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## Rouhani to Macron: Backing for JCPOA should lead to 'tangible measures'

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — In a phone conversation with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron late on Tuesday that lasted for an hour, President Hassan Rouhani said it is not possible for Iran to remain in the 2015 nuclear agreement if it cannot enjoy the deal's benefits.

"We should not let this great achievement of diplomacy [the Joint Compre-

hensive Plan of Action] be destroyed by unilateral actions and violation of others," Rouhani noted. Under the agreement, Iran is obliged to put cap on its nuclear enrichment activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

However, on May 8, President Donald Trump officially withdrew the U.S. from the UN-endorsed nuclear agreement and plans to reimpose sanctions on Iran. **→2**

## Iran's oil production up 6,000 bpd in May: OPEC

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — According to OPEC's latest monthly report published on June 12, oil production in Iran stood at about 3.829 million barrels per day (bpd) in May, an increase of 6,000 bpd from 3.823 million bpd in April, based on secondary sources.

The OPEC's report also announced

Iran's oil output based on direct communication. It said the country's oil production in May reached 3.806 million bpd, a 2,000 bpd increase from 3.804 million bpd in April.

Meanwhile, the report put the country's heavy oil price at \$72.15 in May, an increase of \$5.59 or 8.4 percent from \$66.56 in April. **→4**

## Yemen war: Saudi regime-led forces begin assault on Hudaydah

Forces backed by the House of Saud regime-led coalition have launched an offensive against Yemen's Red Sea port city of Hudaydah in defiance of warnings by the United Nations and international rights groups against the catastrophic repercussions of such a military action.

On Wednesday morning, Saudi regime-owned Al Arabiya TV network announced the beginning of the Hudaydah

operation, which the UN has warned could cause up to 250,000 deaths.

The Saudi regime-led military alliance is providing air cover to the operation.

Meanwhile, Arabic-language al-Masdar News has reported heavy Saudi regime-led airstrikes on Hudaydah as the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-backed troops stormed the Ansarullah (Houthi) positions just south of the city's airport. **→13**



**ARTICLE**  
**Abdouallah Shahbazi**  
Political analyst

## The 2018 Bilderberg Summit and Iran

On Sunday, June 10, 2018, the 66th Bilderberg Conference in Turin, Italy ended. The four day conference, began on June 7th, was held with high security and in total secrecy.

The Bilderberg Group, or the Bilderberg Club, founded 64 years ago (May 29, 1954), is the name of an institution consists of the most powerful financial and political figures in the world. The first meeting was held in the Bilderberg Hotel in the Netherlands and later was named after it.

The most prominent figures of this year's summit, was "the mastermind" Henry Kissinger, who in my opinion, is "the Supreme Master" of Bilderberg.

Representatives of the Total and Royal Dutch Shell, also attended the 2018 summit.

The chairman of the 2018 summit was French Henry de ... who is a member of the board of directors of the HSBC Banking Institutes, a bank established in the nineteenth century at the ports of Hong Kong and Shanghai. The Hong Kong-Shanghai Banking Complex, or the HSBC, is known as the world's largest private bank today, infamous for its mafia operations.

The presence of representatives from Total and Shell and the HSBC, whose related branches like Hinduja Bank and some private Iranian banks since the second half of the 1370s took over Iran's trade and finance, makes this meeting very important to us

Among the members of the meeting were two influential English journalists, Minton Badows, editor of the Economist weekly, and John Maycellusty, former economist editor and current editor of the Bloomberg. The importance of the Economist Group and its deep connection with the above-mentioned center, has always played a role in Iranian Economy.

The issues on the agenda in the 2018 Bilderberg Summit were as following:

Populism in Europe, the challenge of inequality, the future employment, artificial intelligence, the US congressional election prior to November 6, 2018, free trade, US global leadership, Russia, Quantum computer, Saudi Arabia and Iran, the world post-truth, and current affairs. **→13**

## Alphonso Lingis talks about "Irrevocable: A Philosophy of Mortality"

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**  
By Jalal Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Alphonso Lingis, professor emeritus of philosophy at Pennsylvania State University, says six topics are of fundamental importance in the conduct of our lives.

He adds that "Each of us undergoes chance events, strokes of good or bad luck, that disrupt the programs and plans we pursue."

Professor Alphonso Lingis in an interview with Tehran Times says about his new book. Following is the full story:

■ What has been your main question in the book of "Irrevocable: A Philosophy of Mortality"?

A: "Irrevocable" deals with six topics. 1) The weight of reality and the perception of weight. The shadows, reflections, halos, and reverberations that keep us captivated by the carpentry of things.

2) Our birth, the essential encounters in our lives, the crippling diseases and accidents, our death are determined by chance. What do we do when understanding determinism and de-



cision fail us?

3) In our culture we seek to manage emotions, sentiments, affects moods. What are the passions that dominated ancient cultures, and which we maintain, in our literature and culture and in our lives too?

4) What is the nature and role of belief, that is, commitment to the unverified and unverifiable?

5) We demand justice in our institutions and societies. The Khmer Rouge trial and truth and reconciliation commissions confront us with the

distinction and conflict between retributive and restorative justice.

6) When loss is absolute, we cannot recover what was lost or give meaning to the loss. We do find rituals that recognize it and respond to it.

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

A: These issues cannot be clarified simply by a priori argument. Not only phenomenological, but also anthropological, and psychological resources are called up in view of thinking in new ways. The book takes up these issues in the concrete events, encounters, and places in which they arose.

■ What was the necessity of writing this book?

A: These six topics are of fundamental importance in the conduct of our lives. Each of us undergoes chance events, strokes of good or bad luck, that disrupt the programs and plans we pursue.

Each of us suffers wrongs that are not compensated for by institutions of justice. Each of us suffers losses that cannot be recovered and that we cannot find meaning for.

## Israel, iron fist of U.S. interests in Middle East: John Steppling

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — American political analyst John Steppling says that the United States, for forty years, has subsidized, armed, and protected Israel which acts as the iron fist of U.S. interests in the Middle East.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, John Steppling who believes Israel is "an apartheid settler and neo-colonial state founded by Zionists", says the Israeli regime brags about its crimes against Palestinians without concerns about world opinion because it is protected.

The analyst also added that the Zionist prop-

aganda has been controlling the main stream narrative in Israeli-Palestinian conflict which presents Israel as the victim.

John Steppling is an American political analyst and author who has been interviewed by international news outlets such as Press TV for his comments on American foreign policy.

FNA has conducted an interview with John Steppling about Trump's relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem Al-Quds and possible motives behind the move and also the recent killings of Palestinian protesters by Israeli army.



© ISNA / Sare Tajalli

## The skill of decorating cloth in Kerman

An artisan completes a stunning piece of embroidery in her home in Kerman, southeastern Iran, June 12, 2018.

The skill of crafting embroideries with geometric patterns and vivid colors has passed down from generation to generation in the region.

Some 70,000 artists and artisans are currently working in 60 fields of handicrafts across Kerman province.

## Kim-Trump summit: From fire and fury to beef short ribs, sweet and sour crispy pork, and braised codfish

By Nima Chitsaz

After months of escalating tensions between arch foes North Korea and the United States, finally the presidents of the two countries met at the Capella Hotel in Singapore's Sentosa Island.

Since last year when Trump in a tweet, more than a year after former NBA hall of famer Dennis Rodman visited North Korea and watched a basketball exhibition with Kim said: 'Last place on Earth I want to go', referring to North Korea, there have been barrage of insults between the two leaders.

Generally speaking war, disrespect in any form and context, insult, threat, provocative moves and everything which is not of any help in bringing world nations together is not welcomed by sound logic, and probably nobody is willing to imply that, rather the meeting was a good political move, although experts believe the world has to wait and witness the outcome in long run.

However, the U.S. does not have a clean record of keeping promises and sticking to international agreements like the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change with Trump saying "The Paris accord will undermine (the U.S.) economy," and "puts (the U.S.) at a permanent disadvantage."

Another instance of the United States being untrustworthy is its unilateral withdrawal from the land mark nuclear deal signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3+3 group of states, namely Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the United States, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA.

Many world leaders said the JCPOA was the triumph of diplomacy, negotiations and logic, however, the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the deal.

Elsewhere and most recently was the U.S. strongman's behavior at the G7 meeting and the barbs trading between the U.S. and Canadian officials afterwards, which made German chancellor Angela Merkel say the world leaders have to respect each other and be more polite and British Prime Minister Theresa May saying the G7 meeting with Trump was difficult.

A meeting between two presidents trying to solve thorny issues is not bad at all but why this way and after so many ups and downs. Experts say there were many better ways to reach to this point and insist the world has to wait and see the outcome.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



### Rouhani felicitates new Italian, Spanish PMs

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday sent two separate messages to the new prime ministers of Italy and Spain to offer congratulations to them on their new post and also express hope for deepening ties in all fields of mutual interest, the official website of Iran's Foreign Ministry reported.

Constructive interaction and development of relations with the friendly country of Spain has been a priority for the Islamic Republic of Iran in the past decades, Rouhani's message to Spain's prime minister read.

In his message to the Italian prime minister, Rouhani hoped that "through political will and serious determination of the authorities of the two countries, bilateral, regional and international cooperation would further develop to serve mutual interests."



### Energy minister: Iranians will disappoint Netanyahu

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Reacting to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's offer to help Iranians overcome water shortage, Iran's energy minister said on Wednesday that Iranians will let the Israeli regime down as they have done during the past 40 years since the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Speaking after a cabinet meeting, Reza Ardakanian said the prime minister of the Israeli regime should know that Iranians have successfully managed to overcome their water shortages for thousands of years, Mehr reported.

Ardakanian said the Israeli regime has repeatedly ignored Arab countries' water right and has used water as a tool to pressure them in line with its illegitimate interests.



### MPs pass amendment bill on fighting forex smuggling

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran's lawmakers on Wednesday passed into law an amendment bill to combat the smuggling of foreign exchange, especially the U.S. dollar.

According to Mehr news agency, of the 220 present parliamentarians, 137 voted in favor of the bill.

Mohammadreza Pour Ebrahimi, a member of the Parliament Economic Committee, said the committee had consulted and held several meetings with different government bodies to tackle foreign exchange smuggling.

Ebrahimi said that they have joined hands with the government to combat the smuggling of foreign exchange more seriously.



### Iran seizes over a ton of opium in border province

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian border guards have seized over 1,400 kilograms of opium from drug traffickers in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, near the Pakistani border.

The border guards at the Saravan border seized the drugs from smugglers, who were trying to carry the cargo inside the country, the province's board guards commander Saeed Komeili said, media reported.

Komeili said the smugglers escaped after the incident, and that operations were underway to identify and arrest them.

According to official estimates, the fight against drug trafficking annually costs Iran about \$1 billion.



### Canada's Trudeau votes against relations with Iran

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — On Tuesday afternoon, Canada's Liberal cabinet rose to vote on a Conservative motion to reverse the country's long-stated goal to improve relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Toronto Sun reported.

The government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau decided to side with an opposition motion in parliament demanding that Ottawa "immediately cease all negotiations or discussions" on restoring diplomatic relations with Iran.

Trudeau campaigned on restoring diplomatic relations with Iran and this motion calls for the government to "abandon its current plan and immediately cease any and all negotiations or discussion with the Islamic Republic of Iran to restore diplomatic relations."



### Envoy urges enhanced Tehran- Baku customs ties

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Ambassador to Baku Javad Jahangirzadeh in a meeting with chairman of Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee Safar Mehdiyev on Tuesday called for enhancement of customs ties between the two neighboring countries.

Round the clock operation of Astara, Bileh Savar and Jolfa border crossings as of May 1 will help strengthen relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, IRNA quoted the diplomat as saying.

Mehdiyev, for his part, referred to the development of political, economic and cultural ties between the two countries, saying customs ties play an important role in enhancing bilateral relations.

# Zarif in Pretoria for talks with South African officials

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif visited South Africa on Tuesday evening at the head of a politico-economic delegation for talks with the country's top officials on bilateral relations and the future of the Iran nuclear deal following the U.S. withdrawal from the multilateral agreement.

Upon his arrival in Pretoria, Zarif described South Africa as "one of the close partners" of the Islamic Republic, saying Iranian delegates would hold talks with their South African counterparts on the expansion of bilateral relations, Press TV reported.

He also said after Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), all the remaining parties have announced their commitment to taking measures that would ensure Iran's economic benefits.



The European Union countries, along with the Russians and the Chinese, are working on the issue, he said, warning, however,

that the clock is ticking on the issue. Last month, U.S. President Donald Trump announced Washington's pullout

from the JCPOA, vowing to reinstate nuclear sanctions on Iran and impose "the highest level" of economic bans on the Islamic Republic. His secretary of state Mike Pompeo also threatened Iran with the "strongest sanctions in history" if it did not comply with a list of steep demands.

Zarif said Iran has yet to receive the "required operational package" that the remaining parties to JCPOA have promised to provide for Tehran to guarantee its economic benefits from the nuclear deal after the U.S. exit.

While in Pretoria, Foreign Minister Zarif met his South African counterpart Lindiwe Sisulu on Tuesday. He was slated to meet with other senior South African officials.

The top Iranian diplomat expressed hope that his discussions with South African officials would be constructive, serve the interests of both nations and help regional peace and stability.

## Rouhani to Macron: Backing for JCPOA should lead to 'tangible measures'



**1 →** Iran has warned the remaining parties to the nuclear agreement — the European Union, E3 (Germany, France and Britain), Russia and China — that if its interests are not guaranteed it will not remain in the deal.

Rouhani expressed hope that efforts to protect the JCPOA would be successful.

Supports for preserving the nuclear agreement "should be combined with actions and tangible measures", Rouhani stressed.

Macron said that France will remain committed to the nuclear deal.

"We all should make efforts to preserve the JCPOA, and through a little mistake not providing a 'golden opportunity' for those who seek to destroy this deal," he noted.

According to Reuters, the French president also updated his Iranian counterpart on "the progress in the work being done" from Europe's side.

On May 23, Leader of the Islamic Revolu-

tion Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a set of demands from Europe to save the nuclear deal. He warned that Iran would restart its nuclear activities if they failed to act swiftly.

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

**■ 'Iran's presence in Syria is upon Damascus request'**

Rouhani also told Macron that the presence of Iranian military advisors in Syria is upon a request by the Damascus government to fight terrorism.

He also said that Iran welcomes continuation of consultations with France on fighting terrorism and restoring peace and stability to Syria.

## Iran says will restart enrichment at Fordow if nuclear deal falls apart



**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran will begin the enrichment of uranium at its Fordow facility and will install new nuclear equipment at its Natanz plant if the 2015 nuclear agreement is nixed, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has affirmed.

The fate of the 2015 nuclear deal is unclear after the United States withdrew from it. The other signatory nations - Russia, China, Germany, Britain and France - are trying to salvage the accord, which imposed curbs on Iran's nuclear program in return for a lifting of economic sanctions.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the AEOI spokesman, said in an interview with the Young Journalists' Club published on Wednesday that nuclear work will accelerate on the orders of the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei if the remaining parties fail to keep the agreement alive.

He did not specify what kind of new

equipment might be installed at Natanz.

"Currently the Supreme Leader has ordered that the programs be carried out within the parameters of the nuclear deal," Kamalvandi stated. "And when he gives the order we will announce the programs for operating outside of the nuclear deal for reviving Fordow," he added.

Ali Akbar Salehi, the AEOI chief, announced last week that Iran had begun work on a facility to construct advanced centrifuges at Natanz.

Kamalvandi accused the United States and other Western countries of applying double standards by opposing Iran's peaceful nuclear program, while accepting the nuclear arms program of Tehran's foe Israel.

"The West doesn't criticize the Zionist regime and have even helped them," Kamalvandi lamented, adding, "Without the help of the West and America this regime could never have obtained nuclear weapons."

# Tom Donilon: Exiting Iran deal is 'worst mistake' since Iraq War

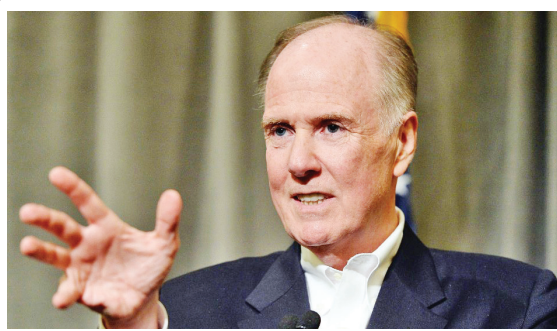
**By staff and agency**

Tom Donilon, a former Obama national security adviser, has said that U.S. President Donald Trump's foreign policy move in pulling out of the 2015 nuclear deal as the "worst mistake" since the war in Iraq.

"I think the pulling out of the Iran agreement is the worst mistake the United States has made in the Middle East since the Iraq War," he told CNN in an interview published on Monday.

He said leaving the nuclear deal comes "at a high cost, including with allies in Europe".

On May 8, U.S. President Donald Trump officially withdrew from the UN-endorsed nuclear agreement



## Mogherini: EU would guarantee nuclear deal implementation

**By staff and agency**

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said on Tuesday that the European Union will continue supporting the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

In her speech at the European Parliament, she said that the EU will continue supporting the JCPOA on the simple pragmatic reason "there is no better alternative", according to Business Standard.

She said it is essential for the EU's security and for the security in the region to continue implementing the agreement, and the EU would guarantee this, regardless of the U.S. withdrawal.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the JCPOA and vowed to reimpose sanctions against Iran on May 8.

Mogherini warned the U.S. withdrawing from the JCPOA and reimposing all secondary sanctions are "extremely problematic"

and needed to be addressed by the EU, its member states and the rest of the international community.

Elsewhere, she noted that Iran has continued fulfilling its commitments under the deal.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has issued 11 reports each time confirming that Iran is abiding by the terms of the agreement since the 2015 nuclear agreement went into force in January 2016.

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

In a phone call late on Tuesday, President Hassan Rouhani told his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron that statements of European support for the nuclear deal "should be combined with actions and tangible measures."

Macron responded to Rouhani by saying



that he "hoped that Iran, for its part, will fulfill its obligations under the nuclear agreement without any ambiguity," Reuters reported.

The French president also updated his Iranian counterpart on "the progress in the work being done" from Europe's side.

In a report on its website on May 18, Government Europa said the European Commission has taken new steps to protect European companies investing in Iran from U.S. sanctions, as part of its commitment to the JCPOA.

It said the European Commission re-

ceived the unanimous backing of EU heads of government to proceed with proposals made by commission president Jean-Claude Juncker and Mogherini, which aim to protect European companies investing in Iran through action on four fronts.

The commission has launched a process to activate the Blocking Statute, which forbids EU companies from complying with extraterritorial effects of U.S. sanctions and allows them to recover damages arising from such sanctions. It has also facilitated the ability of the European Investment Bank to support investment in small and medium-sized enterprises in Iran.

Additional efforts will encourage European companies to pay money to Iran through transfers with the Central Bank of Iran, and will mobilise financial assistance through the Development Co-operation or Partnership Instrument, to increase ongoing sectoral co-operation.

## Iran calls Paris hostage taking 'inhuman'

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has condemned a hostage taking incident in Paris as "inhuman" and "hostile".

The comments by the ministry spokesman came after a gunman who took two people hostage on Tuesday demanded to be put in touch with the Iranian embassy to deliver a message to the French government.

"The hostage incident in Paris is inhuman and Iran con-

demns it," Qassemi said late on Tuesday, ISNA reported.

He added that the Iranian embassy in France is ready to cooperate with the French government.

Police arrested the gunman and rescued the hostages.

"The individual has been arrested and the hostages are out of danger," Interior Minister Gerard Collomb said on Twitter.

There were no immediate details on the age, appearance or nationality of the hostage taker, Reuters reported.





# Iraq's Sadr teams up with Fatah alliance

Iraqi cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and head of the country's Badr Organization Hadi al-Amiri have announced a political alliance between their parties.

The announcement was made on Tuesday during a joint press conferences held in the Iraqi city of Najaf.

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-Amiri, and Abadi's Nasr (Victory) coalition finished second and third with 47 and 42 seats, respectively.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi says that he is opposed any rerun of the May 12 parliamentary election, and warned that those who try to disrupt the political process would be punished.

"The matter is exclusively in the hands of the judiciary, not politicians. The government and parliament don't have the power to cancel the election," he said.

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

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 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-powered 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.

At the time, Sadr 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 rulership," the 44-year-old cleric addressed the entire Iraqi nation in a statement published by his office on Mon-

day, 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?"

(Source: Press TV)

## Greek PM faces domestic backlash over Macedonia name deal

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras was accused on Wednesday of surrendering part of his nation's identity, as a deal he struck to settle a name dispute with Macedonia prompted a barrage of criticism from opposition politicians and media.

Under the agreement announced by Athens and Skopje on Tuesday, the Balkan state known as Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" would henceforth be called the "Republic of Northern Macedonia".

The accord would open the way for the small nation's eventual membership of the European Union and NATO, currently blocked by Greece's objections to its current name.

But conservative opposition leader Kyr-iakos Mitsotakis called it "deeply problematic", because the majority of Greeks were against it and Tsipras lacked the political legitimacy to sign it.

"We are in a situation that is unprecedented in Greece's constitutional history. A prime minister without a clear parliamentary mandate willing to commit the country to a reality which will not be possible to change," Mitsotakis said.

The accord requires ratification by both countries' parliaments, and the junior partner in Greece's coalition, the right wing Independent Greeks party, has said it does not back any



deal that gives away the name Macedonia.

That chimes in with the view of many ordinary Greeks, who feel the name implies territorial claims on a northern Greek province of the same name, the birthplace of national hero Alexander the Great.

The name dispute has soured bilateral

relations since 1991, when Greece's northern neighbor declared its independence from former Yugoslavia under the name Republic of Macedonia.

In a front-page editorial conservative daily Eleftheros Typos called the agreement "the surrender of the Macedonian identity and

language," while center-right Kathimerini referred to "a deal with gaps and question marks".

Responding to the conservatives, Deputy Foreign Minister George Katrougkalos said the deal would put an end to the perpetuation of the name Macedonia as an identifier for the Balkan state.

"If they believe this [that the government does not have the legitimacy], they have the means ... to question it with a no-confidence motion. Why aren't they doing it?" Katrougkalos told Greek Skai TV.

Centre-left daily Ta Nea newspaper said that, while the historian of the future would have the luxury of time to assess the deal, "until then one must keep in mind that there are no compromises without concessions."

Activist group The Committee for The Hellenic Identity of Macedonia said it would organize protests in Athens and northern Greece if the deal went ahead and urged lawmakers not to ratify it.

"We peacefully assert that they have no right to sign [a deal] against Greek people's will," they wrote on Facebook.

Mikis Theodorakis, who composed the music to the film 'Zorba the Greek', said the agreement would "stigmatize us forever" if it went ahead.

(Source: Reuters)

## China: U.S.-North Korea summit offers no lesson for Taiwan ties

A warming of ties between the United States and North Korea does not mean China will reach out to Taiwan for a similar summit, the Chinese government said on Wednesday.

Singapore, the site of this week's historic summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, is also where Chinese President Xi Jinping held a landmark meeting with Taiwan's then president Ma Ying-jeou in 2015.

But relations between China and Taiwan, which China claims as its sacred territory, have worsened since.

China's hostility has risen after the self-ruled island elected Tsai Ing-wen as president in 2016. China says Tsai,

who leads the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, has refused to recognize its "one China" principle.

Tsai says she wants to maintain the status quo but will not be bullied by China and will defend Taiwan and its democracy.

Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, dismissed the suggestion that the Trump-Kim summit could lead to a similar thawing between China and Taiwan.

"The Taiwan issue is purely an internal Chinese affair. Its nature is entirely different to North Korea-U.S. relations," Ma told a regular news briefing in response to a question.

"Taiwan and the mainland both belong to one China, and relations across the Taiwan Strait are not state-to-state ties."

The 2015 Xi-Ma summit was held on the political basis of opposing Taiwan independence and showed both sides of the Taiwan Strait had the ability and wisdom to resolve their own problems, Ma said, adding that any improvement in ties depended on Taiwan's ruling party.

Taiwan is China's most sensitive territorial issue and a potentially dangerous military flashpoint. China has ramped up its military presence around Taiwan in the past year, including flying bomber jets around the island.

(Source: Reuters)

## Trump trade adviser Navarro sorry after saying there's a 'special place in hell' for Trudeau

Peter Navarro, a White House trade adviser, apologized on Tuesday after saying "there's a special place in hell" for Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who is in a trade dispute with President Donald Trump.

"In conveying that message, I used language that was inappropriate and basically lost the power of that message," Navarro said at the Wall Street Journal's annual CFO Network conference. "I own that. That was my mistake, those were my words."

Asked if he was apologizing for the comments, Navarro said, "yeah, absolutely."

Following the G7 summit in Quebec, Navarro told "Fox News Sunday" that "there's a special place in hell for any foreign leader that engages in bad faith diplomacy with President Donald J. Trump and then tries to stab him in the back on the way out the door."

He added, "Those are my words, but they're the sentiment that was on Air Force One after that."



Navarro's comments on Sunday were part of the White House's continued criticism of Trudeau after the prime minister announced that Canada would impose retaliatory measures to answer Trump's tariffs and warned

that Canada would not be "pushed around."

Larry Kudlow, Trump's top economic adviser, echoed Navarro during an interview on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday, saying that Trudeau's comments amounted

to a "betrayal."

The following day, Navarro's remarks brought swift criticism from Republicans on Capitol Hill.

Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch told CNN on Monday that Navarro "should have kept his big mouth shut because I don't think that helps us inform policy and I think frankly it was out of line."

"It's an awful way to treat your allies," Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake told CNN, adding that he doesn't believe he's "ever seen a statement like that against any of our worst enemies, let alone our allies."

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz told CNN that he doesn't think anyone should be "using overheated rhetoric."

White House legislative affairs director Marc Short also sought to distance himself from Navarro's comments and told CNN's John Berman in an interview on Monday that "those are words that I would not have chosen."

(Source: CNN)

## Israeli lethal force in Gaza may be war crime: HRW

Human Rights Watch alleges that Israel's use of lethal force against Palestinian demonstrators in the Gaza Strip in recent weeks may constitute war crimes.

The statement was issued Wednesday ahead of an emergency UN General Assembly meeting to vote on a resolution condemning Israel's use of force.

Palestinians have held near-weekly protests since March 30, calling for a "right of return" to ancestral homes now in Israel. At least 120 Palestinians have been killed and over 3,800 wounded by Israeli fire in protests along the border.

■ **UN vote on resolution condemning Israeli massacre in Gaza**

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) held a vote on a draft resolution condemning Israel's brutal crackdown against Palestinian protesters in the Gaza Strip, which has killed more than a 100 Palestinians in a little over two months.

The vote, which held later on Wednesday, was called by the Palestinians and its supporters at the world body after the United States used its veto power to block the a similar Kuwait-drafted resolution at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on June 1.

The new Arab-backed draft urges Israeli forces to stop "any excessive, disproportionate, and indiscriminate force" against Palestinians.

At least 131 Palestinians have been killed and 13,900 others wounded by Israeli forces since March 30, when the regime ordered a crackdown on weekly Gaza rallies promoting Palestinians' right to return to their homeland.

The draft asks UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to make proposals within 60 days "on ways and means for ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation," including "recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism."

It calls for "immediate steps towards ending the closure and the restrictions imposed by Israel on movement and access into and out of the Gaza Strip."

The U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, however, called the proposed resolution "a fundamentally imbalanced text that ignores basic truths about the situation in Gaza."

"If we are to truly work for the protection of the Palestinian people, the international community must condemn the malign behavior of Hamas without delay," she wrote in a letter to diplomatic missions at the world body, the DPA reported.

She was referring to the Palestinian resistance movement, which has been governing and defending the coastal sliver against repeated Israeli wars and incessant airstrikes.

The U.S. envoy urged UN member states to support a U.S. amendment, which condemns Hamas. The measure will be put to vote at the Assembly before the pro-Palestine resolution.

■ **Under Israel pressure, French mayor forced to remove pro-Palestine street sign**

Meantime, under pressure from Tel Aviv, the mayor of a Paris suburb has removed the sign for a street newly renamed "Nakba Lane," a term used by Palestinians to refer to their forcible eviction by Israel from their homeland in 1948.

Bezons Mayor Dominique Lesparre had unveiled the "Nakba Lane" plaque on Monday in remembrance of Nakba (Catastrophe) Day, which is marked by Palestinians annually on May 15.

In 1948, when Israel declared its existence, some 700,000 Palestinians were driven out of their homes and scattered across refugee camps in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip and neighboring countries.

This year, Gaza saw its deadliest day since Israel's 2014 war on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Nakba Day, with Israeli forces killing dozens of Palestinians.

The street sign read, "In memory of the expulsion of 800,000 Palestinians and the destruction of 532 villages in 1948 by the war criminal David Ben-Gurion for the creation" of Israel, referring to Israel's first prime minister.

(Source: agencies)

## Italy threatens to cancel Conte-Macron meet unless France apologizes

## Italy summons French ambassador amid migrant row

Italy's Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said Wednesday that without an "official apology" from France, a planned meeting between Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday should be cancelled.

"If an official apology doesn't arrive, Prime Minister Conte would be right not to go to France," Salvini told reporters after demanding that France take in more migrants.

Macron had blasted Italy for its "cynicism and irresponsibility" in refusing to welcome 629 migrants left stranded on a French charity's rescue ship in the Mediterranean before Spain agreed to take them in. Gabriel Attal, the spokesman for Macron's party, called Italy's actions "nauseating".

Italy's Foreign Affairs Minister Enzo Moavero Milanesi summoned the French ambassador to Rome over the comments on Wednesday, saying in a statement that "the Italian government considers unacceptable the words publicly pronounced yesterday in Paris".

Milanesi added that the comments made by France were "compromising relations between Italy and France".

France's foreign ministry responded by saying that it is "perfectly aware" of the pressure on Italy as it copes with an influx of migrants from Africa, adding it is "committed to cooperation and dialogue" with Rome.

Salvini's far-right League party campaigned on taking a hard line on migrants ahead of March's election and rose to power as part Italy's euroskeptic, populist government that took office this month. Also on Wednesday, Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said that the hardline interior ministers of Austria, Germany and Italy have formed an "axis of the willing" to combat illegal immigration into the EU.

(Source: AFP)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	99146.3
IFX	1153.75

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,2700 rials
EUR	49,647 rials
GBP	56,486 rials
AED	11,510 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	66.01/b
Brent	75.79/b
OPEC Basket	73.96/b
Gold	\$1,295.70 /oz
Silver	\$16.95/oz
Platinum	\$898.60/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran's oil production up 6,000 bpd in May: OPEC

**1 →** The report put average Iranian heavy crude price at \$65.95 since beginning of the 2018 up to the report publishing day. According to OPEC, oil demand in Iran decreased by about 30,000 bpd in April while the demand in other Middle Eastern neighbors like UAE and Kuwait increased.



In its previous monthly market review published in May, OPEC reported that Iran's oil output increased by 10,000 bpd in April compared to March. The country produced 3.813 million barrels per day of crude oil in March, the report read.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Stock market index closes at near 100,000 points

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange **d e s k** (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) gained 2,767 points to 99,146 on Wednesday, IRNA reported. As reported, 1.66 billion securities worth 4.355 trillion rials (about \$103.19 million) were traded through 121,965 deals in a day. Also, IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), rose 37 points to stand at 1,153 points on Wednesday. As reported, 412 million securities worth 1.856 trillion rials (about \$43.98 million) were traded in a day.



Copper anode, cathode output increases in 2 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Production of copper anode and copper cathode in Iran rose 39 percent and 28 percent, respectively, in Iran during the two-month period from March 21 to May 21 in this year from the same time of the past year. As Shata news agency reported, some 45,274 tons of copper anode and 32,464 tons of copper cathode were produced in the two-month time of this year.



TPO to dispatch trade, marketing delegation to Hong Kong in mid-August

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran' Trade Promotion **d e s k** Organization (TPO) plans to dispatch a trade and marketing delegation to Hong Kong from August 16 to 20 to visit a food expo organized by Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC). The delegates will have a chance for B2B meetings with the businessmen of Hong Kong and also a meeting with directors of Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce (HKGCC) on the sidelines of the event, the official website of TPO reported. The food expo is a popular summer event, and featuring a trade hall and a public hall, it serves a wide variety of quality food products from all over the world.

India's oil imports from Iran rise to highest since 2016

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — India's **d e s k** imports of oil from Iran increased to about 705,000 barrels per day (bpd) in May, which is the highest level since 2016, Reuters reported citing the data from shipping and industry sources. The rise in oil imports came as refiners raised purchases despite the U.S. sanctions against Tehran, the report said. Imports of Iranian oil by India, which is Iran's second-biggest buyer of crude after China rose by 10.2 percent from the previous month

and were about 45 percent more than a year ago, the data showed. According to Shana, Iran's oil exports hit 2.7 million bpd in May, representing a record high since the lifting of international sanctions on Tehran in 2016. Indian state refiners had cut oil imports from Iran in the 2017/18 financial year because of a dispute over development rights for a giant gas field. However, the refiners had drawn plans to raise imports in the current fiscal year from April



after Iran agreed to steep shipping discounts. Iran remained the third-biggest oil supplier to India last month behind Iraq and Saudi Arabia, the data showed, with the United Arab Emirates having replaced Venezuela as the fourth-biggest supplier.

Economic growth rate of 6.6% expected for China in 2018

China's economic growth rate is expected to be 6.6 percent in 2018, as revealed by the latest investigation of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences or CASS, Yicai.com reported Tuesday. About 55 percent of the economists surveyed believe the economic growth rate of the second quarter of this year will remain the same as the first quarter of 2018, according to the investigation published on the China Economist, a periodical from the Institute of Industrial Economics of CASS. The predictions for the average growth rates of China's economy in 2018 are 6.6 percent from economists in eastern China, 6.7 percent from those in central China, and 6.5 percent from those in western China, with the average prediction nationwide being 6.6 percent, the report said. About 55 percent of economists participating in the investigation believe commodity price levels will increase compared with the same period last year and 25 percent of them believe they will remain the same.



The China Economist commodity price index of the second quarter of this year is 135, 9 percentage points lower than last quarter, indicating that the increasing trend of commodity price levels will slow. Meanwhile, about 70 percent of the economists believe the pressure of overcapacity will be relieved but it will still

Euro area dealt spate of weak economic cards as ECB eyes exit

A slump in euro-area industrial production is adding to a series of underwhelming economic data before a European Central Bank meeting that may set the course for future stimulus. Output dropped 0.9 percent in April, weighed down by a plunge in energy, Eurostat said on Wednesday. Production fell in the region's four biggest economies and the overall decline exceeded the 0.7 percent forecast in a Bloomberg survey.

A spate of numbers have defied expectations, suggesting the 19-nation economy isn't likely to match last year's rapid pace of expansion and might even slow down considerably. On top of that, there are uncertainties ranging from Italian politics to trade tensions that intensified during a meeting of Group of Seven leaders at the weekend. More prominent global risks already caught the Governing Council's attention at its last policy meeting in April and updated forecasts due on Thursday will show how they affect growth and inflation in the months and years ahead. In March, the ECB predicted a 2.4 percent expansion for 2018, matching last year's rate, with inflation averaging 1.4 percent. So far, officials have underlined the robust and broad-based economic upswing and reiterated their commitment to start a discussion this week on how to scale back monetary support, though there's no guarantee a decision will be made. In spite of the latest slowdown, economists predict asset purchases will end this year. One reason for their relative optimism has been highlighted by ECB chief economist Peter Praet, who suggested late last month that the soft patch probably had "a lot to do with supply constraints." Not only Germany -- with record-low



unemployment -- is running at full tilt. Other countries are also testing their limits. The European Commission concluded in its most recent forecast that momentum would take a hit in some places "as capacity constraints make themselves felt and labor market slack is absorbed." In a sign that companies are stepping up investment to meet increased demand, output of capital goods surged 1.9 percent in April, the most in five months. A separate report showed employment jumped 0.4 percent in the first quarter. Euro-area inflation accelerated more than expected last month to a level effectively in line with the ECB's goal of below but close to 2 percent. While energy was the main reason for the pickup, economists see underlying cost pressures firming as well. IHS Markit, which compiles gauges for manufacturing activity, also noted increases in the backlog of work and higher input costs. The fast rate of growth experienced late last year "couldn't continue," Sharon Bell, senior European equity strategist at Goldman Sachs said in a television interview with Bloomberg's Francine Lacqua on June 5. "A little bit of a slowdown from that level is what we'd want to see, and that is exactly what we've had in the first quarter. You've still got pretty good growth." (Source: Bloomberg)

OPEC will squeeze oil buffer to historic lows with an output hike

The oil industry will face the biggest squeeze on its spare production capacity in more than three decades if OPEC and its allies agree next week to hike crude output, leaving the world more at risk of a price spike from any supply disruption. Spare capacity is the extra production oil producing states can bring on stream and sustain at short notice, providing global markets with a cushion in the event of natural disaster, conflict or any other cause of an unplanned supply outage. That buffer could shrink from more than 3 percent of global demand now to about 2 percent, its lowest since at least 1984, if the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and other producers decide to increase output when they meet on June 22-23, U.S. bank Jefferies said. "You would essentially be taking 3.2 million barrels per day (bpd) of spare capacity down to approximately 2 million bpd," Jefferies analyst Jason Gammel said, adding global demand was 100 million bpd. Some analysts say spare capacity could even fall below 2 percent, after years of low oil prices drove down investment in new production across the industry. Saudi Arabia which has indicated its sup-

port for hiking output at next week's meeting in Vienna, has said it is alert to the potential squeeze on the market.

"We are concerned about tight spare capacity nowadays," Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih told Reuters last month, although he also said the industry was in "better shape" than in 2016 when oil prices plunged below \$30 a barrel. OPEC and its allies have been curbing supply since January 2017 to boost oil prices and cut bloated global inventories. The price of crude has since surged, climbing above \$80 a barrel last month, while inventories have also fallen. But falling inventories, which have now dropped back to around their five-year average in industrialized nations, adds to the conundrum facing OPEC. "Today we no longer have an inventory cushion or a large spare capacity," Claudio Descalzi, chief executive of Italy's Eni, said in January. "In this context, any geopolitical event can create a price spike." Oil prices have faced one jolt already this year. A U.S. decision to pull out from an international nuclear deal with Iran and reimpose sanctions helped prices climb to their highest since 2014. Sliding Venezuelan

Oil prices are unlikely to increase as 'sharply' from now on, IEA says

The International Energy Agency (IEA) believes a recent spike in the oil price could soon start to ease, helping to alleviate concerns that surging prices could hurt demand and global economic growth. "Prices are unlikely to increase as sharply as they did from mid-2017 onwards and thus the dampening effect on demand will be reduced," the Paris-based organization said in its latest monthly report published Wednesday. Rising oil prices have created question marks over the strength of demand, but the IEA left its oil demand growth forecast for 2019 largely unchanged, at 1.4 million barrels a day (mb/d), similar to this year's level. However, it cautioned that there are possible downside risks to the demand outlook, including "the possibility of higher prices, a weakening of economic confidence, trade protectionism and a potential further strengthening of the U.S. dollar." In terms of supply, the IEA revised upwards its estimate for 2018 non-OPEC production growth to 2 mb/d and said 2019 would also see what it called "bumper growth" of 1.7 mb/d. Most of that non-OPEC supply growth would come from the U.S., it said. The IEA's latest report comes amid uncertainty over the amount of oil production we can expect to see from major producers in coming months. OPEC and non-OPEC producers including Russia are continuing with a deal to curb their supply, but the strategy is seen to have been effective with Brent and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) now trading around \$75 and \$66, respectively. The OPEC and non-OPEC producers agreed back in November 2016 to curb supply in order to boost then-low oil prices.



es. There are now fears that prices could rise steeply if supplies are disrupted from OPEC members Venezuela and Iran. The former is experiencing economic turmoil and the latter is facing a re-imposition of sanctions after the U.S. withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal. OPEC and non-OPEC producers are meeting in Vienna on June 22 to discuss the supply situation. The encounter could be fractious with arguments expected between producers over whether to increase production or maintain supply as it is -- given rising prices and potential supply disruptions. There is also the specter of competition from U.S. shale oil producers and a reluctance to cede more market share to them. Saudi Arabia and Russia are reportedly ready to increase oil output, while others like Iran and Iraq are against such a move. The IEA said that, for its part, it had looked at a scenario (not a forecast, it emphasized) that by the end of next year output from these two countries could be 1.5 mb/d lower than it is today. It said Middle East OPEC producers could make up for the loss and increase production by about 1.1 mb/d. "And there could be more output from Russia on top of the increase already built into our 2019 non-OPEC supply numbers," it added. (Source: CNBC)

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), which defines it as production that can be brought online for 30 days and sustained for at least 90 days, put OPEC's spare capacity at 1.91 million bpd in the first quarter. Based on the EIA definition, Robert McNally at consultancy Rapidan Energy Group said Saudi Arabia, Russia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates together had spare capacity of about 2.3 million bpd. "So were they to raise by 1 million bpd, then 1.3 million bpd is left, scraping the low end of the range historically and uncomfortably tight given the high and rising geopolitical disruption risk," McNally said. But OPEC, Russia and others have said any increase in output would be made gradually. Consultancy Energy Aspects said Persian Gulf OPEC members would likely add less than 1 million bpd immediately, rising to about 1.5 million bpd in three to six months. Energy Aspects analyst Sam Alderson said he expected OPEC and Russia to add about 500,000 bpd of production in the second half of 2018, which would reduce spare capacity as a percentage of demand to about 1.75 percent by December 2018. (Source: Reuters)





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## Congress splits over F-35 sale to Turkey

By Bryant Harris

Congress is hamstrung over what to do about the growing number of U.S. grievances against Turkey.

Senate debate ahead of this week's vote on annual defense legislation has laid bare deep divisions among lawmakers who broadly agree that Congress should push back against Ankara's moves to imprison a U.S. pastor and buy Russian weapons. The dispute is fueled in part by competing parochial interests pitting U.S. defense industry jobs against human rights concerns, with a multibillion dollar deal to sell more than 100 F-35 jets to Turkey hanging in the balance.

Wary of Turkey's impending purchase of the Russian S-400 missile defense system and its detention of Pastor Andrew Brunson, senators have settled on compromise language that could pave the way for Ankara's expulsion from the F-35 coproduction program while temporarily halting the transfer of the aircraft to the Turkish government. The provision falls short of the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act, which passed 351-66 last month with language mandating a temporary hold on all major defense sales to Turkey, including F-35 fighter jets.

Turkey's toughest critics on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sens. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., sought to ban the F-35 transfers during the panel's closed-door markup of the bill last month. Brunson is a constituent of Tillis, who traveled to Turkey to attend the minister's trial earlier this year.

"What we were trying to do is to address some of the concerns that were expressed on the committee [during markup]," Tillis told Al-Monitor. "That's what we did. And it's actually very strong language. It's a good amendment as it stands, but we're going to continue to increase the pressure on what I believe is a political hostage situation in Turkey."

The compromise came about following pushback from senators, notably Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, who worried about the impact on the U.S. defense sector. The F-35s are jointly produced by Lockheed Martin, the nation's top defense contractor, in Cruz's home state, in conjunction with Turkey and seven other countries.

"I think banning the F-35s would be a mistake," Cruz told Al-Monitor. "I do think we should be using a host of sanctions and economic and diplomatic leverage against Turkey, but I think stopping the sale of F-35s is cutting off our nose to spite our face and that would be a mistake."

Political contributions compiled by [opensecrets.org](http://opensecrets.org) show that Lockheed Martin Political Action Committees donated more than \$29,000 to Cruz this election cycle, more than it did to all but two other senators, while Rep. Kay Granger, R-Texas, who represents the district where Lockheed produces the F-35, received \$69,000. Lockheed Martin also spent more than \$14 million lobbying Congress and the executive branch last year, public disclosures show.

In addition to general concerns about interoperability issues with NATO defense architecture, the Trump administration has raised concerns that the S-400 sale would allow Russia to gather valuable intelligence about the costly stealth fighter aircraft. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wess Mitchell first warned that the S-400 sale could "adversely impact" Turkey's participation in the F-35 program during testimony on Capitol Hill in April.

The Senate compromise settles for a temporary F-35 ban, which would remain in place until the secretary of defense submits to Congress "a plan to remove the government of the Republic of Turkey from participation in the F-35 program." The plan must include a timeline for Turkey's removal from the program and the "costs associated with replacing tooling and other manufacturing materials held by Turkish industry."

Ten Turkish companies work with Lockheed Martin to produce the jets, some of which are currently the sole producer of essential parts in the supply chain. Ayesas, for instance, is the only supplier of two major F-35 components — the missile remote interface unit and the panoramic cockpit display. Turkey also produces F135 engines to power the aircraft.

Turkey has ordered more than 100 F-35s, the first batch of which is slated for delivery later this month, according to Turkish media reports. Neither Lockheed Martin nor the Turkish Embassy in Washington responded to Al-Monitor's requests for comment.

The Senate is also asking the Defense Department to brief Congress on its wind-down plan, including "a component-level description of the current and planned supply chain contributions of Turkey to the F-35 program" and "any components for which Turkey is a sole or majority supplier, or where the removal of components of Turkish manufacture would create significant or lasting disruption to the F-35 program."

Tillis acknowledged the supply chain concerns even as he pushes to include his original language as a floor amendment to the defense bill this week.

"I'm actually worried that they are such a critical component of the supply chain without any immediate resiliency," Tillis told Al-Monitor. "I think that this has really raised a number of valid questions about do we really have a resilient supply chain when we may need to increase production."

Tillis' original bill would have outright banned the sale of F-35s to Turkey unless the president certified that Ankara not degrading NATO interoperability or "wrongfully or unlawfully detaining one or more U.S. citizens" — clear references to the S-400 sale and Brunson's incarceration. The House version of the defense bill would ban the sale of F-35s and other aircraft, helicopters and missiles to Ankara until the Defense Department gives Congress an assessment of the impact that the S-400 sale would have on U.S. weapons systems "jointly operated with Turkey."

Congress passed a new round of sanctions on Russia last year, which requires secondary sanctions on countries that engage in "significant transactions" with Russian defense firms. The State Department has designated the firm producing the S-400, Almaz-Aneity, as one of the sanctionable companies but Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that he hadn't yet determined whether the sanctions would apply to Turkey when he testified before Congress last month. The Senate bill also contains a nonbinding provision urging the president to implement the sanctions on Turkey should Ankara proceed with the S-400 purchase.

(Source: Al Monitor)

# Saudi-UAE intervention in Jordan has raised suspicions across the region

By Thembisa Fakude

King Abdullah of Jordan met with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Jun 11, 2018 to discuss the ongoing protests in his country. Jordan has been experiencing sustained protests mainly in the streets of its capital Amman since 30 May 2018. The protests were triggered by the government's plans to increase income tax "at a time when ordinary Jordanians were already struggling with inflation".

These events led to the sacking of Prime Minister Hani Mulki by King Abdullah on 4 June 2018. The government has also moved swiftly and cancelled plans to increase taxes and other scheduled austerity measures in order to quell further protests. Omar Razzaz, the new prime minister who replaced Mulki, was given the difficult task of stabilizing the economy and essentially bringing peace to the streets of Amman.

The three Persian Gulf countries pledged to provide Jordan with a \$2.5 billion aid. The money is expected to provide a lifeline to the country as it navigates its way back to normalcy. The swiftness of the Persian Gulf countries in trying to ease tensions in Jordan has raised suspicions in the region and beyond. After all, it is these leaders who refused to priorities the ongoing Gaza crisis during the last Dammam Summit in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia on 15 April 2018. The Gaza crisis has resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries.

There are a number of reasons why the Persian Gulf countries have moved swiftly in Jordan. Sadly their intentions have little to do with the welfare of the people of Jordan, apart from Kuwait's leader Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who has been seen by many in the region as a unifier. Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia and Mohammed bin Zayed of the UAE have been accused of grandstanding. Their positions on Palestine, for example, have made them unpopular. Israeli media reported last month that "Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman castigated the Palestinian leadership for rejecting opportunities for peace with Israel for decades, and said they should either start accepting peace proposals or shut up".

Bin Zayed and Bin Salman want to present themselves as the leaders of the region, yet "their intervention in Jordan is nothing short of a public relations", their critics argue. Their involvement in Jordan, which seeks to portray them as on



**The protests in Jordan have caught Israel by surprise, something had to be done urgently. Saudi Arabia and the UAE – Israel's allies in the region – had to step in and prevent the situation from getting out of control.**

the side of the people, is meant to boost their low image in the region. Second, there is a semblance of accuracy in Al-Jazeera's Ali Yunis' report "Jordan crisis: Why Persian Gulf States are rushing to step in". Yunis argues that the Persian Gulf intervention is certainly meant to avoid "a second Arab Spring at their doorstep". Indeed there is a possibility that this could culminate in protracted political turmoil in Jordan — this is something most in the region would try by all means to avoid after what happened in Syria. Therefore nipping this in the bud is essential for the Persian Gulf countries.

Jordan has been relatively peaceful and that has indirectly provided security for its neighbor Israel. Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1994 and both countries have increased political and economic cooperation since, particularly on matters of security. The treaty has also facilitated the broadening of economic cooperation. Israel has been lax when it comes to securing its border with Jordan, relegating most of that responsibility to Jordan. There is one significant reason why

this has been the case over the years and that is that Jordan has done relatively well in maintaining security. Most Palestinians, especially those in the West Bank, use Jordan as the point of exit to the outside world. Many Palestinians hold Jordanian passports and many would hesitate to jeopardize that privilege. The protests in Jordan have caught Israel by surprise, something had to be done urgently. Saudi Arabia and the UAE — Israel's allies in the region — had to step in and prevent the situation from getting out of control.

Jordan shares a long border with Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, Jordan hosts a number of Palestinian refugees and it has recently absorbed millions of Syrian refugees. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), as of November 2015, UNHCR reported that there are 4,289,994 Syrian "persons of concern" of whom 630,776 are registered as refugees in Jordan. There are about 1.4 million Syrian refugees in Jordan, only 20 per cent are living in the Za'atari, Marjeeb Al-Fahood, Cyber City and Al-Azraq refugee camps.

Jordan has argued that the influx of Syrians has impacted on its capabilities to deliver services to its people. The collapse of the government in Jordan could lead to a social, economic and indeed political crisis in the Middle East. There could be another wave of refugees and this time it could directly affect Saudi Arabia. It is therefore important for Saudi Arabia to ensure that there is stability inside Jordan. They will, therefore, do whatever it takes to calm the situation down in that country.

Finally, Saudi Arabia has varying relations with its neighbors. Jordan is amongst the few "willing and adherent" neighbors. Saudi Arabia is waging a war on its southern border with Yemen and its relations with Qatar continue to deteriorate. Kuwait and Oman have shown greater independence in their foreign policy by refusing to join the blockade against Qatar. It is only Jordan, Bahrain and the UAE who are firmly in alliance, at various political and economic levels with Saudi Arabia.

(Source: Middle East Monitor)

## Trump's mostly meaningless summit with Kim

There was too much show and not enough substance — and the U.S. is running out of time to win concessions.

The world can be glad of one thing after U.S. President Donald Trump's summit meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un: They're still talking.

The joint statement issued in Singapore was vague. Kim didn't confirm and extend a moratorium on testing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles; he didn't say he'd detail his arsenals or open them to inspection. The promise "to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" is meaningless: North Korea has consistently used that formulation to suggest it might give up its nukes one day — so long as the U.S. does as well.

Despite Trump's claim to have achieved something that eluded his predecessors, previous U.S. administrations extracted more specific commitments from Pyongyang, only to see them breached.

Kim, though, did get something valuable — a meeting with a sitting U.S. president (something his father and grandfather never accomplished, despite great efforts). This will bolster



his position at home. He also appears to have talked Trump into suspending joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises — another longtime demand — in exchange for dismantling a missile-engine testing site that the North may, in fact, have already destroyed.

## Horror multiplies in Yemen



also supplies the coalition with intelligence, refueling capabilities and other assistance, has sent mixed signals about the Hudaydah offensive. While the Pentagon urged the coalition not to attack, a statement by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday made no such explicit request. Instead, he made clear to the emirate leaders "our desire to address their security concerns while preserving the free flow of humanitarian aid and lifesaving commercial imports." He mildly called for all sides to work with the United Nations on a political solution.

The war began in 2014, when Houthis and forces loyal to the ousted former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, took control of the capital, Sana, and much of the rest of the country. In 2015, the Saudi-led coalition, with President Barack Obama's backing, launched airstrikes against the Houthi forces.

The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, both Sunni Arab nations, see the Al Hudaydah offensive as a way to break a stalemate in the war and deal a crippling blow to the indigenous Houthis.

They have accused the Houthis of using

the port to smuggle in arms, including missiles to attack Saudi Arabia. A United Nations panel has expressed doubt that Al Hudaydah is a weapons transit point. Although coalition leaders have argued that the offensive can be carried out quickly, they have repeatedly miscalculated over the years, trapping their countries in a quagmire. The result has been countless civilian deaths, many attributed to indiscriminate coalition bombing attacks. Under international law, these attacks may qualify as war crimes in which the United States and Britain, another arms supplier, are complicit.

In all, more than 10,000 people have been killed in the war in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries. About 22 million Yemenis need humanitarian aid, and 8.4 million are at risk of starvation.

The Trump administration should speak with one voice to its Arab allies, making clear that an attack on Al Hudaydah will be a disaster and that even considering such action reveals how futile their policy in Yemen has been. Working with the Houthis and the United Nations on a cease-fire and a deal for neutral control of the port could be the first step to a political settlement that is the only hope for peace.

(Source: The NYT)



# Israel, Iron Fist of U.S. Interests in Middle East: John Steppling

**1 →** The U.S. has subsidized, armed, and protected Israel for forty years or perhaps longer. Israel is like the iron fist of U.S. interests in the region. It's important to understand that Israel does not control the U.S., but rather that the U.S. controls Israel. Israel could not survive on its own. Its tax base is far too small, and at this point it has too many enemies. When people claim Israel covertly controls the U.S., that's just old fashioned anti-Semitic mythology. There is no global Jewish plot, there is only a fascist party running an apartheid settler and neo-colonial state founded by Zionists. And one of the triumphs of Israeli propaganda has been to control the narrative which presents Israel as the victim. But it benefits greatly from the current uptick of anti-Semitism in the liberal West. Israel consciously and repeatedly claims anti-Zionism is synonymous with anti-Semitism, thereby helping create this upswelling of anti-Semitism. The fact is that most people are aware of Israeli crimes and rightly hate Zionism and Israel but then two things happen; first is that anti Zionists are labeled anti-Semitic, and second, many already intolerant or hyper nationalists (you see this in Europe with these new right wing parties) readily buy into old fascist motivated anti-Jewish mythology. And this is something I argue with people all the time. Anti-Semitism helps Israel. It helps the narrative they constantly reiterate. I mean that narrative has confused the western press and public for decades -- and it has rather coercively affected American Jews in some measure too. The old left was made up of many Jews, and they fought with civil rights leaders, they were among the most committed of socialists....many anyway. That is less true because of the massive propaganda you get from the U.S. government, Hollywood, and also from the American far right. Now this narrative is falling apart. The crimes of Israel are too great, and strangely, perhaps, Israel has stopped bothering to even spin their crimes. They almost brag about it, and this is partly the result of the ascendancy of the Likud Party. After the Jenin massacre the narrative shifted. And of course this prop-

agandized anti-Semitism runs alongside an equally propagandized Islamophobia.

Now Trump is a strange figure in all this. He has appointed many fanatical Christian evangelicals, so called Dominionists, to his cabinet. Rick Perry, and Mike Pence and Pompeo and Kudlow et al. The Christian right is a big part of his support. That said, he also appointed the same pro Zionist neo-cons that Cheney and Bush and Rumsfeld brought into government. But the point is that Trump is only the voice of his class. The extreme wealthy ruling class that always, finally, makes policy. But the embassy move was designed to create chaos in one sense, and to justify further draconian crackdowns and interventions in the Middle East and domestically. The anti-Iranian rhetoric from Pompeo and Bolton serves to justify any increase they want in defense spending. I mean the money spent on defense is now utterly beyond anything anyone ever imagined possible. And you look at Saudi Arabia, whose only reason for existence, frankly, is as a weapons purchaser. So the assault on Yemen is justified by blaming Iran. The U.S., I don't think, wants war...not directly. They do want to destabilize things and they also fear, I think, Assad in Syria. For he can potentially become a symbol of resistance to western capital. It doesn't matter if it's true or not. What matters is perception. But the Syrian people have been heroic and the U.S. has found this all very frustrating. So the Palestinian situation is one in which they want exactly what Israel wants. They want it to go away and they don't care if that means incremental genocide. For that is what is happening. A bigger stronger more funded Israel serves U.S. interests.

■ Since the beginning of the protests dubbed as the "Great March of Return", Israeli forces killed and wounded many Palestinian civilians, including the protesters, members of the press and medical workers. It seems as if the regime in Tel Aviv feels an atmosphere of impunity where it can act beyond all international laws and conventions. Where do you think this feeling of immunity comes from?



A: Well, the impunity is the same impunity U.S. police forces feel when they shoot black men and women in cities across America. The shooting of Palestinians in the recent protests is just shocking. Israel essentially laughs about it. They don't care about world opinion because they are protected. Now....this may come back to haunt them, though. One cannot forever flaunt their own crimes and think the rest of the planet will just accept it. But Zionist hardliners really believe they are smarter than anyone else. And they believe they have the right to do whatever it is they want. It's going to come to be their Achilles heel, I suspect. That sort of arrogance will always eventually be punished. When? I can't say, but such grotesque sadism and cruelty will eventually cost them. And it will cost the U.S. The U.S. today is a desperate government. Trump is, in one sense, a reflection of that desperation. He is the unvarnished face of Western capital. Now, I often wonder at some of the comments from Israeli officials. Outrageous things like gentle women are ok to rape (said by a Rabbi for the IDF), or Arabs are beasts to be put down, etc. I wonder if this is just Israel trolling everyone. It becomes another form of distraction. Say crazy things and then walk it back as if the reasonable voice is the real voice of Zionism. And this is how Israelis work in media. And it's very effective. Clouding the reality is part of what allows Israel to minimize blowback from friends and enemies alike. But Netanyahu

is, I think, genuinely, perhaps, unstable. He appears more and more feverish and hysterical. The corruption charges are hanging over his head. And he desperately wants to hold on to power. The whole Greater Israel meme is fact. That was the dream of the first generation of Zionists who came in and terrorized the Palestinian population, and later drove out the British even. They never ever wanted to share the land with any Arabs or Muslims. And they HAVE expanded. But they are also, strategically, taking the long view. The one thing you can count on is the Israeli government will lie. They lie even when they don't have to. They lie out of habit. And they lie because they mostly hold every non Israeli in contempt.

■ The U.S. Ambassador to the UN said "no country would act with greater restraint than Israel" as the world was witnessing the rise in the toll of Palestinian civilians killed and wounded by Israeli live fire. How do you evaluate his words?

A: It's absurd. It's the exact opposite and I think most of the world knows this.

■ Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammad bin Salman, has recently said that Israelis "have the right to have their own land" and that formal relations between Tel Aviv and Riyadh could be mutually beneficial. The Saudi regime once, at least apparently, opposed Israel's right to exist. What do you think has changed in Riyadh to now come out as an apologist for the Zionist regime and betray the Palestinian cause? How do you think other fellow Arab and Muslim nations think of the Kingdom?

A: This is very interesting. MBS consolidated power as never before in the Kingdom. Who was really behind this? I don't know, but it's very curious. I think Saudis know that regime change in Riyadh is not out of the question. But suddenly this young crown prince orchestrates this coup and then goes on a spending spree with the UK and U.S. defense industries, as well as picking fights with Qatar and then Yemen. Why? Who is advising him? I don't know honestly, but it's very suspicious and at some point the other shoe is going to drop.

## Trump partly right about unfair trade practices: Hunter

By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter, a professor of political science at Georgetown University, tells the Tehran Times that that "Trump is partly right about the unfair trade practices of some of America's trading partners such China and Europe. Some of the trade agreements, such as NAFTA, signed during the Clinton administration were not fair to America."

Professor Hunter also says that "Tariffs are not the only barriers to fair trade. Non-Tariff barriers, including government subsidies and excessively low wages, are also kind of barriers to fair Trade."

"China and Europe use this type of measures to undermine American exports to their markets. Trump wants to correct this imbalance. However, it is not clear whether he will succeed," Hunter tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text the interview:

■ Is "Trumpism" a flow, school, and thought in the United States? Can the current president of the United States produce a political or philosophical thought in the field of American social and foreign policy?

A: Trumpism is not a particular school of thought such as liberalism, socialism or Communism. Trumpism reflects the frustration of a certain portion of the American public, especially the poor whites, that feel that their interests and needs are not taken into account. They complain that other groups such as the African-Americans and the Hispanic have special lobbying groups and sometimes receive special treatment. These whites feel that the very large number of immigrants has changed the demographic balance against them as well as altering the country's cultural landscape. Many of them are socially conservative and do not approve of certain liberal policies such as same-sex marriage. They feel that other countries, such as China as well as the Eu-



ropean and Middle Eastern states have taken advantage of America. Therefore, they feel that America should look after its own interests and as Trump has said "put America first".

■ Trump has repeatedly stated that he is not a Republican. In your opinion, what is the current political affiliation of Trump itself?

A: Trump is not the classic Republican. However, his positions on many issues, including immigration, fiscal policy and foreign policy, are closer to those of the Republicans.

■ The president of the United States has used his own cabinet of neoconservatives, such as John Bolton. This is while he previously described himself as George W. Bush's sharp opponents. How do you evaluate this contradiction?

A: Trump is closer to the right wing of the Republican Party. On some aspects of foreign policy, such as that regarding Iran, he is close to the neo-conservatives. However, Trump himself is not comfortable with the excessive use of military power as are the neo-conservatives. Rather he is pushed by some allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia to adopt a more interventionist posture in the Middle East.

■ If we think of Trump as a Republican, what is his

idea of which spectrum is closer to this party? (T-party, Neoconservatives or Traditional Republicans)

A: Although he does not share all the ideas of the Republicans, Trump is connected to the Republican Party. He ran on the Republican ticket and supports Republican candidates for Congress.

■ Is Trump's protective approach to the economy or his special emphasis on "American values" can be a sign of his influence on a particular economic and political school (thought)?

A: Trump is partly right about the unfair trade practices of some of America's trading partners such China and Europe. Some of the trade agreements, such as NAFTA, signed during the Clinton administration were not fair to America. Tariffs are not the only barriers to fair trade. Non-Tariff barriers, including government subsidies and excessively low wages, are also kind of barriers to fair Trade. China and Europe use this type of measures to undermine American exports to their markets. Trump wants to correct this imbalance. However, it is not clear whether he will succeed.

■ Is the election of Trump as the president of the United States in 2016, a symbol of American citizenship tendency towards populism? Otherwise, how can such a phenomenon be interpreted

A: To some degree, all politicians are populist in the sense that they appeal to peoples' needs and prejudices. Certainly, Trump did manipulate the frustrations of a group of American voters and used slogans that appealed to them. But so do other politicians. Democrats used another set of slogans appealing to another demographics. Certain groups and countries are worried about a policy of America first, because this would mean that they should accept more responsibility or that American markets would not be wide open. Therefore, they call these policies populist in order to discredit them.

## Iran deal as a question of European sovereignty



By Eldar Mamedov

**LOBE LOG** — As President Donald Trump was celebrating his four-point declaration of intentions on the "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini was addressing the European Parliament on the consequences of the U.S. withdrawal from a real working nuclear agreement: the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran.

The debate was convened by the members of the European Parliament concerned with the fate of this signature achievement of EU diplomacy. It served to take the temperature in the chamber. This is meaningful, as the EP has a say in concrete measures the EU is promulgating to salvage the JCPOA.

Following the meeting of EU leaders in Sofia on May 18, the European Commission has updated the Blocking Statute designed to protect EU companies from the extraterritorial sanctions of the US, and of the European Investment Bank (EIB)'s External Lending Mandate, which would make Iran eligible for investment activities by the EIB. Following the adoption of these measures on June 6, the Council (representing the governments of the EU) and the European Parliament will have a period of two months to object before they enter into force. If no objection is raised, the updated acts will enter into force at the latest on August 5, just before the re-imposed U.S. sanctions kick in.

The EU governments have, so far, demonstrated unity in rallying behind the need to save the JCPOA. The U.S. administration, however, is ratcheting up pressure on the weak spots in the EU, such as Poland and Hungary where populist rulers have shown much sympathy for Trump's agenda.

When it comes to the European Parliament, a minority of MEPs could trigger a vote on both or either of the measures proposed by the Commission within the two-month period starting June 6. A simple majority will determine the final result of the vote. Today's debate showed that, even if a necessary threshold is achieved to force a vote, a solid majority of the house is behind the JCPOA and Mogherini's efforts. Although many MEPs repeated the well-known concerns about Iran—such as its missile program, human rights record, and regional policies, including support for Syria's regime of Bashar al-Assad and threats against Israel—even Iran skeptics seemed broadly convinced by Mogherini's argument that the JCPOA opened the gates for dialogue to address these issues.

As an example of progress on regional dialogue, Mogherini mentioned the EU3 (France, Germany, United Kingdom) plus one (Italy) engagement with Iran on Yemen, which led to UN General Secretary Special Representative on Yemen Martin Griffiths' meeting with Houthi rebels in Sana'a. This may be a small example, but the growing tensions around the JCPOA have led to a narrowing of space for even modest progress on the Iran-related issues of concern to the West.

A novel element in the debate was the much more assertive language used by centrist MEPs to defend not just the JCPOA, but a rules-based, multilateral order as a whole, and their identification of Trump's reckless policies as a threat to this order. Some approached Trump's violation of the nuclear agreement in the context of a broader transatlantic divide that includes U.S. imposition of tariffs on European goods, U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement and global migration compact, and the sabotage of the G-7 meeting in Canada, to name but the most egregious examples. Brazen attempts to meddle in the domestic politics of EU member states—such as the public support given by the American ambassador to Germany to far-right populists and Steve Bannon's crusade to radicalize Europe—prompted some MPs to see Trump's America not as a long-cherished transatlantic ally but a threat to everything the EU stands for.

Tellingly, the dissenting voices came from the extreme right. Assorted euro-skeptics and populists parroted the Trump team's talking points about the JCPOA being merely an executive agreement by an administration that is no longer in office and called on the EU to follow suit by abandoning the "dying agreement." Although Mogherini usually never engages in debates with the extreme right, this time she made an exception. Aiming at a broader audience, she drove home the point that the JCPOA is enshrined in a UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR), and thus is part of international law, and the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the agreement amounts to a violation of a resolution that it itself endorsed. She then challenged the populists to explain how their calls for "European sovereignty" are consistent with their professed readiness to follow Washington, not Brussels, on the Iran deal.

The debate in the European Parliament showed once again that the battle to preserve the JCPOA far transcends the non-proliferation agreement with Iran. It is about the re-assertion of Europe's sovereignty, defined as its ability to stand up for its interests and values and uphold an open, multilateral, rules-based international system.

## There is a clear gap between Human Rights rhetoric and action of Canadian government

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau continues to defend his government's decision to sign off on the sale of more than 900 armored vehicles—including dozens described as "heavy assault"—and equipped with cannons—to Saudi Arabia, arguing that the deal is in line with Canada's foreign and defense policies.

The \$11.63 billion deal has been in the spotlight in recent months amid growing concerns about Riyadh's human rights record and its illegal war on Yemen. Trudeau is arguing that his government had little choice but to respect the contract signed by the previous government. "Permits are only approved if the exports are consistent with our foreign and defence policies, including human rights," says Trudeau. "Our approach fully meets our national obligations and Canadian laws."

It doesn't take a strategic mind to describe Trudeau's argument as "flawed logic", as it is up to his government to set out the parameters of Canada's foreign and defence policy. It also flies in the face of international law and the UN Charter, even the human rights agenda of Canadian government, which is now being sold as the centrepiece of Canadian foreign

policy. Yet at exactly the same time Canada is arming one of the most repressive and despotic regimes on the planet that has waged war on the poorest country in the Arab world, there is a clear gap between the rhetoric and the action of the Canadian government:

As the international organisations that track human rights continue to rank Saudi Arabia among the world's worst violators, Canada has pushed forward with arms sales to Saudi Arabia—just like the United States and Britain. Together, these governments have a lot to explain to the world community why they back the continued Saudi-led airstrikes against the defenceless people of Yemen, claiming they are working "on behalf of the legitimate government" in that war-torn country.

Selling arms to the aggressors which only help prolong their war of aggression, kill and wound tens of thousands of civilians, and make millions more refugee, is wrong, well beyond the bounds of international morality and law. The international Arms Trade Treaty is clear on that:

The Treaty is a multilateral, legally-binding agreement that establishes common standards for the international trade of conventional

weapons and seeks to reduce the illicit arms trade. The Treaty aims to reduce human suffering caused by illegal wars and irresponsible arms transfers, improve regional security and stability, as well as to promote accountability and transparency by state parties concerning transfers of conventional arms.

Premier Trudeau knows that his irresponsible arms sales authorizations to the Saudis have done all this and more to the besieged people of Yemen, all while making his government complicit in the Saudi war crimes. He is aware that his government's arms transfer authorization violates "obligations under measures adopted by the United Nations Security Council."

Premier Trudeau is aware that the Canadian arms are being used by the Saudis and their rogue partners in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, attacks directed against civilian objects and civilians protected as such, and other war crimes, including targeting of hospitals, patients, and medical staff. If not, all he needs to do is pick up the phone and call the Doctors Without Borders headquarters in Europe, or the United Nations Human Rights Council in New York.



# How Ethiopia's peace offer caught Eritrea's regime by surprise

By Abraham T Zere

On June 5, Ethiopia announced it would fully accept and implement the 2000 Algiers Peace Accord that ended its border war with Eritrea. It also said it would accept a 2002 ruling by the UN-backed Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), which awarded several disputed territories, including the town of Badme, to Eritrea. Ethiopia had been ignoring the commission's ruling and refusing to withdraw its troops from these territories for the past 16 years, making the demarcation of the border practically impossible.

Adis Ababa's announcement last week was welcomed as a major step towards permanently calming the deadly tensions between the two warring neighbors.

Eritreans in the diaspora celebrated Ethiopia's announcement as if it was a national holiday - a

second independence day of sorts. They were happy because they assumed the statement would start a normalization process between the two countries, which could encourage the Eritrean government to finally abandon its policies of militarization and loosen its iron grip on the population.

But, as the days passed and the Eritrean government remained silent on the subject, the Eritrean diaspora's enthusiasm and joy transformed into disappointment and anger.

Rare reports from inside Eritrea indicated that Eritreans still living in their homeland also welcomed the news. Of course, Eritreans in the country were not able to celebrate Addis Ababa's surprising declaration openly. "We have been beaten down to submissiveness and even lost the language of celebration," a contact in Asmara told me. "People have been waiting for state approval to celebrate it officially and openly." He

asked to remain anonymous for fear of reprisal.

The response from independent experts who have been working with the Eritrean government was also prompt and clear. Lea Brilmayer, a professor of international law at Yale Law School, who led the Eritrean Boundary Commission and later the Claims Commission, told the Voice of America: "If the statement was made in good faith and they [Ethiopia] implement it that would be great".

But Addis Ababa's unexpected move was not necessarily welcomed by all.

Eritrean residents of the Tsorena sub-zone in the border area, where the Border Commission had awarded several villages to Ethiopia, have openly expressed concerns. One of their representatives anonymously spoke to Australia's Radio SBS Tigrinya via telephone and pleaded with the two governments to consider

his community's unique concerns.

## ■ Living in the border

Meanwhile, ethnic Irobs living in the border area between the two countries currently under Ethiopia's rule organized a protest to condemn the decision to accept the boundary commission's ruling. Irobs say the implementation of the "arbitrary" borders drawn by the border commission would divide their community between the two countries.

Despite these concerns and protests, most observers expected an enthusiastic response from the Eritrean government, which appeared to have finally gotten what it always wanted. Yet, no official response has come from the Eritrean state to date.

When contacted by Reuters on the day of the announcement, Eritrea's Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel claimed that he had not yet seen the Ethiopian government's statement,

so could not immediately comment. A day later, when pressed to comment on the issue on Twitter, Gebremeskel simply said, "Our position is crystal clear and has been so for 16 years". He did not elaborate.

Other officials from the Eritrean regime also chose to stay quiet about the announcement that carried the African nation to headlines around the globe. This was not surprising; as in Ethiopia, Eritrean officials do not usually comment on such issues before receiving some guidance from more senior members of the regime. Only after Gebremeskel's tweet did some of them begin sharing - albeit vague - opinions on the issue.

Under President Isaias Afwerki's ironclad rule, Eritrea has become increasingly isolated from the international community. In 2009, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on the country, which are still in force. ➔13

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## Permanent handicrafts exhibit to make debut in Ardebil

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A permanent handicrafts exhibit and marketplace will be constructed in the historical city of Ardebil in northwest Iran, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

Ardebil province's cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism department has recently acquired a 1.5-ha piece of land in order to construct a vast handicrafts market, said Nader Fallahi, the provincial tourism chief.



A view of the Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil

Location of the land is chosen in such a way that is easily accessible to travelers to the city, he added.

“The marketplace would embrace sections dedicated to local food and souvenirs as well.”

Ardebil is home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble, which is named after Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili (1253-1334), who was a Sufi philosopher and leader of Islamic mystic practices.

## Jordan charity gathers hotel leftovers to feed poor

**AMMAN (Reuters)** — At the end of a lavish Ramadan buffet in the banquet hall of one of Amman's five-star hotels, a young Jordanian charity worker rushes to gather up left-over food that his team of volunteers will package and redistribute to needy families.

Bandar Sharif began his ‘Family Kitchen’ initiative 10 years ago, angered by the amount of food thrown away by hotels during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, traditionally a period when consumption levels double across the region.

“What we do is eliminate this waste, we salvage the food and provide it to people who are in desperate need of it,” said Sharif, a 33-year-old teacher.

His team of volunteers now works all year round to collect unwanted food from large wedding parties, bakeries and restaurants.

This year the initiative has focused on the Palestinian refugee camp of Baqaa, one of the depressed areas in a country that has seen some of the biggest protests in years this month over steep price hikes, which are backed by the International Monetary Fund.

Critics say the price hikes are to blame for rising poverty in Jordan.

Family Kitchen's initiative this year provides ‘iftar’ meals - eaten by Muslims after sunset during the holy month of Ramadan - to 500 families in the impoverished refugee camp on the outskirts of Amman.

A third of the camp's 120,000 residents have an income below the national poverty line and around 17 percent are unemployed, the UN refugee body says.



### ROUND THE GLOBE

#### The Sundarbans

The Sundarbans mangrove forest, one of the largest such forests in the world (140,000 ha), lies on the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers on the Bay of Bengal.

It is adjacent to the border of India's Sundarbans World Heritage site inscribed in 1987. The site is intersected by a complex network of tidal waterways, mudflats and small islands of salt-tolerant mangrove forests, and presents an excellent example of ongoing ecological processes.

The area is known for its wide range of fauna, including 260 bird species, the Bengal tiger and other threatened species such as the estuarine crocodile and the Indian python.

The three wildlife sanctuaries in the south cover an area of 139,700 ha and are considered core breeding areas for a number of endangered species.

Situated in a unique bioclimatic zone within a typical ge-



A Bengal tiger in the Sundarbans, a World Heritage in Bangladesh

ographical situation in the coastal region of the Bay of Bengal, it is a landmark of ancient heritage of mythological and historical events.

Bestowed with magnificent scenic beauty and natural resources, it is internationally recognized for its high biodiversity of mangrove flora and fauna both on land and water.

The immense tidal mangrove forests of Bangladesh's Sundarbans Forest Reserve, is in reality a mosaic of islands of different shapes and sizes, perennially washed by brackish water shrilling in and around the endless and mind-boggling labyrinths of water channels.

The site supports exceptional biodiversity in its terrestrial, aquatic and marine habitats; ranging from micro to macro flora and fauna.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Iranian center exhibits rare Quranic manuscripts in New Delhi

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Noor Microfilm International Centre has put on show a collection of its rare Quranic manuscripts at Dr. Zakir Husain Library in New Delhi.

It features some 40 sets of manuscripts with various calligraphy styles on the skin, textiles and handmade paper, ISNA reported.

The largest copy of Quran presented at the exhibit measures 2.8 by 4.8 meters, which is printed on the fabric.

The exhibition is being held in close collaboration with Jamia Millia Islamia, a public central university in Delhi, and will be running through June 11.

Noor International Microfilm Center is situated in the Culture House of the Islamic Republic of Iran, New Delhi and is indulged in caring out repair work and preparing microfilm, photographing of the old manuscripts and printing them.

The center was established in 1985 by the decree of leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, as a result of efforts made by Mehdi Khajeh Piri, a historian and master of preserving ancient texts, to promote Iranian and Islamic heritage in the subcontinent.



People visit the exhibit of rare Quranic manuscripts at Dr. Zakir Husain Library in New Delhi on June 11.

## 2m-year-old elephant teeth fossils discovered in Iran



**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Two fossils of elephant teeth dating back to Quaternary period some 2 million years ago have been discovered in Iran's northwestern Ardebil province.

Regarding the significant importance of these fossils, further searches in the region are being conducted, Tahereh Eftekhari, the head of the natural history and genetic resources bureau affiliated to the Department of Environment said, IRNA reported on Tuesday. Studying these fossils opens a new season for introducing vertebrate fossils especially that of elephants in Iran, she highlighted.

She went on to say that since similar fossils have been discovered in the neighboring Azerbaijan country, one of research priorities is to study the migration procedure and habitat of these species.

The Department of Environment is determined to carry out joint researches

in this field with Azerbaijan so as to locate the habitats of these giant species in Iran, she stressed.

These fossils belong to two different genders of woolless mammoths which have at least 2 million years of age, said Zahra Orak, the head of paleontology group at the natural history and genetic resources bureau.

One of the fossils demonstrates the teeth and the lower jaw, and the other one relates to ivory and upper jaw of this group of mammals, she added.

According to the size of the teeth, it is speculated that elephants had been mature, she said, adding that one of them resembles the teeth of Indian elephants.

Elephants living in India may have inhabited in Iran some 2 million years ago, she guessed. The fossils are unique and intact and no such Quaternary fossils have been previously discovered in Iran, Orak noted.

## Centuries-old copy of Quran recovered



**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A centuries-old copy of the Holy Quran has been recovered by the Iranian police.

The manuscript was found in a car while passing a check post in Shahroud, north-central Semnan province, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

“This exquisite book dates from 400 years ago and its value is estimated at roughly one billion rials (some \$24,000),” Semnan police commander Rouh-al-Amin Qasemi said.

## Handicrafts exhibit underway in Bandar Abbas



**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A sales exhibition of Iranian handicrafts opened its doors to the public on Monday in the port city of Bandar Abbas, southern Iran.

It also hosts several crafts workshops yet offers a 20 percent discount on various handcrafted products, CHTN reported.

The one-week event is held in commemoration of the national handicrafts week and under the auspices of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

## Prehistoric artifacts seized from smugglers



**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian authorities have seized 54 prehistoric objects, which was kept unlawfully at home of a smuggler in a Nahavand, Hamedan province, west-central Iran.

Some cultural heritage advocates notified the police and the smuggler is now under arrest, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Estimated to date from 3rd to 1st millennium BC, the relics include pieces of pottery such as trays, bowls and dishes as well as some stone tools.

## 4 simple tips to stay healthy on your next trip

By Shivani Vora

Traveling can take a toll on your health, said Dr. Douglas Kaiden, medical director of Priority Private Care, an emergency care facility in New York City. “Flying and being in new destinations makes you vulnerable to all sorts of illness and injuries,” he said. “It’s extra important to be vigilant about your health when you’re on the road.” Before your next trip, consider his tips to stay healthy while you travel.

### ■ Be prepared

Going into a trip with a supply of any basic medications you take often, especially prescription medications, is a good idea, Dr. Kaiden said. Depending on where you travel, access to even the over-the-counter medications you often take may be variable, and local laws and regulations complicate things even further. In addition to any medicines you take on a regular basis, he recommends packing pain killers, anti-diarrhea medication, and, if necessary depending on your destination and medical history, antibiotics. It’s also a good idea to check if you need any vaccinations for your destination; check vaccines.gov for more information. Talk to your doctor before you go to make sure you have your bases covered.

### ■ Small steps for your next flight

On your flight, try to get up and stretch and take a stroll down the aisle at least every



Sticking to a healthy lifestyle on your next trip is the best way to stay healthy no matter where you go, but these four tips can also help.

two hours. Sitting for long periods increases the risk for deep vein thrombosis, a blood clot that forms in the legs from stagnant circulation. Simple calf or leg stretches you can do while seated can help as well.

Dr. Kaiden also recommended compression socks to help boost circulation and avoid swollen feet or calves. You can find them at pharmacies or easily available online. Wirecutter, a New York Times Company, has recommendations for the best compression socks in women’s and men’s sizes.

Also, drink plenty of water, and avoid alcohol. Alcohol can act as a diuretic, while water will keep you hydrated and keep motion sickness,

headaches and lightheadedness at bay.

### ■ Avoid gut woes

You should always wash fruits and vegetables before eating, even if you buy them at home, but eating washed fruits and vegetables doesn’t necessarily mean they are clean, depending on who did the washing. Even if you did it yourself, you may be taking a risk. Traveler’s Diarrhea is unfortunately common for travelers who take unnecessary risks when it comes to street food, local produce, or other foods that may not have been properly prepared or handled.

Dr. Kaiden suggests it’s better to stick to cooked vegetables and peeled fruits served

from restaurants, stands or cafes you can trust. That’s not to say you should avoid street food or local produce entirely, just make sure whatever you eat is properly washed and prepared. Watch how the cooks at that night market stall handle their ingredients for a bit and then decide to buy. Similarly, see how popular a produce stand is before buying — if they turn over a lot of fruit, odds are likely you’re not getting food that’s been sitting out under the hot sun for hours at a time.

Constipation is equally common during travel. Combat it by drinking plenty of water through your trip and eating a high fiber diet. Taking a fiber supplement or drinking a glass of prune juice can also help.

### ■ Keep your doctor on speed dial

Finally, it’s important to be able to reach your doctor back at home in case of an emergency. He or she may be able to help you remotely.

For example, Dr. Kaiden recently helped one of his patients who was on vacation in Mexico. The patient awoke with a strange rash on his arm and was convinced that he had contracted a parasite. He sent Dr. Kaiden a picture of the rash, and after talking with the patient, Dr. Kaiden figured out that he had phytophotodermatitis, a relatively harmless rash that’s easily treated. “My patient relaxed and enjoyed the rest of his trip,” Dr. Kaiden said.

(Source: The New York Times)



# A decades-old asthma drug has reversed brain damage from dementia in mice

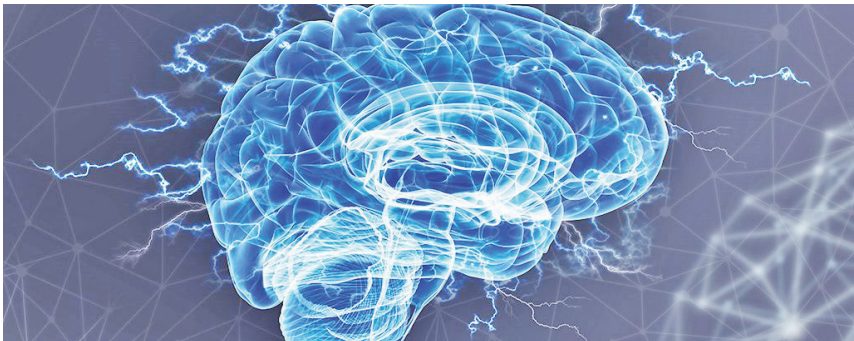
Scientists have used a mice model to reverse some of the most severe damage done to the brain by dementia - and they did this with a surprisingly old medication typically used for asthma.

The discovery could open up the road for treatments that could restore memory and spatial impairment in people with conditions like Alzheimer's. While a human treatment is still some way off, the research shows one method we could use to retroactively treat the buildup of tau proteins, long thought to be a key factor in dementia.

Key to the improvement was an asthma drug called zileuton (or Zylflo) that's been in use for 22 years. The team from Temple University in Philadelphia is highly optimistic, claiming that their findings could eventually improve the lives of millions of people with dementia.

"We show that we can intervene after disease is established and pharmacologically rescue mice that have tau-induced memory deficits," says senior investigator Domenico Praticò.

**■ Amyloid precursor protein**  
There's still plenty we don't know about diseases like Alzheimer's, but the evidence points to tangles of tau proteins blocking connections between neurons. Another



protein, amyloid precursor protein (APP), is also thought to be involved.

In this study the scientists targeted inflammatory molecules called leukotrienes. Having found that leukotrienes cause damage to nerve cells as dementia develops, the team wanted to try blocking the formation of these molecules.

That's where zileuton came in. It was giv-

en to one group of mice engineered to have similar dementia problems to 60-year-old humans with the condition, while another group of mice were given placebos instead.

After 16 weeks, treated mice were performing much better on maze tests than mice who hadn't received zileuton. The treated group was also found to have 90 percent fewer leukotrienes in their brains, and 50

percent fewer tau tangles.

"It's really dramatic what we observed," Praticò told Stacey Burling at The Inquirer. "For the first time, we are showing that we can do something after the disease is established."

### ■ A close analysis

In fact, the synapses of the mice given zileuton looked as healthy as normal mice after close analysis. It's almost as if this aspect of the dementia had been completely cleared up.

Before we get too excited, there are some limitations to consider. For example, these mice didn't have any beta-amyloid plaque build ups (caused by APP) in their brains, which are consistently found alongside tau plaques in human brains with dementia.

And while mice are often used in research for their genetic and biological similarity to humans, transferring treatments over from these animals can be difficult. Add to that the limits of our understanding about dementia, and there's still a lot of work to be done.

Nevertheless, the fact that researchers were able to actually reverse some of the damage of dementia after it had taken hold is cause for celebration, because the condition isn't usually diagnosed in humans until the effects have already started.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

**There's still plenty we don't know about diseases like Alzheimer's, but the evidence points to tangles of tau proteins blocking connections between neurons.**

## How Jupiter is helping the hunt for habitable alien worlds

Jupiter itself isn't a great candidate to host life, but the gas giant is playing a significant role in the search for habitable worlds.

In a planetary-science first, astronomers used their knowledge of Jupiter's magnetic field to model what kinds of radio signals might be emitted naturally by the fields of smaller, rocky worlds.

"If we can get a handle on how to find direct radio emissions from large exoplanets, we can then eventually use these same techniques to study Earth-sized planets and determine which ones have magnetic fields," Jake Turner, a doctoral student in the Department of Astronomy at the University of Virginia, said

in a statement.

"These magnetized Earth-sized planets would then be possible candidates to investigate further, looking for biological signatures, such as water vapor, in a search for life," he added.

### ■ Measuring radio waves

Turner is using Europe's Low-Frequency Array (LOFAR) to measure radio waves produced by Jupiter, to determine how radio waves could be separated out from background noise. He presented his results Monday here at the 232nd meeting of the American Astronomical Society.

The "goal is to determine up to what distance, and with what strength, radio emission from exoplanets can be seen using LOFAR," Turner said.

Many of the planets in our Solar System have magnetic fields generated by their iron cores. Mars once hosted a planet-wide magnetic field, and its loss resulted in the disappearance of most of the Red Planet's atmosphere and all of its surface water. In contrast, Earth's magnetic field protects our world from the sun's radiation and the charged particles of the solar wind, helping to keep it habitable.

(Source: space.com)

## Evolution of sunflowers was fast-tracked by changes in their RNA



Researchers at the University of Colorado Boulder have investigated the remarkable transformation of sunflowers from wild to domesticated, which has occurred in a relatively short amount of time.

The experts set out to identify the genetic mechanisms that have facilitated this rapid evolution.

Sunflowers have held agricultural value for their seeds and oil for an estimated 5,000 years in the time since they were first cultivated by man.

There is some archaeological evidence to suggest that sunflowers were domesticated even before corn. Wild varieties of the common sunflower, *Helianthus annuus*, are widely distributed across North America.

These ancestral flowers grow smaller seeds compared to domesticated sunflowers, which have been selected over time for prominent flower heads that contain larger seeds with higher quality oil.

The researchers wanted to better understand the biological phenomenon of alternative splicing, a regulated process during gene expression that allows a single gene to code multiple ribonucleic acid (RNA) transcripts and proteins.

**■ Process of alternative splicing**  
The process of alternative splicing not

only creates useful capabilities in plants, but also introduces variation over time. However, exactly where this process originates from and what it contributes to major evolutionary transitions is not clearly understood.

Researchers performed RNA sequencing to compare a domesticated *H. annuus* variety with a wild variety of the same species, focusing on 226 cases of splicing differentiation.

The experts were able to identify the genetic regulation of splicing for 134 distinct genes, and found patterns which suggest that this mechanism is the basis of important domestication traits that have manifested under the conditions of heavy breeding by humans.

Study lead author Chris Smith is a graduate researcher in CU Boulder's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EBIO).

"We were surprised to find that splicing differences were attributable to relatively few regulatory changes" said Smith. "We expect that further down the road, various other species could be analyzed this way, too."

The findings, which have shed new light on genetic divergence, could have broader implications for agricultural production.

(Source: earth.com)

## Birth control pills, other common prescription drugs may cause depression



A study finds that more than 200 common prescription drugs could lead to depression and suicide. The risk increases when people take these drugs concurrently.

These common drugs include birth control and hormonal pills, blood pressure and heart medications, proton pump inhibitors, painkillers, and even the simple antacids.

The study finds a link between the increased use of these seemingly harmless medications and the uptrend in depression and suicide among American adults. The possible depressive and suicidal effects become all the more potent because people are also taking multiple sets of these drugs in tandem with each other, a practice known as polypharmacy.

The researchers from the University of Illinois at Chicago are now calling for the pharmaceutical industry to be more vigilant in labeling drugs that have suicide and depression as potential side effects. Pharmacists, doctors, and other medical practitioners should also be extra watchful that patients are not using these drugs simultaneously.

For the study, the researchers analyzed how 26,000 U.S. adults took and purchased their medicines from 2005 to 2014. The data used in the study were collected as part of the National Health and Nutrition Exam-

nation Survey.

### ■ Common drugs

The study found that more than one-third of American adults are using common drugs that increase the risk of depression and suicide because they were unaware of this possible side effect. Worse, since patients were unaware, they also tend to ingest these drugs with three or more other drugs that also have the potential to trigger the two mental disorders.

"Many may be surprised to learn that their medications, despite having nothing to do with mood or anxiety or any other condition normally associated with depression, can increase their risk of experiencing depressive symptoms, and may lead to a depression diagnosis," said Dima Qato, the lead author of the study and an assistant professor at the university.

Qato highlighted that the problem has been getting worse because aside from people increase their consumption of the drugs, the people are also increasingly ingesting them simultaneously.

"(Y)et very few of these drugs have warning labels, so until we have public or system-level solutions, it is left up to patients and health care professionals to be aware of the risks," Qato warned.

(Source: Tech Times)

## The true power of the solar wind

The planets and moons of our Solar System are continuously being bombarded by particles from the sun. On the Moon or on Mercury, the uppermost layer of rock is gradually eroded by the impact of sun particles. New results show that previous models of this process are incomplete. The effects of solar wind bombardment are much more drastic than previously thought.

The planets and moons of our Solar System are continuously being bombarded by particles hurled away from the sun. On Earth this has hardly any effect, apart from the fascinating northern lights, because the dense atmosphere and the magnetic field of the Earth protect us from these solar wind particles.

New results of the TU Wien now show that previous models of this process are incomplete. The effects of solar wind bombardment are in some cases much more drastic than previously thought. These findings are important for the ESA mission BepiColombo, Europe's first Mercury mission.

The "solar wind consists of charged particles -- mainly hydrogen and helium ions, but heavier atoms up to iron also play a role," explains Prof. Friedrich Aumayr from the Institute of Applied Physics at TU Wien. These particles hit the surface rocks at a speed of 400 to 800 km per second and the impact can eject numerous other atoms. These particles can rise high before they fall back to the surface, creating an "exosphere" around the Moon or Mercury -- an extremely thin atmosphere of atoms sputtered from the surface rocks by solar wind bombardment.

This exosphere is of great interest for space research because its composition allows scientists to deduce the chemical composition of the rock surface -- and it is much easier to analyze the exosphere than to land a spacecraft on the surface.

(Source: Science Daily)



## Colliding wormholes may be causing gravitational waves: new study

One of the most significant scientific developments of recent times has been the five separate observations of the elusive ripples in space-time known as gravitational waves.

It is widely accepted that these waves—which were detected by the LIGO and VIRGO observatories in the U.S. and Italy respectively — originated from the mergers of pairs of black holes (and in one case, a pair of neutron stars). But what if the ripples detected were not produced by black holes at all?

In a study published in the journal Physical Review D, a team of European astrophysicists has proposed an alternative explanation, arguing that the source of the waves could be even more exotic objects, such as wormholes — theoretical passages through space-time that create shortcuts across the universe

While black holes have never been directly observed, their existence has been predicted by theoretical models, indirect observations and the recent gravitational wave detections.

However, black holes present a theoretical problem for physicists because they have an edge, known as the event horizon, beyond which nothing — not even light — can escape. This conflicts with ideas in quantum mechanics, which say that information is always preserved and never lost.

To explain this conundrum, the researchers theorize in their study that the black holes we have indirect evidence for are, in fact, not black holes at all, but so-called exotic compact objects (ECOs), like wormholes, which don't have an event horizon.

The "final part of the gravitational signal detected by these two detectors—what is known as ring down — corresponds to the last stage of the collision of two black holes, and has the property of completely extinguishing after a short period of time due to the presence of the event horizon," Pablo Bueno, an author of the study from KU Leuven University in Belgium, told Spain's Information and Scientific News Service (SINC).

(Source: The Newsweek)

## New technology has bright prospects for understanding plant biodiversity

Biologists get a new look at plant biodiversity and function with new imaging technology developed at the University of Alberta.

"Biodiversity and ecosystem function are both changing with human disturbance and climate change, and our research provides a new tool for assessing these changes and renewed hope for improved environmental monitoring," explained John Gamon, professor in the Departments of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and Biological Sciences and co-author in the study. The "information derived from this technology provides a practical way to address biodiversity and ecosystem function over large landscapes."

The method uses an imaging spectrometer, similar to a conventional camera but with a thousand colors, mounted on a moving robotic cart to measure the spectra of light reflected from plants in visible, near-infrared, and short-wave infrared regions to measure differences in plant traits. Differences in reflected radiation allow scientists to not only see more than what the naked eye allows, but also to sample both the functional diversity and evolutionary history of individual plants in the environment.

This work is of particular importance because, as was noted in a previous study, 2050 is expected to see a loss in world economic productivity as a result of global warming threatening one-fifth of vascular plant species. The technological advance presented in this study gives researchers a new tool to monitor biodiversity, combat these threats, and raise awareness of biodiversity importance.

Traditional methods of observing plant biodiversity require extensive time, money, and biologists in the field with in-depth knowledge of plant species to identify them. However, using remote sensing to observe and assess biodiversity, allows researchers to not only observe and cover much larger areas -- including areas that may be hard to reach -- but to reveal and observe the differences in plant diversity and function more quickly.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

## Bank Shahr donates 1.1b rials to release prisoners

In line with materializing objectives of its social responsibility, Bank Shahr donated 1.1 billion rials to free prisoners imprisoned for unintentional crimes, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For his part, Dr. Hossein Mohammad

Pour-Zarandi Chief Executive of Bank Shahr said, "many prisoners have been imprisoned for simple and superficial events unwantedly and unintentionally and have been grappled with various financial and nonfinancial problems."

In continuation of its humanitarian activ-

ities themed 'social responsibility', the bank donated the amount of 1,100,000,000 rials to free prisoners who have been imprisoned for crimes unintentionally, Pourzarandi maintained.

He seized this opportunity to express his

special thanks to the philanthropic and humanitarian behaviors of those generous people who took giant strides in the field of reducing social abnormalities and strengthening family units, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank concluded.

## BMI Museum to Hold Joint 'Banknote Exhibition' in Bulgaria

Talks are underway between officials at Museum of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) and Bulgarian ambassador to Tehran in line with showcasing 'banknote' in an exhibition in Bulgari, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

In his visit to the Museum of Bank Melli Iran (BMI), Bulgarian ambassador expressed his interest to hold exhibition jointly between Iran and Bulgaria and said, "the first joint exhibition of banknote will be held in Bulgaria in late July concurrent with the first establishment anniversary of this museum."

In his visit to the Museum of Bank Melli Iran, Bulgarian



ambassador to Iran familiarized with exquisite and precious objects kept in it coupled with the history of establishment of the museum, evolution of bank and money in Iran as well.

Bulgarian ambassador hailed salient achievements taken by Bank Melli Iran in launching the museum and inked Memorial Book of the Museum.

It should be noted that the two sides placed their special emphasis on broadening and enhancing ties in the field of banking, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank concluded.



## ‘Waste problem in Mazandaran to be resolved in 3 years’

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Municipalities in the northern province of Mazandaran will deal with the persisting problem of waste management in the region within the next three years, the deputy governor general of the province has said. As per a comprehensive plan, the necessary fund to finance the plan are already allocated, IRNA quoted Ali Nabiyan as saying on Wednesday.



For one, the mayors in cities of Noor and Amol has taken measures to set up incinerators and compost manufacturing facilities, Nabiyan explained, adding that all mayors should prioritize waste management. He further explained that waste segregation at source in the province can help decrease the amount of waste by 25-30 percent. Hosseinali Ebrahimi, head of Mazandaran province’s department of environment, said in May that some 3,000 tons of waste is generated every day in the northern province of Mazandaran and is buried in unsanitary landfills. There are 27 unsanitary landfill sites in the province which are posing various threats to the region, he noted, blaming tourism industry of the region as one of the underlying reasons behind high waste generation in the area.

## Sport ministry to allot \$95m to NGOs supporting job creation

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Sport and Youth will allocate a total sum of 4 trillion rials (nearly \$95 million) to NGOs for supporting job creation, deputy director for youth affairs department of the ministry has said.



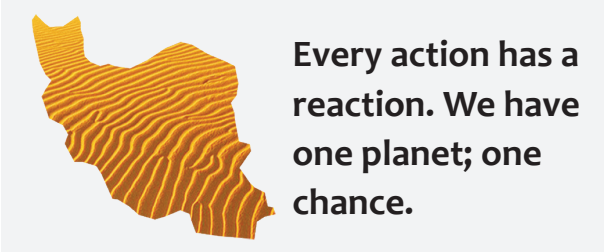
Each NGO will receive loans of up to 1 billion rials (nearly \$24,000), IRNA quoted Mohammad Mehdi Tondgouyan as saying on Tuesday. In this regard, business plans will be evaluated by provincial departments, and each approved plan will be given one billion rials (about \$24,000), he added. So far, some 20 billion rials (nearly \$470,000) has been allocated to NGOs in Fars province, he noted. The allocated budget for this sector reflects the government’s commitment to job creation for young people, he remarked.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Ordering Chinese Food

Waitress: Hi, welcome to Happy Buddha! Can I get you anything to drink?  
Manny: A Coke for me, please.  
Andrea: I'll have a Sprite.  
Waitress: Okay, I'll go get that for you.  
Andrea: Oh man, I haven't had Chinese food in so long! I want everything! This place has the best sesame chicken.  
Manny: Yeah, I've been **craving** Chinese for such a long time. I used to get **take-out** all the time. It's definitely been a while. Let's start off with some crab Rangoon.  
Andrea: Ooh yeah, that sounds good. I think I'm going to get the sesame chicken with fried rice, a spring roll, and egg drop soup.  
Manny: It's so **tempting** to order everything on the menu, it all looks so **appetizing**! I think I'll get General Tso's chicken, hot and sour soup, fried wontons, and white rice.  
Andrea: Aren't you supposed to be on a diet? You should at least get brown rice.  
Manny: I don't think so! I hate brown rice, and I'm so sick of eating healthy all the time. I've been eating so much salad I swear I've forgotten what meat tastes like! There's no better **remedy** than some nice, greasy, calorie-laden Chinese food. I might even get an order of broccoli beef!  
Andrea: Gosh, I'm so hungry! Let's call the waitress over!

■ **Key vocabulary**  
**craving:** a very strong desire for something  
**take-out:** food that is sold by a store to be eaten elsewhere  
**tempting:** attractive  
**appetizing:** delicious  
**remedy:** a medicine or treatment  
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**  
**adaptation:** something that is changed to suit a new form  
**guilty pleasure:** an indulgence; something that you eat, drink, or do that you shouldn't, but makes you happy  
**hits the spot:** just right; just what you were looking for (often refers to food or a drink)



Every action has a reaction. We have one planet; one chance.

# Iran to host Regional Conference on Population Ageing 2018

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Tehran will play host to biennium HelpAge Regional Conference on Population Ageing on October 23-25, Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey, head of Iran’s Welfare Organization said on Tuesday.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of the 11th session of the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (June 12-14) in New York. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Iran, Welfare Organization, and HelpAge International will coordinate to co-host the Regional Conference on issues relevant to population ageing in the Asia Pacific. The main theme of the conference is “Family, Community and State in Ageing Societies”. According to UNFPA, the day one of the conference assesses the trends in population ageing and family dynamics, as well as how communities and governments across Asia have responded. Through parallel streams on day two, the conference will then examine policies and community services to ease adaptation to ageing trends particularly in relation to social inclusion, income security, and health and care.

It is anticipated that this conference bring together 250 participants from various countries in the region and few countries from other regions, representing government, international organizations, academic institutions, civil society organizations, parliamentarians and private sector. Average life expectancy in Iran has risen to 74 years (72.5 years for males and 75.5 years for females) and the elderly constitute 9.3 percent of the country’s population. Some 7.3 million people in Iran are ageing,



of which 3.7 million are women and 3.6 million are men, IRNA quoted Mohseni-Bandpey as saying. Considering the number, “it is important for us to take necessary measures and monitor indices concerning the aging population for the future,” he stated. ■ **Intl. events best opportunities to foster intl. co-op, share experience** Mentioning Iran’s attendance in the 11th session of the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Mohseni-Bandpey explained that such events open up opportunities to facilitate international cooperation and exchange experiences. Unfortunately the international community picture Iran as a country that violate citizen-

ship rights, he lamented adding that currently, Iranian organizations have provided better conditions for people with disabilities to have equal chances of empowerment, employment and accessing social facilities, as well as eliminating environmental mobility barriers. Setting up and expanding emergency social services centers nationwide to report child abuse, suicidal behaviors, domestic violence and the like and also supporting NGOs active in these fields are of the other measures taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran, he explained. He further explained that Iran’s Welfare Organizations mainly collaborate with its European counterparts. Speaking on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities he noted that

Iran is a party to the convention since 2008. Moreover, as the former law on the rights of people with disability that had been approved in [the Iranian calendar] year 1383 (2004-2005) didn’t live up to the expectations of the disabled and their families a new comprehensive law on the rights of persons with disabilities has been approved on December 27, 2017, by the Majlis [Iranian parliament]. Creating an environment in which people with disability can have an equal chance of accessing social facilities as normal people, using public transportation – including buses and subway – free of charge, refining the insurance coverage of the disabled individuals, free education, allocating 3 percent of their job vacancies to the disabled people, and housing loans, are some of the articles of the law which are hoped to improve their living conditions.

■ **The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 2006. It came into force on 3 May 2008 upon the 20th ratification. The Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

## 20% of schools in Iran built by philanthropists

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — More than one fifth of the schools in Iran have been constructed by philanthropists, First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri has said, IRNA reported.

Jahangiri made the remarks here on Tuesday over a meeting with Iranian philanthropists supporting school construction in the country. Education is at the core of development in the country, Jahangiri said, adding that poor education and inefficient educational entities can negatively affect all the sectors and have harmful cultural and economic consequences. Education Minister Mohammad Bat’haei, for his part, said that there are some 650,000 philanthropists are active in field of building schools in Iran. “There are also some 1,000 expatriate donors who have established philanthropic partnership in Iran.” Mehroллаh Rakhshanimehr, Iran’s director of schools renovation, development and equipment organization, has said that

some 50 percent of the newly constructed schools which are to be inaugurated in the current school year (starting September 23) have also been built by philanthropists. Rakhshanimehr went on to say that provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, North Khorasan, Alborz, Tehran, Qom, Gilan, Golestan, West Azarbaijan, Kerman, Khuzestan, and Khorasan Razavi are all short of adequate educational spaces. In January, Rakhshanimehr said that one third of schools in Iran were dilapidated and require renovation. In February, Dariush Varnaseri, director general for Tehran province’s organization for development, renovation, and equipment of schools, also said that there were 6,000 schools in Tehran, 2,500 of which were newly constructed and that some 2,200 schools had also undergone renovation. He also noted that the organization would retrofit and reconstruct 1,400 dilapidated schools in the province over the course of 10 years.

## Iran, Armenia discuss increased science and technology co-op

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian science minister Mansour Gholami and the Armenian ambassador to Iran Artashes Toumanian in a meeting in Tehran discussed increased cooperation in the fields of science and technology.

“Iran is ready to expand bilateral cooperation in the field of science and technology with Armenia,” Gholami said, IRNA reported on Wednesday. There must be a mutual understanding between the universities and research centers of the two countries for the development of bilateral scientific and research cooperation and to do so academic delegations from both countries should pay visits to academic centers in Iran and Armenia, he remarked. This would pave the way for introducing scientific capabilities of the two nations to each other, which can lead to scientific and research cooperation, he noted.



Given Iran’s willingness and determination to expand science and technology cooperation, Iranian science and technology parks and institutes can develop plans and programs in this manner, the Iranian minister mentioned. Ambassador Toumanian, for his part, expressed satisfaction regarding the increasing scientific cooperation between the two countries and said that “We are willing to develop scientific cooperation with Iran, especially in the field of information technology.” The two countries have already conducted joint projects in the field of nano-technology, he highlighted.

## At least fifth of British mammal species could be wiped out within a decade

Populations of much-loved British mammals including hedgehogs and water voles have dropped by up to two-thirds over the past 20 years, and many more are threatened with imminent extinction. Even some apparently common creatures such as rabbits have been driven into decline by human pressures such as harmful farming activities and climate change. These findings come from a review carried out by the Mammal Society and Natural England, the first of its kind to be conducted in more than two decades. The country has undergone significant changes since the last analysis in 1995, and some of the species at risk then – including badgers and otters – have since made considerable recoveries. However, pesticide use, invasive species and road deaths have all taken their toll, and the scientists behind the study have warned Britain is on “a precipice” and must take urgent action to save its mammals. “This is happening on our own doorstep so it falls upon all of us to try and do what we can to ensure that our threat-



*Water vole number have fallen due to the introduction of the predatory American mink and also harmful agricultural practices* ened species do not go the way of the lynx, wolf and elk and disappear from our shores forever,” said Professor Fiona Mathews, chair of the Mammal Society. The review, which made use of data collected by members

of the public as well as scientists over the course of decades, covered all 58 of the country’s land mammal species. The scientists constructed the first ever “red list” for British mammals, and found 12 are threatened with extinction. This means animals like the wildcat, greater mouse-eared bat and even the black rat are likely to be gone forever from Britain’s shores within the next 10 years. However, they noted this is likely to be an underestimate, and the real number could be as high as one in three. “Quite a lot of the news is glum, but by no means all of it,” said Professor Rob Smith, a population dynamics expert at the University of Huddersfield who was not involved in the study. Some mammals that used to face persecution such as polecats and badgers have bounced back in recent years, showing concerted conservation efforts do pay off. The researchers were unable to properly measure the status of several species due to lack of sufficient data, and emphasised the need to gather more information “before it is too late”.

(Source:Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

## Education Ministry devising plans to alter school calendar

The plan to alter school calendar is being drawn up and will be prepared prior to the new school year (starting on September 23), Education Minister Mohammad Bat’haei said on Wednesday. Bat’haei explained that both the ministry and other responsible organizations are agreed upon altering the school calendar. “We are now coming up with plans to implement the scheme before the new school year starts,” Bat’haei concluded.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “ambi-”

■ **Meaning:** “both” or “around”  
■ **For example:** Use of this projector may result in a too bright image even under normal *ambient* light conditions.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Hanker after/for

■ **Meaning:** to have a strong desire for something  
■ **For example:** She hankered for a new life in a different country.

## IDIOM

### Nip in the bud

■ **Explanation:** to prevent something from becoming a problem by stopping it as soon as it starts  
■ **For example:** He wanted to be a clown, but his parents soon nipped that idea in the bud.

## وزارت آموزش و پرورش در حال برنامه ریزی برای طرح تعطیلات زمستانه مدارس

محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش روز چهارشنبه گفت: طرح تعطیلات زمستانه مدارس تا قبل از آغاز سال تحصیلی جدید آماده می‌شود. بطحایی گفت: ما با این طرح موافق هستیم و میان دستگاه‌های مختلف هم اجماع نظری در این زمینه وجود دارد. وی در پایان اظهار کرد: در حال اقدام و برنامه‌ریزی برای چگونگی اجرای این طرح هستیم. در تلاشیم قبل از آغاز سال تحصیلی جدید، این برنامه را آماده کنیم.



# Yemen war: Saudi regime-led forces begin assault on Hudaydah

**I→** Ansarullah media activists have also reported fierce clashes south of the Hudaydah airport and intense air raids over the entire province.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), a key member of the Saudi regime-led coalition waging the war on Yemen, had set a Tuesday deadline for the Yemeni Ansarullah movement to pull out of Hudaydah. The port city serves as a lifeline for aid delivery to the war-stricken country.

“These are the last and final hours to get unconditional guarantees that the Houthis will leave the port,” UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash told Reuters on Tuesday.

The Saudi regime-led coalition claims that the Ansarullah movement is using Hudaydah for weapons delivery, an allegation rejected by the fighters.

The Ansarullah movement has pledged strong resistance in the face of the assault, which is said to be the largest of its kind since the onset of the war in early 2015.

Shortly after the operation was launched, the Yemeni National Salvation Government’s spokesman, Abdulsalam Jaber, said Yemeni armed forces had targeted a UAE warship off the country’s western coast.

Yemen’s Supreme Revolutionary Committee said the warship was destroyed in the counter-attack, adding that Saudi regime-led



helicopters rushed to save the forces aboard the vessel, which is now burning near Yemen’s coastline.

A second battleship left the site following the incident, it added.

Meanwhile, according to The Wall Street Journal, there are signs that the United States military is deepening its role in the assault on Hudaydah, in spite of the United Nations warnings of massive human casualties.

Washington, the paper says, is providing its Persian Gulf allies with intelligence on airstrike targets in the port.

It cited American military officials as saying that the U.S. is helping the UAE develop a list of targets meant to be off limits for airstrikes on Hudaydah, with an apparent aim to minimize civilian casualties.

The U.S. fails to take any concrete action in the face of an imminent Emirati military

offensive against Yemen’s port city of Hudaydah amid diplomatic efforts at the UN to prevent such an assault.

The UN and other aid groups have over the past days withdrawn their staff members from the port city in the wake of UAE threats.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has also raised alarm over the impact of the attack on children in Hudaydah and beyond.

“There are 11 million children in need of humanitarian aid in this war-torn country. Choking off this lifeline will have devastating consequences for every one of them,” UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore said in a statement on Tuesday.

## ■ Red Cross renews warning

On Wednesday, the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) called on all sides to the Yemen conflict to protect civilians, voicing concerns about the humanitarian situation in Hudaydah.

“Under international humanitarian law, parties to the conflict have to do everything possible to protect civilians and ensure they have access to the assistance they need to survive,” Lise Grande, UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, told Reuters.

ICRC spokeswoman Marie-Claire Feghali also warned that the assault on Hudaydah was “likely to exacerbate an already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen.”

(Source: agencies)

## Indian soldiers killed in cross-border shelling

Four Indian soldiers, including an officer, have been killed in cross-border firing in Kashmir’s Samba district over two weeks after the South Asian countries pledged to curb cross-border violence.

The soldiers [from the Border Security Force (BSF)] were in their posts in Chamblial sector when the firing began from across the border, S Rajinder Singh, the deputy commissioner of Samba, told Al Jazeera.

“The soldiers were killed by sniper firing. The firing started late on Tuesday and continued till wee hours on Wednesday,” he said, adding that three wounded soldiers were being treated at a local hospital in Samba - one of the most affected areas due to cross-border violence.

Last month, the militaries from India and Pakistan agreed to honor the 2003 ceasefire agreement in “letter and spirit”. That deal has largely held in the past decade despite tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals.

But the latest ceasefire pledge seems to have crumbled within days as both the countries accused each other of deadly firing.

Residents said that “they had little hope as such attempts had failed in the past too”.



Since 2015, cross-border violence has been growing. According to India’s Ministry of Home Affairs, 1,250 ceasefire violations have been recorded in the first five months of this year, compared to 971 such violations last year.

Thousands of people have been displaced from the villages near the Line of Control (LoC), the de facto border that separates the Indian and Pakistani administered parts of Kashmir.

On Tuesday, Islamabad accused Indian forces of unprovoked ceasefire violations along the LoC in Chirikot sector, resulting in the killing of a civilian.

“The deliberate targeting of civilian populated areas is indeed deplorable and contrary to human dignity, international human rights and humanitarian laws. The ceasefire violations by India are a threat to regional peace and security and may lead to a strategic miscalculation,” the Pakistan’s ministry of foreign affairs said in a statement.

The deadly cross-border hostilities between the two countries intensified since May 18 last month when four civilians and an Indian soldier were killed in RS Pura sector in Jammu region of the disputed state.

This is the second deadly incident this month after two soldiers, including an officer, were killed on June 2 in Jammu’s Akhnour sector.

Kashmir continues to be a point of contention between India and Pakistan who have fought three wars over the region. Both claim the disputed territory in full but govern only parts of it.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Often left out, Japan seeks bigger role in North Korea diplomacy

Japan has offered to pay the initial costs of North Korea’s potential denuclearization, in the midst of high-profile diplomacy between the United States and the two Koreas that has often left Tokyo on the margins.

Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga made the offer in a Wednesday statement, a day after the U.S. President Donald Trump and the North’s leader Kim Jong-un met in a historic summit in Singapore.

At the end of that summit, Trump and Kim signed a brief, broadly-worded document according to which both sides committed to working “towards complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”

While President Trump has said that denuclearization will start in North Korea “immediately,” no specifics have been offered on the disarmament process, including how long it would take and what mechanisms will be in place.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has offered to help with North Korea’s denuclearization, and Suga, the Japanese

minister, said Japan would pay for IAEA inspections if such activities were in fact undertaken.

When asked who would be footing the bill for denuclearization in a press conference after the summit, Trump himself said he thought both Japan and South Korea would “help... very greatly.”

The agreement signed by Trump and Kim on Tuesday offers no specifics. North Korea’s official KCNA has reported that the U.S. has offered Pyongyang “security guarantees,” but no mention of such concessions has been made in the document.

Amid the flurry of diplomacy that culminated in the Singapore summit, Japan has often had to press for its voice to be heard. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan has in the course of many conversations with President Trump stressed Tokyo’s concerns, including the need for the continued presence of the U.S. forces in the region.

Japan has been heavily dependent on US military protection since defeat in World War Two.

At one point, Abe said any deal with North

Korea would have to see the country’s ballistic missiles of all ranges removed.

Japan reportedly plans to ask the U.S. that any potential the U.S. deal with North Korea take into account Japan’s “security concerns,” including the removal of ballistic missiles of all ranges.

Trump, who has billed the meeting with Kim a success, has already suggested he would end the U.S.’s annual war games with South Korea and bring American soldiers in the region home.

The annual drills were a major source of tension but were also considered by Seoul and Tokyo as a bulwark against perceived North Korean aggression.

Only days after Trump announced an initial decision in March to meet with Kim, Japan pledged to provide more than \$2.8 million to fund the potential inspections of the North’s nuclear facilities by the IAEA if Pyongyang agrees to such inspections.

IAEA inspectors previously monitoring North Korea’s nuclear facilities were expelled in April 2009, after the then-six-party talks

for North Korea’s denuclearization collapsed.

## ■ Japan wants the U.S. war games to continue

Highlighting Tokyo’s anxiety, Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera said on Wednesday that the U.S. military presence in South Korea and the joint exercises were “vital” and had to continue.

“The drills and the U.S. military stationed in South Korea play a vital role in East Asia’s security,” Onodera said. “We would like to seek an understanding of this between Japan, the US and South Korea.”

In his Wednesday remarks, Trump called the annual drills both expensive for America and “provocative” toward North Korea.

“We have, right now, 32,000 soldiers in South Korea, and I’d like to be able to bring them back home,” Trump said. “But that’s not part of the equation right now. I hope it will be eventually.”

The U.S. military forces have been stationed in the South since the end of the Korean War in 1953.

(Source: agencies)

## Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner made over \$82m outside White House roles

Financial disclosure forms released on Monday revealed how much Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner have earned from outside income while working at the White House, resurrecting concerns over possible conflicts of interest.

The disclosures showed that the president’s daughter and son-in-law earned more than \$82m in outside income in their first year serving as senior advisers to the president, the Washington Post first reported. Ivanka made \$3.9m from her stake in the Trump International Hotel and reported more than \$5m in earnings from her personal brand.

Trump and Kushner both chose to forgo drawing taxpayer-funded salaries from their roles in the White House. The disclosures, which were also obtained and reviewed by the Guardian, nonetheless reinforce the ways in which the couple has continued to earn money from the Trump Organization and outside business endeavors.

Because the financial disclosures report assets in broad ranges, it is difficult to determine the extent to which Trump and Kushner’s wealth has risen during their time at the White House. The disclosures are filed annually to the Office of Government Ethics. Donald Trump and the



vice-president, Mike Pence, submitted their 2017 financial disclosure forms last month.

Kushner yielded more than \$5m from a New Jersey property acquired by his family’s real estate business last year. Ivanka Trump reported \$2m in severance pay from an entity called the Trump Payroll Corp. She also received an advance totaling \$289,000 for the book she published last year, Women Who Work. Trump said she would donate the profits from the book to charity.

The couple’s vast business investments have repeatedly drawn scrutiny for potential ethics violations. Government watchdog groups have accused the Trump family of using the presidency and its stature for personal profit.

Peter Mirijanian, a spokesman for Kushner and Trump’s outside counsel, said the couple’s net worth “remains largely the same, with changes reflecting more the way the form requires disclosure than any substantial difference in assets or liabilities”.

Before joining the White House, Kushner resigned as chief executive officer from his real estate development business, Kushner Companies, stepped down from more than 260 corporate positions and partially divested from some of his assets. He nonetheless retained the vast majority of his interest in Kushner Companies.

But concerns over potential conflicts of interest resurfaced earlier this year when it was reported that several foreign governments saw Kushner, who has a wide-ranging foreign policy portfolio, as a target for manipulation based on his business interests and personal debt. Ethics watchdogs also sounded alarms over Trump’s brand continuing to win trademarks overseas.

(Source: The Guardian)

## EU must rally against threat from U.S., Russia: Dutch PM

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte Wednesday urged the European Union to rally urgently behind a rules-based international order against threats from Russia and even the United States.

“Even the relationship with our most important ally is no longer self-evident,” Rutte said in a speech to the European Par-

liament in Strasbourg, France which won a standing ovation.

Rutte echoed EU alarm over U.S. President Donald Trump’s decisions to pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal as well as to impose tariffs on European steel and aluminum.

But he urged the 28-nation bloc to “keep working as closely as possible with the United States,” which he said remained an ally nevertheless.

He said he stood before the parliament, the EU’s only directly elected body, with “a real sense of urgency” because the bloc’s

way of conducting international relations can no longer be taken for granted.

“The multilateral order is being challenged in a way that we haven’t seen in decades, and the geopolitical balance of power is shifting,” Rutte warned.

(Source: AFP)

## N. Korea media highlights Trump concessions on war games

North Korea’s state media lauded the summit between its leader, Kim Jong-un, and the United States President Donald Trump as a resounding success, highlighting concessions by the U.S. president and the prospect of a new era of peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula.



The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Wednesday that Trump expressed his intention to halt the U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises, offer security guarantees to the North and lift sanctions against it as relations improve.

KCNA also reported that the two leaders have agreed during their breakthrough summit to visit each other’s country at an unspecified time.

The news agency said that Kim invited Trump to visit Pyongyang “at a convenient time” and that Trump also invited Kim to visit the U.S.

KCNA said the two leaders “gladly accepted each other’s invitation, convinced that it would serve as another important occasion for improved” relations between their countries.

No sitting U.S. and North Korean leaders have visited each other’s countries since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Pyongyang also confirmed Trump’s declaration on Tuesday that the U.S. would halt joint military drills with South Korea.

KCNA quotes Kim as saying it’s “urgent to make a bold decision on halting irritating and hostile military actions against each other”.

Annual military drills between the U.S. and South Korea have been a major source of tension on the Korean Peninsula. The North has called them an invasion rehearsal and responded with its own weapons tests.

KCNA said the U.S. president expressed his intention to offer security guarantees to North Korea and lift sanctions “over a period of good-will dialogue” between the two countries.

(Source: agencies)

## The 2018 Bilderberg Summit and Iran

**I→** The prime ministers of the Netherlands and Belgium, and Serbia and Estonia, and the deputy prime ministers of Spain and Turkey, were among the guests of the summit. Usually, guests are invited based on the topic they are running research on and they hold speeches. However, the presence of every guest does not guarantee their membership in the Bilderberg Club. Then, real members of the “Group” or “Bilderberg Club”, who are the core of the forum, are privately discuss and deciding on the world affairs.

At the 2018 summit, no delegate arrived from China or Russia. The name of the guests at the forum, except those officially mentioned on the Bilderberg website, remains unknown.

## How Ethiopia’s peace offer caught Eritrea’s regime by surprise

**B→** In 2016, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea accused Eritrean state officials of committing “crimes against humanity”. For decades, things have been getting worse for Eritreans thanks to the short-sighted policies of the country’s repressive and reclusive government. The state has also become increasingly militarized under Afwerki’s rule.

The Eritrean government blames Ethiopia and the international community for all its problems and refused to take any responsibility for the grave situation the country is currently in. In their 2017 report submitted to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, the Eritrean government once again tried to blame all its wrongdoings and failures on the “border war with Ethiopia that erupted in May 1998 and the subsequent ongoing existential external threats and belligerencies against Eritrea”.

### ■ Resolving bone of contention

But today, the Eritrean government appears to be caught off guard by Ethiopia’s unexpected readiness to resolve the long-standing bone of contention between the two countries. The Eritrean regime seems confused, unprepared and clueless about how it should respond to Ethiopia’s peace offer.

Ethiopia’s call for normalization and peace put President Afwerki in a very difficult position, as it undermines his current strategy of blaming Ethiopia for his repressive rule. Afwerki kept the country under tight control for two decades by using the “Ethiopia threat” as an excuse. Even if not fully convinced, many Eritreans were coerced to accept those fears as “legitimate” and stoically withstand years of economic hardship, political repression, and military obligations that are akin to modern slavery.

If Ethiopia does follow through with its stated intention to accept the Boundary Commission’s 2002 verdict, it’s doubtful that Eritreans would accept any further fearmongering from the Afwerki administration regarding Addis Ababa’s actions and intentions. If Afwerki attempts to dismiss or undermine this long-awaited gesture from its neighbor, the population may openly turn against the regime.

Eritreans have been demonstrating their willingness to make amends with their neighbor for a very long time. Over the last few years, many Eritreans actively defied their government by travelling to Ethiopia to visit friends and family on Eritrean passports via a third country. These visits helped the Eritrean public hear from the Ethiopian people directly and diluted the state-controlled media’s hateful rhetoric about Ethiopia.

Today, there is a real opportunity to reach a peaceful resolution of this long-standing conflict. If the Eritrean government tries to ignore Addis Ababa’s peace offer, it will find itself taking a stance against not only the Ethiopian government but also the Eritrean people.

(Source: Aljazeera.com)



## Former hero Ronaldo backs Brazil to end 16-year wait in Russia



Former Brazil striker Ronaldo believes it is time for his country to live up to the expectations and end their 16-year wait for a World Cup in Russia.

Tite's Brazilian squad head into the tournament as one of the favourites, and will meet Switzerland, Costa Rica and Serbia in Group E.

"I think for me the favourite is, of course, Brazil, not just because I am Brazilian but because Brazil are playing very well," Ronaldo, who was the top scorer when Brazil last won the World Cup in 2002, told reporters in Moscow.

"Spain are playing very well, and Germany are always strong. But the World Cup is such a difficult tournament, and we also have Argentina, who are always strong, France with a very young team.

"I hope Brazil can win. It's a long time since 2002, and I think it's time."

Five-time champions Brazil will open their campaign against Switzerland on Sunday.

(Source: Goal)

## Britain's most successful long jumper Rutherford to retire in late 2018

England forward Marcus Rashford has suffered a "slight knock" in the final training session before heading to the World Cup in Russia, manager Gareth Southgate said.

The 20-year old, who scored 13 goals for Manchester United in all competitions last season, will be hopeful of a starting spot in Southgate's team after impressing in the warm-up games, including a long-range goal against Costa Rica.

"Marcus took a slight knock but nothing too serious so we will have a look at that ahead of tomorrow's session which is open for everyone to see," Southgate told British media.

"We have another week of preparation and a lot of competition for places, as you know."

Southgate has not yet decided on the starting lineup ahead of Monday's World Cup opener against Tunisia, saying there are "one or two very close calls" which will be decided once training resumes in Repino.

England will also face Panama and Belgium in Group G.

(Source: Reuters)

## Olympic long jump champion Greg Rutherford at end of season



Olympic long jump champion Greg Rutherford has announced he will retire from athletics at the end of the season.

The 31-year-old is hopeful of competing at August's European Championships in Berlin, as well as Diamond League events in Birmingham and London, before hanging up his spikes and calling time on his 13-year career.

Rutherford, who has struggled with injury in recent years, won long jump gold at London 2012 before claiming bronze four years later in Rio.

He said on Instagram: "I'm incredibly proud of my career. I've achieved so much but retirement comes early to those of us for whom sport is a livelihood.

"It only feels like yesterday I was winning my first major medal but now 12 years on, I sit here as the greatest long jumper Great Britain has ever had, one of the most successful in European history and someone ready to hang the spikes up for good."

"I want to thank everyone who's had a positive impact on my career (but I'd struggle to name everyone here) Most importantly, the greatest coach I could have ever wished for - @danpfaff [Dan Pfaff]. My full potential would never have been reached and that Olympic gold medal would never have been won, if it wasn't for his guidance and input.

"I'm going to go for the European Championships one final time. And then I'll also be jumping in Birmingham and London for the Diamond Leagues. If you fancy coming to watch me compete one last time then please do come on down and give me a wave. It'd be so great to finish with some roaring crowds.

"Thank you for all your love and support over the years. It's been a blast & your kind comments have always given me a push in the right direction."

The Briton also claimed gold at the 2015 World Championships in Beijing, before doing so in the European Championships a year later.

(Source: Euronews)

# Real Madrid name Spain manager as new head coach



Real Madrid have appointed Spain manager Julen Lopetegui as their new head coach on a three-year deal.

Zinedine Zidane, who led the club to three successive Champions League titles, stepped down in May, saying the club needs "a different voice".

Lopetegui previously managed Porto for two years, before taking over at the Spanish national team in July 2016.

The 51-year-old will take up the position after the World Cup, which begins on 14 June. A former goalkeeper, Lopetegui made one senior appearance for Real Madrid but played 107 matches for Logrones. He began coaching in 2003 as assistant manager to Spain's Under-17 team. He managed Spain at Under-19, Under-20 and Under-21 level before moving to Porto.

Real finished third in La Liga last season, 17 points behind champions Barcelona.

Forward Gareth Bale previously said he would hold talks

regarding his future at the club, while Cristiano Ronaldo also said he would make an announcement on his future.

Spain begin their World Cup campaign against Ronaldo's Portugal on Friday in a match live on BBC One (19:00 BST kick-off).

■ 'Absolutely nobody was expecting it'

As recently as Monday, Spain's top selling sports newspaper Marca ran a story which claimed that Mauricio Pochettino was still Real Madrid's preferred option for the vacant managerial position, with Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp and Chelsea's Antonio Conte also in the frame and former players Michel and Michael Laudrup among the outsiders.

Among all those names, one was not mentioned - and had not been mentioned - since Zinedine Zidane's abrupt departure: Julen Lopetegui. That tells you just how much of a shock the news of the Spain boss's Bernabeu appointment has been.

## U.S. counterspy warns World Cup travellers' devices could be hacked



The top U.S. counterintelligence official is advising Americans travelling to Russia for football's World Cup beginning this week that they should not take electronic devices because they are likely to be hacked by criminals or the Russian government.

In a statement to Reuters on Tuesday, William Evanina, an FBI agent and the director of the U.S. National Counterintelligence and Security Center, warned World Cup travellers that even if they think they are insignificant, hackers could still target them.

"If you're planning on taking a mobile phone, laptop, PDA, or other electronic device with you - make no mistake - any data on those devices (especially your personally identifiable information) may be accessed by the Russian government or cyber criminals," he said.

"Corporate and government officials are most at risk, but don't assume you're too insignificant to be targeted," Evanina added. "If you can do without the device, don't take it. If you must take one, take a different device from your usual one and remove the battery when not in use."

Evanina's warning comes as U.S. intelligence, law enforcement and congressional officials are still investigating Russian hacking in the 2016 presidential election

and whether anyone with President Donald Trump's campaign was aware of or aided it. Trump has repeatedly denied there was any collusion and Russia has said it did not meddle in the U.S. election.

Another U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said British security agencies have issued similar warnings to the British public and the England football team, which is competing for the World Cup.

In a statement, Britain's National Cyber Security Center said it was "providing expert cyber security advice to the (UK) Football Association ahead of their departure to Russia for the 2018 FIFA World Cup."

The NCSC, a branch of the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Britain's electronic eavesdropping agency, also issued a warning to the public.

Private cyber security expert Patrick Wardle said the official warnings constituted "really good advice. When I travel to Russia, I bring 'burner' devices, so if they get hacked, it doesn't really matter."

A burner device is typically bought for temporary use, then thrown away.

U.S. agencies have issued similar warnings before other major international sporting events, including the recent Winter Olympics in Seoul.

(Source: Reuters)

## 'Trump factor helping Morocco,' says rival 2026 World Cup bid member

Morocco has had an unexpected helping hand from US President Donald Trump over the last few months in its bid to win the right to stage the 2026 World Cup, according to a member of the North African country's bid.

Morocco --which has largely been seen as an underdog --is up against a unified bid from Canada, the US and Mexico.

"I think that Donald Trump factor is helping Morocco," Moncef Belkhatay, a member of Morocco's 2026 bid committee, told CNN Sport's Alex Thomas.

Belkhatay was responding to a question about Trump's April tweet lobbying for support. "The US has put together a STRONG bid w/ Canada & Mexico for the 2026 World Cup," Trump tweeted. "It would be a shame if countries that we always support were to lobby against the U.S. bid. 'Why should we be supporting these countries when they don't support us (including at the United Nations)?"

Since the unified World Cup bid was announced in April 2017, the relationship between the White House and its proposed co-hosts has been touchy at times.

Recently Trump called Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "meek and mild" in a tweet over a tariff dispute following a G7 meeting.



Tariffs imposed on Mexico along with plans for a border wall have also ruffled feathers south of the border.

"When you see what's happening with Mexico, what's happening with Canada lately, that's something that is not ... you don't look united," Belkhatay added. "How united are you?"

"Now we are seeing that politics is entering into the game.



## "Feel the power of dream at 2018 World Cup"

Absolutely nobody was expecting it, and now there is fevered speculation about exactly why the news was broken three days before the national team's World Cup opener against Portugal, rather than being kept under wraps until after the competition.

Whatever the reasoning behind the timing of the announcement, it's a fascinating appointment for a man who has done very well at international level, winning the European under-21 title in 2013 and qualifying for this summer's World Cup in impressive style, but who has minimal experience at club level and failed in his last domestic job with Porto.

Lopetegui's strong relationship with Real's Spain internationals like Sergio Ramos and Isco will ensure he receives a warm internal welcome, but he now faces even more pressure as he heads into a World Cup leading a team which was already burdened by very high expectations.

(Source: BBC)

## Japan end woeful run, Lewandowski shines for Poland



Japan claimed their first victory of the year on Tuesday, coming from behind to beat Paraguay 4-2 and boost sagging morale a week before their opening World Cup Group H match against Colombia.

It was The Blue Samurai's first win under coach Akira Nishino, who had lost friendlies against Ghana and Switzerland since taking over in April.

Japan, one of the most successful Asian teams, having qualified for the World Cup for a sixth consecutive time, scored four times despite managing only three shots against Paraguay, who failed to reach the World Cup finals.

Takashi Inui set up the victory at the Tivoli-Neu stadium in the Austrian city of Innsbruck with two second-half goals, both assisted by Shinji Kagawa. Paraguay's Federico Santander scored an own goal and Kagawa put the result beyond doubt with a stoppage-time effort.

"We held our shape in defence and contained them, and that was a concern for us, but you need balance as well," Nishino said after his team ended a five-match winless streak, stretching back to December. "You need to break down your opponents and we finally did that in the second half.

"Inui has a talent for dribbling in the box and I want more of that from him.

We saw that with his second-half goals."

Fellow Group H side Poland ended their World Cup warmup fixtures on a high with a resounding 4-0 win over Lithuania as talismanic striker Robert Lewandowski netted twice in the first half.

The 29-year-old skipper took his tally to 55 international goals and also scored for the 36th time in 37 Poland games under coach Adam Nawalka.

Dawid Kownacki and Jakub Blaszczykowski were also on target for the Poles at Stadion Narodowy in Warsaw.

Spain coach Julen Lopetegui will leave his post after the end of the World Cup to take charge at Real Madrid, the Champions League winners said in a surprise announcement just two days before the start of the tournament in Russia.

Egypt forward Mohamed Salah, still recovering from his shoulder injury, remains a doubt to face Uruguay in their World Cup opener at Yekaterinburg on Friday, the Egyptian FA's managing director Ehab Lehitia said.

"He is gradually getting better. However, I cannot confirm today that he will play in the first match," Lehitia said of the 25-year-old, who scored 44 goals for Liverpool last season.

(Source: Mirror)

We believe that politics should be independent from football."

Each of FIFA's 207 non-competing members will cast a vote in Moscow on Wednesday at the 68th FIFA Congress, with a simple majority winning.

Since the 2018 and 2022 World Cups were awarded to Russia and Qatar in December 2010, the voting process has gone under an intense amount of scrutiny, thanks in part to an FBI investigation. The US was on the losing side of the 2022 World Cup bid. After the controversial award of the 2018 and 2022 tournaments to Russia and Qatar respectively, FIFA has promised a "more open and transparent" vote this time. The voting of the national associations will be published at the conclusion of Congress.

"The vote of UEFA and Asia will be decisive," said Belkhatay. "We will cross fingers in order to make sure this will be a fair play process, a transparent process."

The New York Times vote tracker lists the North America bid as slightly ahead in the running, though 133 federations remain uncommitted, with 104 votes needed to guarantee victory. However Belkhatay insisted the vote would be very close, adding: "It's 50-50."

(Source: CNN)





“80 Million People,  
One Nation, One Heartbeat”

By Masoud Hossein

**MOSCOW** — Iran national football team Carlos Queiroz says they are completely ready to meet Morocco at the 2018 World Cup opener.

Team Melli, who became the first team to arrive in Russia for the World Cup last week, are training in Bakovka camp, outside Moscow.

Iran, making their fifth appearance in the World Cup finals, kick off their campaign against the Atlas Lions in St Petersburg on June 15.

# It’s time for Iranian players to express excitement, coach says



Carlos Queiroz’s side, meanwhile, face Spain in Kazan on 20 June before meeting Cristiano Ronaldo’s Portugal in Saransk five days later.

Queiroz says to defeat the African powerhouse will help them to book a place in the knockout stage for the first ever, however it will be a difficult task.

Most recently, Herve Renard’s side defeated Estonia 3-1 that means they have now not tasted defeat since one against Cameroon last year, a run of 18 matches, Tehran Times sports correspondent wrote.

“Morocco is an African country but most of their players were born in the European countries and grown up there. They take advantage of a good coach and have also creative players. We respect them a lot and I am sure they respect us a lot too,” Queiroz told reporters at Bakovka.

“Team Melli want to beat Morocco but there is no guarantee to win the match, however, we can guarantee we will fight until the end. Actions, of course, do speak louder than words, and we want to act,” the Portuguese added.

Queiroz also confirmed two players sustain injury.

## Iran, Morocco a key match for Team Melli, Iran ambassador to Russia says



**MOSCOW** — Iran’s ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanaei said Team Melli match against Morocco would be Iran’s key matchnin the 21st edition of the 2018 World Cup.

Iran national football team, headed by Carlos Queiroz, will meet the Atlas Lions on Friday in St Petersburg.

Iran, making their fifth appearance in the World Cup finals, meanwhile, face Spain in Kazan on 20 June before meeting Cristiano Ronaldo’s Portugal in Saransk five days later.

“We have a good feeling because Iran’s national football team is a strong team and we can make history in this

competition,” Sanaei, who met the Iranian players and coaching staff in Bakovka camp, told reporters.

“I will be in St Petersburg to watch Team Melli match against Morocco and I think it would be a key match for both of the teams.

I have met the Iranian players but I know Sardar Azmoun and Saeid Ezaatollahi better than others because they play in Russian Premiere League,” he added.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup starts in Moscow’s Luzhniki Stadium on Thursday with a match between Russia and Saudi Arabia.

## Iran sweating on Ashkan Dejagah’s fitness



By Masoud Hossein

Iran national football team are sweating on Ashkan Dejagah’s fitness ahead of the 2018 World Cup.

With two days remaining to the crucial match against Morocco in Group B of the 2018 World Cup, Dejagah is not completely fit for the competition.

Dejagah returned with a goal after about four months in late May in a friendly match against Turkey, where Team Melli lost 2-1.

He had suffered a knee injury in Nottingham Forest’s training in February. The 31-year-old iconic midfielder

had been a regular for Iran in their successful qualifying campaign and his absence in the key match against Morocco could be a big blow for Carlos Queiroz’s side.

Iran national football team will likely miss striker Mehdi Taremi in their first match.

Team Melli will meet the Atlas Lions on Friday in St Petersburg.

Iran, making their fifth appearance in the World Cup finals, meanwhile, face Spain in Kazan on 20 June before meeting Cristiano Ronaldo’s Portugal in Saransk five days later.

## Morocco star Nabil Dirar doubtful for World Cup tournament in Russia

By Dennis Mabuka

Morocco are returning to World Cup for the first time since 1998 and are placed in Group B where they will face Iran in opener

Morocco are sweating to have winger Nabil Dirar fit to start in their opening match of the 2018 Fifa World Cup.

The Atlas Lions arrived safely in Russia on Sunday to begin their final round of training for the tournament but AFP reports that Dirar, who is part of the squad, may miss the event altogether.

Dirar missed Morocco’s two friendly matches against Slovakia and Estonia owing to a calf injury suffered for the past two weeks.

The 32-year-old Dirar, who plays for Fenerbahce in Turkey, had been a regular for Morocco in their successful qualifying campaign and scored in the decisive match in the



preliminaries away against the Ivory Coast last November.

Coach Hervé Renard has already taken precautions for Dirar’s possible absence and appealed to Amiens defender Oualid El Hajjam to replace him if his condition does not improve.

El Hajjam made his debut for the North Africans in a friendly game against Uzbekistan back in March. After a 20-year absence at the global showpiece, Morocco will make an appearance in the 2018 World Cup and the odds are against them since they have been placed in a group with tough teams, Spain and Portugal.

The Atlas Lions will take on Iran in their opening game on Friday, June 15, before they face off against European champions Portugal and 2010 World Cup winners Spain in the final group games.

(Source: goal.com)

## Spanish coach Lopetegui dismissed two days before World Cup opening match

Head coach of the Spain men’s national football team Julen Lopetegui has been sacked, only two days before his squad, nicknamed La Furia Roja, was to open its 2018 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup campaign against Portugal.

President of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) Luis Manuel Rubiales Béjar made the announcement during a news conference in Madrid on Wednesday.

Rubiales noted that Lopetegui’s replacement would be announced “soon.”

“We want to thank Julen for all he’s done and he’s a big reason behind us being

in Russia, but we feel obliged to dispense with his services,” he added.

“There has to be a message to all RFEF employees and there are ways of behaving that you need to abide by,” Rubiales pointed out.

Lopetegui’s dismissal came after only a day after professional Spanish football club Real Madrid Club de Fútbol, commonly known as Real Madrid or simply as Real, unexpectedly stated that Lopetegui would join the club as their coach next season.

During the official 2018 FIFA World Cup draw ceremony at Kremlin State Palace in the Russian capital city of Moscow

on December 1 last year, La Furia Roja joined the Iran men’s national football team, nicknamed Team Melli, A Seleção of Portugal and Morocco’s Atlas Lions in the preliminary round of the tournament.

The host nation, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Uruguay form Group A in the upcoming quadrennial international sports event.

France is drawn in Group C, and is pitted against Australia, Peru and Denmark.

Argentina, Iceland, Croatia and Nigeria are drawn in Group D.

Group E consists of Brazil, Switzerland, Costa Rica and Serbia.

While the 2014 FIFA World Cup cham-

pion Germany, Mexico, Sweden and South Korea shape Group F, Belgium, Panama, Tunisia and England are in Group G.

Group H has Poland, Senegal, Colombia and Japan.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup will take place from June 14 to July 15. Russia will open the event against Saudi Arabia in a Group A fixture at Moscow’s Luzhniki Stadium.

A total of 64 matches will be played in 12 venues located in 11 cities.

Iran will start its World Cup campaign against Morocco at Krestovsky Stadium in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on June 15.

(Source: BBC)

## John Toshack eyes title at Iran Professional League

**PLDC** — Newly-appointed Tractor Sazi coach John Toshack says he wants to win Iran Professional League (IPL) with the Iranian team.

The 69-year-old Welshman has signed a three-year contract with Tractor Sazi for an undisclosed fee on Sunday.

Toshack, who has won La Liga title with Real Madrid in 1990 and Copa del Rey in 1987 as head coach of Real Sociedad, says he wants to claim IPL title with Iran’s Tractor Sazi.

“One day, somebody asked me about retirement and I said to him I would retire when I died. Now I am in search of new challenge with Tractor Sazi,” Toshack said in an interview with Catalan newspaper Mundo Deportivo.

“Iran is a different country and his national team is heading by Carlos Queiroz. We have so much in common,” Toshack added.

The Welshman has also coached Swansea City, Sporting CP, Real Sociedad (twice), Wales national football team, Besiktas, Saint-Etienne, Macedonia national football team and Khazar Lankaran.

Under coaching of Turkish gaffer Ertugrul Saglam, Tractor Sazi finished in 10th place in Iran Professional League (IPL) last season.

The IPL new season will kick off on July 26.



## Iran to Face India in Asian Women’s U-19 Volleyball C’ship

**TASNIM** — Iran needs a win over India to advance to the 2018 Asian Women’s U-19 Volleyball Championship quarter-final.

The match has been scheduled for Thursday.

The Iranian women started the campaign with a 3-1 win over Hong Kong but suffered a narrow 3-2 defeat to Australia in the preliminary round.

Iran qualified for the next stage as the winner, beating Macau 3-0.

The 2018 Asian Women’s U-19 Volleyball Championship is a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Volleyball Federation of Vietnam (VFFV) for the women’s under-19 national teams of Asia.

The tournament is being held in B’c Ninh Province, Vietnam, from 10 to 17 June 2018.



## Andrea Pirlo wishes Team Melli all the best in World Cup

**PLDC** — Former Italy midfielder Andrea Pirlo has wished Team Melli all the best in the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Iran national football team has been drawn in Group B along with Morocco, Spain and Portugal.

Team Melli will face Morocco in its opener on Friday.

“I wish Iran the best of luck at the World Cup,” Ex-Milan player published the post on his Twitter account.

Pirlo was instrumental in Italy victory in the 2006 FIFA World Cup. He was named Man of the Match three times, including the final, more than any other player in the tournament, and ultimately won the Bronze Ball (awarded to the third best player of the tournament) also being elected to the Team of the Tournament.

## Nike should apologize to Iran: Carlos Queiroz

Iran national football team’s head coach Carlos Queiroz says US Company Nike should apologize to Iranian players for its “arrogant conduct”.

Nike confirmed in a statement they are unable to provide kit to Iran due to the US sanctions currently in place against the country.

The US sanctions mean that, as a US company, Nike cannot supply shoes to players in the Iranian National team at this time.

But Queiroz, whose Iran side play Morocco in its opening World Cup game on Friday, has hit out at the American sportswear company.

“It has been a source of inspiration for us,” Queiroz told Sky Sports News. “This last comment of Nike was, in my personal view, an unnecessary statement. Everybody is aware about the sanctions.

“It was ridiculous and unnecessary to produce this statement against a couple of young players. I think it should be the exact opposite because 99 per cent of our boys, they buy the boots, so the statement should be in the opposite direction and they should thank them,” he stated.

“They should come out and apologize because this arrogant conduct against 23 boys is absolutely ridiculous and unnecessary. We have addressed this concern to FIFA and the minimum Nike should do is to apologize to them (Iran’s players).

“We expect that FIFA will come with a position and if they don’t we will publish the letter we sent to FIFA,” the Portuguese added.

(Source: Sky Sports News)





INTERNATIONAL DAILY  
www.tehrantimes.com

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» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603  
» www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.  
Tel: 88911433  
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com  
» Printed at: Rooztab - ISSN: 1017-94

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran  
P.o. Box: 14155-4843  
Zip Code: 1599814713



Spanish center hosts Iranian film festival

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A festival of Iranian films opened at the Enrique de Sena Cultural Center in Santa Marta, Spain on Tuesday.

A lineup of five movies from various Iranian directors has been selected to be screened during the program arranged by the Asociación Somos Santa Marta.



A scene from “Painting Pool” by Maziar Miri

The lineup is composed of “So Close, So Far” by Reza Mirkarimi, “Painting Pool” by Maziar Miri, “Gamecock” by Masud Atyabi, “A Cradle for Mother” by Panahbarkhoda Rezai and “Gold and Copper” by Homayun Asadian.

The films will be screened on June 14, 19, 26 and 28.

The program has been organized to familiarize the Spanish with a lifestyle that differs from what they live, the organizers has said in a statement.

The festival is being held in collaboration with the University of Salamanca and the Embassy of Iran.

Egyptian publisher acquires rights to 10 books from Iranian writers

**C U L T U R E d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The Ibn Roshd Publishing House, an Egyptian publishing company, has acquired the rights to a collection of ten books from Iranian authors.

The Pol Literary and Translation Agency, a Tehran-based institution that translates Iranian books and presents Persian language publications around the world, has entered into negotiations with the Egyptian publisher.

The Iranian publishers will entrust the rights to Ibn Roshd Publishing House to translate and publish the books in Arabic.


“I’m Alive” by Masumeh Abad, the memoirs of an Iranian girl in her long captivity in Iraq during the 1980s, is among the books.

The collection also includes “Da” which contains recollections by Seyyedeh Zahra Hosseini of the time when the Iraqi army captured Khorramshahr in the early days of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Also included are “Chess with the Domsday Machine” by Habib Ahmadzadeh, “Cradle of Death” by Mehdi Rajabi, “Silver Orchestra” by Amin Barjesteh, “Muhammad (S)” by Ebrahim Hassan-Beigi, “A Hundred Years of Story Writing in Iran” by Hassan Mir-Abedini, “Mahdism” by Behruz Mohammadi, “Ancient Tales: Narration from Rumi’s Stories” by Nahid Abqari and “The Legend of the Mayor” by Behruz Arjangpur.

BOOKSHELF

Strategies for Innovation in International Export



**Writers:** Alireza Tahernejad, Simin Amini-Zare, Giti Akramipur, Amin Amini-Zare

**Publisher:** Dar ol-Hedayah

Our age is a period of change and in no time the influence of information technology has led human life to such an unsustainable and undergoing transformation. The establishment of new rules, regulations and standards for the global village, and the adoption of local practices and social or social standards by adapting the conditions of ethnic practices have led to the adoption of various measures. The need for legal regulation of domestic and international laws and regulations, and strategies Innovative is the same in various fields of trade, including exports and imports. Moreover, the world today is evolving from various social, economic, political, cultural and technical points. Organizations are not excluded from this and are technologically and structurally affected by changes that affect their financial and financial performance; therefore, the issue of improvement in business indicators is important, and in this regard, innovation is important. Special finds. Organizations can rely on innovation, its promotion and promotion, and innovative activities within themselves to maintain their long-term supremacy in competitive areas. Nowadays, innovation capacity and international experience are elements that are often related to the concepts of globalization, with export activities as the first stage in the global process. Innovation is one of the tools for gaining competitive advantage for managers of current organizations. The present book, in two chapters, outlines the concepts of innovative strategies in international exports.

Iran’s “Last Fiction” to compete in APSA

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – “The Last Fiction”, an animated feature film produced by Hoorakhsh Studio in Tehran, will be competing in the 12th Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA).

In a letter sent to Hoorakhsh, APSA Executive Manager Eddy Garcia-Grant asked the studio to submit the movie to the APSA Animated Feature Film category, the studio announced on Wednesday.

The story of “The Last Fiction” directed by Ashkan Rahgozar is based on the classic Iranian tale from Persian poet Ferdowsi’s masterpiece “The Shahnameh” (“The Book of Kings”).

It follows Zahak’s treacherous rise to the throne in Jamshid in Persia. The young and naive hero Afaridoun will have to save the kingdom and its people from darkness. But he must first conquer his own demons in this portrayal of Persian mythology that reveals human nature.

An all-star cast including Parviz Parastui, Leila Hatami, Hamed Behdad, Baran Kowsari, Askhan Khatibi, Akbar Zanjapur and Farrokh Nemati have lent their voices to the characters in the project.

The 12th Asia Pacific Screen Awards ceremony will take place in Brisbane, Australia on November 29.

“The Last Fiction” has also been selected for the feature film out of competition at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival. Three screenings have been arranged for the movie at the event, which is currently underway in the alpine town in southeastern France.

Richard Clayderman sends video message to Iranian fans before Tehran concerts

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – World-renowned French pianist Richard Clayderman has talked with his Iranian fans via a video message a week before arriving in Tehran to perform several concerts.

In the video released by Royal Honar, the Iranian institute that is the coordinator of Clayderman’s upcoming performances, he spoke about his love and interest in performing live in Iran.

“I would like to say that I am so happy to visit your great and beautiful country for the first time,” he said and added, “It was my wish for over 20 years to perform for you and finally this wish will come true.”

“I have travelled to all over the world with my music for about 40 years and



French pianist Richard Clayderman in an undated photo

Feline friends: Ed Sheeran waxwork unveiled at cat cafe

**LONDON (Reuters)** — Ed Sheeran has played to packed stadiums around the world - now he, or rather a wax figure of him, can add a cat cafe to the list of locations.

Waxwork museum Madame Tussauds

on Tuesday unveiled a model of the British chart-topping musician at Lady Dinah’s Cat Emporium in London, where customers sip their drinks surrounded by felines.

The figure of Sheeran is dressed in a checked shirt, bears the singer’s many

tattoos and is holding a guitar - as the cafe’s cats eat treats and play around the model.

“Knowing what a pet lover he is, launching the figure at London’s renowned cat cafe felt like something the man himself

my major goal is to represent happiness, beauty, and beautiful feelings specially peace and love. This is all I want to give in your country,” he stated.

The concerts will be put on at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry for six nights on June 21, 22, 23, 24, 26 and 27.

Clayderman is scheduled to perform “O Iran” based on a composition by Iranian musician Ruhollah Khaleqi.

“O Iran”, a song that was the national anthem in the early years after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, was registered on Iran’s National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

Iranian Istgah Orchestra by conductor Mehdi Noruzi will accompany Clayderman in his performances.

Trump calls De Niro ‘very low IQ individual’ for Tony Awards outburst

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** - Donald Trump on Tuesday hit back at Robert De Niro, calling him a “very low IQ individual,” after the Oscar-winning actor’s expetive-laden attack on the American president on live television.

Two days after De Niro’s outburst on the stage of the Tony Awards ceremony in New York, Trump said he had watched the clip “and (I) truly believe he may be punch drunk.”

Representatives for De Niro did not immediately return a request for comment.

De Niro, one of the most respected American actors, twice used the so-called F-Bomb against Trump on Sunday, prompting loud applause from the audience of theater actors, directors and producers at Radio City Music Hall.

The “Raging Bull” actor’s remarks were bleeped for more than 6 million Americans watching the awards show on CBS at home.

De Niro took the stage to introduce rocker and Tony Awards performer Bruce Springsteen. Without any preamble, he said, “I’m gonna say one thing. Fxx Trump.”

With the audience of theater actors, directors and producers shrieking and rising to their feet in applause, De Niro said: “It’s no longer down with Trump. It’s fxx Trump.” He did not elaborate on his comment.

Trump was on his way to Singapore to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as the Broadway awards show was taking place. He delivered his response on his Twitter account while on his way



Actor Robert De Niro speaks before introducing Bruce Springsteen’s performance at the 72nd Annual Tony Awards Show in New York, U.S.June 10, 2018. (Reuters/ Lucas Jackson)

back to the United States.

“Robert De Niro, a very Low IQ individual, has received to many shots to the head by real boxers in movies. I watched him last night and truly believe he may be ‘punch-drunk,’” Trump tweeted.

“I guess he doesn’t realize the economy is the best it’s ever been with employment being at an all time high, and many companies pouring back into our country. Wake up Punchy!”

De Niro won an Oscar for playing American boxer Jake LaMotta in the 1980 film “Raging Bull.” He returned to the ring in “Grudge Match” in 2013 and played a boxing trainer in 2016 movie “Hands of Stone.”

De Niro, a noted liberal, has been increasingly critical of Trump, a Republican, at smaller show business events in the past year, but none of them had the profile enjoyed by the Tony Awards.

Mozart score among hundreds of manuscripts to be auctioned in Paris

**PARIS (Reuters)** — A score by Mozart and a letter from Vincent Van Gogh are among hundreds of lots up for grabs this month in auctions of items by composers, artists and writers.

They are going under the hammer in Paris as part of a series of sales aimed at liquidat-

ing a 130,000-item collection of art, music and literary works put together by French group Aristophil, which was set up in 1990 and raised funds from investors in exchange for a share in the pieces.

The group went bankrupt in 2015 and Aristophil founder Gerard Lheritier has put

under investigation for fraud, a charge he has denied.

The first sale took place in December and the next round kicks off this week, with the Mozart score estimated to fetch between 120,000 euros and 150,000 euros (\$141,500 to \$177,000) and a letter with illustrations

from Van Gogh to his friend Anthon van Rappard seen selling at around 250,000-300,000 euros.

“The market is awaiting these sales because Aristophil bought everything for several years,” Claude Aguttes of Aguttes auctioneers said.



A poster for “The Last Fiction” by Iranian director by Ashkan Rahgozar



Robbie Williams before the match Action at the Soccer Football, England v Soccer Aid World XI - Old Trafford, Manchester, Britain - June 10, 2018. (Image via Reuters/Andrew Boyers)