering mechanism. However, the problem became worse when its drill broke down in December 2016, which prevented the drill from moving up and down.

The ability to drill into Martian rocks is an important capability for Curiosity to study planet Mars. Samples that the rover drilled earlier led to the discovery of a freshwater lake and groundwater system on the Red Planet that would have been habitable.

The malfunction prompted the Curiosity team on Earth to come up with a new drilling method that can overcome the mechanical problems.

## ■ Martian rock

The team was able to test the new technique over the weekend and was able to drill about 2 inches into a rock nicknamed "Duluth". For the first time since late 2016 when its motor stopped working, the rover has bored into a Martian rock.

"If all goes well and we can continue drilling, the science team hopes to learn how the ancient climate at Gale crater, and the prospects for life there, changed over time," said Curiosity Rover's project scientist Ashwin Vasavada.



**The next challenge for the Curiosity team will be to fine-tune the new process and deliver the rock powder to the rover's built-in laboratories for analysis.**

The technique, called "Feed Extended Drilling" or FED, uses the force of the rover's robotic arm to push the drill forward as the latter spins, much like how humans would drill into a wall at home.

"This is our next big test to restore drilling closer to the way it worked before," said Steven Lee, Curiosity deputy project manager at JPL. "Based on how it performs, we can fine-tune the process, trying things like increasing the amount of force we apply while drilling."

## ■ The next challenge

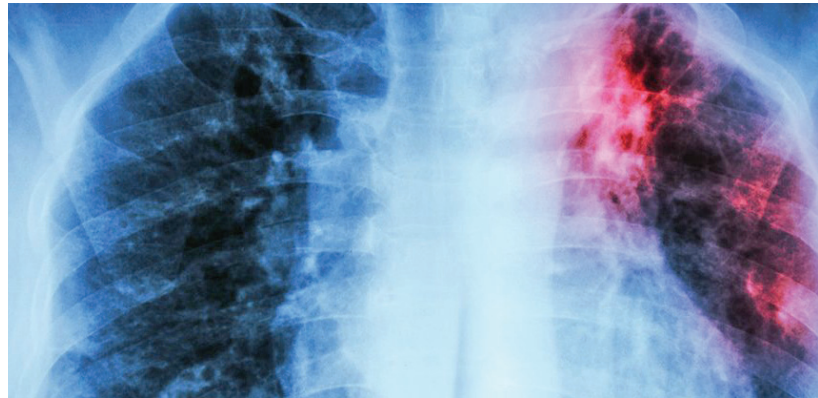
The next challenge for the Curiosity team will be to fine-tune the new process and deliver the rock powder to the rover's built-in laboratories for analysis. Inside the rover are two laboratories that can conduct a chemical and mineralogical analysis of soil and rock samples.

The team plans to test a new method for the delivery of rock samples later this week.

"We've been developing this new drilling technique for over a year, but our job isn't done once a sample has been collected on Mars," said JPL's Tom Green, who helped develop the new drilling method. "With each new test, we closely examine the data to look for improvements we can make and then head back to our test bed to iterate on the process."

(Source: Tech Times)

## Scientists found an unexpected link between tuberculosis and Parkinson's disease



At first glance, tuberculosis and Parkinson's disease are about as different as diseases get, but a new study has found an important link between the two.

This connection is down to a protein called leucine-rich repeat kinase 2 (LRRK2), and not only could it help develop new treatments for both diseases, but it also demonstrates a key connection between the brain and our immune system.

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder that develops as nerve cells in the brain die, depriving the tissue of a key chemical messenger called dopamine.

Exactly what causes these cells to die in some people is a mystery, though an increasing number of signs point to a confused immune system.

## ■ New class of treatments

Mutations in LRRK2 have also been implicated in the development of Parkinson's, a find that is already helping scientists who are developing a new class of treatments.

And research led by a team from the Francis Crick Institute and Newcastle University in the UK has now explained how LRRK2 interferes with one of the processes white blood cells use to kill bacteria.

This is where tuberculosis (TB) comes in, because it's an infection caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, usually within lung tissue.

In most cases, our bodies do a fairly good job of dealing with the infection by sending in white blood cells called macrophages - they swallow the microbes and pack them

inside bubbles called phagosomes.

Once the germs are safely trapped inside these compartments, packets of enzymes called lysosomes click into place and empty their bacteria-dissolving contents, killing the infection.

Broad studies of the human genome have hinted at some kind of relationship between inflammation caused by *Mycobacterium* diseases - including TB and leprosy - and the LRRK2 gene.

What's been missing are the details; just how does a gene connected to Parkinson's disease mess with the way white blood cells deal with mycobacteria?

To get a better idea of what was going on at a cellular level, the team developed several experiments that exposed the chemical's functions.

## ■ Bacterial jail cells

It turns out that LRRK2 regulates a process that connects those bacterial jail cells with their horror-show bubbles of death, effectively preventing them from joining. Meanwhile, macrophages that were engineered to have LRRK2 missing had no problem digesting their TB captives.

Not only does this discovery shed light on how TB and leprosy infections might get a foothold, but it could also explain why certain proteins accumulate inside nerves.

"We think that this mechanism might also be at play in Parkinson's disease, where abnormal masses of protein called 'Lewy bodies' build up in neurons in the brain and cause damage," says one of report's first authors, Susanne Herbst from the Francis Crick Institute.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## When the dinosaurs died, so did forests -- and tree-dwelling birds: new study



Sixty-six million years ago, the world burned. An asteroid crashed to Earth with a force one million times larger than the largest atomic bomb, causing the extinction of the dinosaurs. But dinosaurs weren't the only ones that got hit hard -- in a new study, scientists learned that the planet's forests were decimated, leading to the extinction of tree-dwelling birds.

"Looking at the fossil record, at plants and birds, there are multiple lines of evidence suggesting that the forest canopies collapsed," says Regan Dunn, a paleontologist at the Field Museum in Chicago and a co-author on the study in *Current Biology*. "Perching birds went extinct because there were no more perches."

"We drew on a variety of approaches to stitch this story together," said Daniel Field, the paper's lead author, of the Milner Centre for Evolution at the University of Bath. "We concluded that the temporary elimination of forests in the aftermath of the asteroid impact explains why arboreal birds failed to survive across this extinction event. The ancestors of modern arboreal birds did not move into the trees until forests had recovered from the extinction-causing asteroid."

## ■ The volcanic eruption

The project's pollen expert, Antoine Bercovici of the Smithsonian Institution and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, helped determine that the world's forests were destroyed by looking at microscopic fossils of pollen and

spores. Dunn explains, "After a disaster like a forest fire or a volcanic eruption, the first plants to come back are the fastest colonizers -- especially ferns." That's because ferns don't sprout from seeds, but from spores, which are much smaller -- just a single cell. "Spores are minuscule, the size of a grain of pollen, so they're easily dispersed. They get picked up by the wind and go further than seeds can, and all they need to grow is a wet spot."

The "spores are tiny -- you could fit four across a single strand of your hair," says Dunn. "To see them, we take a sample of rock from the time frame just after the collision and dissolve it in acid. Then we purify it so that all that remains is the organic debris, like pollen, spores and little leaf bits, then we look at them under a microscope."

Immediately after the asteroid hit, the fossil record shows the charcoal remains of burnt trees, and then, tons of fern spores.

"Our study examined the fossil record from New Zealand, Japan, Europe and North America, which showed there was a mass deforestation across the globe at the end of the Cretaceous period," says co-author Bercovici.

And with no more trees, the scientists found, tree-dwelling birds went extinct. The birds that did survive were ground-dwellers -- birds whose fossilized remains show longer, sturdier legs like we see in modern ground birds like kiwis and emus.

(Source: Science Daily)

## Scientists plan new project to search for particles that escape from LHC

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the most complex device ever built by humanity, and it's allowed us to explore previously unknowable realms of physics. However, there are still some missing pieces to the puzzle. Scientists hope that a comparatively modest new instrument near the LHC could spot those missing pieces -- missing particles, actually. The Massive Timing Hodoscope for Ultra Stable Neutral Particles is still just in the planning stages, but it could eventually spot stray particles escaping from the LHC.

The LHC began operating in 2008, with one of its primary goals to identify the Higgs Boson. This elementary particle, first hypothesized by Peter Higgs in 1964, is a vital piece of the so-called "standard model" of physics. The Higgs has to do with why other particles have mass. Data from the LHC has proven the Higgs Boson exists, but there's still a problem with the Higgs: it's not as massive as quantum mechanics predicts. So, physicists need to account for that missing mass. That's where the new project could close the gap.

The Massive Timing Hodoscope for Ultra Stable Neutral Particles (which goes by the inaccurate but much simpler nickname MATHUSLA) will look for particles the LHC misses because they're too stable. The LHC's detectors, like the ATLAS instrument seen above, scan for the decay of exotic particles when protons smash together in the collider. These are usually mind-bogglingly short-lived, but researchers are beginning to suspect some of them might be more stable than expected. That's why MATHUSLA is looking for "ultra-stable" particles. It's right in the name.

MATHUSLA would essentially be a warehouse full of particle detectors stacked 20 meters tall at ground level above the LHC. Particles that streak away from the LHC without showing up in the data could appear in MATHUSLA's detectors a split second later.

(Source: extremetech.com)

## How bats could help scientists stop Ebola outbreaks before they start

The current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo has spread to at least 58 people, and has killed nearly half of those individuals, according to an update on May 23 from the World Health Organization (WHO). This is the nation's ninth Ebola outbreak since 1976, when the deadly virus was first discovered in a village near the country's Ebola River.

That's the goal of one group of researchers, who hope to predict Ebola outbreaks before they begin by tracking the migration patterns of one of the main hosts of the disease: bats. The researchers detailed their work in a new study on May 22 in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

"Traditionally, scientists studying the [spread] of diseases like Ebola have operated under the assumption that the disease moves uniformly," said study co-author Paolo Bocchini, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. "In reality, diseases that are spread by animal hosts depend on how those hosts migrate."

Using satellite information, along with data on rates of infection, births and deaths in bats, Bocchini and his fellow researchers have developed a model that follows the migratory patterns of the mammals in Africa as they pursue resources across the continent.

By "feeding models" with this information plus data on the availability of food and shelter for the bats, the model was able to "accurately predict outbreak hotspots corresponding to bat migration during the 2014 Ebola outbreak," Bocchini told *Live Science*. (The 2014 outbreak, which took place in West Africa, claimed more than 11,000 lives.)

(Source: Live Science)

## Bumblebees confused by iridescent colors

Iridescence is a form of structural color which uses regular repeating nanostructures to reflect light at slightly different angles, causing a color-change effect.

It is common in nature, from the dazzling blues of peacock's feathers, to the gem-like appearance of insects.



Although using bright flashy colors as camouflage may seem counterintuitive, researchers at the Bristol Camo Lab found that intense iridescence obstructs the bumblebee's ability to identify shape. The eyes of bumblebees have been extensively studied by scientists and are very similar to those of other insects.

They can be used as a visual model for predatory insects such as wasps and hornets. When presented with different types of artificial flower targets rewarded with sugar water, the bees learned to recognize which shapes contained the sweet reward.

This current study using bumblebees as a model for (predatory) insect vision and cognition is the first to show that iridescence indeed has the potential to deceive predators and make them overlook the prey, the same way disruptive camouflage would work to break up the otherwise recognizable outline of a prey.

The changing colors make the outline of the prey look completely different to the shape the predators are searching for.

The researchers concluded that iridescence produces visual signals which can confuse potential predators, and this may explain its widespread occurrence in nature.

Lead author Dr. Karin Kjærsmo of the University of Bristol's School of Biological Sciences, said: "It's the first solid evidence we have that this type of coloration can be used in this way."

"Thus, if you are a visual predator searching for the specific shape of a beetle (or other prey animal), iridescence makes it difficult for predators to identify them as something edible."

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

## How much climate change came from the asteroid impact?

If you want to learn about the massive asteroid impact that triggered the extinction of dinosaurs, you might reach for dinosaur fossils. Or, it turns out, you could turn to a rather more humble form of scientific evidence: fish bones, teeth and scales each as small as a grain of sand.

That's the approach taken by the people behind a new paper published in the journal *Science*. In it, a team of scientists use the chemical fingerprint in what's euphemistically called "fish debris" to measure dramatic temperature changes caused by the massive asteroid impact about 65 million years ago. They say that the results could teach us what to expect from our own forays into the large-scale release of climate-altering gases.

"What happens when you crank up the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and maybe denude the landscape?" co-author Ken MacLeod, a geologist at the University of Missouri, told *Newsweek*. "This is a natural experiment for what happens when you twist the dials that hard." As to what that experiment showed, it's a grim picture.

MacLeod and his colleagues couldn't get a good look at the whole post-impact picture. In the immediate wake of the impact--on the timescale of a few years, temperatures plummeted worldwide. That so-called global winter was caused by aerosols flung high into the atmosphere reflecting



the sun's light away from Earth. Because the winter was so abrupt, scientists struggle to pick up its signal in geologic records.

## Asteroid impact

But the asteroid impact had a second, longer-lasting consequence: it vaporized a huge amount of carbon into the atmosphere. And once the haze cleared and sunlight

could reach Earth's surface again, that greenhouse gas got to doing what greenhouse gas does best: turning up the heat. MacLeod and his colleagues suggest that in the location they sampled, it raised local seawater temperatures by about nine degrees Fahrenheit for 100,000 years.

That climate rollercoaster shaped what species survived into the present. "It must have had a severe effect, even more so when it directly follows an impact winter because it's two very stressful environmental changes directly following each other," Johan Vellekoop, a geologist at KU Leuven University in Belgium, who wasn't involved in the new research, told *Newsweek*. "It was an unpleasant time to be alive on planet Earth."

Then, they isolated the fish debris itself. "We start out with a rock, we wash the rock down to just the sand-sized grains," MacLeod said.

MacLeod and his colleagues translated those signatures into temperature readings. It's not a foolproof approach for a couple of reasons. Right now, the measurements only reflect what was happening at one specific location, although MacLeod said he'd like to take the technique elsewhere. And because fish are talented swimmers, there's a chance that their movement has muddled the climate record.

(Source: Newsweek)



## Average precipitation in Iran falls by 29%

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s mean precipitation have **d e s k** dropped by 29 percent compared to the long-term average, the head of the national center for drought and crisis management, affiliated to the meteorological center, has said.

In an 8-month period (September 23, 2017- May 21, 2018) the country has received 151.5 millimeters of rain while the long-term averages are 214.6 millimeters which indicates a 29-percent drop in mean precipitation nationwide, Sadeq Ziaician said, ISNA reported on Friday.



Last year over the same period the country received 203.8 millimeters of rain, Ziaician said, this also shows 25 percent decrease compared to the corresponding period last year.

Provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, Kerman, Hormozgan, and Fars are suffering serious rainfall shortages with 71 percent, 67 percent, 66.5 percent and 56 percent drop respectively, he added.

On the other hand provinces of Zanjan, Ilam, Hamadan, Ardebil and Kermanshah met normal average, and three provinces of East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, and Kordestan have received above-normal rainfall with 16.6 percent, 14.7 percent and 12.8 percent increase in mean precipitation amounts.

In mid-April, 13 provinces of Iran were poured with rain or even blanketed with snow. According to the data released by Iran Water Resources Management Company, precipitation exceeded some 10 billion cubic meters from evening of April 11 to evening of April 13, which was unprecedented for a 2-day period.

At the same time, the country’s meteorological organization has announced on average the whole country reported below-average rainfall- less than 45 percent of the average compared to the same period in the long run (a period of 30 years) which makes the winter and autumn one of the driest seasons in the aforesaid period.

In late March, the national climatological research institute announced that much of the country should expect higher than average temperatures as well as less precipitation this spring projecting that almost all regions temperature is projected to rise above long-term averages by 1.5 degrees Celsius.

However, the rainfalls, affecting almost all the country over the past two months of the spring (March 21-May 21) has helped in compensating some of the shortages, however, many still believe that the summer will be drier than ever especially in southern cities.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Chinese Medicine

A: What’s wrong?  
B: I have a headache. These past few days I’ve been living off **painkillers**. Man, I feel like my head is going to explode.  
A: You should get **acupuncture treatment**. My mom was always having headache issues and it was acupuncture that cured her.  
B: The results are too slow. On top of that, just the thought of smoking **needles poking** into my **flesh** frightens me.  
A: They don’t just randomly stick you, they find your **pressure points**. The heat allows the body to immediately respond to the treatment, restoring the body’s “chi”.  
B: But I get scared the moment I see a needle. How could I stand having needles in my body for hours on end?  
A: The needles are very thin, and as long as the doctor’s technique is good, and the patient himself is relaxed, it won’t hurt—on the contrary it will actually **alleviate** pain. Now there are high-tech needles that are micro thin; they don’t hurt at all. However, if you are really scared of acupuncture, **scraping** or **cupping** are also options.  
B: Scraping is too terrifying. When they finish scrapping, your body is all red, as if you were just tortured. Cupping is the same, your body ends up with red circles all over it—looks like someone beat you up.  
A: This only signifies that the toxins have left the body. Actually, there is only discomfort during the treatment process. Once it’s over you feel very comfortable.  
B: Chinese medicine is strange. The patients are already ill, and then the doctor makes them suffer more.  
A: This is the only way to get at the problem. Anyway, if you want to relieve the pain, you are just going to have to be tough and do it.  
B: Forget it. I don’t want to **inflict** any more pain on myself. In a little while I’ll go and buy some more painkillers and take a nap.

■ **Key vocabulary**  
**painkiller**: a drug, treatment, or anything else that relieves pain  
**acupuncture**: Chinese Medical practice or procedure that treats illness or provides local anesthesia by the insertion of needles at specified sites of the body  
**treatment**: an act or manner of treating  
**needle**: a small, slender, rod-like instrument, usually of polished steel, with a sharp point at one end  
**poke**: to quickly push your finger or some other pointed object into something or someone  
**flesh**: the soft substance of a human or other animal body, consisting of muscle and fat  
**pressure point**: a point on the skin that is extremely sensitive to pressure be- cause of the presence of pressure-sensing organs  
**alleviate**: to make something less painful or difficult to deal with  
**scraping**: it is s done when a tool is used to “scrape” over a muscle or sore spot to help move toxins out, break up scar tissue or get rid of tendonitis  
**cupping**: the process of drawing blood from the body and the application of a cupping glass  
**inflict**: to make someone suffer something unpleasant  
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**  
**meditation**: devout religious contemplation or spiritual introspection  
**tai chi**: a meditative exercise, characterized by slow circular and stretching movements and positions of bodily balance  
**herb**: a plant when valued for its medicinal properties  
**incense**: the perfume or smoke arising from a substance when burned

(Source: irlanguage.com)

# 55,000 international students studying in Iran

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Some **d e s k** 55,000 international students are studying in Iranian universities, Hassan Salar-Amoli, deputy science minister for international affairs has said.

There are a total of 55,000 international students in Iran, 26,000 of them have enrolled in the universities affiliated to the Ministry of Science, 10,000 in the Islamic Azad University, 2,000 in the universities affiliated to the Ministry of Health and 17,000 in the Almustafa International University,” YJC quoted Salar-Amoli as saying Wednesday.

«One of the major policies in the Ministry of Science is to attract international students,” he said, adding, the Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking has placed twenty three Iranian universities in the list of 1,000 major universities worldwide in 2018 which set the scene for enrolling more international students.

Universities should also focus on attracting international students who are required to pay tuition fees, as a means of generating revenue for them, he stated.

To do so it is essential to ease the process for admitting international students, he added.

So far, international students studying at the Islamic Azad University and the universities affiliated to Ministry of Health are



paying tuition fees, universities of Mashhad, Kashan and Kordestan have made progress in attracting such students, he highlighted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the deputy science minister said that Ministry of Science planned to provide scholarships to the most deprived Muslim people from

African countries.

As per the latest rankings published by the Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking twenty three Iranian universities are placed in the list of 1,000 major universities worldwide in 2018.

The rankings are compiled by the CWTS

## National conference on social pathology on the way

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The third national social **d e s k** pathology conference will be held in Tehran by the end of the current Iranian calendar month (June 21), Seyed Hassan Serajzadeh, the head of the Iranian Sociological Association has said.

“The conference has been organized by the Iranian Sociological Association, in cooperation with the University of Tehran’s Centre for Women’s Studies, and other executive agencies and universities,” IRNA quoted Serajzadeh as saying on Friday.

“The Sociological Association as a scientific association is tasked with producing and disseminating sociological knowledge by advising the executive agencies. One of the other missions of the association is to distribute sociological

insights that identifies and solves problems,” he explained.

All social issues and problems will be discussed in the aforesaid conference, women and family issues are also among the topics of the conference, which will be held in the end of [the current Iranian calendar month of] Khordad (late June), he added.

“The incidence and severity of physiological and social damages in society can be greatly reduced in association with responsible organizations,” he expressed.

According to IRNA, over the last two decades, national conference on social pathology has been held twice in 2001 and 2012 by the Iranian Sociological Association and the results have been published in 14 volumes.

Domestic violence, divorce, beggary, social margin-

alization, child abuse, working children, child marriage, runaway teens, abuse of the elderly, drug problems, drug trafficking, social media disadvantages, and violence against women are some of the main subjects of the conference.

Social pathology and social problems refer to the disease condition of society. As the physical body is suffering from various ailments, the society as a system also suffers from various pathologies that threaten the proper functioning and survival.

Some social problems are global or universal nature and others are linked to the level of economic and technological development, history, ecology, socio-political and cultural set up a society.

## EU taken to court by families over inadequate 2030 emissions target



Traditional reindeer herding culture is threatened by climate change in Sweden

“The EU courts must now listen to these families and ensure that they are protected.”

Specifically, the plaintiffs want the EU to improve on its current emission trading scheme directive, effort sharing regulation and land use, land-use change and forestry regulation.

“This case is important because it asks the EU to increase its climate ambition to 2030, in order to take a fair share of the burden required to meet the temperature goal of the Paris agreement and to protect the human rights of European citizens,” said Sophie Marjanac, a climate lawyer at the nonprofit environmental law organization, ClientEarth.

Europeans in areas like France and Portugal have been struck by heat waves that have been linked with climate change, which have

taken their toll on local farmers in particular.

Maurice Feschet, the grandfather of the French plaintiff family, described how their farm in Provence had lost over 40 per cent of its harvest in six years “due to the impacts of climate change hitting us harder and harder”.

“In European politics, there is a concrete urgency to take a step back and consider the principles of democracy,” he added.

“The EU must now listen to its citizens who are impacted by climate change and implement the necessary measures to protect them.”

Meanwhile developing countries such as Fiji and Kenya have been struck by an increase in extreme weather events like cyclones and droughts, which scientists are able to attribute to climate change with increased confidence.

As an indigenous people of northern

Europe whose traditional way of life relies on reindeer herding, the Sami are gravely threatened by a warming climate.

“If we lose the reindeer, the Sami culture will be lost,” explained Sanna Vannar the president of Sami youth association Saminuorra.

“Many of the Sami youth want to be reindeer herders, but they cannot see a future. This is mostly due to the threat of climate change. This must be urgently addressed for the safety of our generation and the next generations.”

The action is supported by Climate Action Network (CAN), an umbrella group of environmental NGOs working to tackle climate change.

“In 2015, as part of the Paris agreement, countries agreed to pursue efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5C. Yet, it is clear that the existing EU 2030 climate target is not enough to respect the commitments taken in the Paris agreement and should be increased,” said CAN director Wendel Trio. This legal action initiated by families is underlining the urgency and the necessity to increase the EU’s 2030 climate target.”

The German NGO Protect the Planet is bearing the costs of the legal case, and scientists from think tank Climate Analytics are providing expertise to clarify how the plaintiffs are affected by climate change and what the EU can do to improve its targets.

(Source: Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

### Iran mulls over water transfer from Sea of Oman to drought-ridden provinces

Iran is weighing up the option of transferring water from Sea of Oman to drought-ridden provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, Hormozgan and Khorasan Razavi, deputy head of the Department of Environment (DOE) for marine affairs has said.

“There is a strong possibility that we initiate the plan to transfer water from Sea of Oman by the next [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019),” ISNA quoted Parvin Farshchi as saying on Friday.

The three provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, Hormozgan and Khorasan Razavi are already stricken with severe drought and the latest projections revealed that the aforementioned provinces will face water scarcity within next three years which necessitates transferring water from Sea of Oman, Farshchi explained.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “-ise, -ize”

- **Meaning:** resemble or become
- **For example:** Students need to learn how to **organize** their work.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Goof around

- **Meaning:** to spend time doing silly things or not doing very much
- **For example:** We spent the afternoon just goofing around on our bikes.

### IDIOM

#### Bring the house down

- **Explanation:** to give a very successful performance
- **For example:** If he sings like that on Saturday, he’ll bring the house down.

### احتمال انتقال آب دریای عمان به مناطق کم آب و بی آب

با توجه به طرح انتقال آب از دریای عمان به استان‌های سیستان و بلوچستان، هرمزگان و خراسان رضوی معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست با اشاره به ضرورت مطالعات انتقال آب دریای عمان از احتمال اجرای آن خبر داد.

پروین فرشچی در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا گفت: به احتمال بسیار قوی طرح انتقال آب از دریای عمان از سال آینده کلید خواهد خورد.

فرشچی توضیح داد: اگرچه در حال حاضر کم‌آبی و بی‌آبی در سه استان سیستان و بلوچستان، هرمزگان و خراسان رضوی پیداد می‌کند پیش‌بینی‌ها نشان می‌دهد که تا سه سال آینده استان‌های سیستان و بلوچستان، هرمزگان و خراسان رضوی حتماً به منابع آبی نیاز دارند و انتقال آب حتماً باید صورت گیرد.



# Nasrallah: U.S. sanctions on Hezbollah will not harm its officials

The Lebanese resistance group of Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah deliver a speech on Friday afternoon, on the occasion of Resistance and Liberation Day.

Resistance and Liberation Day marks the liberation of Lebanon's south from the Israeli occupation on May 25, 2000. In that month Israeli occupation soldiers were forced to withdraw without preconditions, following long years of heroic resistance.

The Hezbollah Secretary General started his televised speech on the 18th anniversary of Lebanon's Resistance and Liberation Day by expressing thanks to the Holy God for His help to achieve the victory of defeating the Zionist occupation in 2000.

Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah hailed the sacrifices of the martyrs, injured, prisoners, fighters, and their families, which contributed to the victory. He went on to highlight Iran's and Syria's contribution to the Resistance victory over the Israeli enemy in the year 2000. He also pointed out that the Holy God grants victory to the people who deserve it, and this has



happened in the case of the Resistance people till now.

Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah further said the Holy God will certainly help the Resis-

tance defeat the Israeli enemy during any possible war.

The Hezbollah Secretary General said the United States-Persian Gulf sanctions

on Hezbollah will not harm its officials, but must be regarded seriously when they target the Lebanese businessmen who support the Resistance. He added, the Lebanese government must protect the Lebanese businessmen from such sanctions.

He said the U.S.-Persian Gulf sanctions against Hezbollah aim to harm its social surrounding, allies, and supporters, and to dry up its financial resources, adding however the sanctions will fail to tamper with the Resistance willingness and determination.

Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah said Americans view others as mercenaries and evaluate them according to their financial abilities. Elsewhere in his remarks he said Morocco falsely accused Hezbollah of supporting Polisario Front, rejecting to submit any documented proof.

He also congratulated the Syrian leadership, army and people on the full liberation of Damascus and its countryside from the terrorist groups.

(Source: Almanar)

## Gaza return protests continue with 120 martyrs

By staff & agencies

The Palestinian Health Ministry in a report on Friday said 120 people have been killed and hundreds have been injured since March 30

Felestin Al-Youm (Palestine Today) quoted the Palestinian Health Ministry that some 120 Palestinians were killed and thousands more injured during the six-week "March of Return" protests that first began on March 30 near the fence separating Gaza from the Israeli-occupied territories.

At least 65 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces only on May 14 as they protested the United States decision to relocate its embassy from Tel Aviv to al-Quds (Jerusalem).

The occupied territories have witnessed new tensions ever since the U.S. President Donald Trump on December 6, 2017 announced Washington's recognition of al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's "capital" and said the U.S. would move its embassy to the city.

The dramatic decision triggered demonstrations in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco and other Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

■ **Israeli forces shoot at Palestinian fishermen off Gaza, arrest two**

Elsewhere, Palestinian officials say Israeli naval forces have opened fire on several Palestinian fishing boats off the coast of the besieged Gaza Strip, and arrested two brothers.

Head of the Fishermen Committees in the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Zakaria Bakr, told Arabic-language Safa news agency that Israeli forces targeted the Palestinian boats off the northern shores of the coastal sliver on Thursday morning.

Bakr added that marines then boarded a boat and arrested two brothers, identified as Rasem and Mohammed Zayed, before taking them to an unknown location.

Over the past few years, Israeli forces have carried out



more than a hundred attacks on Palestinian boats, arresting dozens of fishermen and confiscating several boats.

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli blockade since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

■ **Israel mulls over construction of 2,500 new settler units in West Bank**

Meantime, Israel has announced plans to construct a total of 2,500 new settler units in the West Bank, once again defying international calls for the regime to stop its settlement activities on occupied Palestinian territories.

Israeli war minister, Avigdor Lieberman, tweeted on Thursday that he would request the Higher Planning Council next week to issue permits for building 2,500 new units in more than 30 West Bank settlements.

He also noted that 1,400 of the housing units would be designated for immediate construction.

"We will promote building in all of Judea and Samaria, from the north to south, in small communities and

in large ones," Lieberman said, using the Israeli term for the West Bank.

He further stressed that Israel had been keeping its word on the West Bank construction activities, saying, "In the coming months we will bring forward thousands more units for approval."

The remarks came two days after the Palestinian foreign ministry called Israeli settlements "the single most dangerous threat to Palestinian lives and livelihoods."

"Israel maintains, expands and protects the settlement regime by committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of apartheid against the Palestinian people," the ministry said in a statement to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Most of the United Nations Security Council member states raise alarm over the non-implementation of an anti-Israel resolution adopted in December 2016.

About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built illegally since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian lands.

Tel Aviv has been emboldened by the all-out support of Obama's successor, Donald Trump, stepping up even further its settlement construction activities in the occupied territories in defiance of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2334.

The resolution, approved in December 2016, states that Israel's establishment of "settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace."

Earlier this month, two-thirds of the 15 UNSC member states raised alarm over the non-implementation of Resolution 2334.



The former prime minister was questioned by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) twice this week, including a marathon seven-hour session on Thursday.

----- 1MDB scandal

In 2016, the United States justice department filed a case seeking to seize more than \$1bn in assets in the U.S. linked to the 1MDB fund.

The U.S. investigators have also alleged that \$700m from the 1MDB fund ended up in Najib's bank account.

Najib, who is banned from leaving the country, has denied allegations of any wrongdoing.

So far, \$1bn, earmarked for infrastructure and education, has been paid out by the central bank.

Another \$35m is due to be paid in interest rates by the end of the year.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Malaysia police seize \$28m cash in raids linked to ex-PM Najib

Malaysian police said on Friday that cash worth 114 million ringgit (\$28.6m) and over 400 luxury handbags were seized from several apartments as part of an anti-corruption probe into a state fund founded by former Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Malaysian police revealed on Friday that 72 bags of luggage - 35 of which were stuffed with \$28.6m of cash in 26 different currencies - as well as jewelry and luxury watches were found from an empty apartment in a series of separate raids last week.

A total of 284 boxes containing expensive designer handbags were also seized from the vacant premises, which police declined to say who it belonged to.

Two other residences occupied by Najib's

son and daughter were also raided among the 12 locations.

"What I can confirm is that we did confiscate about approximately 150 bags from the premises where the daughter is staying," Amar Singh, commercial crime chief, said at a news conference on Friday.

Singh added that police are still assessing the value of jewelry and watches in the rest of the 37 items of luggage.

Najib, who was defeated by veteran politician Mohamed Mahathir, is being investigated by the new government over a corruption scandal at the state-owned investment fund, 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), from which officials are alleged to have stolen more than \$4.5bn.

## Canada police seek suspects in restaurant bombing, 15 injured

Canadian police were looking for two suspects who walked into a crowded restaurant and detonated a bomb, injuring 15 people, and said on Friday the incident did not appear to be a hate crime or linked to international terror.

The blast went off in a popular Indian restaurant in Mississauga, a Toronto suburb, at about 10:30 p.m. local time on Thursday. Security camera footage showed two

men entering the restaurant, one carrying an object.

"There's no indication this is a terrorist act, no indication this is a hate crime at this time," Peel Police Chief Jennifer Evans told reporters on Friday. The explosion caused "a considerable amount of damage," Evans said, adding there were two private parties at the restaurant at the time, with children under 10 in attendance. There were no children among the injured.

The two male suspects fled after detonating their improvised explosive device. No one has claimed responsibility, and the motive for the attack was still not known.

The blast in Mississauga comes a month after a driver ploughed his white Ryder rental van into a lunch-hour crowd in Toronto, killing 10 people and injuring 15.

(Source: Reuters)

## Majority believes U.S. is losing influence in Middle East: poll

A strong majority of Americans believe that the United States is losing influence in the Middle East, according to a new poll.

Sixty-nine percent of Americans polled believe America is ceding influence in the region to countries like Russia, Iran and China, according to new results from the Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll released exclusively to The Hill on Thursday.

The finding comes as the region is the backdrop for heightening tensions between the Israelis and Palestinians, and escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran after President Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal.

Fifty-four percent of those polled said that America should have attempted to renegotiate the Iran deal instead of withdrawing, while 46 percent said that they agreed with the administration's decision.

But there was consensus that Iran has violated its end of the bargain — 65 percent

believe that Iran isn't sticking to the terms of the agreement, which rolled back sanctions in exchange for Iran ramping down its development of nuclear weapons.

While a majority of respondents polled didn't back Trump's decision in Iran, there's far stronger support for his decision to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to al-Quds (Jerusalem).

America had long kept its embassy in Tel Aviv in the hopes of staying neutral in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians who both claim the city as their rightful capital. While Congress had regularly passed a law to move the embassy to Jerusalem as a sign of support for Israel, presidents have ignored that law asserting their right to decide foreign policy.

Trump followed through on his campaign promise and moved the embassy earlier this month.

Sixty percent of American adults polled say they support that decision, while 40 percent disagreed. But while 40 percent

said that the decision was long overdue, 31 percent believed it should only have been moved in exchange for a major concession from Israel.

A near-majority of Americans also put the blame for the violence that occurred during protests in Gaza in the days surrounding the announcement on Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist group that governs Gaza.

More than 50 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces during protests along the border. Israel's backers argue that Hamas is responsible for the deaths, pointing to reports they were cajoling protestors to flood the border fence as well as other reports people were throwing firebombs and flaming kites over the fence into Israel.

But Palestinian supporters argue Israel is to blame for Israeli soldiers firing upon the protesters.

Forty-nine percent agreed with the administration and said Hamas was at fault for

the violence. Twenty-nine percent blamed America for the violence, while 22 percent blamed Israel.

The Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll online survey of 1,347 registered voters was conducted May 21-22. The partisan breakdown is 37 percent Democrat, 32 percent Republican, 29 percent independent and 2 percent other.

The Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll is a collaboration of the Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University and The Harris Poll. The Hill will be working with Harvard/Harris Poll throughout 2018.

Full poll results will be posted online later this week. The Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll survey is an online sample drawn from the Harris Panel and weighted to reflect known demographics. As a representative online sample, it does not report a probability confidence interval.

(Source: The Hill)

## Fresh Saudi airstrikes leave civilians killed and injured in Yemen

➔ Earlier in the day, Yemeni army forces, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees, fired a domestically-designed and -developed ballistic missile at a military base in Saudi Arabia's southwestern border region of Najran in retaliation to the Saudi regime aggression against their country.

A Yemeni military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the short-range Badr-1 missile struck Mostahadeth base with great precision.

The Saudi regime air force later claimed to have intercepted the ballistic missile.

Colonel Turki al-Maliki, a spokesman for the Saudi regime-led military coalition engaged in the war on Yemen, said the missile was detected at 00:39 a.m. local time on Friday (2139 GMT Thursday).

On Thursday, Yemeni snipers shot and killed seven Saudi regime and Sudanese troopers as they launched attacks against their positions in Saudi Arabia's Jizan region, located approximately 970 kilometers (602 miles) southwest of the capital Riyadh.

The Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights announced in a statement on March 25 that the Saudi regime-led war had left over 600,000 civilians dead and injured since March 2015.

The United Nations says a record 22.2 million Yemenis are in need of food aid, including 8.4 million threatened by severe hunger.

A high-ranking United Nations aid official recently warned against the "catastrophic" living conditions in Yemen, stating that there was a growing risk of famine and cholera there.

"People's lives have continued unraveling. Conflict has escalated since November driving an estimated 100,000 people from their homes," John Ging, UN director of aid operations, told the UN Security Council on February 27.

Ging said cholera had infected 1.1 million people in Yemen since last April, and a new outbreak of diphtheria had occurred in the war-ravaged Arab country since 1982.

■ **Cyclone hits Yemeni island Socotra, 19 missing**

Elsewhere, Cyclone Mekunu roared over the Yemeni island of Socotra on Thursday sending torrents of water rushing down streets and sinking at least two ships. Nineteen people were reported missing in the powerful storm.

Meteorologists expected the "very severe" cyclone to strike Oman on Saturday near Salalah, the sultanate's third-largest city and home to some 200,000 people near the country's border with Yemen.

Mekunu's sustained winds reached 155kph with gusts reaching 175kph.

Yemen's pro-government SABA news agency reported that 19 people were missing after two ships capsized in the storm and three vehicles washed away.

The island is listed by UNESCO as a world natural heritage site. (Source: agencies)

## Germany's Merkel vows in China visit to offset U.S. trade woes, Beijing reciprocates

Germany and China have agreed to further deepen bilateral cooperation in various fields amid trade threats from the United States President Donald Trump.

The two countries reached the consensus during talks between Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was on an official visit to China.

"China's door is open. You can say it will open even wider," Li further emphasized, adding that Beijing would protect the interests of German firms investing in China and adjust its rules if needed.

"If they come across any problems during their investment, especially when it comes to legal protections, I can clearly tell you that China is striding forward to being a country with rule of law," he noted.

Chancellor Angela welcomed China's announcements that it would further open its financial sector to foreign participation and reduce Chinese joint venture requirements in sectors such as automobiles.

Germany and China should work on a "multilateral global system," Merkel said, stressing her attachment to the rules-based global framework that Trump is challenging.

Beijing and Berlin are concerned over Washington's announcement about a national security investigation into car and truck imports that could potentially lead to tariffs.

During her visit, Merkel also said China and Germany, signatories of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, are standing by the existing agreement after the U.S. withdrawal from the deal.

Germany's top executive faces a subtle balancing act on the state visit to demonstrate Chinese-German solidarity over trade and the Iran nuclear deal without damaging ties with long-term American ally. (Source: Press TV)

## Boko Haram survivors starved and raped by Nigeria's military

➔ For too long, Nigeria's allies - including the United States and the UK - have been content to condemn the terrible crimes committed by Boko Haram while giving the Nigerian military a free pass. Even UN humanitarian agencies working on the ground, where abuses are often committed in plain sight, have done little to challenge the confinement of women to militarized camps and the outrageous levels of sexual violence perpetrated by security forces within them.

Last year, the acting president of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo, established a Presidential Investigation Panel to review the army's compliance with human rights obligations, but so far there has been no action and the situation for women in the camps remains bleak.

Yet, against all odds, these women bravely continue their fight for justice including the return of their husbands and sons. In September 2017, hundreds of displaced women lined the streets waiting to tell their stories to the president's investigation panel. They had drawn up lists of their loved ones in detention, or of those who died in the camps.

As one of these women told us, "This has happened to us. It cannot be undone now. But the government should recognize it. They should know how we suffered and how we died. They should make sure it does not happen again."

(Source: aljazeera.com)



## Ronaldinho set to marry two women at the same time



The Brazil legend will reportedly wed his two girlfriends in an August ceremony at the trio’s mansion in Rio de Janeiro

Brazil legend Ronaldinho will reportedly marry two women simultaneously in an August ceremony.

According to O Dia, the former Selecao star will marry Priscilla Coelho and Beatriz Souza in a highly unorthodox wedding affair.

The 38-year-old started dating Coelho in 2013, and then became involved with Souza in 2016 while still in a relationship with Coelho.

Instead of the expected messy situation, Ronaldinho’s dalliances created an eventually “harmonious” love triangle, with the trio living together at the former Barcelona star’s mansion in Rio de Janeiro since December.

And now the happy trio are set to tie the knot in a ceremony that will skirt Brazilian laws banning bigamy and polygamy.

Because Ronaldinho is planning on marrying both women at the same time, the trio’s relationship will be considered a three-person civil union, which is legal in Brazil.

The Brazil legend’s sister will reportedly skip the August wedding in Rio de Janeiro due to her disagreements with her brother’s lifestyle.

Ronaldinho officially retired from football in January, and announced two months later that he would be entering politics.

But in the meantime he has clearly been working hard on forming the best trident we’ve seen since his halcyon days with Lionel Messi and Samuel Eto’o at Barcelona.

(Source: Goal.com)

## Baku wants a June race date and revised F1 contract

**MONACO (Reuters)** — Azerbaijan wants to return to a June slot on the Formula One calendar and is trying to renegotiate its contract post-2020 so that it pays less in race-hosting fees and gains more commercial benefits.

Promoter Arif Rahimov told reporters at the Monaco Grand Prix that the current contract was a binding commitment for five races from 2016 but with a break clause before a subsequent five.

That clause has to be activated before the end of June.

“We haven’t triggered the break clause, we’re negotiating on the second part of the contract,” said Rahimov.

Azerbaijan pays more than most for its race in Baku and any reduction in fees would hit commercial rights holders Liberty Media’s balance sheet.

Rahimov said he hoped his bill could be closer to the average for long-haul ‘flyaway’ races.

Although contracts are confidential, the global average fee of the current 21 races’ is around \$30.6 million, and some \$40 million for those outside of Europe, according to the racefans.net website. Baku’s bill, thanks to an annual escalator clause, is estimated to have climbed to more than \$60 million.

“We do definitely want to be there in the average of the flyaway races. That’s not the only thing we’re discussing with FOM (Formula One Management),” said Rahimov. “It’s most of the other commercial terms in the contract too.

“They (Liberty) want to try the new approach too so its a bilateral effort to make this viable for all of us.”

Rahimov hoped everything could be sorted before the end of June: “I think we’ll come to some agreement,” he said.

A recent economic study carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers showed Azerbaijan gaining a net economic impact of around \$280 million from the race, over two years. The media value was put at an additional \$100 million.

This year’s race was held in April and for the second year in a row served up a thriller with Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton winning.

## Two arrested in Kiev after clashes before Champions League final

Police in Kiev arrested two individuals after an incident of “group hooliganism” ahead of Liverpool’s clash with Real Madrid.

Two people have been arrested in Kiev after violent clashes in the city ahead of Saturday’s Champions League final.

Ukraine’s National Police confirmed they had detained the individuals after an incident they described as “group hooliganism” on Velyka Vasyliivska street.

They added that “two injured foreigners” were taken to the nearest police station but that they refused to provide victim statements.

On Friday, The Mirror published video footage showing a group throwing tables and chairs at people outside a cafe. The victims were reportedly Liverpool fans.

Further pictures showed one man, said to have been among the supporters targeted, with a bloodied head. It is claimed he was handcuffed by police after fleeing the scene before being released.

He told the newspaper: “We were just having dinner. They just stormed the place – they were throwing glasses and tables. It was terrifying.

“They wouldn’t release us and we just wanted to leave. We did nothing wrong.”

Police said the two individuals arrested also declined to give statements. An investigation into the incident is ongoing.

Liverpool take on Real Madrid in the match at the NSC Olimpiyskiy stadium.

(Source: Four Four Two)

# Liverpool v Real Madrid has the ingredients to be an instant classic

Predictions are a mug’s game in sport. But that rarely staves off the temptation.

Liverpool and Real Madrid this weekend face off in the Champions League final. The consensus is of a classic simply waiting to happen.

Many a sporting final has failed to meet such expectation. This one, however, is not short of supporting evidence to justify the pre-match billing.

A clash of European titans. Superstars in form on both sides. The holders and serial winners against a side who will counter with, as their own manager once described his preferred approach, “heavy metal football”.

Even those with agnostic feelings towards the world game may be richly rewarded for setting their alarm clock for the painfully early hours of Sunday morning.

A large part of that optimism rests with Liverpool’s charismatic, heart-on-the-sleeve manager, Jurgen Klopp.

To describe Klopp as animated on the touchline would be a grand understatement.

He kicks every ball. Joins in every on-field celebration he can. Some he probably shouldn’t. A whirling dervish of wide-eyed fervor.

His critics brand it an affectation. Attention-seeking. Those who know him well attest to his authenticity.

Even before this drama-filled run from pre-qualification to the final he had won the hearts of Liverpool fans after his 2015 move to Anfield.

In the city he found kindred spirits.

Emotional football lovers who seek passion as much as silverware. Supporters raised on glories of the past desperate for someone to lead them back to the summit of European football, where they have stood on five previous occasions.

### ■ Playing on the front foot

His methods have been as important to that connection as results on the pitch.

At his previous club, Borussia Dortmund, where he spent seven years and won two league titles as well as losing a Champions League final, he was at the vanguard of a German tactical revolution called “gegenpressing”.

The philosophy is a simple one, though demanding in its execution.

Virtue is placed in the winning back of the ball as quickly as possible after it is turned over, hunting in packs to harry and chase down opponents to recover possession high up the pitch while the opposition team has little time to set their defensive organization.

It is thrilling to watch. Football played on fast forward. But it can be risky.

The front-loaded tactic can expose the defense, an area of relative weakness compared with the stunning array of attacking weapons Liverpool boasts.

A front three of Sadio Mane, Roberto Firmino and Mo Salah have scored 29 goals between them in this year’s Champions League, two more than Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar — arguably the game’s most celebrated attacking triumvirate — in Barcelona’s 2015 title win.

Victory this weekend would see Klopp make good on his



promise to return Liverpool to the European elite.

If built around a routinely exceptional Salah performance, the Egyptian’s odds of winning this year’s Ballon d’Or, the prize for the world’s best player, would shrink.

For any of that to happen, however, they will need to combat not just a Real side replete with world stars and managed by an all-time great in Zinedine Zidane, but the forces of history.

### ■ History on their side

Real Madrid are habitual Champions League winners.

Liverpool fans are rightly proud of their five European titles, the biggest haul of any British team. But their love affair with the competition is almost reduced to mere flirting when set against Real’s record.

On 12 occasions the Spanish giants have been crowned European champions. No other team is in double figures.

They had a healthy head start, winning the first five editions from its inception as the European Cup in 1956. But accusations of historical weighting to their success, of a club taking advantage of others’ slowness to engage with the tournament, have been undermined of late.

This weekend’s final will be their fourth in five years. They have won the previous three.

There exists a self-fulfilling prophecy about Real and this competition. Only once in the last six seasons have they been champions of their own country. But in Europe they just know how to win.

In their quarter-final they needed a contentious injury

time penalty to fend off a comeback from Juventus, losing 3-1 at home after winning 3-0 away. A German goalkeeping howler helped them edge past an unlucky Bayern Munich in the semi-finals. And yet, here they are. As they always are.

And favorites, thanks to experience and the embarrassment of riches they have in their squad.

Gareth Bale, a \$150m signing from Tottenham in 2013, will likely start from the bench. The attack will be led by Cristiano Ronaldo, a four-time Champions League winner named the world’s best player four times in the last five years.

Salah has been rightly lauded for an incredible season. Ronaldo is on another plane.

Zidane may have been merely backing his team when he said this week that he would take no player from Liverpool, even Salah, over that which he has at his disposal.

But that he could say it with a straight face speaks of the talent the club boasts.

### ■ It’s anybody’s game

So, will experience or exuberance win the day? The glory and intrigue of the contest is that no-one really knows.

Both teams have the players to hurt the other. Either side could rain goals on the other. Both might.

What is certain is that neither side will seek to simply negate the threat of their opponent. They will trust their own qualities to take them to glory.

And that, more than anything, offers the potential of a contest befitting the prize on offer.

(Source: ABC.net)

## Blacklisted fan bypasses Russia’s World Cup security system

**MOSCOW (Reuters)** — A soccer fan

blacklisted by Russian authorities for bad behavior was granted a document allowing him to attend World Cup matches, while several other fans have skirted a stadium ban, Reuters has found.

Russia has vowed to crack down on crowd unrest ahead of the World Cup, to be held from June 14 to July 15, and to weed out troublemakers by screening fans.

However, documents seen by Reuters show that Pavel Cherkas, a 32-year-old fan who was blacklisted last year for being drunk at a match, applied for and received a World Cup fan ID after the ban had taken effect.

Cherkas, who has attended matches despite being banned by the Interior Ministry, showed Reuters his World Cup fan ID, a document that is mandatory to attend matches and proves he has been approved by Russian authorities. After Reuters asked the Ministry of Communications and Mass Media, which oversees the fan ID program, how a blacklisted fan was cleared to attend the World Cup, Cherkas was informed his ID had been revoked, without explanation.

The ministry said a fan ID can be canceled to ensure security or public order, or if it receives information about violations by spectators at events in or outside Russia.

Russia has pledged to curb stadium violence at the World Cup, hoping to expunge memories of brawls between Russian and English fans in Marseille during the 2016 European championship.

Fans say authorities have cracked down on hooligans in recent years and violence is less prevalent. But Russia still wants to show it is taking action and has launched a fan blacklist, which contains more than 400 names, although few violent cases.

However, Reuters has found that the authorities have not been systematically enforcing the list.

“I’m not saying the government is wrong



in banning fans,” said Cherkas, smoking at a picnic table in central Moscow.

“But if they do, they should do so effectively.”

Reuters did not find other cases of blacklisted fans obtaining World Cup fan IDs and could not establish how widespread the problem was. Another blacklisted fan said his ID application had been rejected.

The dates on Cherkas’ ban were amended this month in what the interior ministry told him was a mix-up with another fan. His ban, which was to expire during the World Cup, is now listed as lasting until May 21. It remains unclear whether he will be granted another fan ID to attend two World Cup matches taking place on dates covered by his initial ban. Nine blacklisted fans, including Cherkas, said they had regularly skirted the ban. Reuters reporters saw one of them at a match last month, while others provided photographic evidence of themselves attending sporting events while banned.

FIFA and the World Cup local organizing committee referred questions about how a

blacklisted person could obtain a fan ID to the communications ministry, which said the document was issued at the discretion of federal security authorities.

### ■ STADIUM OUTING

Two Reuters reporters witnessed a blacklisted fan enter Moscow’s Spartak Stadium, a World Cup venue, for a Russian Cup match last month. With a ticket bearing his name in hand, the fan, a man in his mid-20s wearing red Air Jordan running shoes and a black beanie, made his way into the venue unobstructed.

The reporters remained with the fan, banned from attending sporting events last year for having lit a flare at a Russian Premier League match, throughout the match and left the stadium at the same time. He was not approached by stadium or security officials, nor was the name on his ticket checked.

At the stadium, he flipped through pictures on his iPhone of sporting events he had attended while banned, including Russian Premier League matches, an international soccer friendly, and a match at the 2017

Confederations Cup.

Reuters was able to contact 117 people on the blacklist, which contained 423 names as of March 20. Thirty-two agreed to speak, all but one under condition of anonymity.

Although the authorities have not been rigorously enforcing the list, they have taken some steps against hooliganism.

Police visit some fans known to authorities even though they are not officially banned. Some have been asked to promise not to disrupt the World Cup. “I pledge not to organize or take part in fights, illegal actions and mass riots at sports facilities or on the territory of the Moscow region,” a form handed by police to one fan read.

But the blacklisted fans are not Russia’s most violent.

More than a third were included for lighting flares, smoke bombs or firecrackers or attempting to do so. Another 20 percent were banned for public drunkenness. One was blacklisted for kicking another fan.

### ■ LEGAL LAXITY

Loopholes in the blacklist law make it hard to enforce.

Although meant to keep problematic fans out of stadiums, the law does not outline the events where identification is mandatory or where ticket holders must be checked against the blacklist. In any case, few events require identification.

“Many people were preventively included on the blacklist ahead of the World Cup for one reason or another. The authorities probably fear provocations,” said one fan, banned for tossing a flare at a Moscow stadium.

“At the police station, we were told there was an order to come up with a percentage of blacklisted fans.”

The Interior Ministry did not respond when asked whether it had ordered a certain number of fans to be banned or whether it knew that some blacklisted fans regularly attended matches.

## Nadal says French Open title just as sweet even with Federer absent

**PARIS (Reuters)** — Defending champion Rafael Nadal says he could not care less whether great rival Roger Federer is at the French Open or not and is simply focused on winning an 11th title in Paris.

Federer, who took his major haul to 20 by winning this year’s Australian Open, has opted to skip Roland Garros for the second year running to concentrate on retaining his Wimbledon title.

As Nadal met the media on Friday, he was asked whether winning last year or potentially this year would be less of an achievement with the Swiss maestro absent.

“Exactly the same,” Nadal, who will be 32 during the tour-

nament, told reporters. “Being honest. Exactly the same.

“I cannot say that the victory of Federer (in 2009) when I was injured or victory of Novak (Djokovic, in 2016) when I was injured is not that beautiful. Would not be fair for my side.

“When I am winning and other players are not playing for some reason, that’s all. It’s bad news for the tournament but not for myself if I win.

“For me, the victory means exactly the same.”

Sixteen-times grand slam winner Nadal has been in imperious form coming into the French Open, winning on clay in Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Rome.

In Madrid he celebrated the landmark of winning 50 consecutive sets on the red dirt before his only blip came in a quarter-final defeat by Austrian Dominic Thiem.

Djokovic gave Nadal a tussle in Rome last week in the semi-finals and Nadal said the Serb will be a threat, despite a season in which he has suffered injury and poor form.

“Novak is one of the best players of our history of this sport.

“My answer is he’s not coming back; he’s there always. Sometimes when you come back from injuries is difficult to play that well from the beginning, but he played a great event in Rome, and is no doubt one of the candidates to win here.”



# Queiroz to quit as Iran coach after World Cup

Carlos Queiroz will not remain at the helm of the Iran national team after the conclusion of the country's involvement in the World Cup finals in Russia, the former Real Madrid coach told Reuters on Thursday.

Queiroz, who has been in charge of Team Melli since April 2011, had been offered an extension to his contract by the Iranian Football Federation until January's Asian Cup finals in the United Arab Emirates.

But the 65-year-old has decided to call time on his seven-year stint with the Iranians after the World Cup, where they have been drawn to take on Morocco, Spain and Portugal in Group B.

"It's almost one year since we qualified for the World Cup and it's true that they gave me an offer to go for six months to the Asian Cup in the Emirates, but it didn't meet my expectations," Queiroz said by telephone from his team's training camp in Turkey.

"After all these years, for the Iranian federation to only extend the contract for six months is a decision that shows no appreciation or recognition for what I've done. It's an offer that isn't acceptable from my point of view.

"The negotiations are closed, they are behind me. "Before we came here to Istanbul the federation was supposed to review the position and they did not come back to me, so from now on it's time to move forward."

## ■ QUALIFICATION RECORD

Queiroz had considered retiring after the World Cup to spend more time with his family, but now wants to become the first coach to secure qualification for the World Cup finals on five occasions.

Brazilian Carlos Alberto Pereira and Serbian Bora Milutinovic have coached five times at the World Cup, with both taking charge of teams that had either qualified as hosts or stepped in as replacement coaches for already qualified nations.

Queiroz, however, qualified South Africa for the World Cup in 2002 only to step down from his position before the finals in Japan and Korea.

He then led Portugal to the 2010 tournament in South Africa before becoming the first coach to secure back-to-back World Cup appearances with Iran, and he is keen



to lead another country to the finals in Qatar in 2022.

"After all these years in Iran there was the possibility that I would retire after the World Cup," said Queiroz.

"But, in the meantime, the dissatisfaction at not qualifying for a fifth World Cup started to grow.

"It started to speak louder and the more I started to think more about that unique historical opportunity, to be the only coach in football history to have five World Cup

qualifications under my belt, my anger and desire started to grow and this is now my main goal and my expectation.

"I've had two offers, one from Africa and one from Asia with the chance to qualify for the World Cup in Qatar in 2022, and if that doesn't happen then I can look at one or two options that I have in England after the World Cup."

(Source: Reuters)

## Nasser Hajazi remembered on seventh death anniversary



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran legendary goalkeeper Nasser Hajazi was remembered on his seventh death anniversary in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra cemetery on Thursday.

Hajazi's family, Esteghlal GM Reza Eftekhari, and president of Iran Football Federation Mehdi Taj were present at the anniversary.

Hajazi died on May 23, 2011 at the age of 62 after a long battle with lung cancer.

He played for Iran as a goalkeeper in late 1960s and 1970s. Hajazi won the AFC Asian Cup twice for Iran and also played for the Persians in the 1976 Olympic Games and the 1978 FIFA World Cup.

In 2000, the Asian Football Confederation ranked him the second best Asian goalkeeper of the 20th century behind former Saudi Arabia keeper Mohamed Al-Deayea.

In his coaching career, he led Esteghlal from 1996 to 1999 and later in 2007.

The Iranian giant finished runner-up in the AFC Champions League in 1999 under tutelage of Hajazi.

Hajazi earned 62 caps for Iran from 1968 to 1980. He received an offer from Manchester United after the 1978 FIFA World Cup, and trained with them for a month, appearing in a reserve match against Stoke City.

## We will fight until the end at World Cup: Ehsan Haji Safi



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team midfielder Ehsan Haji Safi insists that Team Melli will fight until the very end at the 2018 World Cup.

Iran have been drawn in Group B of the 2018 World Cup along with Morocco, Spain and Portugal.

The Iran national football team will open the campaign with a match against Morocco at Saint Petersburg on June 15.

Team Melli, meanwhile, face Spain in Kazan on 20 June before meeting Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in Saransk five days later.

"All players are trying their best in the Turkey's training camp. It's time to support Team Melli and we will fight until the very end at the 2018 World Cup," Haji Safi said in an interview with ffriri.ir.

"We will do our best to meet expectations in the competition, despite having been drawn in a tough group. Iran could advance to the knockout stage as the best Asian football team," he added.

"Our aim is making Iranian people happy in the competition and friendly match with Turkey (on Sunday) will help us prepare for the event," the Olympiacos stated.

## Estili's goal against the U.S. among World Cup moments

**TEHRAN** — The FIFA World Cup always produces a collection of sensational and memorable goals, and over the years a number of Asian players have contributed to this rich collection of historic FIFA World Cup moments.

Iran has only won one of their 12 matches they've played across four FIFA World Cup tournaments (1978, 1998, 2006, 2014), but that one win was one of the most memorable in FIFA World Cup history.

The match against the U.S. was one of the most eagerly anticipated matches at France 1998, and the moving display from the two teams showed the power of football to bring people together, but it was still a match both teams were desperate to win.



And it was to become one of the abiding images of the 1998 World Cup that broke the deadlock, the-AFC.com wrote.

Iranian midfielder Hamid Estili rising high to loop a header home before wheeling away to celebrate, the emotion clear on his face, showing just how important the moment was for IR Iran as a nation, not just a team.

"Today, everyone reminds me of that goal," said Estili, whose strike along with Mehdi Mahdavia's later in the match earned a 2-1 victory.

"People from five to even ninety-five admire me for that goal. Many Iranians who are living abroad now proudly confess that they're Iranian. That victory unified all the Iranians."

(Source: the-AFC)

## FIFA reveals Iran's slogan at World Cup

FIFA revealed the 32 winning slogans for the World Cup in Russia after choosing from 96 slogans that were created by FIFA.com users.

According to the governing body's official site, the 32 winners will get a chance to travel to Russia. A public vote decided the winners. The winners will get plane tickets for two and at least three nights' accommodation in a four-star hotel. They will also get to accompany the team to a match while their slogans will be displayed on the 32 team buses.

### ■ The Slogans are:

Argentina: Together for a dream  
Australia: BE BRAVE, BE BOLD, SOCCEROOS IN GREEN AND GOLD

Belgium: RED DEVILS ON A MISSION  
Brazil: More than 5 stars, 200 million hearts

Colombia: Here goes 1 dream, 3 colors and 50 million hearts  
Costa Rica: Nothing is impossible when a whole country plays

Croatia: Small country, big dreams  
Denmark: Together we make history  
England: SEND US VICTORIOUS

Egypt: When you say Pharaohs, the world must get up and listen  
France: Your strength, our passion! Come on Les Bleus!

Germany: Let's write history together  
Iceland: LET'S MAKE OUR DREAM COME TRUE

Iran: 80 MILLION PEOPLE, 1 NATION , 1 HEART BEAT

Japan: IT'S TIME TO BATTLE, SAMURAI BLUE!

Korea Republic: TIGERS OF ASIA, CONQUER THE WORLD  
Mexico: MADE IN MEXICO, MADE FOR VICTORY

Morocco: The Atlas Lions, pride of Morocco  
Nigeria: THE WINGS OF AFRICAN PRIDE

Panama: PANAMA THE FORCE OF TWO SEAS  
Peru: We are back! 30 Million Peruvians are travelling here

Poland: GO POLAND!

Portugal: THE PAST IS GLORY, THE PRESENT IS HISTORY

Russia: PLAY WITH AN OPEN HEART  
Saudi Arabia: DESERT KNIGHTS

Senegal: IMPOSSIBLE IS NOT SENEGALESE  
Serbia: ONE TEAM, ONE DREAM - SERBIA!

Spain: TOGETHER WE ARE INVINCIBLE  
Sweden: TOGETHER FOR SWEDEN!  
Switzerland: FOUR LANGUAGES, ONE NATION

Tunisia: Russia here comes the eagles hand in hand players and fans  
Uruguay: The sun shines in Russia, the sky is all light blue

(Source: FIFA)

## Ali Gholizadeh on SC Charleroi's radar

**PLDC** — Iranian prodigy Ali Gholizadeh is a target of SC Charleroi, lesoir.be reported.

The 22-year-old midfielder, who currently plays in Iran's Saipa, has been invited to Iran national football team for the 2018 World Cup.

Gholizadeh started his career with Saipa youth levels. He promoted to first team by Engin Firat and made his debut for Saipa in last fixture of 2013–14 Iran Pro League against Saba Qom as a substitute.

The Belgian top-flight football team had already shown interest in signing Esteghlal midfielder Omid Noorafkan.

The Iranian duo can reunite their countryman Kaveh Rezaei in SC Charleroi.

## Team Melli to make life hard for opponents: Masoud Shojaei

**TASNIM** — Iran national football team captain Masoud Shojaei says they will not be an easy opponent at the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Team Melli have been drawn in Group B along with Morocco, Spain and Portugal.

Carlos Queiroz's men will open the campaign with a match against Morocco, known as Atlas Lions, on June 15.

"We are not considered as a favorite in the group but we will show how strong we are," Shojaei said in an interview with Iran Football Federation's website.

"I think we have a chance of beating Morocco in our first match. Team Melli can advance to the knockout stage with four points," he added.

"It's very important to me to be able to make the Iranian people happy," the captain stated.

Shojaei, 33, will be making a record third appearance for Iran at the World Cup.

## More than 10,000 fans will support Morocco in World Cup

Over 10,000 Moroccans fans will travel to Russia to support their team, known as Atlas Lions, in the 2018 World Cup games.

Head of the Moroccan government Saad Eddine El Othmani said on his facebook account that 8500 fans will travel from Morocco while 3000 members of the Moroccan diaspora will join them in support of the national squad.

Morocco are pitted against Spain and Portugal and Iran in Group B.

Morocco will play Iran on June 15. On the same day, Spain, which eliminated Portugal in the last 16 on the way to winning its first World Cup in 2010, will open against the European champion in Sochi.

(Source: Northafricapost.com)

## Iran clinches Asian Para Taekwondo Championships title

**Press TV** — Iranian athletes have put a magnificent end to their campaign at the fourth edition of Asian Para Taekwondo Championships in Vietnam, and claimed the top spot overall at the prestigious continental event.

Iran placed first in the overall standing of the competitions at Phu Tho Indoor Sports Stadium in southern Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City after picking up six gold, one silver, and two bronze medals.

Uzbekistan finished as vice champion and sat in the second slot of the chart. Mongolia earned the third spot.

Mehdi Pourrahnama, Hamed Haghshenas and Saeed Sadeghianpour claimed three gold medals for the Islamic Republic of Iran in the men's minus 75-kilogram (K44), over 75-kilogram (K44) and minus 65-kilogram (K42) classes.

Ahmad Narimani and Mehdi Bahrami-Azar added two gold medals to Iran's medal haul in the men's over 75-kilogram (K42) and over 75-kilogram (K43) divisions.

Mahtab Nabavi also competed in the women's minus 49-kilogram (K41) section, and struck a gold medal.

Additionally, Asghar Azizi earned a silver medal in the men's over 75-kilogram (K44) category.

Mohammad Reza Shabani and Nabavi also snatched two bronzes for Iran in the men's minus 75-kilogram (K42) and women's minus 49-kilogram (K41) classes.

The fourth edition of Asian Para Taekwondo Championships kicked off on May 24 and finished on the same day.

## Al Kuwait closing in on Esteghlal striker Thiam

**TASNIM** — Reports are emerging suggesting that Kuwaiti football club Al Kuwait could be closing in on the signing of Esteghlal striker Mame Baba Thiam.

The Senegalese joined Iran's Esteghlal in February and helped the team advance to the 2018 AFC Champions League quarter-final.

Now, Thiam's agent says Al Kuwait has handed them an offer but they prefer Esteghlal to the Kuwaiti football club.

"Thiam's contract includes a buyout clause worth \$200,000 but he wants to continue playing in Esteghlal," his agent said.

Iranian media reports suggest that Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia is among the teams eying the striker.



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International section of  
Tehran Quran exhibition  
to open Sunday

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — The international section of the 26th International Holy Quran Exhibition will open on Sunday.

A variety of programs and exhibits have been set up in the international section of the event, which is currently underway at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla, the organizers announced on Friday.

Portraits of 20 Asian Quranic experts who lived over the past two centuries will be shown in an exhibition.

Several narrators will be present at the exhibit to explain more about the characters.

Dozens of the world magazines and periodicals publishing articles on the Quran and hadith and a group of world academic centers active in Quranic studies will be introduced in the international section.

The exhibition, which will be running until June 4, is organized every year during the holy month of Ramadan that is known as the spring of the Holy Quran.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

IRIB TV host  
Mostafa Musavi  
dies at 57

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — Seyyed Mostafa Musavi, the veteran host who collaborated in many TV programs on Islamic topics at Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, died of heart failure at a Tehran hospital on Thursday. He was 57.

Musavi was suffering from diabetes and a kidney disorder, the Persian media announced.

He was the host of "The Love Lane", "God Is All Around" and several other TV programs.

His funeral was held on Friday and he was buried at Tehran's Behesht Zahra Cemetery.

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

**Graffiti**

■ A collection of graffiti by Payam Heidar Qazvini is currently on display in an exhibition at the Seyhun Gallery 2.

The exhibition will run until June 13 at the gallery located at 24 Sinai Alley, off Keyhan St. off Moqaddas-e Ardabili Ave.

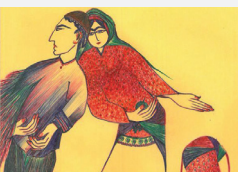
**Painting**

■ Paintings by Babak Khodabandeh-Golpar are on display in an exhibition at Sohrab Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until May 30 at the gallery located at 142 Somayyeh St.

■ An exhibition of paintings Nasim Zolfaqr is currently underway at Haft-Samar Gallery.

The exhibit will run until May 30 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motahari Ave.



■ Hassan Qaemi is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition underway at Afrand Gallery.

The exhibit will run until June 8 at the gallery located at 48 Jalal Hosseini St., Jahan Ara St., off Jalal Ale-Ahmad Highway.



■ Hoor Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Samila Amirebrahimi.

The exhibit will continue until June 15 at the gallery located at 12 Naeimi Alley, North Mirza Shirazi Ave., off Motahari St.

**Drawing/painting**

■ Drawings and paintings by Maryam Baghbani, Javad Fat'halizadeh and Iman Sadeqi are on display in exhibition at Arte Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until June 3 at the gallery that can be found at No. 3, 2nd St. off Golestan St., off Alikhani Blvd.

Halabja tragedy to come into  
focus at Cologne Visions of Iran

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Visions of d e s k Iran, an Iranian film festival, which is organized every year by Museum Ludwig in the German city of Cologne, will spotlight the Iraqi chemical weapons attack on Halabja in 1988 by screening three documentary films about the tragedy.

"Museum of Peace: An Audiovisual Tour" by Negar Tahsili, "Zemnako" by Mehdi Qorbanpur and "Memories for All Seasons" by Mostafa Razzaq-Karimi have been selected for the event, the organizers have announced.

In "Museum of Peace: An Audiovisual Tour", Tahsili outlines different phases of the 30 poison gas missions that were carried out during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

"Zemnako" tells the story of a 40-day-old newborn who loses his mother in the aftermath of the Iraqi chemical weapons attack on the Kurdish city of Halabja in 1988.

"Memories for All Seasons" narrates the memories of a group of Iranian soldiers wounded by Iraqi chemical weapons during the war.

A lineup of other films will also be screened at the festival, which will be held from May 31 to June 3.

Among the films are "Mother of the Earth" by Mahnaz Afzali and "Poets of Life" by Shirin Barqnavard, two films from "Karestan", a documentary series on Iranian entrepreneurs.

"Karestan" depicts the successful lives of Iranian entrepreneurs and gives a new definition of careers in Iran. Each part has been directed by a different filmmaker under the supervision of the filmmakers Rakhshan Bani-Etemad and Mojtaba Mirtahmasb. Mirtahmasb and Barqnavard are expected



A poster for Visions of Iran

to attend the film screening sessions, which will be followed by review sessions.

The festival will also screen "24 Frames" by Abbas Kiarostami, "Kupal" by Kazem

Molai and "Inversion" by director/writer Behnam Behzadi.

Amir Jadidi to star in  
Gholamreza Takhti biopic

Actor Amir Jadidi (Photo by Elnaz Nasiri)

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Amir Jadidi will star as Gholamreza Takhti in the biopic about legendary Iranian wrestler, which will be directed by Bahram Tavakkoli, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Friday.

Saeid Malekan is the producer of the project tentatively named "The Life of World Champion Takhti".

Jadidi collaborated with Tavakkoli and Malekan in their latest movie "The Lost Strait", a true story about an epic battle by Iran's Ammar Battalion during the last days of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The film was highly acclaimed at the Fajr festival in February, earning awards in six categories including the best actor award for Jadidi.

## Novels by Ahmad Akbarpur published in Turkish

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Two novels from Iranian children's book writer Ahmad Akbarpur have recently been published in Turkish.

"I'm Not Father's Servant" ("Babanin Usagi Degilim") and "The Emperor of Words" ("Kelimeler Imparatoru") have been translated by the prolific Turkish translator of Persian literature Nezahat Basci, Akbarpur told the Persian service of MNA on Thursday.

The books have been published by the Istanbul-based publisher Demavend, which is managed by Professor Ali Guzelyuz, a translator of the Divan of Hafez.

The story of "I'm Not Father's Servant" is set in a village where a package of money falls from the pocket

of an austere and stingy father into a toilet hole. No one wants to go down into the hole to take out the package. He decides to force his children to do the task, causing them to get into a fierce argument.

In "The Emperor of Words", Akbarpur creates a world without boundaries, and he also becomes one of the characters in his own story, in which he sends his protagonist, a teenage Korean poet, on an odyssey.

Basci has previously translated numerous books from Persian writers, "The Stories of Majid", "Sweet Jam", "The Tandoor", "The Cruse" and "Like the Full Moon" by Hushang Moradi Kermani and "Call Me Ziba" by Farhad Hassanzadeh.

Mehrdad Oskui to preside  
over jury of Krakow Film Festival

Iranian documentarian Mehrdad Oskui in an undated photo

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Mehrdad Oskui, the Iranian director of acclaimed documentary films such as "Starless Dreams" and "Nose, Iranian Style", will preside over the jury for the short film competition at the 58th Krakow Film Festival, the organizers have announced.

Curator Lydia Beilby and writer Mi-

chael Brooke, both from the UK, Swiss filmmaker Matteo Gariglio and Polish animation director Mariusz Wilczynski are the members of the jury.

"The Other Side of Burka" and "It's Always Late for Freedom" are among other acclaimed documentary films by Oskui.

The Krakow Film Festival will be running in the Polish city from May 27 to June 3.



The front covers of the Turkish versions of Iranian children's book writer Ahmad Akbarpur's novels "I'm Not Father's Servant" and "The Emperor of Words"

Roaring dinosaurs return in  
"Jurassic World" sequel

**LONDON (Reuters)** — The dinosaurs are back. The roaring creatures return to cinema screens in "Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom", the fifth installment in the sci-fi movie franchise which began 25 years ago.

The sequel to 2015's "Jurassic World" sees actors Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard reprise their roles as Owen and Claire and return to Isla Nublar, three years after its dinosaur theme park was devastated by the creatures escaping confinement.

With a volcanic eruption threatening the surviving dinosaurs on the island, Claire and Owen want to rescue them.

"Jurassic World" successfully rebooted the "Jurassic Park" film franchise, which kicked off with the 1993 film directed by Steven Spielberg, taking \$1.67 billion at the box office worldwide.

Making the sequel, eagerly awaited by fans, was a "big responsibility", director J.A. Bayona said at a London photocall to promote the film on Thursday.

"You really need to do something that will satisfy them, but at the same time you're looking for something to surprise them... That's the most challenging thing about doing a sequel," he told Reuters.

"We also wanted to go back to the sense of fear and suspense that the original 'Jurassic Park' had, so we really enjoyed adding all this tension and this suspense and even horror to this new chapter."

Pratt, who also starred in the "Guardians of the Galaxy" superhero films, said there was an appetite for dinosaur films.

"Kids love superheroes but kids love dinosaurs as well," he told Reuters.

"Science and imagination merge. We feature these creatures that truly at one point walked the earth, which is mind-boggling... Kids love dinosaurs and so does the kid inside the adult."

"Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom" begins its worldwide cinema rollout from June 6.

Stock market value of Netflix  
eclipses Disney for first time

**SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters)** — Netflix's (NFLX.O) stock market value ballooned to a record \$153 billion on Thursday and eclipsed Walt Disney Co (DIS.N) for the first time, making it the world's most valuable entertainment company, following a monumental shift by viewers away from cinemas and cable television.

Lifted by a blitz of original programs and 125 million global subscribers, some of whom have given up cable television packages, Netflix's stock has surged 80 percent so far in 2018, more than any other company in the S&P 500.

Since Netflix's initial public offer in 2002, when it was a mail-order DVD service, its shares have surged nearly 33,000 percent. It has also become a must-own stock for Wall Street investors, alongside Apple (AAPL.O), Amazon.com (AMZN.O), Alphabet (GOOGL.O) and Facebook (FB.O).

Netflix's stock on Thursday was up 2.3 percent at \$352.90, in line with the median price target of analysts covering

the Los Gatos, California company, according to Thomson Reuters data. The most optimistic analyst price target would put Netflix's stock market value at \$182 billion.

Disney has lost 5 percent over the past year as it and other one-time entertainment industry leaders struggle to adapt to the shift by global viewers to online video. It owns some of the most valuable entertainment brands in the world, including Marvel, Pixar Animation and "Star Wars." It also operates popular theme parks on three continents and has offered to buy more assets from Twenty-First Century Fox (FOXA.O) for \$52 billion.

With a stock market value of \$152 billion on Thursday, Disney is also starting its own streaming service for families, and it has said it will stop supplying new movies to Netflix starting next year.

Earlier this month, Netflix's market capitalization overtook leading U.S. cable operator Comcast (CMCSA.O), which owns NBC and Universal Pictures.