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# A doubtful deal

North Korea, U.S. sign 'comprehensive' document after historic summit



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## Tehran says U.S. policies have left Mideast in 'total chaos'

**POLITICS** **d e s k** Gholamali Khoshroo, Iran's ambassador to the UN, has said that the failed policies of the U.S. have left the Middle East region in total chaos.

"The failed policies, or lack of policies, of the United States, which violate international law, have left the Middle East in total chaos," Khoshroo said in an

interview with Chris Hedges, a columnist writing for Truthdig.

Following is an excerpt of the interview published on Sunday:

The United States, to cover up these aggressive, reckless and costly policies, blames Iran. Iran is blamed for their failures in Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Lebanon. ➔2

## 300 Iranian knowledge-based companies active in oil industry

**TECHNOLOGY** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — About 300 knowledge-based companies are now active in the field of oil industry in Iran, an advisor to vice president for science and technology said on Monday.

In his meeting with Iranian researchers and academics on Sunday Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei

said universities should be familiarized with problems of the industry sector in order to gain self-sufficiency for the country in the oil and power sectors.

"Foreign [oil] companies imposed some conditions to Iranian part in their contract for extracting oil," Mehr quoted Ali Vatani as saying. ➔10

## IRGC: No forces martyred in fight against terrorists

**POLITICS** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Ground Forces of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) issued a statement on Tuesday rejecting claims that security forces have been martyred in the clashes with terrorists in north-western Iran.

Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour, commander of the IRGC Ground Force, announced on Sunday that his

forces had disbanded two terrorist teams in northwestern Iran in 24 hours, a day after disbanding a 7-member terrorist cell.

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry also announced on Monday that security forces had arrested 27 members of a terrorist network who planned to carry out terror attacks during the holy month of Ramadan.



### ARTICLE

Hanif Ghaffari  
Political analyst

## Be careful Mr. Macron!

Emmanuel Macron, the weak and incapable president of France, continues to play his direct role to the benefits of the United States and the Zionist Regime. During his recent press conference with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister the Quds occupying regime, Macron expressed his concerns over Iran's regional activities. He then pointed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and said:

"My colleagues in Europe and I think that there is a need to preserve the nuclear agreement, but we are concerned about Iran's activities in the Middle East... the nuclear deal is no longer sufficient safeguard against Iran... We want to bring stability to the Middle East, and the nuclear agreement is part of that, but it should be extended by an additional 10 years, and we should consider Iran's aggression in the region and its ballistic missile program,"

The decoding of the French President's remarks is far easier than it is imagined! The passivity of French politicians before the Zionist regime and the United States, has crippled the Elysees palace for years. Everybody remembers that last summer, Emmanuel Macron and Benjamin Netanyahu met on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. At that meeting, Macron pledged Netanyahu to keep Paris pressure on Tehran to limit our country's missile and regional capabilities.

The French President also promised Trump and Netanyahu to set the "change of the JCPOA" as his main headline, and forget about "maintaining the nuclear deal" or "restraining the US" in this regard. Indeed, Macron gave in to the plans and tricks designed by Washington and Tel Aviv, but that was not all. He also played the role of a "coordinator" between Washington and the European Union. The final result of this game was quite clear.

"Trump's withdrawal of the JCPOA" and "reduced international credibility of Europe" were the diplomatic and political paybacks of French officials. However, it seems that the humiliated president of France didn't exactly understand this. There are some points here that need to be taken into consideration: ➔7

## Israeli regime letting loose racist elements in its army: Swedish activist

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — A senior human rights activist from Sweden condemned Israel for recent killings of civilians in the Gaza Strip and said the Zionist regime is pursuing ethnic cleansing of Palestinians through "letting loose" the racist elements in its army.

"The Israeli regime is letting loose the racist elements in its army, allowing them to shoot to kill indiscriminately," Ulf Sandmark said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency.

"These Israeli racists are allowed to pursue the ethnic cleansing, their Final Solution, just like their Daesh allies did against the Yazidis in Iraq, and their Saudi Wahhabi friends pursue dramatically against the Zaydis in Yemen by attacking the sole lifeline port of Hodeida," he added.

Sandmark is a Swedish economist and human rights activist as well as a longtime collaborator of American political figure Lyndon H. LaRouche. Sandmark is the chairman of the Schiller Institute in Sweden and the Stockholm Correspondent for

the Executive Intelligence Review (EIR). As a child, he lived for three years with his family in Addis Ababa and became active in Third world development issues at the time of his studies at the Stockholm School of Economics. He has written many articles and proposals for development programs, including "The Phoenix program - Discussion points for the reconstruction of Syria" (coauthor Hussein Askary) about how to realize the major potential for recovery in linking up Syria to the New Silk Road. As a chairman for 20 years of the Anti-Drug Coalition in Sweden, he has written about how to dismantle the drug banks and their narco-terrorist bands. He has also delivered speeches to various international conferences, including a two-day conference held in London last year to "support the Yemeni people against the Anglo-American-Saudi imperial war".

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ As you know, on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan each year, Muslims and

anti-Israeli activists hold worldwide demonstrations to express their solidarity with the defenseless people of Palestine. Israeli soldiers on Monday shot and killed another Palestinian near the Gaza border three days after they killed a 21-year-old medical nurse and injured dozens more during mass protests in the same area dubbed the "Great March of Return". Since March 30, Israeli troops have killed at least 120 Palestinians during the demonstrations along the Gaza border, drawing international condemnation. Most of the dead and the thousands wounded were unarmed civilians against whom Israel was using excessive force. What is our assessment of the developments and the Israeli regime's crimes?

A: Losing his war against Syria and being blocked from attacking Lebanon, (Benjamin) Netanyahu turns his wrath solely on the Palestinians in his effort to escalate the tensions and division in the whole region. ➔7

## U.S. sits idly by amid concerns over imminent UAE attack on Hudaydah

The United States is standing idly by in the face of an imminent military offensive by its ally, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on Yemen's port city of Hudaydah, which the UN and aid groups have warned could lead to a humanitarian catastrophe there.

In the past few days, forces loyal to Yemen's ex-president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, backed by a Saudi-led coalition, have closed in on Hudaydah, reportedly seizing a number of nearby areas. The UAE, which is a party to the Saudi-led coalition, is playing a key role in the offensive.

The coalition, which has been waging a deadly war on Yemen since 2015, claims that the Yem-

eni Houthi Ansarullah movement is using the besieged port for weapons delivery, an allegation rejected by the fighters.

The Houthi movement has been both running state affairs in the absence of an effective government and defending the country against the Saudi aggression with the help of allied popular forces.

Ansarullah has pledged a firm response to a military offensive against Hudaydah. Residents of the port city are also preparing to help the Houthis against any such invasion.

Yemeni media reports over the past days suggest that people from other parts of Yemen are rushing to the port city to assist the armed

forces in their counter-attacks in the wake of a potential Emirati offensive.

■ **UAE invasion looming on horizon**

On Saturday, the UAE has given the UN and foreign NGOs three days to leave Hudaydah before it mounts an attack on the Red Sea port city, which is a lifeline for aid flow into the war-torn country.

Correspondence from European donor governments to aid groups in Yemen warned that "a military assault now looks imminent."

"The Emiratis have informed us today that they will now give a 3-day grace period for the UN (and their partners) to leave the city," read the correspondence seen by Reuters. ➔13



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## Kazem Dashi is more than just a historic rock

Kazem Dashi, also known as Qala Dashi, is a large rock in the north-west of Lake Urmia in Gurchin Qaleh village. At different times in history, including during the World War I, the site provided a safe haven for the surrounding villagers. The rock is named in the memory of Kazem Khan, commander of the village guards, who himself was from Gurchin Qaleh.

## Missiles that changed the equations

By Ramin Hossein Abadian

The killing of a number of Saudi troops directly and as a result of the Yemeni missile strike in Jizan has changed the field equations and indicated that the Yemeni forces now have the upper hand.

The army and the Yemeni Popular Committees have always been on the agenda for defending their innocent people against the military aggression of the Saudi regime and its regional and transatlantic allies, which have always used and enjoyed missile power as a deterrent against aggressive attacks. That is why, over the last three years of the Yemeni war, we have always been witnessing the emergence of a new generation of Yemeni missiles.

Over the past two years, Yemeni forces have launched many rocket attacks on Saudi positions and their mercenaries, especially in border towns such as Asir, Jizan and Najran. Many of these attacks were carried out by advanced ballistic missiles such as Barkan 2, Zelzal 2, Badr 1, and so on, and the message of the missile power of the Yemeni forces, despite all the restrictions imposed by the Saudi authorities and Emirati officials, has been transmit Yemeni forces. Yemeni missiles have even reached Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

The missile and military committees of the Yemeni army and popular committees have further developed a major and breakthrough achievement for the Yemeni Resistance Forces in the Yemeni war of more than three years. The Yemeni forces targeted the Saudis in the Jizan border town, and as a result the four armed forces of the regime were directly targeted and killed. Several Saudi troops were also wounded in the attack.

This is the first time that four Saudi officers are killed directly as a result of the missile attacks of the Yemenis. Although the Yemeni forces have already imposed heavy damage on Saudi invaders and their mercenaries on various fronts, nevertheless, the killing of a number of Saudi troops directly following the Yemeni missile attacks is new.

After the incident, Saudi allies, including Saeb Al-Ahmad Jaber al-Sabah, Kuwaiti Emir and UAE President, conveyed condolences to Saudi Arabia. Now, all the controversy over the media propaganda of the Yemeni missile power has ended, and everyone has realized the Saudi's apparent weakness in countering the missile power of the Yemeni forces.

The messages of condolence also demonstrate that Riyadh missile defense systems are not capable of tracking all Yemeni missile missiles as was claimed by the Saudis. ➔13



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



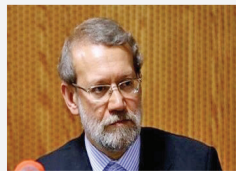
**Ayatollah Khamenei to lead Eid-al-Fitr prayers in Tehran**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei will lead the Eid-al-Fitr (the fast-breaking feast) prayers in Tehran on Friday.

The Eid-al-Fitr prayers will be held at the Imam Khomeini Prayer Grounds.

Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting.

During the Eid, Muslims attend communal prayers, listen to sermons and give Zakat al-Fitr or donations to the poor.



**Measures taken to ease investment after U.S. JCPOA exit**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Parliament speaker announced on Tuesday that certain measures have been taken to tackle the problems facing investment in Iran since Trump exited the U.S. from the nuclear deal and plans to reinstate sanctions on Tehran.

Ali Larijani made the remarks at a ceremony unveiling the book entitled "The Economy of Iran in 2017".

"Considering the fact that America acted in violation of ethics and international rules and commitments in regard to the nuclear deal, the move has somehow affected the country's situation in terms of the type of investment," Larijani told reporters. "For this reason, we have taken certain measures and negotiations are also taking place [to manage the situation]."



**'We do not know what type of person N. Korean leader is negotiating with'**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said on Tuesday that "we don't know what type of person the North Korean leader is negotiating with".

"This person [U.S. President Donald Trump] is not a 'wise representative' of the U.S. We hope that the American nation will think about it," he said at a press conference.

Trump and North Korea leader Kim Jong-un held a first summit in Singapore on Tuesday.

Nobakht said President Trump could still scrap an agreement committing the U.S. to unspecified "security guarantees" in exchange for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

"It is not clear that he would not cancel the agreement before returning home."

Trump pulled the U.S. out of the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran last month.



**Tehran, ICRC assess humanitarian crises in Yemen, Syria**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Hossein Jaber Ansari, the senior advisor to Iran's foreign minister in political affairs, held talks on Tuesday with Valérie Petitpierre, the visiting ICRC operations coordinator for the Near and Middle East, discussing humanitarian aspects of the ongoing crises in Syria and Yemen.

According to ISNA, Jaber Ansari stressed that Iran is fully ready to provide all kinds of help to the International Committee of Red Cross to alleviate the pains of the people of the war-ravaged countries of the region.



**'U.S. Iran sanctions politically motivated'**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Ali Khatibi, Iran's former envoy to OPEC, says Washington's new sanctions against Iran are politically motivated, calling the EU's support for Iran at this juncture a crucial factor.

"Foreign firms can continue to work with their counterparts in Iran if Tehran and the EU governments manage to reach a general agreement and address the concerns of investors in the oil and non-oil sectors," Khatibi told the Azernews in an interview published on Tuesday.

Referring to impending U.S. sanctions against Iran, he urged the Iranian and European governments to address the investors' concerns and support them in the face of U.S. threats.



**Border guard killed in clash with drug smugglers**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian border guard was killed on Tuesday in armed clashes with drug smugglers in the southeastern province of Sistan-Balouchestan.

The clashes took place between the Mirjaveh 128 commando unit and drug traffickers near the border with Pakistan, leading to death of Lt. Akbar Masoumi Nejad, the police said in a statement on its website.

No further details were available regarding the incident. Iran sits on a major drug route between Afghanistan and Europe, as well as the Persian Gulf states. The Islamic Republic shares about 900 kilometers of common border with Afghanistan, over which 74 percent of opium is smuggled.

# Tehran says U.S. policies have left Mideast in 'total chaos'



**1 →** The United States, to cover up these aggressive, reckless and costly policies, blames Iran. Iran is blamed for their failures in Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Lebanon.

The Trump administration is very naive about the Middle East and Iran. It can only speak in the language of threats—pressure, sanctions, intervention. These policies have failed in the region. They are very risky and costly. Let the Americans deal with the problems of the countries they have already invaded and attacked. America lacks constructive power in the Middle East. It is unable to govern even a village in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen or Syria. All it can do is use force and destructive power. This U.S. administration wants the Middle East and the whole world to bow to it. This is not a policy conducive to sound relationships with sovereign states, especially those countries that have resisted American influence.

The plan to arm 'moderate' rebels in Syria was a cover to topple [Syrian President] Bashar al-Assad. The Americans knew there were no 'moderate' rebels. They knew these weapons would get into the hands of terrorist groups like Daesh [Islamic State], Al-Nusra and their affiliates. Once again, the Ameri-

can policy failed. The Americans succeeded in destroying a country. They succeeded in creating bloodbaths. They succeeded in displacing millions of people. But they gained nothing. The sovereignty of Syria is expanding by the day. It is hard to imagine what President Trump is offering as a strategy in Syria. One day, he says, 'I will move out of Syria very soon, very quickly.' The next day he says, 'If Iran is there, we should

stay.' I wonder if the American taxpayers know how much of their money has been wasted in Iraq, Syria and Yemen?

The Iran nuclear deal was possible following several letters by President Barack Obama assuring the Iranian leadership that America had no intention of violating Iranian sovereignty. America said it wanted to engage in a serious dialogue on equal footing and mutual interests and concerns.

## Zarif visits South Africa to discuss ties

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif left Tehran for Pretoria on Tuesday to discuss ties with senior South African officials.

He planned to meet with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and International Relations Minister Lindiwe Sisulu.

Various issues including ways to expand Tehran-Pre-

toria relations and the future of the 2015 nuclear deal after the U.S. withdrawal from the international agreement were scheduled to be raised at the talks.

An Iranian trade delegation comprising representatives from the country's private sector will travel to South Africa this month to explore business opportunities there, Trend news agency reported.

Iran's chamber of commerce chairman Gholam

Hossein Shafiei will lead the trade team to South Africa.

During the planned three-day visit, the representatives from the Iranian private sector will sit down with African merchants and business people active in the fields of mines, food, engineering services, petrochemical products, oil, medicine and pharmaceutical equipment, tourism, car manufacturing, and household appliances.

## Israel, UAE held secret meeting to sabotage nuclear deal: New Yorker

**By staff and agency**

The New Yorker's Adam Entous published a report on Monday revealing that senior officials from United Arab Emirates and Israel met in Cyprus in line with attempts to kill the 2015 nuclear deal.

"For years, American officials were skeptical of Israel's claims about its ability to expand ties with the (Persian) Gulf states. But, toward the end of Obama's second term, U.S. intelligence agencies

learned of phone calls between senior UAE and Israeli officials, including calls between a senior Emirati leader and Netanyahu. Then U.S. intelligence agencies picked up on a secret meeting between senior UAE and Israeli leaders in Cyprus," the New Yorker reported.

The UAE does not officially have diplomatic relations with Israel.

"U.S. officials suspect that Netanyahu attended the meeting, which centered

on countering Obama's Iran deal. The Israelis and the Emiratis didn't inform the Obama administration of their discussions."

On May 8, U.S. President Donald Trump officially withdrew from the UN-endorsed nuclear agreement and plans to reimpose sanctions on Iran. Immediately after the decision, Israeli, Saudi and UEA leaders issued statements expressing pleasure over Trump's move.

Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, issued a statement, saying that the 28-nation bloc is united in preserving the international nuclear deal.

Iran has threatened that if the remaining members of the nuclear agreement, especially the EU trio of Germany, France and Britain, fail to guarantee Iran's interests under the nuclear agreement Tehran will resume nuclear activities with a much greater speed.

## Ex-senior diplomat proposes three steps to alleviate regional crises

### Mousavian says Iran feels threatened by export of Wahhabism

Hossein Mousavian, former Iranian diplomat and a current Princeton University researcher, has elaborated on root causes of crises and instability in the Middle East.

Addressing a recent conference on challenges of security arrangements in the Middle East in Beirut, Mousavian proposed three "major diplomatic innovations" to alleviate regional crises and foster long-lasting regional cooperation and peace.

The two-day conference, which brought together about 200 experts on political and security affairs, was arranged by former Lebanese President Amin Gemayel.

Following is the full text of Mousavian's speech in the conference:

Much of West Asia today is in a state of chaos and conflict. Large parts of Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan are devastated. The on-going wars in Yemen, Libya and Syria have taken huge humanitarian tolls. Political solutions to the current crises are still uncertain, even though there is no military solution for any conflict. Many terrorist groups are still active throughout the region and pose a major threat to all regional and global powers. Instability in the Middle East continues to decisively impact international peace and security.

The region is in the midst of two interconnected conflicts: one between regional powers, and the other between global powers. The chief outside players are the United States and Russia. Moscow's intervention in Syria together with Iranian support has changed the balance of power in the conflict. Meanwhile, disputes between regional powers have reached an unprecedented level of hostility, as seen in Saudi, Emirati, and Israeli rhetoric, actions, and alliances against Iran.

The roots of instability and conflict in the Middle East today go back decades. There have been three major sources contributing to regional instability.

The first is the full and unconditional support the United States and other world powers have provided to corrupt dictators such as the Shah of Iran or Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and numerous other dictators in the Arab and Muslim world. These dictators have presided over conditions of poverty, unemployment, bad governance, and political suffocation—which all contribute to extremism and terrorism.

The second root cause is because Washington has given carte blanc support to Israel as it has conquered, occupied, and annexed Arab land in violation of international law.

The third cause of regional instability are the wars that have engulfed the region.

In this regard, the first mistake of the United States, its Arab allies and other major global powers was supporting Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during the Iraq's invasion of Iran—including the use of chemical weapons that killed tens of thousands of Iranians. Their support of attacking Iran backfired with Saddam's invasion of Kuwait.

The second major mistake of the United States and its allies were the post-September 11th invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which unleashed chaos and violence in large parts of the region. The U.S. invasion of Iraq led to the rise of ISIS and other brutal terrorist groups that the United Nations has said are top threats to global security. In Afghanistan, after 17 years of U.S. occupation, the Taliban remain in



### Mousavian says regional states have two options: Cooperation or the status quo of confrontation

control of vast parts of the country.

The third major mistake of the U.S. and its allies was their military attack on Libya. The NATO regime change military operation in Libya has resulted in a failed state in the Arab and Muslim world.

The fourth bad mistake as former Qatari Prime Minister al-Thani said was about Syria. He said that the U.S. and its regional allies made "mistakes" in supporting extremist groups in Syria." Former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden also publicly stated that U.S. regional allies were a "problem" in Syria and supported terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda.

In Syria, the CIA for years led efforts by U.S. regional allies to topple the Syrian government. This operation led to the deaths of over 100,000 Syrian troops according to the Washington Post's David Ignatius.

The Syrian Civil War also marked a new phenomenon in the Middle East's modern history. Previously, governments in the region had been changed in three ways:

1. Popular revolution such as in Iran in 1979 or Egypt in 2011;
2. Foreign instigated coup d'etats such as the UK/ U.S. coup against Mossadegh in Iran in 1953; and
3. Regime change through direct foreign military intervention—such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya.

However, in Syria there was a new phenomenon of over 100,000 foreign terrorists from all over the world were organized and exported to the country to bring regime change.

The fifth disastrous mistake is the Saudi-UAE-U.S. war on Yemen. The Saudi war on Yemen has been described

**"Since Turkey entered the Astana talks, it has taken major steps to stop the movement of arms, people, and money that crossed its borders in support of terrorist groups in Syria."**

by the United Nations as the world's "worst humanitarian crisis," with tens of thousands killed or wounded, millions displaced, and outbreaks of famine and cholera.

In such a devastated region, amongst regional powers, Iran and Turkey are two key players which can play major role on crisis management in the region. Their relations suffered from 2011 on the Syrian crisis since Turkey was after regime change by supporting extremist and terrorist groups and Iran supported the central state.

Nevertheless, Turkey has also evolved in recent years from being a loyal U.S. ally in NATO to a more independent regional power. This has recently been the case in Syria, where Turkey has joined Russia and Iran in the "Astana process" peace talks, which have made practical progress in negotiating ceasefires and negotiations between rebel forces and the Syrian government.

The Astana process is separate from the U.S.-back Geneva process talks, which have failed to affect any real change in Syria. The primary reason for the failure of the Geneva process and the success of the Astana process is the Astana process's serious approach to confronting terrorism. Meanwhile, the U.S. led coalition countries spoke of ending the war in Syria but at the same time continued to support Syrian terrorist groups.

Since it entered the Astana talks, Turkey has taken major steps to stop the movement of arms, people, and money that crossed its borders in support of terrorist groups in Syria.

About Turkish-Iranian relations, it is important to note that in the past four hundred years, since Safavid-Ottoman era, Iran and Turkey have not gone to war and there has been peace and cooperation between them.

The reality is that there cannot be peace in the region unless there is cooperation between all the major regional and global powers. Their relations simply cannot be zero-sum. No side benefits from opposing mutually-beneficial cooperation. And there cannot be peace if major regional or global powers oppose it.

The major regional divides today include divisions between Arab and non-Arab states. Turkey and Iran are the two major non-Arab states. They each have their own set of problems and security concerns in the Arab world, as well as with the West. Turkey has opposed the crackdown on groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood by many Arab countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates. Iran feels threatened by export of Wahhabism, an ideology that explicitly views Shia Muslims are heretics and which many terrorist groups follow.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman has of course publicly stated that Turkey and Iran are together part of a "triangle of evil," along with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Turkey and Iran can establish a stabilizing regional equilibrium on balancing the role of global powers in the region in favor of global peace and security.

Another major regional divide is between Arabs themselves. During the last three decades, at least four Arab countries, Kuwait, Libya, Yemen, and Syria have been attacked by other Arab states. Even Qatar, as member of (P)GCC, is now sanctioned and threatened by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain.

**Read more on [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com)**



# Jordan protesters: Arab money won't help

Eyad Bani-Melham views \$2.5bn as small change.

"Jordan's budget deficit is huge," says Bani-Melham, a lawyer in Jordan's capital, Amman. "This new money is not going to make a difference."

For Bani-Melham, a pledge by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to provide Jordan with \$2.5bn in aid is not going to solve the kingdom's unemployment problem, nor will it achieve social justice.

"When we took to the streets, we demanded social change and called for a system overhaul - we were not asking our country to plead for financial support," he said.

The 29-year-old is not alone. Thousands of other Jordanians also protested against price hikes and an income tax reform bill last week. They say the incoming aid will not "save" the country from its structural economic problems and crippling public debt, currently close to \$40bn.

The protesters called for a long-term fiscal plan, more transparency, an end to corruption and, crucially, a complete overhaul of the government's approach to economic and social policies.

While this latest promise by the three Persian Gulf Arab states may decrease some of the economic pressure facing Jordan's new government, it will likely not convince the masses that real change is imminent.

"In the past, Jordan received a similar aid package from the Persian Gulf, but it didn't have a positive or lasting effect," Odai Nofal, who hails from the province of Zarqa, says.

"As citizens, we didn't see a change in the government's methodology that catered to the public's needs," the 28-year-old adds. "All we saw was a bunch of austerity measures, and so we're rightfully concerned about seeing this pattern continue."

## ■ 'National program'

Like Bani-Melham, Nofal was among the first to participate in the recent nationwide protests - the biggest in years.

The demonstrations led to a cabinet reshuffle and a pledge by the country's new prime minister, Omar al-Razzaz, to repeal an income tax bill that had been part of a series of reforms backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

For a country that has long suffered from economic problems and has historically been heavily reliant on foreign aid, Jordan's economic reform measures stem from a \$723m three-year credit line that it secured from the IMF in 2016.

With its high public debt on the rise, citizens such as 49-year-old Aroub Soubh say that changes at the local and national level should be prioritized at the current stage.

"We must first sort out our internal affairs before seeking international support," the activist and journalist says.

The protesters also called for the reintroduction of subsidies on bread and oil prices that were revoked earlier this year.

In 2018 alone, the cost of fuel has increased five times, and electricity bills have shot up by 55 percent.

"People need to regain confidence in the government, especially when it comes to decisions about economic policies that are due to be made soon," Soubh says, adding that the next few months will allow people to observe how the government plans to remedy its controversial austerity measures.



Laila Kloub agrees.

"The new government needs to depend on a national program," the 25-year-old writer says, adding that such a move would help the public know who needs to be held accountable.

"It's important for us citizens to feel like we have contributed in solving the crisis."

## ■ 'Strings attached'

Despite its "minimal" effect, Jordanian citizens say the five-year aid package does not come without "strings attached".

Following the 2011 Arab uprisings, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) made a strategic decision to help the Jordanian and Moroccan monarchies with a five-year agreement worth over \$5bn each. But this aid flow ceased with the end of the Arab Spring and shifting alliances in the region.

The new aid package has led Jordanians to believe that their country, which is hosting more than 650,000 Syrian refugees, may now be inclined to side with Saudi Arabia in regional conflicts.

"Nothing comes for free," Soubh, the journalist, says.

According to her, many who welcomed the latest aid pledge did so with "caution".

"At least, for the first time, Jordanians feel they've established an open line of communication with Razzaz."

Al-Razzaz, who previously served as the outgoing government's education minister, also pledged to engage in dialogue to reach consensus on a new tax law and economic reform.

Locals who took to the streets are hopeful that under

al-Razzaz would "finally" take serious steps to hold corrupt officials to account, a key demand for protesters.

## ■ 'Positive signs'

With a diminishing middle class, people such as Nofal and Bani-Malham expect to see protests recommence in the next few months if the government's approach remains unchanged.

The protests in Amman were organised and led by an independent group referred to as the Hirak Shababi, or youth movement, as well as by various unions representing tens of thousands of employees across the country.

For now, "there are a few positive signs", Bani-Melham says, referencing al-Razzaz' pledge to repeal the income tax law.

"But we also need to see ministers and parliamentarians be paid more reasonable salaries ... salaries that do not affect public money," he says. "We need to collectively agree on what the best progressive tax rate should be."

Whether these changes take place or not will depend on the new cabinet and parliament's approval.

Though many Jordanians feel optimistic that Razzaz' incoming government will answer to their demands, they also feel empowered by their ability to demonstrate and bring about change once again, if necessary.

"If our demands aren't met, we will always have the fourth circle to return to," said Nofal, referring to the scene of the latest protests.

"But we hope this government meets, and exceeds, our expectations."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

# Iraqi court arrests four over ballot box warehouse fire

An Iraqi court has ordered the detention of four people over accusations of torching a warehouse holding ballot boxes from the country's recent parliamentary election.

On Monday, Iraqi state television announced that three of the suspects are members of the country's police force while the other is a employee of the Independent High Elections Commission.

On Sunday, the storage site housing ballot boxes from Iraq's May parliamentary elections caught fire ahead of a recount.

Following the blaze, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced that the torching of a storage site was part of a plot to damage Iraq's democratic process.

Outgoing speaker of parliament Salim al-Jabour said the incident proves that the recent parliamentary elections should be repeated.

"The crime of burning ballot-box storage warehouses in the Rusafa area is a deliberate act, a planned crime, aimed at hiding instances of fraud and manipulation of votes, lying to the Iraqi people and changing their will and choices," he said in a statement.

Top aide to nationalist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr Dhiaa al-Asadi said the fire was a plot aimed at forcing a repeat of the election and hiding fraud.



"Whoever burned the election equipment and document storage site had two goals: either cancelling the election or destroying the stuffed ballots counted amongst the results," he tweeted.

On Wednesday, the Iraqi parliament has voted in favor of a manual recount of votes in the country's May 12 parliamentary elections.

The announcement came a few days after Abadi ordered the creation of a high-pow-

ered commission to look into the alleged irregularities in the parliamentary elections.

An official statement said a recent cabinet meeting chaired by the premier had named the Iraqi anti-graft chief as the head of the commission.

The statement further suggested that hackers may have manipulated the election results.

Meanwhile, Iraqi cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, whose coalition won the largest number of

seats in the country's recent parliamentary elections, has rejected calls for an election rerun, warning Iraqis about breaking out of a possible "civil war."

"Stop fighting for seats, posts, gains, influence, power, and ruler ship," the 44-year-old cleric addressed the entire Iraqi nation in a statement published by his office on Monday, adding, "Is it now time to stand as one for building and reconstruction instead of burning ballot boxes or repeating elections just for one seat or two?"

Sadr's Sairoon bloc won 54 out of 329 seats in the Iraqi parliament. The Fatah (Conquest) alliance, led by Badr Organization Secretary General Hadi al-Amri, and Abadi's Nasr (Victory) coalition finished second and third with 47 and 42 seats, respectively.

Over 7,000 candidates contested the 329 seats in the parliament that will choose a new president, prime minister and government in Iraq.

This is the fourth such polls since the 2003 U.S. invasion that led to a sharp rise in sectarian tensions and ensuing terror-related violence in the Arab country.

The next prime minister will face the huge task of rebuilding a country shattered by the war against Daesh and the U.S. invasion.

(Source: Press TV)

on the final deal.

Another flashpoint could come when lawmakers vote Wednesday on an amendment seeking to keep Britain in a customs union with the EU.

May urged Conservative lawmakers to back the government and show "that we are united as a party in our determination to deliver on the decision made by the British people."

In fact, her party is far from united. May's Cabinet is divided between ministers including Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, who support a clean break with the EU, and those such as Treasury chief Philip Hammond who want to keep close ties with the bloc, Britain's biggest trading partner.

Britain is due to leave on March 29, 2019, and the bloc is frustrated with what it sees as a lack of firm proposals from the U.K about future relations. A paper laying out the U.K. government position, due to be published this month, has been delayed because the Cabinet cannot agree on a united stance.

Brexit Secretary David Davis warned Conservative rebels that they should not use this week's votes to try to "reverse the decision of the referendum."

"That was the decision of the British people ... and whatever we do, we're not going to reverse that," he told the BBC.

(Source: AP)

A junior member of Prime Minister Theresa May's government resigned Tuesday over Brexit, emboldening pro-EU lawmakers ahead of key votes in Parliament on Britain's departure from the European Union.

Conservative lawmaker Phillip Lee, who voted to remain in the EU in Britain's 2016 referendum, resigned as a justice minister so he could vote against the government on a key measure.

Lee said "the people, economy and culture of my constituency will be affected negatively" by Britain's EU departure, and it is "irresponsible to proceed as we are."

He called for Brexit to be delayed, and for the public to get a second referendum on the terms of any exit deal.

Lee's resignation came as May's fragile minority government scrambled to shore up support among lawmakers before two days of debate and votes in the House of Commons on its flagship Brexit bill.

The European Union Withdrawal Bill, a complex piece of legislation intended to disentangle Britain from the bloc, has had a rocky ride through Parliament. The upper chamber, the House of Lords, inserted amendments in 15 areas to soften the terms of Britain's departure.

May says the changes would weaken the government's negotiating position, and the government will try to alter



or reverse them in the House of Commons on Tuesday and Wednesday. But May is facing a potential rebellion from some Conservative lawmakers who want to retain close ties with the bloc after the U.K. leaves in March 2019.

They are rallying around an amendment giving the House of Commons power to send the government back to the negotiating table with Brussels if lawmakers don't like the terms of the Brexit deal struck with the EU. Currently, the government is offering lawmakers a "take it or leave it" vote

## U.S. military in Korea says no guidance on cancelling war games

U.S. military forces in Korea have not received any direction to cease joint military drills, a spokesman said on Tuesday, after U.S. President Donald Trump said war games would be ended amid talks with North Korea.

"USFK has received no updated guidance on execution or cessation of training exercises - to include this fall's schedule Ulchi Freedom Guardian," U.S. Forces in Korea Lt. Col. Jennifer Lovett said in a statement.

"In coordination with our ROK partners, we will continue with our current military posture until we receive updated guidance from the Department of Defense (DoD) and/or Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM)."

(Source: Reuters)

## Police question Netanyahu in telecom case for third time

Israeli police questioned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as part of an investigation into a corruption case involving the country's telecom giant.

Two Netanyahu confidants have been arrested on suspicion of promoting regulation worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the Bezeq telecom company. In return, Bezeq's subsidiary news site, Walla, allegedly provided positive Netanyahu coverage. The confidants have turned state witnesses.

It's the third time that Netanyahu, who held the government's communications portfolio until last year, is being questioned over the affair. Police declined to comment.

Police have recommended indicting Netanyahu on corruption charges in two other cases.

Netanyahu has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing, dismissing the accusations as a media witch hunt.

In the so-called "Case 4000," Netanyahu stands accused of favoring the Israeli telephone communications giant Bezeq in exchange for positive coverage on its Walla! portal, one of the most popular among Israelis. He reportedly engaged in the corrupt practice between 2014 and 2017 while he was also occupying the post of the communications minister.

The Tuesday questioning would use the testimony of Nir Hefetz, Netanyahu's former ally, as its subject. Hefetz "gave police text messages and incriminating recordings allegedly indicating a quid-pro-quo relationship" between the premier and Bezeq's boss, Shaul Elovitch, the paper wrote.

Last month, Haaretz revealed comments made in 2015 by Elovitch, in which he had said that he understood Netanyahu "was willing to commit suicide for me," referring to the duo's special relationship.

Also on Tuesday, police are to question two suspects in "Case 2000." In that case, Netanyahu is accused of helping the Yedi-ot Aharonot newspaper against its competitor Yisrael Hayom likewise in return for favorable coverage of the prime minister.

For many months now, thousands of Israelis have been holding weekly protests against the premier, urging him to resign.

He also faces two other criminal cases.

The "Case 3000" is also looking into potential wrongdoing involving Netanyahu's personal lawyer and German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp's local representative. Its focus is an enormous deal for the purchase of naval vessels and submarines from the company.

And in the "Case 1000," he is suspected of having received gifts from businessmen overseas.

(Source: agencies)

## U.S. shows new de facto embassy in Taiwan amid China tensions

The United States unveiled a new \$256 million representative office in Taiwan's capital on Tuesday, a de facto embassy that underscores Washington's strategic ties with the democratic, self-ruled island as it faces escalating tensions with China.

Washington cut diplomatic ties with Taipei in 1979 but remains the island's strongest ally and sole foreign arms supplier. It opened the American Institute of Taiwan (AIT) to conduct relations between the two sides after severing ties.

In comments certain to rile Beijing, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen said the new complex was a reaffirmation of both sides commitment to a "vital relationship".

"The friendship between Taiwan and the U.S. has never been more promising. The great story of Taiwan-U.S. relations remains to be filled with the efforts of those that will one day occupy this building," Tsai said.

So long as both sides stood together, nothing could come between them, she added.

The new complex, a major upgrade from the low-key military building the AIT had used for decades, will serve as the representative office later this summer, said AIT Director Kin Moy.

Marie Royce, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, said at a ceremony to mark the unveiling that the complex was a symbol of the strength and vibrancy of the U.S.-Taiwan partnership.

"We have faced many trials along this journey, but we have risen to the challenge at every turn, knowing that our shared commitment to democracy would see us through," said Royce, the highest-ranking State Department official to visit Taiwan since 2015.

In Beijing, China's Foreign Ministry said they had lodged "stern representations" with Washington about the new building and the visit of the senior U.S. diplomat.

"We urge the United States to scrupulously abide by its promises to China over the Taiwan issue, correct their wrong actions, and avoid damaging China-US relations and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a daily news briefing.

The sprawling new site occupies 6.5 hectares, including Chinese gardens, in Taipei's Neihu district. AIT's Taipei office has nearly 500 American and local employees, while its Kaohsiung branch has more than 30 staff.

(Source: Reuters)



STOCK MARKET

|        |         |
|--------|---------|
| TEDPIX | 96101.9 |
| IFX    | 1114.13 |

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

|     |               |
|-----|---------------|
| USD | 42,2300 rials |
| EUR | 49,798 rials  |
| GBP | 56,629 rials  |
| AED | 11,494 rials  |

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| WTI         | 65.98/b        |
| Brent       | 76.14/b        |
| OPEC Basket | 74.22/b        |
| Gold        | \$1,295.95 /oz |
| Silver      | \$16.85/oz     |
| Platinum    | \$912.20/oz    |

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Budget paid in cash for development projects doubled in 3 months yr/yr

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Some 27 trillion rials (above \$639.8 million) of budget has been paid in cash to implementation of development projects during the first three months of the present Iranian calendar year (started on March 21, 2018), IRNA quoted Iranian deputy finance minister as saying on Tuesday.

The paid amount is twice more than that paid in the same period in the preceding Iranian year, Rahmatollah Karami said.



Economic ties to be strengthened between Iran, Sweden: envoy

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Swedish Ambassador to Tehran Helena Sangeland said Sweden and Iran are expanding their relations in the field of economy and their economic ties will be even more strengthened in the future.

“We have a very good relation which has become better since two years ago”, she told IRNA on Tuesday.

In line with expanding the economic ties between the two countries, the seventh meeting of Iran-Sweden Joint Economic Committee will be held by the next two weeks, the envoy announced.



Iran’s Intl. metal working exhibition slated for late June

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The third edition of Iran’s International Exhibition for Metal Working (AMB Iran 2018) is scheduled to be held on June 26-29 at Shahr-e-Aftab International Exhibition Center in Tehran.

As reported by IRNA, so far over 140 Iranian and foreign exhibitors from 12 different countries including Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, China, Japan, Czech Republic and Russia have registered to participate in this year’s exhibition.

The exhibition aims to provide a good opportunity for joint business talks in the field and to facilitate technology transfer for improving Iranian industries.



Iran-EU trade at €5.3b in Q1

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The trade between Iran and European Union countries during the first three months of 2018 stood at €5.3 billion, the same as the figure of the first quarter of 2017, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to the latest report of European Union’s statistics agency Eurostat, EU countries exported €2.39 billion of goods to Iran in the said time, registering a five-percent-decrease from its previous €2.53 billion in the same period in 2017.

EU members imported €2.912 billion of Iranian goods from January to March of 2018, showing five percent increase from €2.777 billion in first quarter of 2017.

While Germany, Italy and France were respectively the major exporters to Iran, Italy, Spain and Greece were the three top importers from the country in the said time span, this year.

NITC seriously follows up on fleet renovation plan

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) is seriously following up its plan of renovating the fleet and reducing the average age of its tankers, according to a director of the company.

Akbar Jebel-Ameli, the director for technical affairs and operations in NITC, told Fars news agency that his company is pursuing this plan for a more serious presence in the international markets.

NITC prepared this five-year plan once

the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Iran’s nuclear deal) was implemented in January 2016, he added.

Last month, the company managing director, Nasrollah Sardashti, has announced that NITC has prepared a plan for the renovation of its fleet, adding “We have already demolished four tankers and two other tankers will be demolished soon based on the planning.”

NITC, which operates the largest tanker fleet in the Middle East and



has the world’s largest fleet of super tankers, transports Iranian crude and also acts as an independent entity in

contracts with foreign concerns for crude oil transportation based on prevailing international freight rates.

Gas processing up 9% in year



**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Natural gas processing increased 9.3 percent in Iran in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to a director in National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC).

Gholamreza Bahman-Nia, the director for supervising production in NIGC, announced that some 214 billion cubic meters of gas was processed during the

The U.S. sanctions on Iran’s petroleum industry will take effect on Nov. 4, but many European refiners, as well as buyers in Asia, are already winding down Iranian oil purchases.

In May, French oil major Total said it might pull out of its investment in Iran’s South Pars gas field if it cannot secure a waiver from the U.S. government.

“The Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) and the oil ministry have been negotiating for one and a half years over the issuing bonds for oil projects ... We are

Iran to issue bonds for investment in oil sector

Iran will issue bonds in the coming months to fund oil projects, the head of its Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) said on Tuesday, a month after the United States withdrew from a nuclear deal and said it would reimpose unilateral sanctions.

It was not immediately clear whether Iran would seek foreign buyers for the bonds, something which could prove difficult given concerns among Western companies that they could be penalised by Washington for continuing to work with Tehran.

German investor confidence extends slide as political risks gain

German investor confidence tumbled to its lowest level since 2012 as U.S. trade tariffs and Italy’s political turmoil added to concerns that the economy is weakening.

The ZEW Center for European Economic Research in Mannheim said on Tuesday that its index of investor expectations fell to minus 16.1 in June from minus 8.2 in May, marking the fourth monthly decline this year. Economists in a Bloomberg survey predicted a drop to minus 14. The negative reading means that more of those investors surveyed saw a worsening of the outlook than forecast an improvement.

The downbeat assessment comes after Italy, Germany’s fifth largest trading partner, triggered doubts over its commitment to euro-area membership when its new populist government promised to implement spending plans that would break European Union rules. Italian bonds and stocks recovered on Monday after Finance Minister Giovanni Tria made assurances that Italy had no plans to leave the single currency.

The turmoil added to mounting concerns over global trade after the U.S. imposed import tariffs on European steel and aluminum. While economists have downplayed how damaging the measures will be for the region’s expansion, Germany’s export-driven economy already appears to be coming off its peak, a trend which could worsen if further risks materialize.



“The recent escalation in the trade dispute with the U.S. as well as fears over the new Italian government pursuing a policy which potentially destabilizes the financial markets have left their mark on the economic outlook for Germany,” ZEW President Achim Wambach said in a statement. “On top of this, German industry has been reporting worse than expected figures for exports, production and incoming orders.”

An array of downbeat indicators have caught economists by surprise recently. Still, the Bundesbank has expressed confidence that growth will recover in the second quarter as temporary effects wear off. Germany’s DAX stock index has pared some of its losses in June after sliding more than 4 percent from a peak in May.

ZEW’s gauge of current conditions slipped to 80.6 from 87.4. A measure of expectations for the euro area dropped to -12.6 from 2.4.

(Source: Bloomberg)

UK wage growth unexpectedly slows even as job creation booms

British workers’ wages rose more slowly in the three months to April despite another surge in job creation, leaving the Bank of England still waiting for clear signs that the economy is ready for higher interest rates.

In a second reading in a row to show a loss of momentum in pay, total earnings, including bonuses, rose by an annual 2.5 percent, the Office for National Statistics said, down from growth of 2.6 percent in the three months to March.

Economists polled by Reuters had mostly forecast growth of 2.6 percent, matching the pace of the three months to March.

Central banks in many rich countries have been stumped by the failure of wages to follow their typical pre-crisis pattern of rising quickly as unemployment falls.

Excluding bonuses, growth in earnings fell for the first time in more than a year, rising by 2.8 percent year-on-year against expectations for growth to hold at 2.9 percent in the Reuters poll.

But the number of people in work rose by a larger than forecast 146,000, pushing up sterling briefly.

“It’s a really strong set of employment figures,” Andrew Wishart, an economist at Capital Economics, said. “It looks like that’s set to continue.”

The BoE expects wages to pick up speed gradually over the next three years, a big reason why it says it is likely to raise borrowing costs gradually over the period.



But last month it said it wanted to be sure the economy had recovered from its near-stagnation in an unusually icy early 2018, before pushing ahead with only its second rate hike since before the global financial crisis.

On Monday, data showed British factories had a weak April.

Tuesday’s data showed that in the month of April alone — when employers often give staff their annual pay rise — regular pay was up by 2.5 percent, its weakest increase since November.

However, the unemployment rate held at 4.2 percent in the three months to April, its lowest since 1975, as expected in the Reuters poll.

Households - whose spending is the main driver of Britain’s economy - struggled last year from the double whammy of slow wage growth and a jump in inflation, due in large part to the fall in the value of the pound after the 2016 Brexit vote.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S.-China power struggle will probably be the biggest market event of the century, strategist says



President Donald Trump, right, and Xi Jinping, China’s president, greet attendees waving American and Chinese national flags during a welcome ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, on Thursday, Nov. 9, 2017.

probably of the century,” she added.

Over the past few months, the U.S. has imposed new tariffs on Chinese products in an attempt to reduce its trade deficit with the country. China has prepared retaliatory

measures but both countries have been holding diplomatic talks to try to reach a compromise over their trade links.

China has been a long-standing ally of North Korea and is an important trading

partner and a major source of food and energy. “(China) has helped sustain Kim Jong Un’s regime, and has historically opposed harsh international sanctions on North Korea in the hope of avoiding regime collapse and a refugee influx across their 870-mile border,” the Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank, argued in an article earlier this year. As the relationship between the U.S. and North Korea gets closer, China could feel threatened and potentially change its attitude toward the U.S.

“I think our whole relationship with North Korea and the Korean Peninsula is going to be a very much different situation than it has in the past. We both want to do something, we both are going to do something, and we have developed a very special bond,” President Donald Trump said at the signing ceremony Tuesday.

The North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said at the same ceremony that both countries have overcome their differences.

Speaking in the aftermath of the summit, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said that China will continue to play a constructive role in the peace process of North Korea.

(Source: CNBC)



# Oil edges up, but bulls remain wary ahead of OPEC meeting

Oil prices rose for a second day on Tuesday and volatility subsided to its lowest in three weeks, as investors prepared for a key meeting of the OPEC producer group next week.

Crude remained in a tight trading range, in line with the broader financial markets, which were largely unruffled by a U.S.-North Korea summit aimed at denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Brent crude futures were up 17 cents at \$76.63 a barrel by 0855 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 11 cents to \$66.21.

"The market has been range-bound for two weeks and that is likely to remain the case," Ole Hansen, senior manager at Saxo Bank, said.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, together with partners including Russia, has cut oil output by 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) since January 2017 in an effort to boost the market.

Volatility in oil prices has subsided due to caution around the group's meetings



LCOATMIV scheduled for June 22/23, at which it will decide on future supply policy.

With U.S. sanctions threatening to cut

Iranian exports and the potential for more declines in Venezuelan production, OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia and Russia have

indicated they would be willing to raise output to make up for any supply shortfall.

Russian production reportedly climbed to 11.1 million bpd in early June.

In the United States, output has risen by almost a third in the last two years, to a record 10.8 million bpd.

Top exporter Saudi Arabia - which has so far led OPEC's efforts to withhold supplies - is also showing signs of raising production.

In physical oil markets, Middle East light crude grades are set to trade at discounts against their respective official selling prices amid ample supplies to Asia, including from the United States, four trade sources said.

Saudi Arabia has told OPEC that the country increased oil output to a little more than 10 million bpd in May, from 9.9 million bpd in April.

"This fits with the theory that the Saudis and Russians are subtly moving toward a change to the agreement at this month's meeting," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at futures brokerage AxiTrader.

(Source: Reuters)

## OPEC president: U.S. hasn't asked us for more oil

The president of OPEC says the cartel has not been asked by the United States to boost oil production in the face of collapsing output in Venezuela and U.S. sanctions on Iran.

"The U.S. is important to us, but ... we have not received any official communication, or even unofficial communication, from the administration," said Suhail Al Mazrouei, the current head of OPEC and energy minister of the United Arab Emirates.

"I can tell you there is no truth in that whatsoever," he added in an interview with CNNMoney Emerging Markets Editor John Defferios.

Bloomberg and Reuters reported last week that the Trump administration had quietly asked Saudi Arabia and some other OPEC members to increase oil production.

President Donald Trump has not been shy about suggesting that oil prices have been too high — and that the cartel is to blame. U.S. gasoline prices hit an average of \$2.92 per gallon on Monday, up from \$2.34 a year ago.

"Looks like OPEC is at it again," Trump tweeted in April. "Oil prices are artificially Very High! No good and will not be accepted!"

The price of crude has fallen since hitting a recent peak of \$72 in late May. U.S. oil futures were trading 1 percent lower on Monday at \$65 per barrel.

Still, production increases could be coming soon. OPEC oil producers and Russia are due to meet in Vienna on June 22 to discuss easing supply caps that have been in place since the beginning of 2017.

Saudi energy minister Khalid Al-Falih told CNNMoney last month that he was engaged in intensive discussions with Russia and other OPEC officials about how to balance the oil market.

"We are now collecting all of the data," Al Mazrouei said on Sunday. "I can assure you that every country is important to us."

Trump policies have helped heighten fears over a major supply crunch. Global oil supplies were already getting tight before Trump vowed last month to exit the Iran nuclear deal and impose "powerful" sanctions on the OPEC nation.

Iran ramped up its oil production by 1 million barrels per day after sanctions were lifted in early 2016, and at least some of that oil will now be pulled from the market.

Tehran had requested that OPEC address U.S. sanctions at its June 22 meeting, according to the country's OPEC governor. But Al Mazrouei said the cartel would steer clear of politics.

"I will fight not to make OPEC ... a political organization," said Al Mazrouei. "It has never been a political organization."



The objective of the organization is to ensure that the market is well supplied."

Al Mazrouei also acknowledged that U.S. shale producers have played a key role in the market amid the supply disruption in Venezuela.

"They are needed," he said of shale producers. "Imagine if this increase in the U.S. production did not happen, we would be at ... an environment that is not very healthy for the world economy," he said.

(Source: CNN)

## Iraq says oil producers should not be influenced by calls to boost output

Iraq's oil minister said on Monday producers should not be influenced by pressure to pump more oil and unilateral decisions on output could be a breach of a supply cut pact between OPEC and non-OPEC countries, leading to its possible collapse.

With oil recently reaching \$80 a barrel, the highest level since 2014, some producers are discussing the possibility of easing some of the cutbacks and will meet to set policy on June 22-23. Oil was trading above \$75 a barrel on Monday.

Jabar al-Luaibi said in a strongly-worded statement that oil prices still needed more

support and stability, and producers "should not over-exaggerate the need of the oil market for more oil supplies for the time being, which could cause big harm to the global markets."

"This could be misinterpreted by speculators and consumers, leading to a significant fall in oil prices and this is unacceptable to us," Luaibi said in the statement.

The minister "rejects unilateral decisions by some oil producers without consulting the rest of the members" of the OPEC and non-OPEC producers who took part in the

reduction agreement, according to the statement by the Iraqi oil ministry.

Luaibi warned that this "could violate the agreement in one way or another and could lead to the collapse of the agreement."

The comments by OPEC's second largest producer come after Reuters reported that the U.S. government had unofficially asked Saudi Arabia and some other oil producers to raise output a day before Washington imposed new sanctions on Tehran.

OPEC and its allies, led by Russia, have cut a combined 1.8 million barrels per day of output since January 2017 and the cuts

are due to expire at the end of 2018.

However, Saudi Arabia and Russia have said the cuts could be eased gradually if there was a supply shortage in the market, after Riyadh received calls from consumers including the United States, China and India to support global demand.

"Producers should deal wisely and with vision with the facts on the ground without being influenced by pressures and conflicting calls to pump more oil into the market, which could lead to undesirable results," Luaibi said.

(Source: Reuters)

## LNG trade grows 10% in 2017 as Malaysia, U.S., Australia, others boost exports

Global liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade grew by 10 percent last year due primarily to growing liquefaction capacity in the Australia and the United States, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said on Monday.

The world's first floating liquefaction plant, Malaysia's 0.2-bcfd PFLNG Satu, was also commissioned in 2017, EIA said.

LNG trade reached 38.2 billion cubic feet per day (bcfd) in 2017, up 3.5 bcfd from 2016 and the largest annual volume increase on record, the EIA said, citing the Annual Report on LNG trade by the International Association of Liquefied Natural Gas Importers (GIIGNL).

New liquefaction export capacity commissioned in Australia, the United States and Russia, collectively added 3.4 bcfd of liquefaction capacity. Russia's new capacity only came online in December.

Including additions in the United States and Australia, liquefaction projects currently under construction are projected to increase global capacity by 13.5 bcfd by 2022, EIA said.

One billion cubic feet of natural gas is enough to fuel about five million U.S. homes for a day.

In 2017, there were 19 LNG exporting countries and 40 importing countries.

Besides Australia and the United States, EIA said several other countries also increased LNG exports in 2017, including Angola, Nigeria, Malaysia, Algeria, Russia and Brunei, which together added another 1.4 bcfd of exports.

That more than offset a combined decline of 0.6 bcfd in exports from Qatar, Indonesia, Norway, Peru, the United Arab Emirates and Trinidad, the EIA said.

Asian countries led growth in global LNG imports, accounting for 74 percent, or 2.6 bcfd, of the increase in 2017.

Japan remained the largest LNG importer at 11.0 bcfd in 2017.

China had the largest growth in LNG imports globally at 1.5 bcfd and became the world's second-largest LNG importer at 5.2 bcfd in 2017, surpassing South Korea.

LNG imports also increased in South Korea, Pakistan, Taiwan, and Thailand, which collectively added 1.0 bcfd.

Europe increased its LNG imports by 1.4 bcfd, primarily in Spain, Italy, Portugal, France, and Turkey.

In North America, Mexico's LNG imports increased by 17 percent as the country continued to rely on LNG supplies amid declining domestic production and construction delays in infrastructure connecting the Mexican domestic grid to gas pipeline exports from the United States.

(Source: The Star Online)

## Kazakhstan's Jan.-May oil output rises 6.4 percent from a year ago

Kazakhstan's oil output in the first five months of 2018 rose 6.4 percent from the same time a year ago to 37.7 million tons, the Deputy Energy Minister Makhambet Dosmukhambetov said on Tuesday.

Output at Tengizchevroil, owned by Chevron, Exxon-Mobil, Lukoil and KazMunayGaz was 12.5 million tons.

The giant Kashagan field, developed by Eni, ExxonMobil, CNPC, Shell, Total, Inpex and KazMunayGaz, produced 5.0 million tons.

The Karachaganak field, operated by a Shell- and Eni-led consortium, produced 5.2 million tons.

Kazakhstan's total oil exports from January to May rose 5.7 percent from the same time a year ago to 30.6 million tons, Dosmukhambetov told a government meeting.

(Source: Reuters)

### Call for Identifying Sales Agents for Booth Spaces in the Foreign Sections of the Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition



All interested and qualified companies looking forward to take part as sales agents of booth spaces in the Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemicals are respectfully asked to have their official requests, considered geographical scope, and a brief description of their experiences and competencies sent to the postal address: room 117, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 3<sup>rd</sup> NIOC Hq., No. 18, Roudsar St., Hafez St., Tehran, Iran; or emailed to [INFO@IRAN-OILSHOW.IR](mailto:INFO@IRAN-OILSHOW.IR) until Jun. 24<sup>th</sup> and call 021-88946361 if necessary. Please notice that sending requests does not bring any obligation on the side of the organizer and it has all the rights to ask for further documents if necessary in order to evaluate the applicants. The applications received after the specified date, will not be evaluated.

#### Applicants Policy:

1. Legal applicants' requests will be evaluated only.
2. Have at least five years of experience in exhibition activities
3. Have a representative or a company outside of Iran
4. Have foreign marketing experiences or organizing foreign exhibitions
5. Applicants with marketing experience or a background of organizing events in energy field are prioritized.

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## U.S. loses leverage to stop Yemen operation

By Jack Detsch

As the U.S.-backed coalition in Yemen appears ready to assault the Houthi-held port city of Hodeidah, the entry point for most of the country's aid, Congress is calling on the Pentagon to "use all available means" to stop the operation.

In a letter circulating in the House of Representatives and obtained by Al-Monitor, members of Congress "deeply alarmed" by the military action are asking U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to dissuade Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates from attacking. UN officials worry the assault could put as many as 250,000 lives at risk.

The Pentagon has already been scrutinized by lawmakers for refueling Saudi and UAE jets in the yearlong conflict and deploying U.S. Special Forces troops to dismantle missile launchers near Yemen's northern border without seeking congressional authorization. Al-Monitor reported in November that U.S. refueling support to the coalition more than doubled over the last year.

"We urge you to use all available means to avert a catastrophic military assault on Yemen's major port city of Hodeidah by the Saudi-led coalition, and to present Congress with immediate clarification regarding the full scope of U.S. military involvement in that conflict," reads the letter spearheaded by Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., which has been signed by seven members of Congress. "We remind you that three years into the conflict, active U.S. participation in Saudi-led hostilities against Yemen's Houthis has never been authorized by Congress, in violation of the Constitution."

Yet fierce fighting on the ground may be moving too fast for the United States to stop it. Over the weekend, as the UN's top Yemen mediator Martin Griffiths tried to talk the Houthis into peacefully turning over the port, Saudi-backed troops clashed with the Houthis just miles from the city, with most UN and nongovernmental organization workers quickly hustled out to avoid getting caught in the crossfire.

Key lawmakers had begun losing faith in U.S. efforts to convince Saudi and UAE military officials to stop the assault, after The Wall Street Journal reported that the UN's shuttle diplomacy failed to move UAE officials and that the Donald Trump administration had given the operation "a blinking yellow light."

"More evidence the Yemen War is spiraling," Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said in a tweet. "The U.S. has begged Saudi/UAE coalition not to attack the humanitarian aid port of Hudaydah. New reports suggest they have refused our plea, are readying an assault. Result could be catastrophic."

Despite the uptick in U.S. refueling, military experts say the UAE is less dependent on the Pentagon for operations in Hodeidah. Once envisioned as an Emirati-led amphibious assault needing advanced U.S. boats to navigate Red Sea minefields, the 45,000-strong force of Yemeni troops has instead moved along the coast in a two-month offensive to reach Hodeidah with refueling support from new helicopter bases.

"It's a waste of time to point blank stop this operation without offering an alternative," said Michael Knights, a fellow at the Washington Institute. "If somebody told the U.S. in 2003, don't go to Baghdad, what would we have said?"

The letter comes as Congress has been increasingly frustrated in recent months by perceptions that the Trump administration is overriding legislative authority to expand U.S. participation in the Yemen war. In May, Reuters reported that Congress is reviewing the sale of more than 120,000 precision-guided munitions that will be used in the conflict, laying the groundwork for a potential fight on the Senate floor.

(Source: Al Monitor)

## The source of Jordan's river of discontent

A week of protests has rattled both the Hashemite kingdom and the Middle East, in large part because young people focused on an Arab style of favoritism in government and business. A cultural shift against 'wasta' may have begun.

In an interview last year, King Abdullah of Jordan admitted he can do only so much to end a deep cultural practice known in Arabic as wasta. The term refers to the common use of nepotism and cronyism in daily life, especially in hiring. One in 3 Jordanians, for example, works for the government, plum work often gained through favoritism, such as a tribal connection or even bribery.

"Wasta," the monarch said, "cannot be rooted out without first being categorically rejected and spurned by citizens."

In early June, the king, who inherited his own job, almost saw his wish come true. For nearly a week, tens of thousands of Jordanians took to the streets in protests that, while initially focused on economic issues such as a proposed income tax, ended up venting public frustration with wasta and the lack of a meritocracy in business and government.

Many demonstrators held up loaves of flatbread with the words "corruption = hunger." Others demanded a special commission to go after the corrupt. In a country where 70 percent of people are under age 30, the message was not lost.

"Young people no longer see themselves as subjects pleading for a gratuity," one columnist wrote in The Jordan Times. "They consider themselves as the taxpayers who pay the salaries of all public officials and, understandably, they want good value for their tax money."

The protests were the largest in Jordan since the Arab Spring in 2011. This time, however, they were better organized and more unified and diverse. Union workers, middle-class professionals, and rural people turned out in many cities, sending shock waves across the region.

In Jordan itself, the king appointed a new prime minister and canceled recent austerity measures such as a reduction in energy subsidies. He also quickly arranged for \$2.5 billion in aid from Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf allies.

The common model of state patronage in the Middle East, which often relies on wasta, has mainly benefited the elite, bloated the public sector, and created economic stagnation. In April, the International Monetary Fund warned the Arab world — which has the highest rate of youth employment — that it must find jobs for 27 million young people entering the workforce in the next five years.

"More than 60 percent of [Arab] citizens perceive that connections — or wasta — determine whether or not you find a job," said IMF chief Christine Lagarde. "The public dissatisfaction that is bubbling up in several countries is a reminder that even more urgent action is needed."

Earlier this year, the World Bank issued a report, "Eruptions of Popular Anger: The Economics of the Arab Spring and Its Aftermath," which warned that perceptions of wasta and corruption are negatively associated with "subjective well-being." It found that a "broken social contract, not high inequality" was the main reason for the Arab Spring.

(Source: The CSM)

# Trump and Kim meet, but will they produce something concret?

By Dan Balz

With smiles and handshakes and words of mutual warmth, President Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un entered the history books in Singapore on Tuesday as the first sitting leaders of their countries ever to meet face to face. Whether their summit turns out to be a truly historic event depends much more on what comes next as the Washington post reported.

The United States and the world community have tried before to rein in North Korea. Three recent presidents were parties to agreements in which North Korea pledged to halt its nuclear activity. In each case, the commitments crumbled, the promises proved meaningless, and North Korea continued its steady march toward acquiring nuclear warheads and the means to deliver them across the Pacific Ocean.

Trump and Kim have embarked on a dramatically different approach, eschewing the bottom-up process of the past for a top-down start that the president suddenly and surprisingly agreed to when offered by the North Koreans. But the Singapore summit is only the opening, a first step in what could be lengthy and difficult negotiations between the two nations.

The president is counting on his personal skills to convince Kim that abandoning North Korea's nuclear weapons program, and the security it provides him, is in his country's and the world's best interests.

To do so will require discipline and commitment that has not been part of Trump's foreign-policy tool kit. And he must resist the kind of impetuosity he displayed on his way to Singapore when he abruptly withdrew U.S. support for a joint communique negotiated with other nations at the Group of Seven meeting in Canada. His pique at Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's post-meeting news conference created a rupture in relations with America's closest allies.

Summit meetings are a combination of symbolism and substance. That the president had flown halfway around the world to meet the leader of North Korea alone spoke volumes symbolically. That Kim would reverse course after a flurry of provocative missile launches early in Trump's term to engage in diplomacy also symbolized the change in the climate.

All that freighted with significance the moment of their first greeting. As Trump and Kim greeted each other on a red carpet with the flags of the two nations as their backdrop, the world watched in anticipation. After the earlier insults and incitements, there was no way to overstate the stakes — and worldwide hopes for an easing of tensions — involved in putting Trump and Kim in the same room together, joined only by their translators.



## The Singapore summit is only the opening, a first step in what could be lengthy and difficult negotiations between the two nations.

Neither Trump nor Kim appeared stiff or reticent as the two men walked toward each other, arms outstretched for a first handshake. They did not smile for their first formal photograph, but immediately afterward, as they began to walk along a portico, they loosened considerably, and both smiled more broadly. "We will have a terrific relationship," Trump told reporters after the two men were seated.

That was classic Trump, as was his "very, very good" response to a shouted question from CNN's Jim Acosta when the two men finished their one-on-one and headed to a bilateral meeting with their advisers. Cameras followed them from one meeting to another, giving the world glimpses of their body language. In a made-for-TV moment, Trump got the kind of public-relations extravaganza he wanted, but without any real hint of the substance of the conversations.

The record from history long ago etched a handful of summits in collective memory: the Yalta Conference of 1945 among Franklin D. Roosevelt, Britain's Winston Churchill and the Soviet Union's Joseph Stalin, which shaped the postwar world; the summit in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1986 between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, which seemed to end in failure but eventually paved the way for a later arms agreement; the personal diplomacy of Jimmy Carter as he negotiated peace between Israel's Menachem Begin and Egypt's Anwar Sadat at Camp David in 1978; the brutal encounter between John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna in 1961 that left the young president shaken and may have emboldened the Soviet leader to put missiles in Cuba.

Whether Singapore will be remembered as the beginning of a success or the start of another dead end with the North Koreans will not be written for months, if not years. Many people have pointed as a possible parallel to Richard Nixon's 1972 trip to China and his meeting with Chinese leader Mao Zedong, which produced a thaw between the two nations after two decades of hostile relations.

But historian Margaret MacMillan, who chronicled that trip in her book "Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World," noted that Nixon's journey began with far less uncertainty than surrounds the Trump-Kim summit.

"A lot of the groundwork had been done before he got there, and the goals were more modest," she said. In that case it was to start on a path toward establishing diplomatic relations, which were not completed until after Nixon left office. "Denuclearization is much, much more difficult than establishing diplomatic relations," she added.

Historian Robert Dallek, noting parallels and differences between the 1972 Nixon visit and this week's events, said, "We weren't going to ask them [the Chinese] to change governments or cut back on developing armaments of any kind." The Trump administration is not pushing for regime change in North Korea; to the contrary, the president and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have sought to assure Kim that this is not the goal of these talks.

The risks for both Trump and Kim are significant, although the North Korean leader already has gotten what his predecessors did not, which is a meeting with the president of the United States. But he

wants and needs more.

Bill Richardson, who was ambassador to the United Nations during the Clinton administration, said the very fact of the summit was a win for North Korea "because it illustrates the stature of Kim as a world figure and helps him domestically." But he added that Trump's decision to accept a meeting "is worth the risk" — if there is an agreement. "Negotiating with North Korea from the bottom to the top doesn't work," he added, referring to the approach of previous administrations. "Maybe top-to-bottom will work."

Trump has said many times he is prepared to walk away from negotiations with North Korea if he concludes that Kim is not serious about denuclearization. But failure is not in the interests of either leader. Trump would like to show that he can accomplish what other presidents before him, particularly his immediate predecessor, Barack Obama, have failed to do.

Wendy Sherman, a former State Department official with experience negotiating with North Korea and Iran, said the young Kim will want to find a way to stay in power for a long time. But he is under pressure to build the economy of his impoverished nation and open up to the rest of the world without putting his country at risk or himself in jeopardy. Trump wants a big foreign-policy success that he could use to help in his campaign for reelection in 2020. "There's a potential that interests align," Sherman said. "But it's still very, very tough."

The first handshakes and smiles set a tone for the rest of the day's meetings. Symbolism is importance, but the substance is everything.

## What is behind the Eid ceasefire with the Taliban?

The crisis in Afghanistan is deepening and President Ashraf Ghani needs to engage the Taliban

By Ahmed Rashid

For the first time ever, the Taliban has announced a three-day ceasefire with the Afghan government over the Eid holiday period. They have ordered their forces to cease operations although they said they would continue attacking U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

The Taliban's move follows Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's earlier demand from the Taliban to respect a brief unilateral ceasefire which the government would enforce over the Eid holiday period.

There have been many offers of temporary ceasefires by the government over the past two decades but none have yielded a positive response from the Taliban. It was thought that the Taliban had become too fragmented and, at the same time, too confident that they are winning the war to accept a ceasefire.

It appears that pressure from Pakistan on the Taliban Shura which largely resides in the Pakistani border town of Quetta has been instrumental in pushing the Taliban to agree to a ceasefire.

According to Lisa Curtis, deputy assistant to U.S. President Donald Trump, Washington has been pursuing "multiple lines of effort" for bringing peace to Afghanistan and an important component of that effort was to ensure that Pakistan played "a constructive role" in it. U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan will also observe this truce.

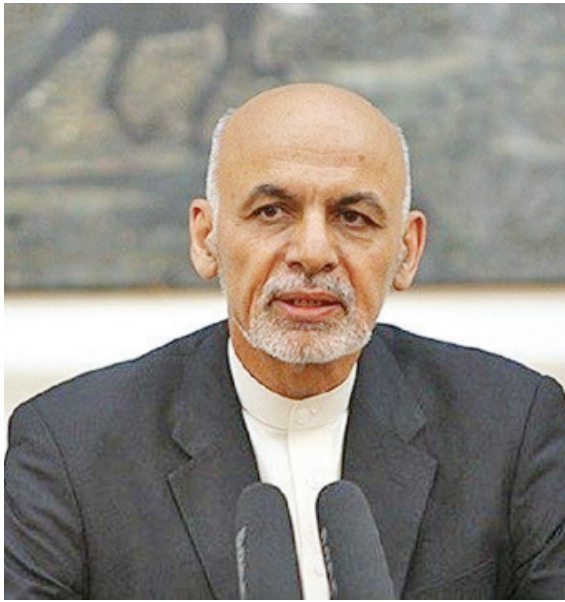
The strategy behind the ceasefire offer is to create a pause in hostilities for a few days which could be extended further. The end game of the Ghani administration is to jumpstart military and political dialogue aimed at ending the war.

■ **Is the ceasefire a sign that the Taliban will enter into talks?**

On February 28, Ghani issued a renewed call for the Taliban to join peace talks, promising that the government would recognize the group and give their leaders an office in Kabul. The Taliban never bothered to even reply to the offer.

At end of March, the Taliban were asked to attend a regional conference in Tashkent to discuss peace talks. They failed to turn up or even reply to Uzbekistan's offer.

The Taliban's main demand is to hold direct talks with the U.S. — something they have been asking for over several years. They will not talk to the Ghani government which they consider to be a "puppet" of the



## The strategy behind the ceasefire offer is to create a pause in hostilities for a few days which could be extended further.

U.S. And as far as the Taliban are concerned, it is the Americans who have to make the first concessions.

However, the possibility for direct talks happening is slim because there is disarray within all parties to the war. The Taliban are divided with individual commanders now asserting more authority in the field than the Quetta-based leadership.

In fact, even ensuring the ceasefire will be a big challenge for the Taliban leadership; it is doubtful that they have had the opportunity to consult all their field commanders. Instead, it seems that the Quetta Shura has taken a unilateral decision to accept the ceasefire.

Furthermore, the Taliban are on the offensive and most attacks across the country are initiated by them rather than the Afghan army. There is no reason for them to give up that advantage now.

Equally fraught is the regional balance of power. Pakistan, Iran, Russia and possibly other states are giving public support to the Kabul government but covertly engaging elements of the Taliban who operate close to their borders.

The Trump administration is also divided between remaining in Afghanistan until the Taliban are defeated (which could take years) or pulling out quickly. Before the U.S. elections, Trump made it clear that he was in the leave camp, but it seems that he was subsequently persuaded by the U.S. military to stay put in Afghanistan.

■ **Why is Ghani insisting on a ceasefire now?**

The crisis in Afghanistan is getting worse by the hour as the fighting intensifies and the government loses control of more districts.

It has been estimated that close to 200 soldiers and police officers were killed every week last year. The Afghan government cannot afford politically to continue having such a high death toll. The strength of the Afghan security forces has declined over the past 12 months, a U.S. government watchdog has said. The number of security forces personnel has fallen by about six percent to just over 300,000, according to a new report.

The lack of safety is affecting severely the civilian population. UNICEF has reported that for the first time since 2002, it has registered an increase in out-of-school children. According to its report, some 3.7 million children between the ages of seven and 17 years (44 percent) are out of school due to the war.

Afghan's are also increasingly facing food insecurity as this year's draught has affected some 20 provinces. In its report, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) said that "this drought will have a particularly detrimental effect on already chronically food insecure farming households."

Meanwhile, Afghanistan's refugee problem is growing. Afghans continue to leave their homes to seek safety in other parts of Afghanistan or escape into neighboring Iran or Pakistan or even further into Europe.

As these multiple crises are worsening, Ghani is desperate to stop the fighting even for a day if it can give some respite to his people. A major diplomatic push is now needed in the region to make the ceasefire last longer than three days.

(Source: Al Jazeera)



# Europe should stand up to U.S. bullying once and for all: American Analyst

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — An American political analyst said European nations have to “summon up the resolve” to stand up to U.S. bullying decisively.

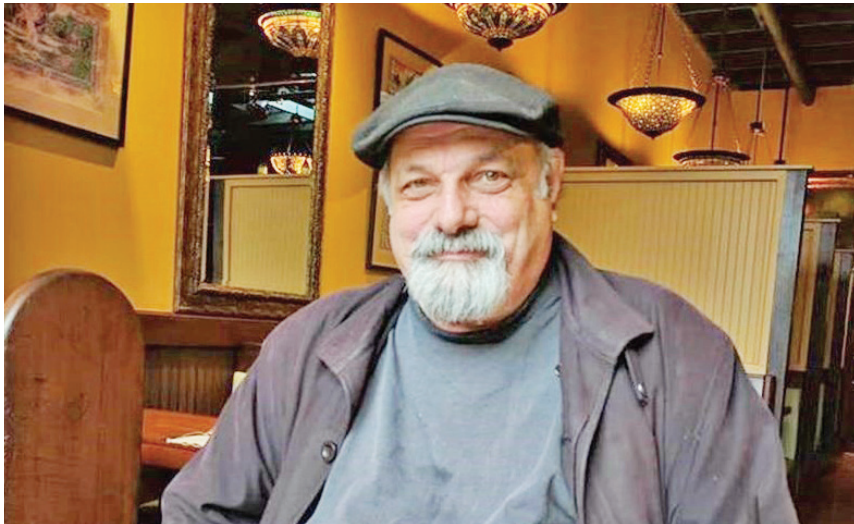
“The Europeans have to summon up the resolve to stand up to U.S. threats and bullying once and for all. A united front of all the parties concerned against U.S. intransigence is required. It’s not enough to pledge to uphold the nuclear deal, the Europeans have to take concrete actions to ensure that Iran is not subject to punitive measures initiated by the U.S.” Dennis Etler, a professor of Anthropology at Cabrillo College in Aptos, California, told the Tasnim News Agency.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ As you know, U.S. President Donald Trump on May 8 withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal, which is an international agreement and endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution. What is your take on Trump’s decision?

A: Trump’s withdrawal from the JCPOA is in keeping with his stated position before and during his presidential campaign. The question was, would he follow through on his pledge to scuttle the deal once elected. It took over one year, but he finally did as he said he would. The unilateral U.S. withdrawal contravenes established international norms and violates UN Security Council resolutions, but the Trump regime has no regard for either.

Trump’s rationale for the withdrawal from the accord has nothing to do with any Iranian failure to abide by its provisions. All concerned parties acknowledge that Iran has lived up to obligations. Trump and his backers in Israel and Saudi Arabia, however, want to impose



a new set of restrictions on Iran’s sovereign right to a credible self-defense and freedom of action in foreign affairs, restrictions which they themselves refuse to accept.

Thus, Trump’s punitive actions against Iran have nothing to do with Iran’s adherence to the JCPOA and everything to do with U.S., Israeli and Saudi attempts to geo-politically contain Iran, destabilize its economy and create domestic discord in order to foment regime change and install a regime friendly to U.S. interests in the Middle East. This is part and parcel of U.S. imperialism’s contention with the rising eastern powers of China and Russia.

■ UK, France, Germany, Russia and China

have expressed their support for the deal, saying that they would stand by it despite the U.S. pullout. Do you think the agreement will stand without the U.S.? Will Europeans, Russia and China continue to honor their commitments under the deal?

A: Although there is no legitimate reason for the U.S. to withdraw from the JCPOA and reimpose economic sanctions against Iran, the U.S. has declared that it will do so. The other parties to the agreement, including the UK, France, Germany, Russia and China have no reason to follow suit and have said they will live up to their obligations. The issue is the secondary sanctions that the U.S. threatens to place on foreign companies that

continue to engage in activities proscribed by the sanctions it plans to reimpose. The U.S. hopes its threats will be enough to dissuade foreign companies from doing business with Iran. Will the nations adhere to the JCPOA, work to oppose U.S. secondary sanctions and circumvent them? Russia and China have the will and means to do so. The question is, will the European powers acquiesce to secondary U.S. sanctions?

■ As you know, Europeans are trying hard to salvage the deal. What would happen if all their efforts fail? How do you think should Iran react to this?

A: The Europeans have to summon up the resolve to stand up to U.S. threats and bullying once and for all. A united front of all the parties concerned against U.S. intransigence is required. It’s not enough to pledge to uphold the nuclear deal, the Europeans have to take concrete actions to ensure that Iran is not subject to punitive measures initiated by the U.S. If the U.S. threatens to impose secondary sanctions against European companies doing business with Iran, the Europeans in concert with Russia and China must impose sanctions against the U.S. in retaliation. This is absolutely necessary to maintain the integrity of internationally approved and recognized multilateral agreements. If that is not done, the Iranians have no choice but to abrogate the agreement and take whatever actions they deem necessary to secure their sovereign rights to defense and deterrence from foreign aggression. The U.S. must be criticized and condemned for acting outside established international norms.

## Be careful Mr. Macron!

➔ First, the main mission of the French President is «limiting Iran’s missile and regional power». It may come to the mind that, following the withdrawal of Trump from the nuclear deal with Iran, Europe’s goals toward Iran have been changed, or redefined! Undoubtedly, this is going to be a «strategic mistake»; a mistake that, unfortunately, was made by our country’s foreign diplomacy and foreign policy system. The European troika instructions for military and regional repression of our country remain intact. In recent weeks, there has been intensive talks between US and European officials on «confronting existing circumstances.»

Macron and Merkel’s insistence on «expanding negotiations with Iran» is the result of these hidden talks. Europe has pledged to the United States to keep on its attempts to «change the JCPOA» and «expand it in the form of a new agreement». Meanwhile, the apparent emphasis of the European authorities on «preserving the JCPOA» is a «tactical coverage» for managing public opinion. American and European officials have long agreed on «changing the JCPOA».

The second point is about the special approach taken by the French authorities. «Robert Del Picchia», a member of the Senate of France and member of the Union for a Popular Movement Party stated accordingly:

«The president’s intention is that France may withdraw from the current agreement with Iran, but only in order to launch negotiations on a new, more complete document.»

This is the first time that the French authorities formally and explicitly spoke of the possibility of walking out of the



nuclear deal. Even after Trump’s withdrawal from then JCPOA, the French officials continue to complete the White House arranged puzzles. Macron’s goal of this game is obvious: putting sanctions on Iran and limiting our country’s defensive power»!

On the one hand, the French President and his other European partners intend to bind the hands of a «powerful Iran» in the region and in the area of defense and missile capabilities, and on the other hand, they continue to impose economic pressure on our people. As the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution has recently pointed out, this bad dream will never come true.

The third and final point is that the diplomatic and foreign affairs apparatus of our country is confronted with France

«special game» on the JCPOA. It should be noted that the Iranian government’s forbearance and our foreign ministry’s toleration has only led the dual and dangerous game of Paris, and added to the enmity of people like Macron and Le Drian. It’s now time for our foreign ministry officials to uncover the hidden role of France in the «breach of the JCPOA» and in «Trump’s withdrawal from the nuclear deal». It is also time to get our people informed about the details of French behavior and their tricks over the past year, especially over recent weeks. Revealing the true face of those like Macron and uncovering their tricks will tie the hands of the Elysees Palace authorities for further hostility to the Iranian nation. It should also be noted that in this equation, France is in no way considered to be «Iran’s political partner», but rather a «full blamed accuser» that should be hold responsible for its direct play on the US ground and the Zionist regime.

Finally, «Macron’s concerns» about our new nuclear actions is something that we should be proud of. Such concerns will not be the least important for the Iranian nation. For now, it is the first practical response of Iran to the hidden or obvious tricks of Europeans (especially the French). Obviously, if France wishes to change this equation, it will have to change its «fundamental approach» towards Iran and separate its policies on the JCPOA from that of the White House and Tel Aviv. Realizing this decision calls for a determined will. However, the French President doesn’t seem to be that determined at this moment to make such a great decision.

## Israeli regime letting loose racist elements in its army: Swedish activist

➔ The Israeli regime is letting loose the racist elements in its army, allowing them to shoot to kill indiscriminately. These Israeli racists are allowed to pursue the ethnic cleansing, their Final Solution, just like their Daesh allies did against the Yazidis in Iraq, and their Saudi Wahhabi friends pursue dramatically against the Zaydis in Yemen by attacking the sole lifeline port of Hodeida. Keeping tensions on the brink of a full-scale war is a personal survival tactic to stay in power for the scandalized Netanyahu, but also for his masters in the modern form of the British Empire who are «threatened» by the breakout of peace in East Asia and therefore rely on escalating the conflicts in West Asia to keep the world divided and maintain global control. The British are now blocked from using the Korean conflict to stop the rapprochement between the Russian and American presidents. To stop that, the British now «need» to escalate the West Asian conflicts to the brink of nuclear war.

■ Another round of the Great March of Return protests were held on Friday concurrently with similar anti-Israeli demonstrations around the world to mark the International Quds Day. The National Committee of the Great March of Return said the protests would not end until the world listens to the Palestinians’ legitimate demand for returning to their homeland and breaking the siege on Gaza. What do you think about the Palestinians’ demands?

A: The Palestinians should ask to be included in the broad peace plan, which (Russian) President (Vladimir) Putin is trying to coordinate with (U.S.) President (Donald) Trump and all sides of the conflicts in the region. The basis for this peace plan is to provide safety for all parties in a true win-win policy. By removing terrorist threats and other excuses for the British-owned war dogs, the Russian president masterminds the settlements of as many conflicts as possible at the same time. He is working together with the Chi-



nese President Xi Jinping making room for a new paradigm of relations among nations working for the common aims of mankind, which is rapidly implemented with the giant, worldwide Belt & Road Initiative.

The Palestinians could facilitate the inclusion of Palestine and Israel in President Putin’s peace plan by acting against Daesh terrorists and other British Empire provocateurs. The Israeli government, by letting loose its Jabotinsky fascist elements, is destroying whatever moral fabrics remain in its people and destroying any Jewish moral authority everywhere. Netanyahu is a dangerous traitor not working for the people of Israel, but for the foreign powers who are ready to sacrifice Israel and world Jews, just like he is butchering the Palestinians, for the cause of bringing war with Iran and from there into a worldwide nuclear confrontation. Israel needs to rid itself of its traitorous fascist regime, end its apartheid policy and implement democratic rights for everyone in Israel, including the

Palestinians, and also to bring freedom to the modern day concentration camp victims in Gaza.

■ Israel has rejected international calls for probes into recent deaths and insisted that its open-fire rules for Gaza will not change. Some Western states, particularly the U.S. and Britain, who call themselves champions of human rights, have supported the Tel Aviv regime’s crimes against Palestinians. The UN has also failed to restore the rights of the people. What do you think? What role can Muslim countries play in protecting the rights of the oppressed people of Palestine?

A: The old paradigm of geopolitics and permanent conflict is about to be replaced by the new paradigm of world relations. True world leaders, like Presidents Putin and Xi, are skillfully avoiding the provocations by the British Empire, and its neoconservative lackeys around the world, to stage conflicts that could split the world like during the lost 20th Century with its two World Wars and

the long Cold War. The Syrian military allies in the long war have learned to look through the constant British steered machinations to escalate the conflict into the, long sought for, full-scale confrontation between the U.S. and Russia. The Syrian president, Bashar Assad, with the support of Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, has brilliantly implemented not only a broad national defense mobilization but also a patient reconciliation policy to turn around their enemies to join the Syrian national government side or just leave. This is the new paradigm policy trying to find the win-win solutions at the level of the highest principles of the nation and among nations.

The Muslim countries need to look at the Koreans who, under the umbrella of cooperation among the bigger neighbor nations and together with the U.S., are trying to replace the world’s oldest, «insoluble» frozen conflict, with a peace treaty which could make possible an open and respectful cooperation. The Muslim countries need to facilitate and broaden the peace plan of the Russian president, to Palestine, to Yemen, and to the old Iran-U.S. conflict. They need to welcome and facilitate any meeting between the Presidents Putin and Trump to sort out the implementation of the peace plan on a win-win basis for as many conflicts as possible.

Ultimatums, although correct from the standpoint of history and higher justice, thrown from far away, like calling for «the immediate return of all Palestinian refugees», help neither any peace nor the Palestinians. Is it not the right of the Palestinians themselves to decide the conditions for peace with their enemy Israel? Is it not so that calling for «Death to Israel» hands over to the fascist enemies there, the right to pursue a jihad in the name of self-defense? Is it not better to rejoice over the downfall of the paradigm of the British Empire 2.0 which is the common enemy of mankind? Is it not better to rejoice over the emerging New Silk Road paradigm pursuing the common aims of mankind?

## America’s Genocide in Yemen starts Tuesday



By Eric Zuesse

**MODERN DIPLOMACY** — The Houthis in Yemen are expected to start being slaughtered en-masse on June 12th. The U.S.-Saudi-UAE plan is to destroy the Yemenese port city of Al Hudaydah, which is the only entry-way by which food reaches approximately seven million Shiites, members of the Houthi tribe, who occupy the western third of Yemen, and who had recently ruled all of Yemen. The U.S. provides the weapons and the training, and the United Arab Emirates supplies the pilots for this operation, which is financed mainly by the Saudis. The objective is to establish a joint UAE-Saudi-run government of Yemen.

On Monday, June 11th, the New York Times bannered “U.N. Pulls Out of City in Yemen, Fearing Bloody Assault by Arab Coalition”. That report didn’t mention that this is America’s fundamentalist-Sunni coalition of Arab monarchies, using American weapons, in order to bomb and blockade, and now starve to death, approximately seven million Houthis, and that it’s part of a broader war in which the U.S. and Israel are allied with fundamentalist-Sunni monarchies, which are trying to conquer Shiite-run countries, especially Yemen, Syria, and ultimately Iran. The Houthis are Shia, not Sunni. On 24 October 2014, a Houthi leader was interviewed in Yemen Times, which reported: “Al-Bukhaiti does not think that ‘the Iranian system’ [a Shia theocracy] could ever be implemented in the country. Neither do the Houthis have any interest in bringing back the Imamate. Instead, he describes the Zaydi [their Shia] doctrine as ‘republican’ and the Houthi group as ‘liberal.’” None of America’s Islamic allies is even remotely like that description.

America’s alliance of fundamentalist-Sunni Arab monarchies call Iran especially an “existential threat” to themselves, because Iran, and Shiites generally, are opposed to monarchical governments, especially after 1979, when Iranians overthrew the U.S. CIA-installed (in 1953) Shah. And all of America’s allies in the Middle East, other than theocratic-Jewish apartheid Israel, are fundamentalist-Sunni monarchies.

The reason the U.N. is pulling out is to avoid being killed by these American missiles and bombs, which are expected to produce, by means of these UAE and Saudi proxy-fighters, a rare American victory in the Middle East.

The United Arab Emirates are providing the U.S.-trained pilots, who will drop U.S. bombs from U.S. planes, so as to destroy Al Hudaydah, and thereby completely block any food from reaching the seven-to-eight million food-stranded Houthi Shiites.

The New York Times report said, “Diplomats involved in behind-the-scenes negotiations say that the United Arab Emirates officially warned the British government on Friday that an attack on Al Hudaydah was imminent. The Emiratis said they would give three days for humanitarian workers and nongovernmental organizations to flee the city. The International Committee for the Red Cross removed its staff from the city over the weekend. ... [The U.S. Secretary of State,] Mr. Pompeo said that in his conversation with the Emiratis he had made clear the United States’ ‘desire to address their security concerns while preserving the free flow of humanitarian aid and lifesaving commercial imports,’ the statement said.”

On June 5th, Agence France Presse reported that, “More than 22 million people are now in serious need of aid, with 8.4 million on the brink of starvation, according to the United Nations.”

So, while the U.S. has approved this operation, the U.S. also has a “desire” to be “preserving the free flow of” food, and this suggests that the U.S. Government intends that the blame for the expected genocide will fall only upon America’s fundamentalist-Sunni royal partners, who are expected to be running Yemen afterward. Whatever “concerns” for “preserving the free flow of humanitarian aid and lifesaving commercial imports” that the U.S. might have had, will, no doubt, show up during the starvation-operation, which will follow the bombardment of Al Hudaydah.

This mission is clearly important to the Trump Administration. The New York Times report closes: “American military officials do not want Congress to prevent military aid to the two nations [UAE and Saudi Arabia], both of which are crucial allies in counterterrorism, nor do they want a vacuum of power in Yemen to result in a new incubator for extremist groups like the Islamic State [which group is fundamentalist-Sunni, like America’s allies, the monarchs in UAE and Saudi Arabia, are] and Al Qaeda [which also is fundamentalist-Sunni]. Diplomats in the region say they believe that only more pressure from Washington will stop the planned assault.” The U.S. has instead given its allies the go-ahead to proceed.

Trump had said, when he campaigned for the Presidency in 2016, that he had opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq. However, no record existed confirming that that had been so. In any case, there has been no indication of anything like such sentiments from him since he became President, and all of the people whom he has appointed to diplomatic and military posts have been consistent supporters of American invasions, including of Iraq. But this time around, the U.S. is not providing any of the actual troops.

Thus far in his Presidency, Trump has sold to the royal family of Saudi Arabia \$400 billion in U.S.-made weapons and training. Additional billions have been sold to UAE. So, the war in Yemen is profitable for American firms such as Lockheed Martin. And no American is likely to get the blame. Perhaps Trump has learned something, after all, from the experience of George W. Bush. Trump is aspiring to win the Nobel Peace Prize, which his immediate predecessor, Barack Obama, had won. (After winning that, Obama bombed Libya in 2011, but Obama’s Prize was never retracted.) Perhaps Trump has sound reason to be optimistic.



# A quisling and his enablers

By Paul Krugman

This is not a column about whether Donald Trump is a quisling — a politician who serves the interests of foreign masters at his own country's expense. Any reasonable doubts about that reality were put to rest by the events of the past few days, when he defended Russia while attacking our closest allies.

We don't know Trump's motivation. Is it blackmail? Bribery? Or just a generalized sympathy for autocrats and hatred for democracy? And we may never find out: If he shuts down the Mueller investigation and Republicans retain control of Congress, the cover-up may hold indefinitely. But his actions tell the story.

As I said, however, this isn't a column about Trump. It is, instead, about the people who are enabling his betrayal of America: the inner circle of officials and media personalities who are willing to back him up whatever he says or does, and the wider set of politicians — basically the entire Republican delegation in Congress — who have the power and constitutional obligation to stop what he's doing, but won't lift a finger in

America's defense.

It's important to understand that the fight Trump is picking with our allies isn't about any real conflict of interest — because they are not, in fact, doing the things he accuses them of doing. No, Canada and Europe aren't imposing "massive tariffs" on U.S. goods: A vast majority of U.S. exports enter Canada tariff-free, and the average European tariff is only 3 percent. These are simple facts, not disputable issues.

**■ Trump destroying Western alliance**  
So Trump is justifying his attempt to destroy the Western alliance by accusing our allies of misdeeds that exist only in his imagination.

The same thing may be said about his claim that Canada's Justin Trudeau somehow betrayed him and undermined the Group of 7 summit meeting. In reality, Trudeau's remarks at the end of the conference were restrained and conventional, simply asserting — as any normal leader would — that he would defend his nation's interests. The Trump rage-tweet that followed was responding to an insult that, like those "massive tariffs," exists only

in his imagination.

But that's Trump, a man whose presidency has been marked by around seven false statements per day in office. What about his officials?

Well, they have been acting like the courtiers in the old story about the emperor's new clothes. (The emperor's new hairpiece?) If the boss says something whose falsity is obvious to anyone with eyes to see, they'll claim to believe his version.

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So Larry Kudlow, the administration's chief economist (actually "economist," but that's another story) went on TV to declare that Trudeau "stabbed us in the back." Peter Navarro, the administration's chief trade expert ("expert") went even further, repeating the stab-in-the-back line and declaring that Trudeau faces a "special place in hell."

Remember when people used to imagine that Trump would be restrained by officials who would put some check on his worst impulses? Maybe that happened for a few months, but at this point he's

entirely surrounded by sycophants who will tell him whatever he wants to hear.

**■ Trump betraying his oath**

Still, America isn't a monarchy — not yet, anyway. Congress has the power to check a president who seems to be betraying his oath of office. It can even remove him; but short of impeachment, there are many ways members of Congress could act to constrain Trump and limit the damage he's doing.

But Congress is controlled by Republicans. And their response to a president whose actions are manifestly not just un-American but anti-American has been ... a few sad tweets from a handful of senators who are unhappy about Trump's behavior but not willing to do anything real. Most Republicans haven't even gone that far: They're just silent.

Why are Republican politicians unwilling to discharge their constitutional responsibilities? Relatively few of them, one suspects, actually want a trade war, let alone a breakup of the Western alliance. And many of them, one also suspects, are well aware that a de facto foreign agent sits

in the Oval Office. But they are immobilized by a combination of venality and cowardice.

On one side, tax cuts for the rich have become the overriding priority for the modern G.O.P., and Trump is giving them that, so they're willing to let everything else slide.

On the other side, the party's base really does love Trump, not for his policies, but for the performative cruelty he exhibits toward racial minorities and the way he sticks his thumb in the eyes of "elites." So any Republican politician who takes a stand on behalf of what we used to think were fundamental American values is at high risk of losing his or her next primary. And as far as we can tell, there is not a single elected Republican willing to take that risk, no matter what Trump does.

What all this tells us is that the problem facing America runs much deeper than Trump's personal awfulness. One of our two major parties appears to be hopelessly, irredeemably corrupt. And unless that party not only loses this year's election but begins losing on a regular basis, America as we know it is finished.

(Source: The NYT)

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## Aerospace technology development is a solution to environmental challenges: minister

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s aerospace technology development plan should be at service to solve national problems like water shortage and land use change, Communications and Information Technology Minister said. Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi made the remarks during a meeting with strategic committee of Iran’s Supreme Council of Space on Monday, ILNA reported.

Iran should provide an exact and fully operational space technology roadmap according to the national 1404 (March



2025-March 2026) Outlook Plan, he added.

With a comprehensive plan, the council provide an opportunity for supervision on development of the projects, he explained.

Headed by President Hassan Rouhani, the Supreme Council of Space observe activities of Iran Space Agency, which is 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, Iranian Space Agency (ISA), affiliated with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, in the form of an autonomous organization, was organized.

## Iran to establish center for medical technology development

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Tehran’s Sharif University of Technology and University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) signed an agreement to establish a center for medical technology development on Tuesday.

Sharif University’s Biotechnology and Environment Research Center and TUMS Gastro Intestinal and Liver Diseases Research Center plans to establish the center to conduct interdisciplinary studies.

The center aims to develop design and manufacture medical equipment as well as computational biology and bioengineering and will be equipped with organs-on-chips laboratories.

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, affiliated to the United States National Library of Medicine (NLM), the increase in fundamental knowledge concerning human health and the mechanisms of disease has been so rapid during the second half of this century that we have often been described as living in a time of biological revolution.

Technological innovation in medicine covers the wide range of events by which a new medical technology is discovered or invented, developed, and disseminated into health care. One of the most vulnerable links in this innovation chain today is the development phase, the “D” of R&D, in which research findings are brought into clinical practice.

## Financial crime task force eyeing binding crypto exchange rules: Japan official

International financial crime-fighting group Financial Action Task Force (FATF) will start discussions later this month on introducing binding rules governing cryptocurrency exchanges, a Japanese government official familiar with the matter said on Tuesday.

The move, spurred by a call in March from financial policymakers from the world’s top 20 economies for regulators to monitor



cryptocurrency trading, said the official who spoke on condition on anonymity.

Paris-based FATF, a 37-nation group set up by the G7 industrial powers, did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

Japan was the first country to adopt a registration system for cryptocurrency exchanges but with current guidelines non-binding, enforcement among countries is inconsistent.

Due to chair the G20 in 2020, the Japanese government hopes to take a lead on the issue and is pushing for adoption of new binding rules by 2019 at the latest, the official said.

Japan believes it can gain the cooperation of governments in Europe and the United States, the official added.

Japan’s Financial Services Agency (FSA) was not immediately available to comment.

(Source: reuters.com)

# 300 Iranian knowledge-based companies active in oil industry

**1→** The government supports knowledge-based companies which are active in providing equipment and components for petrochemical production, he explained.

The science and technology vice presidency, Oil Ministry and domestic universities are cooperating with each other to develop oil industry technologies, Vatani added.

Knowledge-based companies and graduated students of oil industry are main factors to achieve self-sufficiency in this field, he said.

The private sector also plays an important role in development of the oil industry, he added.

Oil industry technology is not more complicated than nuclear technology, hence we can reach it in the near future, he concluded.

**■ ‘National will needed to improve oil technology’**

A national will is needed for Iranians to reach technology in extracting oil, Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research Director Hamidreza Tayyebi told Mehr on Monday.

Up-to-date equipment, reference library and equipped laboratories are important factors to develop technology in the field of oil industry, he said.

Like many other type of technology, improving technology in oil industry is a time-consuming process, he explained.

A number of universities and research centers are now responsible for exploiting



## The government supports knowledge-based companies which are active in providing equipment and components for petrochemical production

oil resources, he said.

Tasking a specific university with

conducting activities related to extraction and increasing recovery rate

of oil reserves could help us reach our objectives sooner, he proposed.

## Iran has gained notable achievements in nanotechnology

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Although Iran’s Nano-technology Initiative Council has been established not very long time ago (2003), it has gained several achievements in this field so far, First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri said on Monday.

Iranian researchers have published a considerable number of International Scientific Indexing (ISI) papers in the field of nanotechnology in recent years, he said.

According to the StatNano report published in January 2018, more than 154,000 nanotechnology related articles were indexed in Web of Science (WoS) in 2017 while more than 50% of them were published by China, the United States, and India. Iran and Korea are on the next ranks.

There is a small distance between Iran and advanced countries in the field of nanotechnology, he said.

“Hence we should do our best in development of science production, nanotechnology products and marketing,” he added.



“The government plans to support companies who are active in the field of nanotechnology and allocate budget

for boosting nanotechnology in the country.”

ISNA reported in January that Iran’s first researches in this field started in 2000 and with publishing 9 articles, the country achieved the rank of 52 in that year.

The national nanotechnology development headquarters was established in 2005, with the aim of making policies, assessing achievements in field of nanotechnologies, raising public awareness about nanoscience, improving quality of life and creating lucrative markets.

Recognizing the great importance of nanotechnology, Iranians have had boosted researches in the field year on year.

There are 257 companies active in this field, 33 percent of which working on nanomaterials.

These companies have manufactured 376 different products using the nontechnology, showing that this is a field with huge economic and practical advantages.

These products are exported to 47 different countries.

## Nanodiamonds are behind mysterious Milky Way microwaves

Scientists have discovered the source of a mysterious microwave light emanating from a number of regions across the Milky Way galaxy.

The radiation is known as anomalous microwave emission (AME) and its source was unknown for decades, although it was believed to be caused by “spinning dust”.

Now, researchers have confirmed that the light is indeed being released by spinning dust, specifically, rapidly spinning nanodiamonds.

These are articles of compacted carbon that are so small they can’t even be seen by ordinary microscopes.

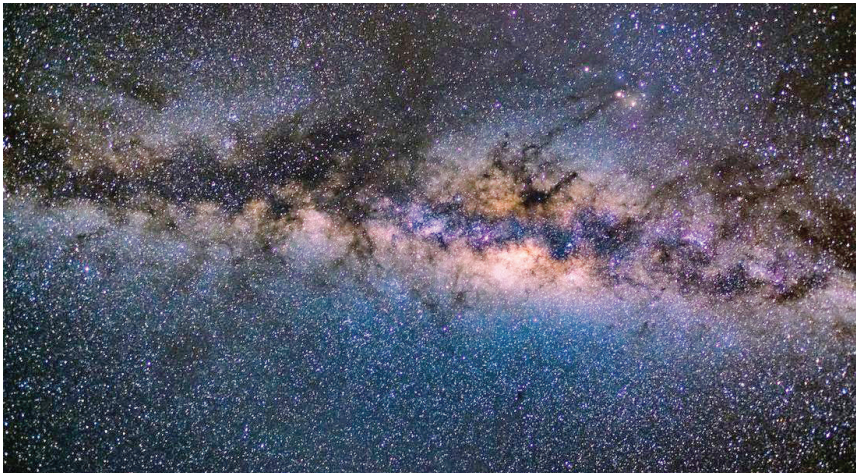
They are found in dense disk-shaped clouds of gas that circle round young stars, called protoplanetary disks.

“Though we know that some type of particle is responsible for this microwave light, its precise source has been a puzzle since it was first detected nearly 20 years ago,” said Dr Jane Greaves, an astronomer at Cardiff University and lead author on the paper in Nature Astronomy.

Astronomers had believed that AME was caused by organic, or carbon-based, molecules known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

PAHs are found throughout interstellar space and emit a distinct if faint infrared light.

Nanodiamonds - particularly hydrogenated nanodiamonds, which contain hydrogen on their surfaces - also naturally emit light in



the infrared portion of the spectrum, but at a different wavelength.

The astronomers discovered that the infrared light coming from some protoplanetary disks matched the unique signature of nanodiamonds.

They found that other protoplanetary disks throughout the Milky Way matched the clear infrared signature of PAHs, but showed no signs of the AME light.

It led them to conclude that the disks that emitted AME could not contain PAHs but must contain nanodiamonds.

The observations were made by West Virginia’s Green Bank Observatory and another telescope in Australia which homed in on three clear sources of AME light, the protoplanetary disks surrounding three stars called V892 Tau, HD 97048, and MWC 297.

“This is the first clear detection of anomalous microwave emission coming from protoplanetary disks,” said Dr David Frayer, a coauthor on the paper and astronomer with the Green Bank Observatory.

Dr Greaves added: “In a Sherlock Holmes-like method of eliminating all other causes,

we can confidently say the best candidate capable of producing this microwave glow is the presence of nanodiamonds around these newly formed stars.”

Nanodiamonds are believed to form when carbon atoms become superheated in the highly energized star-forming regions of space.

The process is similar to how diamonds are produced artificially on Earth.

In astronomical terms, nanodiamonds are particularly special because their structure produces a dipole moment which means they emit radiation when they spin.

Because the nanodiamonds are so small, they can spin exceptionally fast, thus emitting microwave radiation, which is usually measured in the hundreds of billions of oscillations a second.

“This is a cool and unexpected resolution to the puzzle of anomalous microwave radiation,” concluded Dr Greaves. “It’s even more interesting that it was obtained by looking at protoplanetary disks, shedding light on the chemical features of early solar systems, including our own.”

“It is an exciting result,” concluded co-author Dr Anna Scaife from Manchester University. “It’s not often you find yourself putting new words to famous tunes, but ‘AME in the Sky with Diamonds’ seems a thoughtful way of summarising our research.”

(source: news.sky.com)

## Ways the Internet of Things will affect your daily life

The Internet of Things is still in its infancy as a phenomenon. Despite this, its rate of expansion, adaptability, ingenuity and scope is startling. Companies are developing more and more ways for us to connect. Within the next five years, sensors will likely have permeated every aspect of our lives, from our refrigerators to our shoes. The world’s IT infrastructure will be supporting a trillion devices, big and small.

The challenges we face in this area are still great - security being at the top of the list. Supporting the billions of connected devices through a stable network infrastructure is another. Soon enough, if all goes well, the phenomenon will be more than a trending hashtag - it will be a way of being in the world. With that bright future in mind, let’s look at some of the aspects of your daily life that the Internet of Things may influence.

First and foremost, the home. Smart, connected appliances are what people think of when they hear IoT. They imagine an intelligent house, programmed to save



energy and make your life a more convenient one. Alarm clocks will be synced with traffic apps; heating systems will be synced with external temperature sensors, which

will be synced with cost evaluations; lighting will react as we enter a room, as might our coffee makers. It all sounds so alien to us, but there are plenty such homes that already exist.

Next, IoT will have a drastic effect on waste management. With the seamless integration of light, heat and air conditioning that reacts to you, a lot of money could be saved on those bills. For food, anything you don’t eat in your fridge will be recorded so you can examine trends and patterns.

Thirdly, we have our daily commute. Imagine you left your home without your house key - your house would tell you this. Our cars will anticipate our approach and open themselves via a sensor in our phones. Intelligent traffic detection will allow our device to direct us to the shortest route to work/ home. Taxi services for business meetings will be planned according to your calendar - synced with your smartphone.

(Source: ics.ie)



# Surprisingly productive microbes are a key source of food in the abyss, scientists find

Miles beneath the ocean's surface in the dark abyss, vast communities of subsea-floor microbes at deep-sea hot springs are converting chemicals into energy that allows deep-sea life to survive -- and even thrive -- in a world without sunlight. Until now, however, measuring the productivity of subseafloor microbe communities -- or how fast they oxidize chemicals and the amount of carbon they produce -- has been nearly impossible.

The manipulator arm on the remotely operated, deep-sea vehicle Jason uses an Isobaric Gas-Tight (IGT) sampler to collect samples of fluids and microbes spewing from hydrothermal vents surrounded by a community of tubeworms at a site called "Crab Spa" on the East Pacific Rise. IGTs are designed to maintain the microbes at the pressure of their natural environment. Scientists added various chemicals into the IGTs to measure how fast microbes consumed chemicals and converted them into biomass.

Miles beneath the ocean's surface in the dark abyss, vast communities of subseafloor microbes at deep-sea hot springs are converting chemicals into energy that allows deep-sea life to survive -- and even thrive -- in a world without sunlight. Until now, however, measuring the productivity of subseafloor microbe communities -- or how fast they oxidize chemicals and the amount of carbon they produce -- has been nearly impossible.

## ■ Microbe-based ecosystems

A new study by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) scientists has unveiled that these microbe-based ecosystems are surprisingly productive and play an important role supporting life higher up the food chain



in the food-starved deep ocean. They estimate that worldwide, deep-sea hydrothermal vent microbial communities can produce more

than 4,000 tons of organic carbon each day, the building block of life. That is roughly the same amount of carbon in 200 blue whales

**The "significant amounts of carbon these organisms produce daily provide an important source of food and energy for other organisms in the deep sea, where there's generally a lot less carbon available."**

-- making these ecosystems among the ocean's most productive on a per volume basis. The study appears in the June 11, 2018, issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"We found that microbial communities living below the seafloor at vents can generate similar amounts of carbon as the well-known animal communities above seafloor, like the tube worms, which are known to be as productive as rainforest ecosystems," said Stefan Sievert, a microbiologist at WHOI and senior author of the study.

## ■ Amounts of carbon

The "significant amounts of carbon these organisms produce daily provide an important source of food and energy for other organisms in the deep sea, where there's generally a lot less carbon available."

As carbon from decomposing marine life sinks from surface waters to the deep, bacteria and other microorganisms chomp away at it until it withers away to marine gristle. "What's coming down from the surface to these depths isn't all that much, and not very digestible to deep-sea life," said Jesse McNichol, who conducted this work as a Ph.D. student at WHOI and is the first author of the study.

The microbes at vents get their energy to live and grow through chemosynthesis, feeding off a chemical cocktail of hot hydrothermal fluids emanating from the ocean's crust. And they, in turn, represent the base of the food web, providing food for other organisms that require preformed organic matter, just like humans do.

(Source: Science Daily)

## Scientists don't know why Africa's ancient 'trees of life' are suddenly dying

For centuries -- millennia even -- they've towered over the savannah like giants from another world, but their long, almost immortal watch is at last beginning to fade.

The African baobab, the largest and longest-living tree among all angiosperm (flowering) plants, is in the midst of a deadly crisis, with new research finding several of these ancient trees have recently died or are in the process of internal collapse.

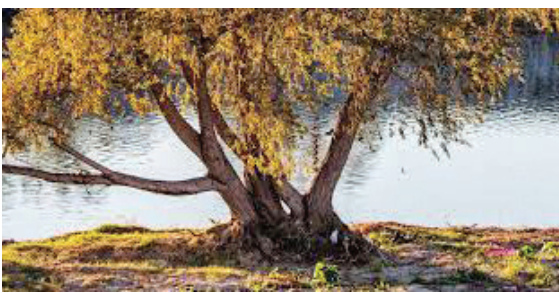
"It is definitely shocking and dramatic to experience during our lifetime the demise of so many trees with millennial ages," chemist Adrian Patrut from the Babe - Bolyai University in Romania explained to The Guardian.

To investigate how baobabs -- aka the 'tree of life', owing to its ability to retain water -- can grow to such impressive sizes, Patrut and his team began researching them in 2005, analyzing over 60 of the largest and potentially oldest specimens in Africa.

Trees usually have their age counted by tree-ring dating (dendrochronology), but Patrut says the unusual biology of baobabs prevents this.

## ■ Cloistered mini forests

That's because, according to Patrut, we're not looking at a conventional, singular trunk here -- but a bunch of them,



clumped vertically like a kind of cloistered mini forest.

The "majority of baobabs start growing as single-stemmed trees," the authors explain in their paper.

"Over time, single-stemmed individuals become multi-stemmed, owing to the baobabs' ability to periodically produce new stems, in much the same way other tree species produce branches. With this special ability, baobabs develop architectures of increasing complexity over time."

While investigating those complex architectures, the team found these woody structures were rapidly becoming condemned: eight of the 13 oldest baobabs -- and five of the

six largest -- either died since 2005, or had begun internal collapse.

"Statistically, it is practically impossible that such a high number of large old baobabs (could) die in such a short time frame due to natural causes," Patrut told National Geographic.

But if we're not looking at natural causes here, what's behind this sudden downfall?

## ■ High-profile deaths

The researchers don't know for sure, but they describe the spate of high-profile deaths -- the end of trees so grand they each had their own names -- as an event of "unprecedented magnitude" that likely points to climate change.

"We suspect that the demise of monumental baobabs may be associated at least in part with significant modifications of climate conditions that affect southern Africa in particular," the team writes.

"However, further research is necessary to support or refute this supposition."

While the science of baobab biology is not yet settled -- with at least one ecologist calling out Patrut's multi-stem hypothesis as a "fantasy" -- nobody disagrees that it's heartbreaking to see these great, old lives pass into memory like this.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Secondhand smoke associated with hearing loss in kids, new research suggests

Sometimes the effects of secondhand smoke aren't overtly noticeable, but still have a significant effect on a child's life. New research from Japan has revealed that exposure to smoking, both in utero and in the first few months of a child's life, is associated with higher prevalence of hearing impairment.

The study, published online in Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology, studied data on

50,734 children who were born between 2004 and 2010.

The researchers were most interested in the children's hearing health at age three. Of the children, 3.8 percent were exposed to smoke only during their mothers' pregnancies, 15.2 percent were exposed only by their mother's past smoking habits, 3.9 percent were exposed only to secondhand smoke at four months old,

and 0.9 percent were exposed to tobacco smoke both during pregnancy and at four months.

The children's hearing was tested in a whispered hearing test and parents smoking was measured by a questionnaire.

By age three, 4.6 percent of children had a type of hearing impairment. Results revealed a correlation between exposure to cigarette smoke and hearing impairment in the three

year olds. Children exposed to only their mothers' past smoking had a 26 percent increased risk of hearing impairment. Those exposed to only secondhand smoke at four months had a 30 percent increased risk. However, those whose mothers smoked during their pregnancy had a 68 percent increased risk of hearing impairment.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Bank Pasargad takes giant strides in generating 'employment' and 'production'

Bank Pasargad managed to guide popular deposits in line with generating employment and production in the country, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and CEO of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian and Dr. Pourmand CEO of MIDHCO (Iranian Mines Industries Development Holding Company) paid a visit to Bardsir Steel Production Complex and also Badsir Direct Reduction (DR) Unit in Kerman Province.

Karbasian pointed to the projects launched in Bardsir Steel Production Complex and said, "all projects in this production company have been launched by private sector,



so that MIDHCO has used the least public concessions and privileges for launching its projects."

He seized this opportunity to express his special thanks to the unsparing financial support of Bank Pasargad in launching mining and mineral projects in the country and added, "the bank owes its success to popular deposits that managed to generate employment opportunities in line with materializing objectives of resistance economy."

In line with production growth and generation of employment opportunities, the bank paved suitable ways for implementation of 35 giant projects in the country. Launching these national projects across the country generated employment opportunities for about 150,000 job-seeking people, he concluded.

## SINA BANK launches 'Year by Year' Festival of Clients' Club

'Year by Year' Festival of SINA Bank kicked off in June 2016 and will continue by the end of August 2018, lasting for a period of three months, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

With opening at least an account in the bank, citizens, irrespective of their age brackets, can take membership in Customers' Club of the bank without any restriction.

With fulfilling debit card-transactions, deposit holders can take membership at the customers' club of the bank.

Members of the club can obtain more concessions though increase of transactions such as withdrawing cash money from ATMs of the bank, transfer of money via SHETAB system, payment of bills and also purchase of various kinds of mobile phone charges,

the report added.

Moreover, participating in nine stages of drawing lot, members can increase their chance among other members of the bank and get valuable prizes including 36 Azadi gold coins, 36 half Azadi gold coins and also 36 quarter of Azadi gold coin.

At the end of three-month deadline, a number of nine stages of drawing lot will

be conducted in nine consecutive days between Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) and Eid al-Ghadir Khumm (appointment of Imam Ali as Prophet Muhammad's successor) and winners of the drawing lot will be awarded with valuable prizes.

For more information, do not hesitate to log on the following websites at: www.club.esinabank.ir or www.sinabank.ir.

## Eng. Mansour Yazdizadeh Named CEO of ESCO

In a get-together meeting held in the presence of Social Security Investment Organization (Persian acronym for SHASTA) and members of the Board of Directors of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO), Eng. Mansour Yazdizadeh was appointed as the Chief Executive of the company, Public Relations Dept. of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) reported.

In this regard, unsparing efforts and endeavors of Eng. Ahmad Sadeghi, former chief executive of this giant industrial and production complex, were appreciated.

It should be noted that Eng. Yazdizadeh has been working as CEO of National Iranian Steel Company (NISC) since Sept. 2017.

He also has served in Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) since 1994 in different

positions including member of the Board of Directors, Deputy CEO of company for Planning and Development Affairs, Deputy Sales and Marketing Affairs, Domestic Sales Manager of the company, etc.

Eng. Yazdizadeh has also played an important role in launching Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) and also implementation of national rail project of the company.



## Giant Martian dust storm threatens Opportunity rover

NASA's Opportunity rover has survived on Mars much longer than originally intended, but the planet is testing the little robot right now. A massive dust storm is sweeping across the landscape, blotting out the sun and leaving Opportunity stranded. However, NASA says the plucky little rover remains operational, and the team hopes it will meet this challenge as it has so many others.



The Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter first spotted the beginnings of this super-storm on June 1st. The MRO team notified Opportunity's controllers as soon as they saw how close it was to the rover. It didn't take long for the dust storm to grow in size to cover more than 7 million square miles (11.2 million square kilometers), which is larger than North America. Stuck smack in the middle of it is Opportunity. The small blue dot in the below image of the storm (click to enlarge) indicates Opportunity's location in Perseverance Valley.

This is a problem for the rover because unlike its younger cousin Curiosity, Opportunity is solar-powered. According to NASA, the opacity level or "tau" of the new storm is 10.8. That means very little light is reaching the surface. Opportunity reported a significant drop in battery charge last Wednesday, so NASA suspended science operations and placed the rover in low power mode.

The good news is Opportunity made contact with NASA over the weekend to confirm that it's still operational. At the time, the rover reported an internal temperature of -20 degrees Fahrenheit (-29 Celsius). In low power mode, the rover conserves power to make sure its heaters remain active. Without the heaters, the rover's batteries would likely fail and doom the mission.

Opportunity has already survived one sizeable dust storm. Back in 2007, Opportunity came through a two-week storm unscathed. However, the tau rating of that storm was just 5.5. There's much less light available to recharge the batteries this time, so the Opportunity team is hoping for a shorter storm.

(Source: extremetech.com)

## New method can reduce cost of direct air capture carbon dioxide removal technology

Scientists found a way to reduce the costs of carbon dioxide removal in the air. Using a technique called direct air capture, industrial coolants can convert carbon gas into synthetic fuel.

A novel way to reduce carbon dioxide deposits in the atmosphere is in the works and found to be cheaper than previously thought.

Direct air capture exists since the 1940s, but scientists said it is an extremely expensive means to remove carbon dioxide in the air.

Direct air capture costs \$1,000 per metric ton of carbon dioxide based on a 2011 estimate. David Keith, a professor at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, said it is possible without costing a fortune.

In a study published June 7 in Joule, Keith's team proposed a new way to reduce the cost of the siphoning technology between \$94 and \$232 per metric ton of carbon dioxide.

"We're making something that's never been done before -- commercial large-scale air capture -- but we're doing it on a basis of technology that already exists," said Keith.

Keith and his colleagues' company, Carbon Engineering, supplies the technology needed to conduct this process. Carbon dioxide molecules make up only 0.04 percent of air, but an effective strategy has to be in place to remove 200 years' worth of fuel gas in the atmosphere.

In Carbon Engineering's approach, an array of industrial-sized cooling tower uses a solution of liquid hydroxide to capture and convert carbon dioxide into carbonate. The carbonate is then transformed into pellets using a machine that extracts the water minerals. Lastly, the carbon pellets are then "roasted" before it can be used to manufacture synthetic fuel

(Source: Tech Times)

## Is expired sunscreen better than no sunscreen?

You've just claimed a spot on the beach; the sun is rising overhead, and you're looking forward to a relaxing day of sea and sun.

And speaking of sun -- you mustn't forget to apply a generous layer of protective sunblock. But when you reach for your tube of sunscreen, you notice that it's long past the stamped expiration date.

Sunscreens typically provide protection with active ingredients that absorb or reflect ultraviolet (UV) radiation, such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, and so-called "broad spectrum" products block out two types of potentially damaging UV radiation -- UVA and UVB rays, the Melanoma Research Foundation reported.

Most sunscreens will remain effective up to three years after the container is opened -- unless the brand's expiration date says otherwise, according to the Mayo Clinic. However, storage in hot places or exposure to moisture can break down a sunscreen's components and reduce its effectiveness even before it's "officially" expired, Dr. Lauren Ploch, a dermatologist, told Live Science in an email.

"Any ingredient in a personal care product -- even inactive ones, like emulsifiers and preservatives -- can degrade over time," Ploch explained. "This degradation is often accelerated by suboptimal storage conditions, so storing sunscreen in a hot car may make it ineffective even before its expiration date."

Expired sunscreen may be less effective at blocking UV rays, raising the likelihood of sunburn and an increased risk of skin cancer. But heavy creams, which generally provide better coverage and sun protection than gels or sprays, can still provide a shield between skin and sun, even if the sunblock is expired, Ploch said.

"Expired sunscreen may be better than no sunscreen, especially if the active ingredient is a physical sunblock like zinc oxide or titanium dioxide," she said.

(Source: Live Science)



## Iran to host International Biology Olympiad 2018

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran will play host to the 29th International Biology Olympiad (IBO 2018) from July 15 to 22, an official with the Ministry of Education has said. Representatives from 62 countries will participate in IBO 2018, Fars news agency quoted Fatemeh Mohajerani as saying on Monday. So far, some 250 students from around the world have applied to attend the event, she remarked.

Each country is represented by a team of four students, Mohajerani said, adding, Iran is represented by four students including two girls and two boys, all from Tehran.

“Workshops will be held on the sidelines of the event and scientific visits will be offered to the participants.”

The Ministry of Education has allocated a budget of 150 billion rials (nearly \$3.5 million) for hosting the Olympiad, she noted.

Iran first participated in International Mathematical Olympiads which was held in the Iranian calendar year 1366 (March 1987-March 1988), she stated, adding, Iranian students have succeeded in winning 681 medals during 31 years of participation in different Olympiads.

IBO is a yearly competition for secondary school students. Their skills in tackling biological problems, and dealing with biological experiments are tested.

Over the one-week event there will be two full days of exams for participants, split into a practical day and a theoretical day. There will be also a number of excursions and activities for both participants and accompanying adults.

## Norway, Sweden ready to help quake-hit Kermanshah: envoys

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — Ambassadors of Sweden and Norway to Iran met with Kermanshah provincial governor Houshang Bazvand in his HQ saying that their countries are ready to help quake-hit Kermanshah areas.

On November 12, 2017 a destructive magnitude 7.3 earthquake hit Kermanshah. Some 90,000 houses were partly or completely damaged by the tremor in urban and rural areas of the region. Sadly, the quake took over 660 lives and left more than 10,000 injured. Those quake victims who have lost their homes spent a bitter winter in tents and conex boxes.

Sweden’s ambassador to Iran Helena Sangeland expressed happiness regarding the fair speed of reconstruction in damaged areas.

She also said that her country is ready to talk about mutual investments in different projects.

The aim of Kermanshah journey is to observe the status of quake-hit people, she told IRNA after the meeting.

Touching upon Sweden’s €200,000 help to Kermanshah earthquake victims, she said that her country is studying ways to provide health services to these people.

Norway’s Ambassador in Tehran Lars Nordrum said in the meeting that he will report quake-hit Kermanshah status to the officials of his country, including Norwegian Refugee Council, so that they can provide required aids.

# Villain in Tehran air pollution: Carbureted motorcycles to go into production again?

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — While the production of carbureted-engine motorcycles was halted in Iran as of late September 2016 renewed speculation is mounting that the highly polluting vehicles might go into production again.

The Tehran motorcycle fleet consists mostly of carburetor-equipped motorcycles which are typically less fuel efficient and emit more emissions compared to newer, fuel injection technology.

In order to tackle the problem, the national working group for air pollution mitigation, affiliated to the Department of Environment (DOE), made a proposal to bring production of the pollutant carbureted-engine motorcycles to halt some two years ago. The cabinet of ministers approved the proposal in June 22, 2016 which went into effect as of September 2016. While there are still about 1 million motorcycles in the capital the law was hoped to cease the production of the polluting models and encourage fuel injection technology and manufacture of electric motorcycles.

However, in a letter written jointly by the ministers of interior and industry, mining, and trade the two officials have appealed to the First Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri to reconsider the carbureted motorcycles production halt and allow issuance of license plates for 10,000 motorcycles, ISNA reported on Tuesday.



Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli, and Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari have claimed that some manufacturers were not aware of the production halt and that not issuing license plate for the 1,000 motorcycles may have some adverse social and economic consequences. They have further urged the cabinet to approve the issuance of license plate for the already-manufactured motorcycles.

## Iran proposes to set up clinic in Armenia

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iran has proposed to establish a clinic in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, in a bid to expand cooperation in the field of health sector between the two countries.

In a meeting between Iranian Ambassador to Armenia Seyyed Kazem Sajjadi and Armenia’s Minister of Health Arsen Torosyan, the Iranian official also proposed signing a memorandum of understanding between two clinical centers of the two sides to promote medical ties, ISNA reported on Monday.

He referred to Iran’s successful experience in setting up medical clinics in Arab and African countries.

The Armenian minister, for his part, expressed satisfaction regarding the in-



creasing healthcare cooperation between the two countries and added that «We will soon send a delegation to Iran to hold talks on the issues discussed here.»

The two officials mainly discussed cooperation in health sector in various field of rescue and relief, constructing clinics jointly, export of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals as well as exchange of knowledge and technology.

## Housing for families with disabled members within 3 years

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — All families with at least two or more members with disabilities will be provided with free housing by the Iranian current calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), Kiumars Solgi, director of Iran’s charity housing association has said.

The project [housing provision to families having two or more members with disabilities] has been launched over past three years, in cooperation with Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Welfare Organization, Housing Foundation and other related organizations, he remarked.

“It has been planned to construct some 10,000 residential units in the cities and some 6,000 in the villages,” he stated, adding that construction of 3,500 units

to do anything about it.

Unfortunately this is not the first time the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry is demanding the issuance of license plate for carbureted-motorcycles. Mehdi Dehqan-Azad, an official with National Standard Organization, has said that last year, adding an article to the proposal, the Ministry has issued license plate for some 740,000 carbureted-engine motorcycles.

Deputy environment chief Masoud Tajrishi also said that during a cabinet meeting held on Sunday only three organizations opposed the issuance of license plate for 10,000 carbureted motorcycles and the rest unanimously agreed halting the production for good would jeopardize employment.

That the manufacturers object the production halt by claiming that they were not properly informed is not acceptable, Tajrishi said. Using economic problems as an excuse to undermine the public health is “upsetting”, he stated, adding that this is a test to see which one “we” prioritize: the current and next generations’ health or short-term advantages.

“Voting in favor of issuing license for more carburetor motorcycles means that we have failed to well-inform the officials about the environmental catastrophes and this is why many think that ignoring such proposals is not violation of the law,” he lamented. ➔13



has been completed, so far.

The assignment of all units will be done by the next three years, IRIB quoted Solgi as saying.

“We welcome all Iranian donors and contributors who are willing to help us in this manner”, he concluded.

Iran’s charity housing association is a non-profit organization that provides charity-based services as well as construction and repair of houses for underprivileged.

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# A doubtful deal

## North Korea, U.S. sign 'comprehensive' document after historic summit

By staff & agencies

The United States President Donald Trump and North Korea Leader Kim Jong-un have signed a document described by the American leader as important and comprehensive, following a historic summit between the two in Singapore. The document that many analysts called it doubtful deal.

The meeting was the first between a sitting U.S. president and a North Korean leader.

The meeting began at 9 a.m. on Tuesday local time on Singapore's Sentosa Island at the Capella Hotel, a former British colonial barracks converted into a high-end hotel, starting with a carefully choreographed handshake greeting against a backdrop of the U.S. and North Korean flags.

The Trump-Kim historic summit on June 12, 2018, seemed unthinkable months ago.

After meeting privately and with aides, Trump and Kim moved into the luncheon at a long flower-bedecked table.

Trump and Kim arrived in Singapore on Sunday to hold the first ever face-to-face meeting between leaders of the two countries, which have remained enemies since the 1953-1950 Korean War.

Trump was scheduled to return to the United States on Wednesday, but will now leave immediately after meeting with North Korean leader Kim on Tuesday, the White House said in a statement on Monday.

Earlier, the White House said Trump will leave Singapore on Tuesday night, adding that nuclear talks with North Korea are moving "more quickly than expected."

The U.S. president reportedly moved up his departure time from Singapore after Kim set the deadline for their historic summit. Bloomberg News reported on Monday that Kim will leave Singapore at 4 p.m. on Tuesday local time after his meeting with Trump.

### ■ The meeting & the handshake

The two leaders addressed the media before walking into their one-on-one discussion. Trump said he is confident the talks will be a "tremendous success" and that "we will have a tremendous relationship, I have no doubt".

The U.S. president said he had formed a "very special bond" with Kim and that the U.S.'s relationship with Pyongyang would be very different.

"People are going to be very impressed and people are going to be very happy and we are going to take care of a very dangerous problem for the world," he added.

Asked whether he would invite Kim to the White House, Trump answered, "Absolutely, I will", adding Kim accepted his invitation to visit the White House at the "appropriate" time.

Kim said that "it has not been easy to get here" and that "the old prejudices and practices worked as obstacles, but we have overcome them and we are here today."

"Many people in the world will think of



this as a form of fantasy from a science fiction movie," the North Korean leader said, according to pool reporters.

Both leaders expressed optimism throughout roughly five hours of talks, with Trump thanking Kim afterward "for taking the first bold step toward a bright new future for his people."

Trump added during a news conference that Kim has before him "an opportunity like no other" to bring his country back into the community of nations if he agrees to give up his nuclear program.

As both leaders stood on a hotel veranda to say their final goodbyes, Trump said: "We'll meet again. We will meet many times."

After the signing, Trump said he expected to "meet many times" in the future with Kim. For his part, Kim hailed the "historic meeting" and said they "decided to leave the past behind."

Trump had said before leaving for the summit that he would be able to tell within minutes whether he'd be able to strike a deal with Kim to dismantle the North's nuclear program.

The optimistic summit was a remarkable change in dynamics from less than a year ago, when Trump was threatening "fire and fury" against Kim, who in turn scorned the American president as a "mentally deranged U.S. dotard." Beyond the impact on both leaders' political fortunes, the summit could shape the fate of countless people — the citizens of impoverished North Korea, the tens of millions living in the shadow of the North's nuclear threat, and millions more worldwide.

### ■ Trump and Kim sign agreement after historic summit

Trump and Kim capped a one-day peace summit by signing the agreement without immediately disclosing the terms. Trump stayed on to detail the agreement at a later news conference while Kim left the summit for a return flight to Pyongyang.

Trump and Kim signed an agreement on Tuesday pledging to support a peaceful resolution to seven decades of hostilities between the two countries and a de-escalation of nuclear tensions.

Under the agreement, the U.S. committed to provide security guarantees to its old enemy while North Korea "commits to work towards complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula".

That provision falls short of the hoped-for "complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization" of North Korea that had been urged by the U.S. and its allies in the build-up to Tuesday's talks.

Trump defended the agreement at a press conference on Tuesday afternoon, saying both he and Kim are committed to its provisions.

"Today is the beginning of an arduous process," Trump told reporters. "Our eyes are wide open, but peace is always worth the effort, especially in this case."

Trump said economic sanctions against the country will remain in effect until North Korea reverses its nuclear program, and added there are no short-term plans to reduce the number of the U.S. troops - some 28,500 - stationed in South Korea.

Before signing the document, Kim said the two leaders had had a historic meeting "and decided to leave the past behind. The world will see a major change."

### ■ Four major points covered in the Trump-Kim agreement:

The U.S. and North Korea will pursue better relations "in accordance with the desire of the peoples of the two countries for peace and prosperity".

The U.S. and North Korea "will join their efforts to build a lasting and stable peace" on the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea commits to "work towards denuclearization".

The countries agree to recover and repatriate prisoners of war (POWs) and missing

in action (MIA) remains dating back to the Korean War.

### ■ The flip side to the summit coin

Analysts are divided over the agreement, with some saying it does nothing to avoid repeating past mistakes in similar attempts at a denuclearization deal.

Others see the summit as a welcome reversal to decades of hostility and harsh language between the U.S. and North Korea.

While the summit is seen as a test for diplomacy that could end the long-running nuclear standoff, foreign policy experts say the stakes are high if it does not result in a nuclear agreement.

Experts say the talks could run into trouble because the U.S. and North Korea hold different understandings of what it means for the latter to denuclearize.

Critics of the summit leapt at the leaders' handshake and the moonlight stroll Kim took on Monday night along the glittering Singapore waterfront, saying it was further evidence that Trump was helping legitimize Kim on the world stage. Kim has been accused of horrific rights abuses against his people.

Giving voice to the anticipation felt around the world as the meeting opened, South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Tuesday he "hardly slept" before the summit. Moon and other officials watched the live broadcast of the summit before a South Korean Cabinet meeting in his presidential office.

### ■ Trump blasts 'haters & losers'

Meanwhile, about three hours before the summit Trump blasted the "haters & losers" who have expressed skepticism about its success.

"The fact that I am having a meeting is a major loss for the U.S., say the haters & losers. We have our hostages, testing, research and all missile (sic) launches have stopped (sic), and these pundits, who have called me wrong from the beginning, have nothing else they can say! We will be fine!" Trump tweeted.

### ■ Trump: North Koreans very working people who love their leader

Elsewhere, Trump said North Koreans are very working and industrious people and they "love" their leader Kim Jong-un.

"His country does love him," Trump said in an interview with ABC News following the historic summit between Trump and Kim in Singapore.

The U.S. president said "you see the fervor" the North Koreans have for their leader.

"They're gonna put it together, and I think they're going to end up with a very strong country, and a country which has people — that they're so hard working, so industrious," Trump said.

Trump told ABC News that Kim "wants to do the right thing" and that begins with denuclearization.

## U.S. sits idly by amid concerns over imminent UAE attack on Hudaydah



### ■ UN rushing to stave off assault

Meanwhile, the UN has warned that a potential raid could cost up to 250,000 lives in Hudaydah which has a population of 600,000 people.

UN aid chief Mark Lowcock said an attack on the city would be "catastrophic" and that aid agencies were hoping to "stay and deliver" in Yemen.

However, the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have withdrawn their staff members from the key Yemeni port.

The UK government has issued guidance to aid agencies receiving British funding to leave the city. The French aid group Doctors Without Borders, known as MSF, has also suspended its operations there.

On Monday, the UN Security Council met behind closed doors over the situation in Hudaydah amid heavy fighting there.

After the meeting, Russia's Ambassador to the UN Vasily Nebenzya called for deescalation and said the Security Council would be "closely" following the developments in Yemen.

He further expressed hope that efforts by UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths would bring about a positive resolution of the conflict.

Additionally on Monday, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres met with Yemen's self-proclaimed foreign minister, Khaleed Alayman, at the UN headquarters in New York.

During the meeting, Guterres stressed that "everyone should redouble efforts to find a political solution and avoid a fierce, bloody battle for Hudaydah," according to his spokesman, Stephane Dujarric.

Guterres also noted that Griffiths was locked in "intense negotiations" with Yemen's Houthi movement, Saudi Arabia and the UAE to find a "way to avoid the military confrontation in Hudaydah."

### ■ U.S. avoids action, gives 'yellow light'

Meanwhile, the United States and the UK, the main sponsors of the Saudi-led war, have stopped short of taking



concrete action to stop the UAE from attacking Hudaydah, merely voicing concerns over the humanitarian consequences of such an assault.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he was "closely following" the situation in Hudaydah, but refrained from demanding that the UAE hold fire.

"I have spoken with Emirati leaders and made clear our desire to address their security concerns while preserving the free flow of humanitarian aid and life-saving commercial imports," he said in a statement on Monday.

The British government also called on the Emiratis not to press ahead with the attack. At the same time, the UK's Department for International Development (Dfid) warned international aid groups on Saturday that diplomatic negotiations to avert the attack were failing.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, head of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee of Yemen, on Monday held the U.S. responsible for any threat against Hudaydah, warning that such adventurism would result in failure.

UN officials believe that Abu Dhabi would not launch the Hudaydah attack without a green light from Washington. "So far they have a blinking yellow light from the U.S.," a UN official said.

The U.S. administration is, however, under pressure from congressmen to prevent such a military action.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers at the U.S. House of Representatives has circulated a letter calling for Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to help prevent a "catastrophic" military campaign on Hudaydah.

"We urge you to use all available means to avert a catastrophic military assault on Yemen's major port city of Hudaydah by the Saudi-led coalition, and to present Congress with immediate clarification regarding the full scope of U.S. military involvement in that conflict," said a draft of the letter obtained by The Hill newspaper.

They have also called on Mattis "to dissuade the Saudi-led coalition from moving forward with this offensive and reject the provision of U.S. logistical, military and diplomatic support for any such operation."

Furthermore, Oxfam America aid organization has urged the U.S. to prevent the UAE attack on Hudaydah.

"With hundreds of thousands of Yemenis at risk, this is not the time for the U.S., or any state, to hide behind carefully crafted disavowals. The U.S. could threaten to end its participation in the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition in Yemen if the offensive proceeds. It could threaten to end any broader Yemen-related defense cooperation, including arms sales to the UAE. It could threaten sanctions or other economic consequences," it said.

Saudi Arabia and its allies launched a war on Yemen in March 2015 in support of Yemen's former Riyadh-friendly government and against the Houthis.

The military campaign has killed and injured over 600,000 civilians, according to the Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights.

Saudi Arabia has also imposed a blockade on Yemen, which has smothered humanitarian deliveries of food and medicine to the import-dependent state.

(Source: Press TV)

## Syria repels ISIL attempt to seize key border town near Iraq

Following days of intense fighting, Syrian government forces have thwarted an attempt by ISIL (Daesh) remnants to seize a strategic town near the Iraqi border, clearing all its neighborhoods of Takfiri terrorists.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said Monday that Syrian troops and their allied forces had fully secured Bukamal, which lies on the Euphrates River in the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr after days of violent clashes with the terrorists.

Syrian "forces and their allies regained control of the whole town of al-Bukamal after expelling Daesh from its northern and northwestern parts," said the head of the UK-based observatory, Rami Abdel-Rahman.

The terrorists had on Friday sent bombers into several neighborhoods of Bukamal to pave the way for their advance on the city.

However, surrounded by Syrian forces, the terrorists were forced to retreat to the vast Badiya region, which stretches from the country's center to the border with Iraq, he said.

In November last year, Syrian forces announced that they liberated the town, the last Daesh bastion in Syria.

Dayr al-Zawr is the capital of an oil-rich Syrian province of the same name, which borders Iraq. The city used to serve as the main Daesh stronghold in Syria after the terror group left Raqqa in the north to U.S.-backed Kurdish militants.

Separately, the Russian Reconciliation Center in Syria said Syrian troops backed by the Russian air force had managed to prevent the terrorists from breaking out of the southeastern al-Tanf area in Homs Province toward the city of Palmyra.

During the operation, the forces killed five terrorists and destroyed a pickup truck as well as a motorbike belonging to them, the statement said.

It said that a large group of terrorists, "moving on pickup trucks with heavy weapons and motorcycles had been located by Syrian observation posts in the area of Mount Gurab."

The US-led coalition runs a military base in the al-Tanf. Washington has described the area, which lies at the ultra-strategic intersection of the Syrian, Iraqi, and Jordanian borders, as its "red line."

On numerous occasions, the Russian military, which has been assisting the Syrian army in its anti-terrorism operations, has reported suspicious activities in and around the base in support of Takfiri terrorists.

(Source: agencies)

## Missiles that changed the equations



Earlier, Saudi officials had been deceiving and distorting public opinion arguing that rocket defense systems have tracked all Yemeni missiles.

The Saudis have long been thinking about buying an Iron Dome missile defense system from the Zionist regime. In the same vein, the Zionist daily Jerusalem Post confirmed that the Saudi government was trying to buy an Israeli dome in order to counter the missile attacks of the military and popular committees in Yemen. Elsewhere, a European businessman in arms sales in Saudi Arabia said too that Riyadh was considering buying Israeli weapons, including an active system (dome of iron) developed with advanced systems.

Now that the Yemeni forces, with the help of the people of the country, have succeeded in accomplishing a lot of fieldwork against the Saudis and the aggressors, Americans, too, in addition to providing field and arms assistance to Saudi Arabia, support the media and propaganda of the invaders.

Washington's main purpose is to distract public from Saudis and its aggressors' failure against Yemeni forces in recent weeks.

In the same vein, Americans have focused on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Secretary of Defense James M. Mattis once again accused Iran of hijacking Yemen, saying that the missile launched on April 2 in the direction of Saudi oil tanker by the Houthis was provided by Iran.

Mattis argued that the threat against shipping in the Red Sea was entirely posed by Iran. Therefore, he urged that they should control this issue, or else there will be consequences.

The U.S. ridiculous claim was dismissed by the United Nations since there was no evidence that rockets fired into Saudi were from Iranian positions.

In any case, what seems to be quite clear is that as a result of the recent successes of the Yemeni missile forces against the Arab aggressors, the field equations have changed in the war over Yemen, and now it is in favor of the Yemeni Resistance Forces who are a threat to the invaders and criminals.

## Villain in Tehran air pollution: Carbureted motorcycles to go into production again?



Vahid Hosseini head of the national working group for air pollution mitigation has also objected the issuance of license plate for carbureted motorcycles in a letter published on the working group official website.

Now, after two years from the approval of the proposal to halt the production of carbureted motorcycles, there are no reasons for making any exceptions, Hosseini wrote. "Doesn't issuance of license plate for carbureted motorcycles mean that all proposals approved by the cabinet can be broken? And doesn't it infringe on the rights of the manufacturers who have complied with the production halt and started to adopt fuel injection technology?"

Issuance of license plate for carbureted motorcycles is an anti-environmental move and brings disappointment, Hosseini concluded.

According to a report published by World Bank in April 2018 there are about 4.24 million vehicles in Tehran. With a total fleet of 3.37 million cars are the largest vehicle types. The second largest category, in terms of sheer numbers, are motorcycles, amounting to a total of 0.76 million, or 18 percent of total vehicles. The smallest category is heavy-duty vehicles, with a total of 0.1 million vehicles, or about 2 percent of total vehicles in the streets of Tehran.

Cars only contribute about 3 percent of the city's mobile PM pollution. Motorcycles being the most pollution intensive vehicle per passenger, contribute to about 12 percent of the total mobile PM emissions and heavy-duty vehicles contribute about 85 percent to mobile PM emissions.

Therefore, motorcycles are the second largest contributor to PM, even before cars which greatly outnumber them. One of the main reasons behind their high contribution to emissions is that a large part of the fuel consumed in motorcycles burns incompletely.

## Bahrain king signs off on law banning opposition figures from running in elections

Bahrain's king has signed into law a contentious bill recently adopted by the parliament, which bans figures of dissolved opposition parties and organizations from running in parliamentary elections.

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa signed off on "The Exercise of Political Rights," an amended version of the kingdom's election law which passed the National Assembly in late May, the official Bahrain News Agency reported.

The new version prohibits "leaders and members of political associations dissolved for violating the kingdom's constitution or its laws" from standing in the elections.

It also bans anyone "convicted of a felony, even if they have been granted amnesty."

The measure is viewed as an attempt by the regime in Manama to bar dissidents from entering the 40-seat parliament ahead of the elections in November.

Already in its current composition, the legislature hardly contains any anti-regime figures. Bahrain stifled a peaceful popular uprising in 2011, and has since been coming down hard on any instance of dissent.

The opposition parties boycotted the polls in 2014.

Since then, the authorities have outlawed two of the most important opposition groups, al-Wefaq and the National Democratic Action

Society (Wa'ad).

The regime has further stripped many of the oppositionists of their citizenship.

Scores have also been killed and hundreds arrested during Bahrain's crackdown on dissent. The island hosts the US Fifth Fleet. It closely aligns its policies with those of Washington and its most valued regional ally, Saudi Arabia.

(Source: Press TV)



## Ball girls selected for World Cup opener

A group of 14 Russian girls will act as ballgirls in the opening match of the World Cup on Thursday, the first all-female group to do so.

The girls, aged 13 to 16, from Agryz, a small town of 19,000 people some 800 km (500 miles) east of Moscow, were selected by the Russian national team after making a sponsor's shortlist of "inspiring entrants" to a national junior football tournament.

"It's like a fairytale for them", said their coach, Ildar Idiyatov.

The 14 girls, who play football for a team in the Russian region of Tartarstan, will have the eyes of the world on them as they return the ball in the Group A match between Russia and Saudi Arabia at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow.

The local World Cup organizing committee said 776 children would work as ballboys and ballgirls at the 64 match tournament, but this was the first time an all-female group had operated at the opening game of the FIFA showpiece.

"Women are not a weak sex, we are always ready to compete with boys at the same level," said Daria Vasilyeva, one of the ball girls selected for the opening match.

"At the World Cup, all of us are united and we are all just as worthy and can also pass the balls to the football teams."

(Source: Reuters)

## Briton sets world leading 100m time and PB of 9.91secs in Jamaica

Britain's Zhanel Hughes ran 9.91 seconds - the fastest 100m time in the world this year - as he went under 10 seconds for the first time in Jamaica.

The 22-year-old did not start as well as home sprinter Yohan Blake but overtook his rival to storm to victory.

American Noah Lyles was second with a personal best of 9.93 and Blake third in 10.00.

Hughes ran 9.99 in winning the Boston Games 100m but the time did not count as he was aided by a 2.4m/sec tailwind.

"Tonight was amazing," said Hughes on social media after the race in Kingston.

He moves to equal second on the British all time list behind 1992 Olympic champion Linford Christie (9.87), with the same time as James Dasaolu

(Source: BBC)

## Roberto Martinez delivers Eden Hazard injury update ahead of World Cup

Roberto Martinez calmed the fears surrounding Eden Hazard after the forward suffered a 'dead leg' in Belgium's World Cup warm-up match with Costa Rica. Hazard was forced off in the 70th minute of Belgium's 4-1 victory on Monday night, just a week before the side's opening Group G match in Russia against Panama. England boss Gareth Southgate will have been keeping an eye on Hazard's fitness from a distance, with England facing Belgium on June 26.

But it appears the Chelsea forward was taken off as a precaution and should be ready for the start of the tournament. Asked about Hazard's injury after the win, Belgium boss Martinez said: 'Eden is okay, he had a little trouble, but it's nothing to worry about.'

'I really enjoyed his performance. He was sharp and strong, he was majestic. 'At the end he just came off because he had a little bit of a dead leg, a little bit of a knock on his leg.'

Romelu Lukaku claimed that Belgium are full of confidence following their comprehensive victory over Costa Rica. 'I think we have made progress. We did not lose, it's important. We scored a lot of goals tonight,' he said.

'We will still progress before the match against Panama and we will give 120 per cent against them. 'We will continue to make progress later.'

(Source: metro.co.uk)

## Egypt's Salah still doubtful for World Cup opener

Egypt forward Mohamed Salah remains a doubt to face Uruguay in their World Cup opener on Friday, the country's football association has said.

The Liverpool player, who sustained a shoulder injury in the Champions League final against Real Madrid last month, took part in light training on Monday but the Egyptian FA's managing director Ehab Lehita said it was too early to say whether he would play against the South Americans.

"He is gradually getting better. However, I cannot confirm Tuesday that he will play in the first match," Lehita said of the 25-year-old, who scored 44 goals for Liverpool last season.

"All I can say is that we hope he will play in this match."

Former Egypt international Mido said he expects Salah to play in the opening match in Yekaterinburg.

"We heard that he is doing alright so it's a question of whether he will start the game or whether he will be kept for the second half," Mido, who earned 51 caps, told Sky Sports.

"But anyway we have a good team, well-organized and hopefully if Salah is not there to start the game hopefully the boys will do well.

"We want him to be involved because he worked so hard to get this team, with his team mates of course, to come to this tournament."

Egypt also face Saudi Arabia and hosts Russia in Group A.

(Source: Reuters)

# Messi the star attraction in Argentina SWC training



Around 400 eager fans turned out at Argentina's World Cup base camp to catch a glimpse of Lionel Messi and his team-mates at an open training session.

A particularly affectionate welcome was reserved for the Barcelona forward, as hordes of adoring young supporters chanted "Messi, Messi" on his way out for an hour-long practice on Monday. After several days of chilly temperatures in the Russian capital, overcast skies gave way to sunshine, with excited locals packing a temporary stand in Bronnitsy, southeast of Moscow, to follow the action.

Injury had already struck Argentina on the eve of their

departure for the tournament, with West Ham midfielder Manuel Lanzini ruled out with a serious knee injury.

Enzo Perez was summoned as a replacement for Lanzini, although the status of Ever Banega for Argentina's first group game against Iceland on June 16 remains uncertain after the Sevilla midfielder trained alone. The odd Messi mask was spotted in the crowd, while others waved Barcelona flags, as well as those of Argentina. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner was then mobbed by dozens of youngsters at the end of the session as players stopped to sign autographs.

Ernesto Lagorio, Argentina's ambassador to Russia,

## Real Madrid star 'not worried' despite transfer talk ahead of World Cup

One of Cristiano Ronaldo's international team-mates has claimed the superstar is "not at all worried" about talk over his future, as rumors continue to swirl that he could leave Real Madrid this summer.

Ronaldo opened the door to a sensational exit from the Spanish giants just moments after they beat Liverpool 3-1 in the Champions League final.

However Manuel Fernandes, who plays in Russia for Lokomotiv Moscow, has insisted that Portugal's star man is unperturbed over the growing transfer speculation.

Fernandes said: "I have nothing negative to say about Cristiano, he looks focused and doesn't look at all worried about his future."

Portugal kick-off their 2018 World Cup campaign with a grudge match over local rivals Spain, on Friday night.

But regardless of the outcome of their



opening match, Portugal will be confident of progression to the knockout stages of the tournament. After Spain, the reigning European champions take on Morocco and Iran.

(Source: Independent)

## Pogba can shine at World Cup, says Sagna

France midfielder Paul Pogba can put an underwhelming season at Manchester United behind him and make an impact at the World Cup, according to former Arsenal defender Bacary Sagna.

Pogba, 25, endured an inconsistent Premier League campaign, scoring six goals and providing 10 assists in 27 appearances, as United finished second in the standings.

"Paul is a special character and he's very important for the team," Sagna, who played for France 65 times, told Sky Sports.

"He had a so-so season with Manchester United because he got a lot of criticism... People have to remember he is only a holding midfield player and he has orders from the manager.

"That's what he's been doing, but I'm looking forward to seeing him shining and



he's going to shine."

France open their World Cup campaign against Australia on June 16 and also play Peru and Denmark in Group C.

(Source: Euronews)

# Vincent Kompany: 'Pele is the greatest player of all time'

In an exclusive interview for CNN Sport, Belgium and Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany, picks three-time World Cup winner Pele.

"I think you can always have the debate, Maradona, you add Messi to it now. They won't be far off each other," said Kompany, referring to the two past and present Argentine players.

"(Pele) has more than a thousand goals which is difficult to achieve. He was part of great teams but he was also the best player in great teams," added the 32-year-old Kompany.

Kompany's favorite World Cup memory of the Brazilian great is a moment when he dummied Uruguayan goalkeeper Ladislao Mazurkiewicz in the 1970 finals. However after flummoxing Mazurkiewicz, Pele great was then unable to find the net with his shot.

"He got a long pass on the floor which he kind of faked to take into his stride and therefore beat the goalkeeper and went around the goalkeeper. He just narrowly missed the



best goal in World Cup history," added Kompany.

■ **'The richer I get, the better it is for other people'**

Kompany believes the key ingredient to Belgium winning the World Cup in Russia is a hint of luck.

"Let's not forget that luck plays a big part, you also have to peak at the right time as well. A lot of people forget that

# The most optimistic generation since the 1990s

U.S. tennis great Andre Agassi says a generation of young American tennis players could once again dominate the game like he and Pete Sampras did in the 1990s.

Speaking in Paris during the French Open, which he was attending as an ambassador for the Swiss watchmaker Longines, Agassi told TIME that he thought U.S. players had suffered in world rankings while an unusually gifted generation of players like Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal have dominated the scene. "This generation hasn't left a lot of room for anybody to pick up any slack," he says.

Yet there are bright American stars emerging, said the former world number one. Agassi says Frances Tiafoe, "a hell of an athlete," could be one to watch at slams in the years to come; as well as the 6' 11" Reilly Opelka. "I think we have the possibility of someone sneaking through."

When Agassi played professionally, from 1986 to 2006, it was during an era of American dominance in the men's game. He and Sampras spent long periods as the world number 1, following in the footsteps of U.S. champions from Stan Smith to John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors. Today, though,



European players like Federer and Nadal are the stars of men's tennis. Andy Roddick was the last American man to win a Grand Slam singles title way back in 2003.

That same year, Agassi became the oldest number 1 tennis player at 33—a record since broken by Federer, who took the number 1 at the age of 36, after five years away from the top spot. Both had a late career surge, although Agassi insists that beyond that, his career bears

little resemblance to Federer's.

When it comes to what Federer brings to the game, Agassi is simply a fan. "Watching him is watching history," he says. "You see it every time with the way he conducts himself—with the fans, with his peers, with the media.

"I just have more appreciation than the average fan because he makes it look so easy and I actually think I know what it takes.

And it's truly remarkable."

Agassi's admiration for today's champions doesn't stop there. Speaking to TIME on Saturday, two days before Serena Williams announced her withdrawal from the French Open because of a pectoral injury, Agassi praised her return to the court after the birth of her child as a sign of her "determination, clarity, discipline, commitment and competitiveness."

Much to the joy of fans worldwide, Williams, a 23-time grand slam winner, had played to form through three rounds in her grand slam comeback after giving birth to her daughter in September 2017. "It's a challenge that probably equals a playing field for her, in many respects—which speaks to how great she is," he says.

Though he couldn't have predicted Williams' withdrawal from the tournament, he understands the fight it takes to get back in the game. He says: "Seeing champions struggle and overcome adversity or difficulty, whatever that may be, is a pleasure. Success or failure, I respect that fight and that commitment."

(Source: Time)



**"80 Million People, One Nation, One Heartbeat"**





“80 Million People,  
One Nation, One Heartbeat”

Kuala Lumpur: Team Melli have been drawn in the 2018 FIFA World Cup’s “Group of Death”, but our Islamic Republic of Iran expert believes they can reach the Round of 16.

A talented squad featuring a number of players who ply their trade in Europe in addition to stability in the form of coach Carlos Queiroz, who has been with the side since 2011, are reasons for optimism as Islamic Republic of Iran appear in back-to-back FIFA World Cups for the first time in their history.

We spoke to Tehran-based experienced journalist Pejman Rahbar, Editor-in-chief of Varsesh3, Iran’s leading sports website. He has been covering Iranian football for over 20 years.

■ What does IR Iran expect from the World Cup?

A. Simply put, Iran expect to qualify to the knock-out stage. This is a very difficult group, and we need good results against Spain and Portugal. That is very important; arguably more important than qualification.

■ What’s the most important thing for the team to do to have a successful World Cup?

A. The most important thing for Iran is luck; in the 2006 FIFA World Cup, our easiest match was the third

## Expert’s view: IR Iran



match (against Angola). If we had started with the Angola match, and we had won, we could have gone into the third match against Mexico (even after losing the second game against Portugal) with a chance of qualifying with a good result. Now, everything depends on the first match against Morocco. If we win this first match, I think qualification is possible, but if we lose, I think we will lose the following games.

■ Which player will have the biggest impact?

A. Mehdi Taremi is our X-factor, but there are some doubts because of his injury. With this team playing the formation chosen by Queiroz, Alireza Jahanbakhsh is the number one player that can have an impact. Saied Ezzatollahi is suspended for the first game, but he will be important when he comes in for the second match. Sardar Azmoun is also very good and can score goals at the World Cup.

■ Which player will have the biggest impact?

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Sardar Azmoun is also very good and can score goals at the World Cup.

■ What do you predict the starting XI will be?

My prediction for the starting XI for Iran is

4-3-3

Goalkeeper: Alireza Beiranvand

Defence: Ramin Rezaeian, Morteza Pouraliganji, Rouzbeh Cheshmi, Milad Mohammadi

Midfield: Saied Ezzatollahi (Omid Ebrahimi in his absence), Ehsan Hajsafi, Masoud Shojaei

Forwards: Sardar Azmoun, Mehdi Taremi, Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

■ What are your predictions for the three group stage matches?

A. To be able to predict the results you need to be a magician, and I am not one. Iran have a lot of mysteries before the World Cup starts; one of the most important things will be the tactics of Carlos Queiroz in the first match. After that things will be clearer and we can say what will happen in the following matches. I’m not a good predictor and I don’t predict. But I hope Iran win against Morocco and after that anything can be possible.

(Source: afe.com)

## Iranian girls defeat Macau at Asian volleyball C’ships



**TEHRAN (MNA)** — Iran’s girl volleyball players have advanced to the 8th final by gaining a decisive victory against Macau on Tuesday at 19th Asian Women’s U19 Volleyball Championships held in Bac Ninh, Vietnam.

The Iranian team defeated Macau 3-0, scoring 25-11, 25-18, and 25-12 in three straight sets.

Their third victory comes after a loss against Australia and a win against Hong Kong in pool C.

The Iranian squad will next take on the third team of pool B at the eighth final of the international tournament.

The Asian Women’s U19 Volleyball Championship is an international volleyball competition in Asia and Oceania contested by the under 19 women’s national teams of the members of Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC). The current champion is China, which won its twelfth title at the 2016 tournament hosted by Thailand.

## Rouhani to coach Uzbekistan’s national karate team



**TEHRAN (MNA)** — Former Iranian national karate team coach Hossein Rouhani has signed a contract with the Uzbek officials to lead the central Asian country’s national karate team.

The Iranian instructor has reportedly reached an agreement with the Uzbek officials on the sidelines of the 2018 world Karate 1 Premier League competitions which was held in Turkey’s Istanbul on June 8-10.

The Karate 1 Premier League at-

tracted 607 karate practitioners from 43 different countries. The Iranian karate practitioners put on a great performance and won the title with 12 medals in both men and women’s Kumite and individual matches.

It has been reported that Rouhani had been negotiating with Uzbekistan karate officials since last year.

He is expected to leave for Uzbekistan to lead their national team when he returns to Tehran from Turkey.

## Iranian referee Alireza Faghani dreams of World Cup final

**TASNIM** — Iranian international referee Alireza Faghani says to reach the final of the 2018 World Cup is his dream and this is what he is working for.

The 2018 edition will be Faghani’s second stint in the World Cup. His last appearance was in Brazil 2014 where he was the fourth official for seven matches, including the opening match between hosts Brazil and Croatia.

“To reach the final of the World Cup is our dream and this is what we are working for. We hope one Asian referee has the chance to officiate the final of the World Cup,” he said in an interview with the-afc.com.

“In AFC there is always a team behind us, working in all



aspects - in terms of medical, physical, technical. We have practical training in all seminars. That’s what we have all been preparing for all tournaments, and we all have fair competition with the other referees in AFC and the rest of the world. With these key elements, the AFC referees perform well in all FIFA tournaments,” he added.

“We hope that the national teams will qualify for the final. But if not, we have many talented referees with good quality who can officiate it. We have experience for the opening match, and we have the chance to challenge, to compete with the other referees in the world to officiate at the highest level,” Faghani concluded.



## Queiroz optimistic Iran could advance to knockout stage

Carlos Queiroz, the head coach of Iran’s national football team, has expressed hope Team Melli will advance to the knockout stage in FIFA World Cup 2018.

Speaking in an interview with the Turkish television channel Sporx on Wednesday, Queiroz said Iran’s group in the tournament is a very difficult group but he is optimistic

Team Melli can beat rivals.

“The Iranian team has participated in the World Cup four times so far and has not been able to pass the group stage,” said the Portuguese coach.

“Our only goal is to advance from the group. Some people may see it impossible, but everything is possible in football,” he said.

The Iranian team is going to face Turkey on Monday as part of preparations for the 2018 World Cup.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup will take place from June 14 to July 15.

A total of 64 matches will be played in 12 venues located in 11 cities.

(Source: ifpnews.com)

## Iran 5-a-side football team blanks France in 2018 IBSA Blind Football World Championships

**Press TV** — The Iranian men’s national five-a-side football team has trounced France at the 2018 International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) Blind Football World Championships in Spain.

The Iranian visually-challenged sportsmen routed their French counterparts 7-0 in the Spanish capital city of Madrid. Sadeq Rahimi scored a hat trick, while Behzad Zad Aliasghar and Hossein Rajabpour netted a brace each.

The Iranian para footballers are scheduled to play Colombian opponents on Tuesday.

The 2018 IBSA Blind Football World Championships kicked off on June 5, and will finish on June 18, 2018.

Five-a-side football includes a smaller pitch, smaller goals, and a reduced game duration. The penalty area is semi-circular in shape.

There are no offside rules and headers are not allowed. Players are also required to wear shin guards, but this is usually at the discretion of the referee.

## Iran’s best scorer to miss the game against Morocco

**Morocco World News** — Iran’s best scorer, Mehdi Taremi, may miss his first World Cup game against Morocco, Friday June 15, on the second day of the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Al Gharafa’s striker is considered as one of the best assets of the Iranian team.

The football player was injured in Iran’s last friendly game against Lithuania on June 8, according to the Iranian federation.

Since his injury, the 25-year-old footballer has not joined in any training with his teammates and Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz.

If his condition does not improve, Queiroz is seriously thinking of replacing him with Reza Ghoochannejhad, the striker of SC Heerenveen.



## Iranian grandmaster Maghsoodloo vice champion in Master Open Alekhine Memorial 2018

**Press TV** — Iranian chess grandmaster Parham Maghsoodloo has featured great mental skills at the Master Open Alekhine Memorial 2018 in Russia, and finished as the vice champion of the international tournament.

The 17-year-old Iranian sportsman came second with the overall score of 6.5 points in the Chess960 section of the event.

Russian chess player Vladimir Blus stood on top of the podium. Alexander Trapisheko, also from Russia, finished in the third place.

Chess960, also called Fischer Random Chess (originally Fischerandom), is a variant of chess invented and advocated by former world chess champion Bobby Fischer, announced publicly in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on June 19, 1996.

It employs the same board and pieces as standard chess, but the starting position of the pieces on the players’ home ranks is randomized.

The random setup renders the prospect of obtaining an advantage through the memorization of opening lines impracticable, compelling players to rely instead on their talent and creativity.

The Master Open Alekhine Memorial 2018 kicked off in the Russian city of Voronezh on June 10, and will finish on June 12, 2018.



Iranian chess grandmaster Parham Maghsoodloo

## Iranian fans prepare for 2018 World Cup

**PLDC** — With three days remaining until the 2018 World Cup starts in Russia, the Iranian fans cannot wait to see Team Melli’s games in the competition.

The Iranian fans attend Iran national football team training camp demanding to take a photo with Team Melli’s players.

Iran will face Morocco on June 15 at St Petersburg.

Carlos Queiroz’s side, meanwhile, face Spain in Kazan on 20 June before meeting Cristiano Ronaldo’s Portugal in Saransk five days later.

The Iranian team is going to make history in the World Cup, booking a place in the next stage for the first time.

Tens of thousands of Iranian fans are in Moscow at the moment and some of them gather in Red Square while wearing Team Melli’s jersey and chanting Iran team.

Iran will participate at the 21st edition of the World Cup with “80 million people, one nation, one heartbeat,” slogan.

(Source: persianleague.com)





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Tragicomedy on Nasser ad-Din Shah to hit Tehran theater

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Director and playwright Dariush Ra'yat has returned after a 13-year hiatus to take a tragicomedy on Qajar king Nasser ad-Din Shah (1821-1900) to stage at the Sayeh Theater of Tehran's City Theater Complex this evening.

The story of the play “The Qajar Theater” is set in the last few months of Nasser ad-Din Shah's life when Anis ud-Doleh, the shah's favorite in harem, and Etemad us-Saltaneh, a leading politician of the royal court, plan to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Nasser ad-Din Shah's coronation by launching a theater in the harem, at which to stage plays such as Samuel Beckett's “Waiting for Godot”.

“The story is a fusion of real and fantasy events,” Ra'yat told the Persian service of MNA on Tuesday.

“This play actually reviews Nasser ad-Din Shah's character and the contradictions in his personality,” he added.

Parizad Seif, Behruz Purborji and Pejman Alipur are members of the cast for “The Qajar Theater”.

This is first time Ra'yat is staging a play after 13 years. He directed “A Night with Agha Mohammad Khan”, a tragicomedy about the founder of the Qajar dynasty, in Tehran in 2005.

Tehran Peace Museum to host seminar on war photography

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – A number of photojournalists and experts on photojournalism will come together at the Tehran Peace Museum on June 20 to attend a one-day seminar on war photography.

Saeid Sadeqi, Zanyar Boluri, Majid Dukhtehchizadeh and Sayyad Nabavi are among the photographers who will attend the seminar, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Tuesday.



Tehran Peace Museum

The seminar has been organized to discuss the role of war photography in promoting peace, the effects of war photography on the process of war and achieving peace.

Photos by American photojournalist and war photographer James Nachtwey will also be reviewed at the colloquium.

Nachtwey has received numerous awards including two World Press Photo of the Year awards and five Robert Capa Gold Medals.

The seminar has been organized by the museum in collaboration with the United Nations Information Center in Tehran.

Diplomats from the Dutch Embassy in Tehran and the United Nations Information Center in Tehran are expected to attend the session.

Iran unveils plan to boost its share in world film market

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – The Cinema Organization of Iran (COI) unveiled a comprehensive plan on Tuesday that aims to increase the country's share in the world film market.



The COI Comprehensive Plan for International Affairs created by the COI High International Council is composed of 22 articles, the organization announced in a press release.

One of the articles stresses the need for turning Iran into a regional hub where Iranian and foreign distributors and film studios can easily buy and sell their latest offerings.

Based on the plan, numerous short-term and mid-term international academic courses will be organized, and international distributors of Iranian films will be provided with support from Iran.

According to the plan, Iran also intends to expand relations with domestic and international film unions and guilds.

Vocalist Mohammad Motamedi to join European musicians at Dutch festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian vocalist Mohammad Motamedi will team up with a number of European musicians to give performances at the 2nd Dutch Edition of the Oriental Landscapes.

The Oriental Landscapes will open today running until June 25 in five cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam and Leiden.

Motamedi's first series of performances will be held on June 15 at the Duif Church in Amsterdam along with the Dutch Matangi Quartet, Calefax Ensemble as well as saxophonist and composer Maarten Ornstein, lutenist Mike Fentross, and Lebanese singer Rima Khcheich, the organizers have announced.

His second series of performances will be with the Rembrandt Frerichs Trio, as well as violinist Tony Overwater and drummer Vinsent Planjer on June 21 at the Korzo Theater in The Hague.

The Tivoli Vredenburg Music Complex in Utrecht will host Motamedi along with Calefax, Matangi and the Rembrandt Frerichs Trio for performances June 22.

The Oriental Landscapes is a festival aiming to enhance the link between masters of classical Oriental music traditions with a new generation of artists and composers. The festival also offers a series of international conferences.

It also introduces a global musical space bringing the East and West into an artistic dialogue.



Vocalist Mohammad Motamedi acknowledges the audience after a performance at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on February 25, 2016. (Tasnim/Mohammad Delkesh)

“Blockage” to compete in Filmfest Munchen

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – “Blockage”, an acclaimed drama by Iranian director Mohsen Qarai, will be competing in the 36th Munich International Film festival – Filmfest Munchen, which will run from June 28 to July 7.

The film, which shared the best film award in the New Currents category at the Busan International Film Festival with “After My Death” by Kim Uiseok from South Korea in 2017, will be screened in the International Independents competition, the organizers have announced.

The film is about Qasem, a young man who is working at Tehran Municipality and his job is to prevent vendors from selling their merchandise on the sidewalks. He's to be fired because of his secret deals with some of the vendors so he's looking for an-



A scene from “Blockage” by Iranian director Mohsen Qarai

other job as a truck driver. He's counting on his wife, Akram's patrimony to buy a truck, however, Akram believes they should buy a small house and leave Qasem's father's home. Nevertheless, Qasem's fighting with a vendor some days earlier creates an opportunity to overcome these problems.

The Munich festival in its Spotlight category will also screen Iranian director Asghar Farhadi's latest drama “Everybody Knows” that was shot in Spain with Oscar-winning couple Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem.

The festival, which will begin with the world premiere of Mackie Messer, Joachim Lang's cinematic adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's “Three Penny Opera”, is also scheduled to honor director Terry Gilliam and Oscar-winning actress and screenwriter Emma Thompson with lifetime achievement CineMerit Awards.

150 years on, “Little Women” and its author still resonate

**CONCORD, Mass. (AP)** — A century and a half before the #MeToo movement gave women a bold, new collective voice, Louisa May Alcott was lending them her own.

Society had far different expectations of women in 1867, when publisher Thomas Niles asked Alcott to write a “girls' story.” At a time when women were expected to marry, often did not hold employment and could not vote, Alcott had her doubts about the success of “Little Women.”

Since then, the coming-of-age book has been translated into more than 50 languages and made into films, a musical and a recently aired PBS “Masterpiece” miniseries. The novel constantly finds new audiences as women worldwide confront sexual misconduct, misogyny and pay inequity.

Mayela Boeder, 34, of Appleton, Wisconsin, read “Little Women” as a girl and thinks it's still relevant.

“You could say that strong females in literature, TV and every other medium have slowly shaped the minds of modern strong women,” she says.

“We grew up with Buffy, Hermione, Katnis, Jo, Lizzie Bennet, Sara Crewe, among others, and so we have almost been groomed to fight for what's right and to not let others take advantage of us.”

Alcott drew heavily from her experiences living in poverty with progressive parents Bronson and Abigail Alcott and three sisters in Concord, Massachusetts. Although her transcendentalist father led his family through 30 homes, one stands out as the place where “Little Women” was written: Orchard House.

Alcott was 26 when her family moved into the then-dilapidated house in 1858. The enterprising family turned the tenant



In this May 17, 2018 photo, Samuel Ruggerio, of Erie, Penn., front left, examines the desk where author Louisa May Alcott sat while writing the book “Little Women” at Orchard House, in Concord, Mass. (AP Photo/Steven Senne)

farmhouse, once slated for destruction, into a place where Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and other literary neighbors would drop by for intellectual discussions. Bronson encouraged his wife and daughters to join and built Louisa a desk at a time when writing was considered by scientists to be injurious to the female psyche.

Looking back, says Orchard House Executive Director Jan Turnquist, the Alcotts were feminists. “They believed all humans have agency,” she says.

She tells of how Louisa May Alcott was the first woman to register to vote in Concord in 1879, when Massachusetts gave women the right to vote in town elections on education and children issues.

In 1880, Alcott and 19 other women attended the Concord town meeting and cast their ballots. In a letter to periodical Woman's Journal, Alcott wrote of voting: “No bolt fell on our audacious heads, no earthquake shook the town.”

DC unveils special exhibits as “Hamilton” comes to town

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The blockbuster musical “Hamilton” is finally coming to the nation's capital, and the city is preparing in ways that only Washington can.

Lin-Manuel Miranda's genre-bending historical musical about the life of Alexander Hamilton is starting a three-month run at the Kennedy Center on Tuesday.

Hamilton didn't actually spend much of his life or professional career in Washington. The U.S. capital was in Philadelphia when he served as the nation's first treasury secretary, and the federal government didn't move to Washington until 1800, four years before his death.

However, the myriad museums of modern Washington have been preparing specialized exhibits designed to appeal to tourists and locals who can't get the tunes out of their heads.

“D.C. seems like the sort of town that's tailor-made for this sort of wonky, nerding out over a former secretary of the Treasury,” said Daniel Piazza, chief curator of stamp collections at the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum.

The Postal Museum has already launched an exhibit, “Alexander Hamilton: Soldier, Secretary, Icon,” that includes mail, portraits, and postage and revenue stamps reflective of Hamilton's life and career. But the real prize of the exhibit are the two flintlock pistols made of walnut, brass and gold that were used in the July 11, 1804, duel with Vice President Aaron Burr, which resulted in Hamilton's death.

The pistols are on loan from the private collection of JPMorgan Chase & Co. They will only be on display through June 24, although the museum's larger Hamilton exhibit will continue through next year.

The Library of Congress is unveiling its



Alexander Hamilton exhibit called “Alexander Hamilton: Soldier, Secretary, Icon” that include mail, portraits, and postage and revenue stamps reflective of Hamilton's life and career, at Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, Monday, June 11, 2018. (PA/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

own Hamilton display, drawing on its collection of more than 12,000 of Hamilton's papers and documents. Much of it will have direct connections and references that fans of the musical will recognize, according to curator Julie Miller. Miranda based his musical on a 2004 biography, “Alexander Hamilton” by Ron Chernow, which drew from much of the same material.

Miller said the exhibit includes a letter from Hamilton to his wife, Elizabeth Schuyler, in which he refers to her as “the best of wives and best of women” — a line quoted verbatim in the musical.

There's also material chronicling a historically important dinner meeting with Hamilton and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. That meeting is at the heart of the song “The Room Where It Happens.”

The Library of Congress is supplementing its physical exhibit by making a vast number of Hamilton-related papers accessible online.

U2 dedicates song to Anthony Bourdain at Apollo show

**NEW YORK (AP)** — U2 frontman Bono honored the late Anthony Bourdain toward the end of the band's special performance Monday at the Apollo Theater in Harlem.

Bono spoke of losing a “lot of inspiring, useful people” over the past few years “who gave up on their own life” alluding to the apparent suicides of musicians Chris Cornell and Chester Bennington, as well as fashion designer Kate Spade.

“And now this great storyteller, who I'm sure has stories he couldn't tell us. So for Anthony

Bourdain, and his friends and family this is a song inspired by a great, great, great friend of ours. His name is Michael Hutchence,” Bono said before launching into an impassioned version of “Stuck in a Moment You Can't Get Out Of.”

The Grammy-winning song about suicide was written by the band after INXS singer Hutchence was found dead in 1997 of an apparent suicide.

The 61-year old Bourdain was found dead of an apparent suicide last week in France.

As for the performance, the band took a break from their Experience and Innocence arena tour to play a special one-night show at the legendary theater for Sirius XM, subscribers. The invite-only show had a star-studded guest list, including tennis legend John McEnroe, rocker Jon Bon Jovi, E-Street band guitarist “Little Steven” Van Zandt, and New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft.

The band ripped through its 90 minute set, covering 18 songs, and maintaining enough energy to keep many of the nearly 1,500 on their feet for most of the night. On the floor, fans waved their arms and sang along from the

first chorus of opener, “I Will Follow” to the last encore of “Love Is Bigger Than Anything in Its Way.”

Never afraid to play songs from a new album, four came from “Experience.” But they played also included standards like “Pride (In the Name of Love),” “Vertigo,” and “Desire.”

They also dusted off a few gems that have not been heard yet on the tour, including “Angel of Harlem”, the band's homage to Billie Holiday. For that one, and a few others, the Sun Ra Arkestra backed them up.