



**Commander denies rumor of IRGC chief replacement** **2**



**Irrigation of Tehran green spaces limited** **12**



**Vahid Amiri officially joins Trabzonspor** **15**



**Tehran hosts art exhibits on Hajj** **16**

# Talks with U.S. obviously futile



See page 2

## Terrorists attack Iranian border checkpoint, kill 10 forces

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Anti-revolution terrorists attacked an Iranian military checkpoint on the western border with Iraq on Friday night, killing 10 forces from the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. PJAK, a terrorist group aligned with the PKK, claimed responsibility for the attack. In a statement released on Saturday, the IRGC said the overnight attack took place in the village of Dari in the Marivan

district, Kurdistan province. The attackers exploded an ammunition, the IRGC stated. The IRGC said that a number of the attackers were also killed in the clash and others injured or fled. “Terrorist and anti-revolution groups and their supporters have no status among the Iranians, especially the great and revolutionary people of Kurdistan, and should wait for a hard revenge,” the statement said.

## Govt. presents package to back production, job creation

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Budget and Planning Organization of Iran put forward its 10-section protective plan to support domestic production and job creation during the present Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2019), Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday. The excerpts of the proposed plan include: holding internship plan for university graduates, supporting entre-

preneurs and employers via implementing a contributory plan, holding skill-training plans in real work environments to make trainees ready for entering the market, implementing wage subsidy plan to support employment of work force in deprived areas and by private sector, and also implementing microfinance plan via linking an official financial institute with a local non-financial one. **→4**

## Lieberman threatens war on Gaza

Hamas and Israel have announced a ceasefire following an escalation which left four Palestinians and an Israeli soldier dead, but the Israeli minister of foreign affairs warned of a “wide-scale” war on the Gaza Strip. “With Egyptian and United Nations efforts it has been agreed to return to the era of calm between (Israel) and Palestinian factions,” Hamas spokes-

man Fawzi Barhoum told Reuters late on Friday. The truce followed dozens of Israeli strikes on Gaza, which left four Palestinians dead and at least 120 others injured. The air raids came after the Israeli military said one of its soldiers had been killed as a result of a shooting carried out from Gaza. **→13**

**EDITORIAL**  
**Mohammad Ghaderi**  
Tehran Times editor-in-chief  
@ghaderi62

## Europe Keeps to Play on the U.S. Ground

Europe's package of proposals which was recently offered Iran had raised concerns and complaints among our country's officials, including the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. While Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, had promised Iran to do her best to maintain the nuclear deal, there are some points that can't be easily ignored.

This package bears almost no results for the Iranian economy, and can in no way guarantee the critical issues such as oil exports and banking transactions. Although coming up with a practical package (at least at the level of Europe's economic capabilities) shouldn't take much time, European leaders insist on continuing the negotiations with Iran until November! Regarding the European officials' approach to the nuclear deal, there are some points that can't be easily ignored:

In 2017, the European troika announced its agreement to making changes in the content of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the inclusion of issues such as Iran's missile and regional capabilities, inspections of our country's military sites and putting permanent restrictions on our nuclear program. The completion of this puzzle presented by the Trump government was not something that would be hidden from the Iranian people. The intensive talks between the experts of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the European Union and the United States over “changing the JCPOA” was a sign of the Europeans' betraying the JCPOA and the Iranian nation. Even Angela Merkel and Emanuel Macron, in their last visit to Washington (before Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA), urged the US president to avoid pulling out of the nuclear deal in exchange for the fulfilment of all his demands.

However, Trump was concerned about other issues such as attracting the support of Zionist lobbyists, and thus he was determined in walking out of the nuclear deal. Therefore, the US withdrawal doesn't suggest the break of “Washington-Brussels” alliance, but rather adds to the European troika accusation: a charge which is definitely no less than the charge of Trump's government in pulling out of the nuclear deal. **→7**

## Yemeni forces using drones in attacks on Saudi soil: commander

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Yemen's army and popular committees are using drones as a new weapon in their attacks on Saudi soil in retaliation for the Riyadh-led coalition's offensives against the Arabian Peninsula country, a senior commander of the army said.

Speaking to the Tasnim News Agency, Brigadier General Abed bin Mohammed al-Thawar pointed to the Saud-led coalition's massive attacks on Yemen's western port city of Hudaydah and said, “Our drones' flights deep into Saudi Arabia and the attacks on the economic companies of this regime were our response to the massive helicopter operation (carried out by Saudi-led forces) on the west coast region to take control of Hudaydah.”

He further emphasized that all attempts by the Saudi-led coalition to occupy the strategic city of Hudaydah have failed thanks to the endeavors by “heroes” of the army and popular committees.



“The strategic depth of the enemy, (namely) Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, is within our reach,” he said, adding, “(Reaching) no distance is difficult for us and the enemy will witness the impact of these weapons and their strength.”

“All military, economic and political sites of Saudi Arabia and the UAE are within the range

of our weapons,” the commander noted.

Backed by Saudi-led airstrikes, Emirati forces and militants loyal to Yemen's former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, launched the Hudaydah offensive on June 13 despite international warnings that it would compound the impoverished nation's humanitarian crisis.

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

Since March 2015, Saudi Arabia and some of its Arab allies have been carrying out deadly airstrikes against the Houthi Ansarullah movement in an attempt to restore power to fugitive former President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, a close ally of Riyadh.

Over 14,000 Yemenis, including thousands of women and children, have lost their lives in the deadly military campaign.

## Xi's visit to UAE highlights China's rising interest in Middle East

China and the United Arab Emirates signed a raft of financial, business and trade agreements during a visit by President Xi Jinping to the UAE, underscoring energy-hungry Beijing's rapidly growing interest in the Middle East.

Xi made the first visit by a Chinese leader to the Persian Gulf state in 29 years, meeting two of its most powerful leaders, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, ruler of Dubai, and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi.

They announced 13 agreements and memoranda of understanding, including approval for the first Chinese state-owned financial services firm to set up in Abu Dhabi Global Market, a

financial center, while the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and the China National Petroleum Corporation agreed to explore joint business opportunities.

As both a major energy exporter and a hub for international trade, the UAE is an important part of Xi's “Belt and Road” initiative to invest in infrastructure linking China by both sea and land to markets in Asia and Europe.

“We have many areas of political and economic agreement and a solid base of projects in the energy, technology and infrastructure sectors. More importantly (we have) a strong political will to start a greater phase of cooperation and integration,” Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid wrote

in a Twitter post in Arabic on Friday.

“Today, we have exemplary relations with China and a Chinese leadership that sees the UAE as main strategic partner in the region,” he added.

China is the UAE's second largest trading partner and biggest source of imports. The UAE is the gateway for about 60 percent of China's exports to the Middle East, and on its own accounts for around a quarter of total Arab trade with China.

UAE economy minister Sultan bin Saeed al-Mansouri said that total bilateral trade between his country and China is expected to reach \$58 billion in 2018, up from \$53.5 billion in 2017. **→13**

**ARTICLE**  
**Dr. Mohammad Nahavandian**  
Deputy president for economic affairs

## American unilateralism and the world crisis

Friday, July 6, marked the 1st anniversary of signing the Bayonet Constitution in Hawaii of the late 19th century. 131 years ago, in 1887, Kal'kaua, the king of Hawaii under the threat of bayonet and lobby of the Americans and a group of white businessmen called Hawaiian League who were mostly involved in sugar production, was forced to sign a new constitution. Backed by the military arm of Hawaiian League, Bayonet Constitution changed the voting rights, as it gave the foreign Americans and Europeans the voting right, but restricted the native Hawaiian to only those who could meet certain financial requirements!

Later, authorized by the direct intervention of their secretary of state, the American military forces suppressed the native Hawaiians' protests against the foreign interference in their domestic affairs. A few years later, the Americans overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy and annexed the independent country to the United States due to its strategic importance. In other words, they didn't recognize a right for a nation in the Pacific Ocean which they had already recognized for themselves based on the Constitution of the United States in 1783. Despite their human rights rhetoric, the American statesmen authorized themselves to use force in order to change the fate of others. With such attitude, they not only gave priority to the interests of the United States over other countries, but they are presumed that the right of the Americans stands above the others.

2. In 1929, the U.S. Senate passed a law titled the Hawley-Smoot Tariff, which imposed the highest rates of tariffs on the imported commodities in the history of that country. The then U.S. president, Herbert Hoover who chanted slogans on protecting domestic productions and maintaining jobs for the American farmers and won the presidential election of 1928, signed the tariff act into law. **→7**



© Tehran Times/ Amin Berenjakar

## Climbers compete at Shiraz

The 5th edition of indoor cadet rock climbing competition was held in Shiraz, Fars province.

The event brought about 300 climbers from 24 provinces together in Shiraz Tabatabaei's Hall.

Rock climbing is an activity in which participants climb up, down or across natural rock formations or artificial rock walls.

The goal is to reach the summit of a formation or the endpoint of a usually pre-defined route without falling.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



**Ayatollah Morteza Tehrani passes away**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Morteza Tehrani, a distinguished Shia cleric famous for his ethics teachings, passed away on Saturday, Tasnim reported. Ayatollah Tehrani was a student of Imam Khomeini who accompanied him when the founder of the Islamic Revolution was sent into exile to Najaf during the Shah's rule.

In a message, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei offered his condolences over Tehrani's demise. "Extend my sincere condolences to his honorable family, dear children, students and followers, and ask God to bestow His highest blessings upon him," the Leader's message read.



**Iran officially joins ASEAN**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — President Rouhani, in a letter sent to the Foreign Ministry, announced Iran's accession to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Mehr reported.

It came after a bill which supported Iran's accession to the ASEAN was referred to the Expediency Council after the Guardian Council found some problems with it. However, the bill was finally approved by the Expediency Council on July 7.

Iran is due to sign a cooperation treaty with the ASEAN in a move which could lead to wider economic cooperation between Tehran and East Asia.



**Islamic Development Organization chief to leave: report**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Hojatolislam Seyed Mahdi Khamoushi, head of the Islamic Development Organization, will soon leave his post, Fars reported on Saturday.

Khamoushi held the position for 17 years. Khamoushi, 56, will replace Hojatolislam Ali Mohammad-Sirat as the head of the Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization.

Fars named three possible candidates for the head of the Islamic Development Organization. It cited Hojatolislam Reza Qolami, Hojatolislam Seyed Nasereddin Nourizadeh and Mohammad Haji Abolqasem Dulabi as possible replacements.

The head of the organization is appointed by Ayatollah Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution.



**Barred Zoroastrian Sepanta Niknam regains council seat**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Nine months after he was denied a seat in Yazd's city council, Sepanta Niknam, a follower of Zoroastrianism, regained his status as councillor.

According to a new legislation passed by the Expediency Council, religious minorities can now run in city council elections, Majid Ansari, a member of the Expediency Council, said on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The move overrides the Guardian Council's rule that a non-Muslim cannot be a member of a body which makes decisions about Muslims.

The ban on Niknam turned into a matter of national controversy since it was placed on him.



**Commander denies rumor of IRGC chief replacement**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Head of the Supreme Leader's Military Office on Saturday denied rumors that the Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari is going to be replaced.

In an interview with Tasnim, Brigadier General Mohammad Shirazi said, "Presently, replacement of the Sepah commander is not on the agenda at all."

Ayatollah Khamenei, the commander-in-chief of the Iranian Armed Forces, has the authority to appoint military commanders.

Major General Jafari has served as the IRGC's commander since September 2007.



**Red Crescent employee killed in shooting incident**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A Red Crescent employee was killed on Friday night in a shooting incident targeting an ambulance in Kamyaran town, Kurdistan Province, the YJC reported on Saturday.

"Unfortunately, the details of the incident are still unknown," said Babak Ghanbari, director of the Public Relations Office of the Red Crescent Society in Kurdistan.

The chief of Kurdistan Justice Department Ali Akbar Garousi said investigation is underway to find the attackers. Garousi also said opposition terrorist cells might be behind the attack.

"No one was injured during the attack," he added.

**Talks with U.S. obviously futile: Leader**

**"One cannot even count on Americans' signature, let alone their word and their verbal promise"**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution on Saturday reiterated that negotiations with the United States are an "obvious mistake".

"It is imagined that if we settled our problems with America, the country's entire problems will be resolved... our problems with America are not soluble. This should be taken note of," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told an annual meeting of Iranian diplomats.

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to "the existence of a government with a religious background, and Islamic for that matter" as a key factor drawing U.S. hostility toward Iran, saying, "With such matters, our problem with America cannot be resolved at all."

He noted, "The problem of America with the Islamic Republic is an issue of coming back. The Americans want to recreate the status they had before the revolution, before the Islamic Republic. They want that. Well, that is impossible. It is not doable. And they are not happy with anything short of that."

"So, there is no use in negotiations with America. It holds no benefit. The Americans cannot be trusted, which is something now our dear officials are repeatedly insisting upon. Really untrustworthy. And I personally believed in this very issue from the olden times. They are really not trustworthy. One cannot even count on their signature, let alone their word and their verbal promise."

He added that the United States' opposition to Iran's nuclear program and regional presence stems from their "deep enmity with the powerfulness of the Islamic system."

"Regional presence is among the elements of power and security of Iran, and is considered as a strategic backing for the country."

**"Our problems with America are not soluble," Leader notes.**



This is why enemies are against it."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei said talks with European countries should not be halted, but added in the meantime that "we should not remain idle waiting for the European package [on the preservation of the nuclear deal]."

"Instead," the Leader suggested, "we should follow up on necessary activities inside the country (against U.S. sanctions)."

■ **'Iranophobia project has been defeated'**

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad

**ICJ can order temporary stop to U.S. sanctions: law professor**



**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Francis Boyle, a professor of international law at the University of Illinois, has said that Iran can call on the International Court of Justice to temporarily stop the return of U.S. sanctions.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran can call for the court's ruling on stopping the sanctions which would be temporarily. This action can limit the U.S. sanctions' influence on Iran's business and banking transactions," he told IRNA in an interview published on Saturday.

He noted that Iran's action in filing complaint at the International Court of Justice against the U.S. over re-imposition of unilateral sanctions is a "legal and peaceful response within the framework of the UN Charter".

Iranian Foreign Minister

Mohammad Javad Zarif said on July 16 that Iran has filed a complaint at the ICJ against the U.S. move.

"Today Iran filed a complaint @ CIJ. ICJ to hold U.S. accountable for its unlawful re-imposition of unilateral sanctions. Iran is committed to the rule of law in the face of U.S. contempt for diplomacy & legal obligations. It's imperative to counter its habit of violating int'l law," Zarif tweeted.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced Washington's exit from the 2015 nuclear deal on May 8 and said sanctions will be restored against Iran.

According to the U.S. Treasury, the first stage of sanctions will be snapped back in August and the second stage in November.

Trump has asked countries to cut their oil imports from Iran by November.

**'Secret agreement' with IAEA over university inspection denied**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Saturday rejected any "secret agreement" with the IAEA for inspection of universities or other sites in Iran, saying all inspections have been carried out under the country's commitments.

"Any state member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has accepted certain commitments under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements," Kazem Gharibabadi said, Mehr reported.

The remarks came after the news of an IAEA inspection of a university in Iran raised eyebrows among certain political activists, with some saying the move undermines the country's independence and national identity.

On Wednesday, Science Minister Mansour Gholami



said the IAEA inspection was carried out upon a decision by the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

**Russian ambassador: Iran is a big country with independent foreign policy**

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Moscow's ambassador to Tehran, Levon Dzhagarian, has denied the Russian government's meddling with Iran's presence in Syria.

In an interview with the Russian daily Kommersant, the diplomat reacted to rumors that Russia has asked Iran to leave Syria, saying, "Iran is not a [small] country you can force out. Iran is a big country that pursues an independent foreign policy."

Alexander Lavrentiev, Putin's special presidential envoy to Syria and a senior member of the Russian negotiating team

at last Monday's Putin-Trump summit in Helsinki, arrived in Tehran on Thursday to discuss the implications of the summit for Iran's military presence in Syria.

Tehran insists that its presence in Syria is legitimate, following request from the Syrian government. Ali Akbar Velayati, senior adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said last week that "Iran is prepared to leave Syria immediately, if Damascus asks."

Velayati, who visited Moscow to meet Putin before the Russian president's meeting with Trump, reiterated that Iran is coordinating

**Iran condemns racist law approved by Israeli Knesset**



**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Friday condemned the Israeli Knesset for passing the racist Jewish nation-state bill.

The Knesset adopted a bill on Thursday that declares the occupier of the Palestinian lands as "the nation-state of the Jewish people."

According to Press TV, the law prioritizes "Jewish" values over democratic ones in the occupied territories, declares Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel, allows Jewish-only communities, sets Hebrew as the official language of Israel and relegates Arabic from an official language to one with "special status."

Qassemi said, "The illegitimate and racist Zionist regime has been formed by occupying Palestine and mass killing the actual owners of that territory and the recent action of this regime's parliament

reveals the racist nature and approach of this regime in the past 70 years."

However, he said, "Apartheid in occupied Palestine will be eradicated by the Palestinian nation's resistance and endeavor."

"The United States' all-out support for the Zionist regime and the Trump administration's move to relocate his country's embassy to Jerusalem al-Quds as well as efforts by certain Arab countries to normalize their relations with the usurpers of Palestinian territories and failure to bring this regime to justice for violating international rules and regulations and killing oppressed Palestinian people on a daily basis have emboldened them to press ahead with their policy of Judaizing Palestine and ethnic cleansing, which will undoubtedly lead to further instability and insecurity in the region," the Foreign Ministry website quoted Qassemi as saying.

"Such decisions are made by the Supreme National Security Council, and all organizations are required to follow them," Gholami added.

According to Gharibabadi, all commitments under the IAEA safeguards and the Additional Protocol are the same for every country, and Iran is no exception.

"Given Iran's voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, the country is committed to meet its obligations, and certain examinations are made within this framework and according to decisions made at high levels of the establishment," he stated.

The envoy also said with respect to the redlines drawn by the Supreme Leader, no permit has ever been issued to allow IAEA inspectors to interview Iranian scientists, adding that the IAEA itself has not made such a request so far, "because it is fully aware of Iran's response".



in a meeting with Lavrentiev in Tehran on Thursday.

its military presence in Syria with Moscow and Damascus.

Velayati pointed to the resistance front as well as Iran and Russia in their campaign against foreign-backed terrorists in Syria, saying, "They will be the winner of the on-going conflict."

In the meantime, deputy Secretary-General of the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic said that the "Israeli regime's negative role cannot affect Iran-Russia cooperation in fighting terrorism in Syria." Amir Said Iravani made the remarks



# U.S. urges strict UN sanctions until North Korea acts on denuclearization

The United States called on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Friday to act on his promise to give up nuclear weapons and said the world, including China and Russia, must continue to enforce sanctions until he does so.

After briefing UN Security Council envoys in New York, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley warned against loosening sanctions on Pyongyang after Russia and China suggested the council could discuss such a move.

The UN Security Council has unanimously boosted sanctions on North Korea since 2006 in a bid to choke off funding for Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

U.S. President Donald Trump and the North Korean leader met for the first time in Singapore last month and Pompeo followed up with inconclusive talks with North Korea this month. He reiterated on Friday that he had made progress.

"Chairman Kim made a promise ... that he was prepared to denuclearize. The scope and scale of that is agreed to. The North Koreans understand what that means," Pompeo told reporters. "We need to see Chairman Kim do what he promised the world he would do."

Pompeo also called for an end to sanctions violations and Haley said the best way the talks between the United States and North Korea could be supported was by enforcing, not easing, sanctions.

"We can't do one thing until we see North Korea respond to their promise to denuclearize. We have to see some sort of action," Haley told reporters.

The United States last week complained to the UN Security Council North Korea sanctions committee that as of May 30, there had been 89 illicit ship-to-ship transfers of refined petroleum products this year by Pyongyang, breaching a UN sanctions cap.

It asked the committee to order a halt to refined petroleum exports to North Korea, but Russia and China put a "hold" on the request on Thursday and asked for more detail on



the U.S. accusation.

"For China and Russia to block it - what are they telling us? Are they telling us that they want to continue supplying this oil? They claim they need more information, we don't need any more information," Haley said.

"We put pressure today on China and Russia to abide and be good helpers through this situation and to help us continue with denuclearization," she said.

However, Russia's Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy told Reuters there was no reason for Haley to reproach Russia.

"We abide by all decisions. We just ask questions totally in line with sanction committee rules ... We didn't block anything - we put it on hold. She needs to study basics more."

China's UN Ambassador Ma Zhaoxu said China was committed to denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and to the promotion of dialogue and negotiations.

"Everybody should fully implement resolutions passed by the Security Council," he told reporters after Pompeo's briefing.

(Source: Reuters)

## Rohingya Muslims subjected to systematic massacre, rape

An international group of medical experts says evidence collected from Rohingya Muslims' accounts proves that the highly-persecuted minority is subjected to systematic massacre and rape in Myanmar.

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) said in a report on Friday that the refugees' accounts of being shot, hacked and injured by explosives were supported by forensic evidence.

The US-based NGO, which investigates mass atrocities globally, added that the report was based on the findings its physicians recorded after they examined survivors in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

The detailed report mainly focused on refugees from the village of Chut Pyin in Myanmar where security forces, according to survivors and inhabitants of neighboring rural areas, fired on civilians, raped women and burned homes. The PHR report estimates that hundreds of people were killed in the village.

"The evidence we've collected from our field investigations, and the forensic evidence in particular, indicate that a large-scale and well-coordinated attack was perpetrated on the civilians, particularly the Rohingya civilians, living in Chut Pyin on the afternoon of August 27th last year - almost a year ago - that involved the use of guns, machetes, multiple types of weapons, against women, children and men who lived in that village," said Homer Ven-

ters, the PHR director of programs.

Rohingya Muslims previously based in Rakhine were subjected to a campaign of killings, rape, and arson attacks by the military backed by the country's majority Buddhist extremists in what the UN has described as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

The brutal campaign has forced some 700,000 Rohingya to flee their homeland since August 2017 and seek refuge in Bangladesh. Many of the displaced Rohingya are either living in squalid camps or just across the border in a plot of land known as the "no man's land."

"The fact that so many of these children have multiple types of injuries, and that they've been exposed in many cases to physical violence and sexual violence, really puts the lie to this notion that this is any kind of anti-terror campaign", as the Myanmar military claimed to be, Venters further said, adding that the incident should be investigated as a crime against humanity.

The Rohingya, who have lived in Myanmar for generations, are denied citizenship and are branded illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, which likewise denies them citizenship.

Their former communities in Myanmar have been razed and Buddhists have been shuttled and settled there in newly-built structures to repopulate the area.

(Source: agencies)

## Raqqah residents call for Syrian government's return

Residents of the northern Syrian city of Raqqah, the former stronghold of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist outfit, have called on the government to return to the war-ravaged city and provide civil services for the residents.

Raqqah fell to the United States-sponsored Kurdish militants last year after they drove the Takfiri terrorists out of the city. The militants have, however, refused to hand over the control of Raqqah back to the Syrian government.

In an interview published by Ruptly on Saturday, Raqqah residents recalled times before the conflict erupted and when services such as water and electricity were not scarce. They expressed hope that the government would return.

Last year, the ISIL lost its de facto capital of Raqqah after four months of fighting and bombings by the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a U.S.-backed coalition of mainly Kurdish militants. The bombings left the city in ruins.

The United States-led coalition attacks against ISIL in Syria's Raqqah last broke international law by endangering the lives of civilians, says international rights group.

ISIL-controlled territory in Syria's north and east has been reduced to just a handful isolated pockets.

The U.S. support for several militant groups in Syria, notably Kurds, has sparked fears that they might be trying to create a

statelet outside the Syrian government's control. The U.S. has been conducting airstrikes against what it claims are ISIL targets inside Syria since September 2014 without the consent of the government or a United Nations mandate.

The U.S. and its allies have been accused of killing civilians in their so-called fight against ISIL in Syria.

### Evacuation of rebels from Quneitra begins

Elsewhere, rebels in the southwest province of Quneitra in Syria have started leaving the area after giving up their fight against government forces near the frontier with Israel, according to Syrian state media.

A convoy of buses on Friday mid-afternoon carried the first batch of rebels, their family members and assorted civilians to opposition-held territory in the north where they will live among more than one million others displaced by Syria's seven-year-long foreign instigated war.

The surrender in Quneitra, in line with a deal that was struck between rebels and government forces, is a big victory for the Syrian government.

According to state media, the agreement "stipulates the departure to Idlib [province] of terrorists who reject the settlements", and allow those who wish to remain to "settle" their status with the authorities, meaning accepting a return of state rule.

(Source: agencies)

## Chinese leader arrives for Africa visit as U.S. interest wanes

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives in Africa on Saturday on a four-nation visit seeking deeper military and economic ties while his rival in a bitter trade war, the Trump administration, shows little interest in the world's second most populous continent.

This is Xi's first trip abroad since he was appointed to a second term in March with term limits removed, allowing him to rule for as long as he wants. That rang familiar to some of Africa's long-entrenched leaders.

China is already Africa's largest trading partner, and it opened its first military base on the continent last year in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti, which this month launched a China-backed free trade zone it calls the largest in Africa. After surpassing the U.S. in arms sales to Africa in recent years, China this month hosted dozens of African military officials for the first China-Africa defense forum.

Xi is stopping in Senegal and then Rwanda ahead of his participation in a summit of the BRICS emerging economies in South Africa that starts on Wednesday.

The summit comes amid the United States' billion-dollar trade war with China and tough trade negotiations with other key economic partners. Last month the foreign ministers of BRICS members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa criticized what they called a "new wave of protectionism," saying U.S. measures undermine global trade and economic growth.

Xi's Africa visit also highlights China's sweeping "Belt and Road" initiative that envisages linking Beijing to Africa, Europe and other parts of Asia via a network of ports, railways, power plants and economic zones.

While such high-profile projects bring badly needed infrastructure and generate economic growth, U.S. officials and others have warned that African nations are putting themselves into debt to China. Its government, banks and contractors loaned more than \$94 billion to African governments and state-owned companies from 2000 to 2015, according to the China Africa Research Initiative at Johns Hopkins University.



"Public debt in the median sub-Saharan African country rose from 34 percent of GDP in 2013 to an estimated 53 percent in 2017," says a report in January by Wenjie Chen and Roger Nord of the International Monetary Fund.

From oil in countries like Nigeria and Angola to rare minerals in Congo, Africa's natural resources are a major draw for China's economy, the world's second largest behind the U.S. China's voracious appetite for resources such as timber and ivory, however, has taken its toll on Africa's environment, often with the help of corrupt local officials.

On his first visit to a West African country Xi will meet with President Macky Sall of Senegal, which according to the International Monetary Fund had economic growth of 7.2 percent last year and whose largest trading partner is the European Union.

The stop highlights China's interest both in Francophone Africa and in Atlantic Ocean ports, while Senegal positions itself as a gateway to the region. Already a Chinese-backed industrial park has appeared outside the capital, Dakar,

while rail and road links are being improved as part of an ambitious plan to reach the other end of the continent in Djibouti.

Xi then moves on to Rwanda, becoming the first Chinese president to visit the landlocked East African country, whose economy grew by 6.1 percent last year. He will meet with President Paul Kagame and visit a memorial for Rwanda's 1994 genocide, which killed more than 800,000 people.

The Chinese leader then will make his third state visit to South Africa for the BRICS summit. South Africa's economy, one of Africa's largest, grew just 1.3 percent last year amid a drop in investor confidence because of a corruption scandal around former President Jacob Zuma, who resigned in February.

Finally, Xi will stop in the Indian Ocean island nation of Mauritius, whose economy grew by 3.9 percent last year.

China's economic push will continue in September with the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which brings together dozens of heads of state.

(Source: AP)

## Concern in White House over intelligence chief's Russian summit surprise



While U.S. President Donald Trump defended his efforts to build a relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, aides said there is some frustration that the U.S. intelligence chief did not know about plans for a second summit and they hope that meeting will follow a more traditional pattern.

Since Monday's summit and joint news conference in Helsinki, Trump and his aides have been trying to control the damage done when he stunned the world by siding with Putin over U.S. intelligence agencies on the question of Moscow's meddling in the 2016 U.S. election.

The U.S. director of national intelligence Dan Coats, who on Monday immediately defended intelligence personnel on the election issue, expressed surprise at Trump's invitation on Thursday to Putin to visit Washington in the autumn.

Coats was on camera while at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado when news broke of the invitation, clearly taking him aback. He advised against a one-on-one meeting with Putin, saying he "would look for a different way of doing it."

If Coats had been in Washington instead of the conference, he would have been informed about the plan, one source familiar with the inner workings of the White House said on condition of anonymity.

"That DNI Coats was surprised, and his fanciful reaction, is what is most alarming to people," the source said.

Some in Trump's inner circle saw the Helsinki summit as problematic for the president and that he looked weak, another source close to Trump said, as he missed a chance to show strength in dealing with Putin by confronting him about the election interference.

In a CNBC interview broadcast on Friday, Trump said he and Putin had a rapport in Helsinki. U.S. intelligence agencies accuse Putin of directing interference to sway the election against Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton toward Republican Trump.

"Look, the fact is we got along well," Trump said in the interview, which was taped on Thursday. He added that the two did not agree on everything. "It wasn't always conciliatory in that meeting," he said, without elaborating.

Five days after the two-hour Helsinki meeting, attended only by the two leaders and their interpreters, some U.S. officials remained in the dark about what was discussed.

On Twitter, Trump listed topics he and Putin talked about, but gave no details. He said they discussed counterterrorism, Israel's security, nuclear proliferation, cyber attacks, trade, Ukraine, Middle East peace and North Korea.

There are hopes inside the administration that the next summit will be more traditional, with U.S. and Russian negotiators meeting ahead of time to set up an agenda and try to reach agreement on some issues.

One official, asked if the reaction to Helsinki would be a more organized process, said this is often how the White House operates. Another official said aides thought a proper procedure had been put in place for Helsinki, but it did not work out.

### Syria, Ukraine

As Americans groped for information about the meeting, Moscow offered snippets of its version on Friday.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it sent detailed proposals to Washington on organizing the return of more than 1.7 million refugees to Syria after agreements reached by Putin and Trump, RIA news agency said.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters at the United Nations later that Trump and Putin discussed how to return refugees who fled the civil war in Syria, but offered no details and did not mention any Russian proposals.

Russia's Interfax news agency reported that Putin also made proposals to Trump involving eastern Ukraine, citing Russia's ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov. He did not spell out what they were.

A White House National Security Council spokesman said later the United States on Friday rejected a proposal from Russia for a referendum to decide the fate of eastern Ukraine.

The Russian ambassador said Moscow is ready to discuss a proposed new meeting between Putin and Trump, Interfax said.

Putin has rejected accusations that his government meddled in the election won by Trump. A week ago, a federal grand jury indicted 12 Russian intelligence officers for carrying out cyber attacks to undermine Democratic Party networks. A special counsel is also investigating whether Trump campaign aides coordinated with Russian officials, which Trump denies.

U.S. intelligence officials have said Moscow is targeting congressional elections in November, as well.

(Source: Daily Star)

## Egypt rejects Israeli law on 'racial segregation'

Egypt on Saturday rejected a controversial law adopted by the Israeli parliament that defines the country as the nation state of the Jewish people, warning that it undermines peace efforts.

It "consolidates the notion of occupation and racial segregation, and undermines the chances of achieving peace and reaching a just and comprehensive resolution to the Palestinian issue", the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The law adopted Thursday also defines the establishment of Jewish communities as being in the national interest and downgrades Arabic from an official language to one with special status.

Arab citizens account for some 17.5 percent of Israel's more than eight-million population and have long complained of discrimination.

The Israeli legislation was also condemned by the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, comprised of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

(Source: AFP)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	108295.5
IFX	1213.75

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	43,650 rials
EUR	51,199 rials
GBP	57,333 rials
AED	11,886 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$68.26/b
Brent	\$73.07/b
OPEC Basket	\$70.91/b
Gold	\$1,232.70 /oz
Silver	\$15.57/oz
Platinum	\$833.20/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



SPGC injects 39bcm of gas to national network in a quarter

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC) injected 39 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas to Iran’s national gas distribution network in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), Shana news agency reported.

The figure shows a 16-percent increase compared to the same period of time in the preceding year, according to SPGC Managing Director Hadi Hashemzadeh Farhang.

He said SPGC also supplied 549 million cubic meters (mcm) of natural gas to petrochemical plants as feedstock during the same three months.

SPGC is a strategic unit in Iran’s oil and gas industry which accounts for over 70% of Iran’s total gas production annually.



Stock market poised to attract capitals from the middle-class

**E C O N O M Y** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Finance Minister Masoud Karbasian announced that Iran’s stock market is ready to attract capitals of the middle-class, Mehr news agency reported on Saturday.

In a bid to amend economic environment of the country, Iranian stock market, which is to witness a new wave of changes, is planned to act as a new platform for the middle-class to make their investments in, he declared.



Soleymani Amiri appointed new head of Iran’s Central Insurance

**E C O N O M Y** **TEHRAN** — Gholamreza Soleymani Amiri was appointed as the new head of Central Insurance of Islamic Republic of Iran (Bimeh Markazi), Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry’s news website Shada reported on Saturday.

Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Masoud Karbasian appointed Soleymani Amiri to the post, replacing Abdolnaser Hemmati.

Britain records slightly larger than expected budget deficit in June

Britain’s government recorded a slightly bigger budget deficit than expected in June, although borrowing over the first three months of the financial year has been the lowest since 2007.

The deficit in June stood at 5.394 billion pounds, compared with 6.239 billion pounds a year ago, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said. A Reuters poll of economists had pointed to a reading of 5.0 billion pounds.

So far this financial year, the deficit totals 16.8 billion pounds, down 24.4 percent from April-June 2017, though it is rarely possible to get a good steer on full-year borrowing trends after only three months of the financial year.

The figures may still cheer finance minister Philip Hammond, however. The deficit stood at 9.9 percent of GDP when Hammond’s predecessor, George Osborne, took power in 2010 and started a multi-year program of public spending cuts.

In March, Britain’s Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) said it expected the shortfall between how much the government spends and how much it earns from tax revenues to fall this financial year to 37.1 billion pounds, or 1.8 percent of GDP.

Since then, Prime Minister Theresa May has promised an extra 20 billion pounds a year in public healthcare funding, phased in over the next five years. Hammond has said he will explain how this will be funded in his autumn budget statement.

The OBR has estimated that Brexit will be a net drain on Britain’s public finances, not a benefit.

Britain made more progress on improving the public finances last year than the OBR expected because the economy slowed less than feared after the 2016 Brexit referendum shock.

(Source: Reuters)

Over \$1.7b needed for reducing electricity losses by 3%

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Energy Ministry needs about 75 trillion rials (near \$1.724 billion) to reduce the power transmission and distribution losses at the country’s grids by three percent, IRNA reported on Saturday quoting an official at the Energy Ministry.

According to Abdolsaheb Arjmand, the director general of the office of

power transmission and distribution management and supervision at the Energy Ministry, with a 15 trillion rial (near \$345 million) of funding each year, the current figure for energy losses which stands at 11 percent will be reduced to eight percent in five years.

According to the data released by Iran’s Power Generation and Distribution



Company (known as TAVANIR), the country’s current installed power capacity stands at around 77,000 megawatts (MW).

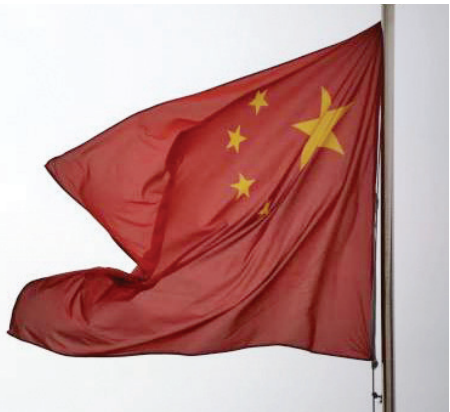
Iran is currently wrestling with power shortage in many of its cities

and the country’s power generation capacity indicates that the inefficient grids, transmission and distribution infrastructures are the main reason for such problems.

The threat of a trade war to the global economy



The first danger is that protection will spread far further. One reason for this is that Donald Trump is a convinced protectionist. He made this clear at his inaugural, remarking that: “Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength.” His aims are to repatriate supply chains and eliminate U.S. overall trade deficits. Since the latter cannot be achieved by normal trade policy actions, while foreigners are unlikely to bow to his demands, particularly since it is hard to work out what they are, there may be no “off switch”. The Republican establishment does not seem to have one.



The second danger is that protection will spread. When the U.S. imposed tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum, it damaged the downstream users. So they, too, will demand protection. Similarly, when the U.S. keeps out imports from China, the latter will be diverted to other high-income countries. The latter may well follow the U.S. suit.

Third, an open-ended trade dispute would have geopolitical consequences. “When goods don’t cross borders, soldiers will” is a well-known saying. It is not so simple. But if the U.S. waged a war against

imports, it is bound to appear a deeply hostile act, with damaging implications for the fragile international order. Making this more likely is the certainty that the actions the U.S. is taking (and the retaliation it is evoking) are all contrary to the World Trade Organization’s rules. Finally, such an open-ended trade war would surely greatly increase business uncertainty. That would then affect investment across the world, especially in the world’s more open and trade-dependent economies.

As Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of England, has noted recently, trade helped to stimulate the upsurge in global growth since 2016. A fall in world trade would surely have the obverse effect. JPMorgan stresses that its “model-based estimates cannot capture the potential for a larger drag as business sentiment decline. Concerns relate to the growing risk that rising tariffs signal a more fundamental shift in U.S. policy.” Just so. If action were halted now, the world economy would survive reasonably unscathed. If we are at the beginning of an ongoing process of tit-for-tat protection and regime destruction, the effects could not so easily be guessed. The sensible thing to do is not to go there. But will the world be so sensible?

(Source: Financial Times)

Govt. presents package to back production, job creation

**I →** The proposed program also includes expansion and supporting home jobs besides developing job creation in housing, agriculture and industry sectors. The government is also intended to finance renovation of completely knocked down (CKD) vehicles of public transportation system across the country.

Currency war erupts, threatening to ripple across global markets

The currency war has arrived.

So say some of the best and brightest in the \$5.1 trillion-per-day foreign-exchange market. U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday accused China and the European Union of “manipulating their currencies and interest rates lower.” The comments came after the yuan plunged to its lowest level in a year, with little sign of China’s central bank intervening to stem the slide. They also follow a decline in the euro this year and add to the calculus that European Central Bank policy makers might need to consider when they meet next week.

As the world’s largest economies open up a new front in their increasingly acrimonious game of brinkmanship, the consequences could be dire -- and ripple far beyond the U.S. and Chinese currencies. Everything from equities to oil to emerging-market assets are in danger of becoming collateral damage as the current global financial order is assailed from Beijing to Washington.

“The real risk is that we have broad-based unravelling of global trade and currency cooperation, and that is not going to be pretty,” said Jens Nordvig, Wall Street’s top-ranked currency strategist for five years running before founding Exante Data LLC in 2016. Trump’s recent rhetoric “is certainly shifting this from a trade war to a currency war.”

China’s shock devaluation of the yuan in 2015 provides a good template for what the contagion might look like, according to Robin Brooks, the chief economist at the Institute of International Finance and the former head currency strategist at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. Risk assets and oil prices would likely tumble as worries about growth arise, hitting currencies of commodity-exporting countries particularly hard -- namely, the Russian ruble, Colombian peso and Malaysian ringgit -- before taking down the rest of Asia.

“Asian central banks will initially try to stem currency weakness through intervention,” Brooks said. “But then Asian central banks will step back, and in my mind, the big underperformer on a six-month horizon could be EM Asia.”

(Source: Bloomberg)

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97-04/141

**Tender Holder:**  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

**Subject of Two-Stage Tender:**  
Supplying HEVC HEAD END equipment system (Terrestrial Telecommunication Administration) according to the tender documents

**Deadline of Receiving Documents:**  
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Wednesday July 25, 2018.**

**Place of Receiving Documents:**  
Secretariat of Tenders’ Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

**Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:**  
The amount of **USD 55,995** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

**Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:**  
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m. on Saturday August 25, 2018** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

**Time and Place of Opening Envelopes**  
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m. on Monday August 27, 2018** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation. It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.

For more information, please contact the following phone numbers: **0098-21-22166313**  
It is obvious that cost of publishing two advertisements shall be borne by the winner of tender.

Public Relations Dept. of IRIB



# Oil prices could top \$120 before year-end: Analyst

Oil prices have lost more than eight percent this month, but investors should be aware that a roughly 40 percent spike from last week's levels to more than \$120 is possible this year.

"This is a tight market. Supply and demand are close," says Matt Badiali, senior research analyst at Banyan Hill. Global oil demand is expected to average 99.1 million barrels a day this year, but global oil supply stood at 98.8 million barrels a day in June, according to the International Energy Agency.

"We have supply constraints, thanks to Venezuela becoming a failed state. We have potential supply disruption with the Iran sanctions, and we have demand increasing with global growth," Badiali says. "Disappointment that [the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries] didn't just open the spigots" on production also supports a higher oil price.

OPEC, along with nonmember allies including Russia, reached an agreement last month to curtail some of its production cuts, essentially increasing output by one million barrels a day. In part, the move was meant to offset supply losses tied to economic woes in Venezuela, disruptions in Libya, and renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran.

But the decision by major oil producers to lift output didn't cause a drop in prices—instead, they climbed shortly after the decision, with U.S. benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude futures -0.15 percent on June 29 settling at \$74.15, their highest since November 2014.

The production increase "wasn't enough



to close the gap between demand and supply that has developed over the last year and a half," says Leigh Goehring, managing partner at Goehring & Rozencwajg, a research house focused on natural resources. It has been roughly 18 months since OPEC and its allies implemented a pact to cut production.

Following the return of some Libyan production earlier this month, oil prices began to move sharply lower, pushing global Brent crude +0.58 percent on July 16 to a three-month low of \$71.84. Adding further downward pressure, a U.S. official suggested that the U.S. would issue some waivers for U.S. sanctions on Iranian oil; U.S.-Chinese trade tensions mounted, raising concerns about a drop in oil demand; and there was

talk of a possible release of oil from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Recent tweets from President Donald Trump have also called for Saudi officials to pump more crude and lower prices. It's "very new and very unusual for a sitting president to be able to...comment on OPEC or oil prices to a degree where we see his tweets have an actual impact on the price" of oil, says James Bambino, managing director of the Oilgram Price Report at S&P Global Platts.

But the most important factors influencing prices are supply and demand, he says. The market may see a fall of \$10 because of the tweets, but part of that drop would be attributable to "indications that foreign policy will have a longstanding impact on

supply-and-demand factors," says Bambino.

The IEA forecasts that global oil demand will grow to 100.5 million barrels a day in 2019, from 99.1 million this year.

Goehring argues that Saudi Arabia, OPEC's biggest producer, has little spare capacity to make up for inventory losses elsewhere. It's capable of pumping about 10.6 million barrels a day, just above current output of 10.3 million barrels a day, he says.

Global oil inventories may decline early in the fourth quarter "to levels that have historically seen triple-digit oil prices," says Goehring. He believes that Brent oil prices will reach \$100 a barrel this year. That has been his forecast for 18 months.

"I don't believe the bull market in oil is over. I'm using this downturn as a buying opportunity."

He's not the only one expecting supplies to come up short of demand. "We are coming out of a difficult bear market in oil," Badiali says, as energy-company bankruptcies picked up during the slump in crude prices, which fell below \$30 in 2016. WTI crude settled at \$69.46 on Thursday. "An industry—even one as flexible and resilient as the oil industry—doesn't recover that quickly," he says.

And if the U.S. follows through on threats to bar any entity dealing with Iran after November from accessing the U.S. credit markets, Badiali said it is possible to see WTI prices over \$120 a barrel this fall.

"I don't believe the bull market in oil is over. I'm using this downturn as a buying opportunity," he says.

(Source: marketwatch.com)

## Aramco's potential SABIC deal to impact IPO timing

Saudi Aramco's potential acquisition of a stake in Saudi petrochemicals maker SABIC would affect the time frame of its own planned initial public offering, Aramco's chief executive Amin Nasser said in a television interview on Friday.

Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television cited Nasser as saying that buying a stake in a petrochemicals company would make the state oil giant less vulnerable to price volatility.

Aramco said on Thursday it is looking to buy a strategic stake in SABIC, a move that could boost the state oil giant's market valuation ahead of a planned IPO.

Nasser said that Aramco is ready to list but that the timing is up to the government to decide, according to Al Arabiya.

Aramco said on Thursday in a statement that it was in "very early-stage discussions" with the kingdom's Public Investment Fund (PIF) to acquire the stake in SABIC in a private transaction. It has no plans to acquire any publicly held shares, it said.

Riyadh-listed Saudi Basic Industries Corp (SABIC), the world's fourth-biggest petrochemicals company, is 70 percent owned by the PIF, Saudi Arabia's top sovereign wealth fund. It has a market capitalization of 385.2 billion Saudi riyals (\$103 billion).

Reuters reported on Wednesday that Saudi Aramco had invited banks to pitch for an advisory role on the potential acquisition of a strategic stake in SABIC, citing two sources



with direct knowledge of the matter.

The Aramco IPO is the centerpiece of an ambitious plan championed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to diversify Saudi Arabia's economy beyond oil.

Preparations for the IPO, which may be the biggest in history, have slowed, with some sources close to the process saying that the plans for a domestic and international listing might be pushed further into next year or beyond.

A final decision has yet to be made by Prince Mohammed, who oversees the kingdom's economic and oil policies, the sources said. Saudi Arabia's energy minister, Khalid al-Falih, said last month that it would be "nice" to see Aramco floated in 2019, adding that the timing was not critical to the government.

Aramco plans to boost investments in refining and petrochemicals to secure new markets for its crude and sees growth in chemicals as central to its downstream strategy to lessen the risk of a slowdown in oil demand.

(Source: Reuters)

## Norway oil strike ends just as another is set to begin

Britain's largest workers union, Unite the Union, threatened strike action on Equinor's Mariner oil platform, the union said on Friday, and yet another strike on Total's North Sea fields is due to begin after the weekend, according to Reuters.

The threat of another strike comes just a day after negotiations successfully wrapped up over another strike in the same area.

Norwegian drilling rigs workers agreed to call off the strike their 10-day strike earlier Thursday after the union representing 1,600 striking employees reached a deal with employer the Norwegian Shipowners' Association, the Safe union confirmed in a statement on its website.

The strike began on July 10 after the Safe union and the Norwegian Shipowners' Association could not come to an agreement over wages and pension conditions. The industrial action led to the shutdown of one of Shell-operated field, Knarr filed.

"The strike is over... All workers will go back to work today," the lead negotiator for the Safe union told Reuters.

A state-appointed mediator managed to resolve the conflict. "Via the state-appointed mediator, a solution has been found... and therefore the strike is to end immediately," the Norwegian Shipowners' Association said in a statement.

As Western Europe's biggest oil producer, Norway pumps about 2 million



barrels per day. The Knarr field had a daily output of 23,900 barrels of oil and 3,500 barrels of natural-gas liquids a day in April, according to the latest available public figures cited in Bloomberg. The strike had limited impact on Norway's output, affecting about 1 percent of its production, but some drillers warned of possible contract cancellations if the dispute goes on for a month or more.

Some other oil rigs involved in drilling or exploration, and support vessels were also affected, rather than producing platforms.

Royal Dutch Shell operates the 23K bbl/day oil field with 45 percent stake with its co-partners Idemitsu from Japan, Germany's Wintershall and DEA. After a deal was reached, Shell says it is prepared to restart the Knarr field.

"Shell can confirm that we have initiated preparations to restart production from Knarr as the industrial action in Norway has now concluded," said Shell spokesman.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Is digitalization in oil and gas wowing the workforce?

Digitalization is the buzzword on everyone's lips in the oil and gas sector. It is seen as the remedy for all the industry's problems from operational efficiency, safety and lack of visibility. But it is also being heralded as a solution to the industry's constant struggle to recruit the young, tech-savvy workers that it needs.

It promises to radically transform how the oil and gas workforce operates. But most companies are still confused about how to separate the reality from the hype. Is flexible working the next great recruiting tool? Can firms go digital without having to go toe-to-toe with Silicon Valley for talent? And what's this about robots running job interviews?

Earlier this month I attended a roundtable held on the heels of the 2018 Global Energy Talent Index (GETI) report that discussed just that theme. In attendance were Peter Searle — CEO, Airswift, Hannah Peet — managing director, Energy Jobline, Stephanie Rogers, managing director, resources, Accenture and Tony Salemm, VP, craft labor risk assessment group, Industrial Info Resources.

### ■ The lure of digitization

The 2018 GETI report found that the oil and gas sector is quite excited about the prospects of digitalization and Peet was quick to agree with that. "I think digitalization can be a strong selling point for workers when the benefits are made clear," she said. "As the GETI report showed, greater opportunities for remote and flexible working are very much in demand, with four-in-ten respondents citing it as key to attracting fresh talent to the sector. Companies that offer flexible working are very much at an advantage in attracting talent."

Searle agreed and added the last thing anyone wants is to be in a stagnant job. "Digitalization offers a lot of room for growth," he said. "For starters, data analytics and machine learning will transform humdrum processes into more agile and dynamic activities. People can be upskilled into new roles where they'll be intellectually stimulated and have more room for advancement."

This involves a couple of things. For starters, companies can seek out individuals that are especially keen to utilize new skills. It is also important that companies show workers how these technologies support various career paths and ultimately keep their skill sets relevant as roles shift. Finally, a clear understanding of how these technologies can achieve the desired business outcomes and company-wide impact will be essential.

"It's also worth pointing out that, though new opportunities are important, remuneration is still one of the top selling points for workers," Peet added. "The benefits of digitalization will complement the power of pay, but not replace it."

### ■ Flexible working

There is clearly still a divide between the potential of digitalization and what's achievable. With this in mind, the conversation turned to what it is realistic to expect from more flexible working opportunities.

Salemm voiced the opinion that there is a strong business case for it. "The push for economies of scale and onshore development for offshore projects ties in nicely with flexible and remote working," he said.

"We recently saw this in action with a major project in Papua New Guinea, where much of the early development was done by

teams in Singapore and Houston. Instead of just working on the PNG project, these teams were able to serve multiple projects remotely. The company was then able to hold off on sending full teams to the PNG site until close to launch. This not only reduced the labor burden onsite but made for a more efficient use of those remote teams.

"This is a good strategy, considering that many of the job candidates for onshore and remote working are typically flexible and office-based," Rogers said. "Examples of these roles include project management, data science, and analytical support. That said, there will still be some limitations."

### ■ Opportunities to upskill

When it came to discussing other ways that digitalization can help increase worker satisfaction and improve retention rates, the fact that workers are more eager to upskill into the new roles created through digitalization than many realize was raised by Rogers. "We have conducted research which shows that workers are very interested in developing new skills to have greater digital capabilities," she explained. "Where companies aren't offering training opportunities, workers are taking the initiative to go out and find the education themselves."

This point tied into what the GETI report revealed, where training and development opportunities were cited as one of the biggest drivers of satisfaction. People are going to want to stay with the companies that are invested in their futures. "Along these lines, apprenticeships and local development schemes are going to be essential," Salemm said. "As powerful as multiskilling is, nothing beats having strong local talent."

### ■ Workers pushback

One criticism that has been leveled at the wave of digitization and a barrier to its acceptance is the belief that it poses a threat to employment, but that sentiment was debunked by Salemm. "It's amazed me how, after 35 years of working with information and technology, that people still don't respect their power," he said. "There are still plenty of companies who make the minimal investments when it comes to big data and technology. It's really a cultural issue, rather than a budgetary one."

Searle added that for a long time, people saw technology as a threat, instead of seeing it as an enabler of efficiency, productivity and, ultimately, satisfaction, while Rogers explained that digitalization isn't about job reduction, but job evolution.

"Touching upon what was said earlier, digitalization will help create a more diverse working environment," Peet concluded. "There simply aren't enough people available in the oil and gas sector for companies to continue only hiring from within. Digitalization introduces a skills fluidity, where it becomes easier for someone from a sector like mining or aerospace to move into oil and gas."

Companies are going to have to be more open-minded about who they hire. And this goes well beyond people from other sectors or industries. Women and minorities must make up more of the workforce for the industry to remain viable in the long-run. This broad mix of backgrounds will introduce new ways of thinking and, along with the technology itself, help spur innovation. Together, digitalization and diversity will propel the industry forward.

(Source: Forbes)

## Japanese tech giant Fujitsu commits to 100 percent renewable electricity

Fujitsu has joined the RE100, a global initiative of the world's biggest companies, all committed to renewable power, it announced Friday.

The tech giant has set itself the goal of sourcing all electricity consumed at its sites inside and outside of Japan from renewables by 2050, with an interim target of 40 percent by 2030.

To achieve its goals, Fujitsu will use a number of sourcing mechanisms, including power purchase agreements and on-site installations of solar panels. The business is also planning to continue research and development and technology trials relating to energy management and storage.



"With our technology and expertise, Fujitsu will show leadership in providing solutions for overcoming any barriers to disseminating renewable energy, such as cost," Hideyuki Kanemitsu, head of the Responsible Business Unit at Fujitsu, said in a statement.

The Fujitsu Group has ambitious plans when it comes to sustainability and the environment. Under its Fujitsu Climate and Energy Vision plan, the business wants to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions to zero by 2050.

The RE100 is led by international non-profit The Climate Group in partnership with the CDP, previously known as the Carbon Disclosure Project. Other members of the RE100 include Facebook, Goldman Sachs, the Carlsberg Group and eBay.

"We are delighted to welcome Fujitsu to RE100," Sam Kimmins, the head of RE100, said. "Their commitment comes at a crucial time, sending a clear message to the world that Japanese companies are committed, alongside their global peers, to using 100 percent renewable power."

(Source: CNBC)

## Argentina to start natural gas exports to Chile in October

Argentina will begin exporting natural gas to Chile from October, the Argentine Energy Ministry said on Friday, following a meeting between the governments of both countries.

The gas will come primarily from the Vaca Muerta shale field in the Neuquen basin, and will be sent over the Andes mountain range to Chile's southern province of Biobio, the Argentine government said in a statement.

"Unconventional natural gas production in the Austral Basin was also discussed, and possible export of that gas to the Chilean region of Magallanes," it said.

It followed a meeting in the Chilean capital Santiago on Friday between Argentine energy minister Javier Iguacel and his Chilean counterpart Susana Jiménez.

The Chilean energy ministry said the two ministers had also discussed a study into the opening of four new electricity lines between the two countries. In 2016 and 2017 Chile exported excess electricity to Argentina through the single power line that currently connects the two countries.

Jiménez told Reuters in an interview in June that gas imported from Argentina could be used for electricity generation, replacing imports from elsewhere, or to heat homes in areas where families still depend on wood, a source of pollution in the center-south region.

Chile produces little hydrocarbons of its own while Argentina has the world's No. 2 shale gas reserves but is still a net energy importer.

(Source: Reuters)

## U.S. oil industry lobbies against tighter sanctions on Russia

The U.S. oil and gas industry is lobbying against tighter sanctions on Russia that could impact U.S. investments there, congressional sources said on Friday.

The U.S. Senate has revived a bill, called DETER, that would allow for swift sanctions if Moscow was found meddling in future U.S. elections. Both Democrats and Republicans are looking to redress what they consider President Donald Trump's weak stance on accusations of Russian interference in the 2016 election when he met Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday.

Top U.S. energy company Exxon Mobil is among the firms that have previously opposed U.S. sanctions on Russia. Opponents claim sanctions unfairly penalize U.S. companies while allowing foreign energy rivals such as Royal Dutch Shell and BP to operate in the world's biggest oil producer.

Western powers imposed sanctions in 2014 after Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen told Reuters on Friday there was growing bipartisan support for his DETER bill.

When asked whether energy industry lobbyists were either opposing the bill or seeking revisions, Van Hollen said that "a range of issues need to be discussed including... ones related to U.S. and European energy projects."

Van Hollen said that while he was willing to address "reasonable concerns" from industry representatives and other lawmakers, the legislation needed to be robust enough to discourage Moscow from meddling in future U.S. elections.

"Don't trip the wire because if you do, sanctions are automatic and harsh" should be the message, Van Hollen said.

He said he had not been directly contacted by energy lobbyists. Lobbyists representing oil and gas firms with interests in Russia were opposing the legislation, two Senate aides said. They did not mention specific companies and spoke anonymously because private conversations were still underway.

(Source: Reuters)



## Dark money lurks at the heart of our political crisis

By George Monbiot

A mere two millennia after Roman politicians paid mobs to riot on their behalf, we are beginning to understand the role of dark money in politics, and its perennial threat to democracy.

Dark money is cash whose source is not made public, and which is spent to change political outcomes. The Facebook/Cambridge Analytica scandal, unearthed by Carole Cadwalladr, and the mysterious funds channeled through Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist party to the leave campaign in England and Scotland have helped to bring the concept to public attention. But these examples hint at a much wider problem. Dark money can be seen as the underlying corruption from which our immediate crises emerge: the collapse of public trust in politics, the rise of a demagogic anti-politics, and assaults on the living world, public health and civic society. Democracy is meaningless without transparency.

The techniques now being used to throw elections and referendums were developed by the tobacco industry, and refined by biotechnology, fossil fuel and junk food companies. Some of us have spent years exposing the fake grassroots campaigns they established, the false identities and bogus scientific controversies they created, and the way in which media outlets have been played by them. Our warnings went unheeded, while the ultra-rich learned how to buy the political system.

The problem is exemplified, in my view, by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). In the latest reshuffle, two ministers with close links to the institute, Dominic Raab and Matthew Hancock, have been promoted to the frontbench, responsible for issues that obsess the IEA: Brexit and the NHS. Raab credits the IEA with supporting him "in waging the war of ideas". Hancock, in his former role as cabinet office minister, notoriously ruled that charities receiving public funds should not be allowed to lobby the government. His department credited the IEA with the research that prompted the policy. This rule, in effect, granted a monopoly on lobbying to groups such as the IEA, which receive their money only from private sources. Hancock has received a total of £32,000 in political donations from the IEA's chairman, Neil Record.

The IEA has lobbied consistently for a hard Brexit. A report it published on Monday as an alternative to Theresa May's white paper calls for Brexit to be used to tear down the rules protecting agency workers, to deregulate finance, annul the rules on hazardous chemicals and weaken food labelling laws. Darren Grimes, who was fined by the Electoral Commission on Tuesday for spending offences during the leave campaign, now works as the IEA's digital manager.

### ■ Highly opaque

So what is this organization, and on whose behalf does it speak? If only we knew. It is rated by the accountability group Transparency as "highly opaque". All that distinguishes organizations such as the IEA from public relations companies such as Burson-Marsteller is that we don't know who it is working for.

The only hard information we have is that, for many years, it has been funded by British American Tobacco (BAT), Japan Tobacco International, Imperial Tobacco and Philip Morris International.

When this funding was exposed, the IEA claimed that its campaigns against tobacco regulation were unrelated to the money it had received.

Recently, it has been repeatedly dissing the NHS, which it wants to privatize; campaigning against controls on junk food; attacking trade unions; and defending zero-hour contracts, unpaid internships and tax havens. Its staff appear on the BBC promoting these positions, often several times a week. But never do interviewers ask the basic democratic questions: who funds you, and do they have a financial interest in these topics?

The BBC's editorial guidelines seem clear: "We should make checks to establish the credentials of our contributors and to avoid being 'hoaxed'." In my view, the entire IEA is a hoax. As the documentary filmmaker Adam Curtis has revealed (ironically, on the BBC's website), when the institute was created, in 1955, one of its founders, Maj Oliver Smedley, wrote to the other, Antony Fisher, urging that it was "imperative that we should give no indication in our literature that we are working to educate the public along certain lines which might be interpreted as having a political bias ... that is why the first draft (of the institute's aims)) is written in rather cagey terms".

The two men were clear about its purpose: to become a public relations agency that would change society along the lines advocated by the founder of neoliberalism, Friedrich Hayek. It should not, Hayek urged them, do any actual thinking, but become a "second-hand dealer in ideas". The IEA became the template for other neoliberal institutes. It was financed initially from the fortune Fisher made by importing broiler chicken farming into the UK. Curtis credits him with founding 150 such lobby groups around the world.

### ■ Dark money influences elections

While dark money has been used to influence elections, the role of groups such as the IEA is to reach much deeper into political life. As its current director, Mark Littlewood, explains, "We want to totally reframe the debate about the proper role of the state and civil society in our country ... our true mission is to change the climate of opinion."

Astonishingly, the IEA is registered as an educational charity, with the official purpose of helping the "general public/mankind". As a result it is exempted from the kind of taxes about which it complains so bitterly. Charity Commission rules state that an "organization will not be charitable if its purposes are political". How much more political can you get? In what sense is ripping down public protections and attacking the rights of workers charitable? Surely no organization should be registered as a charity unless any funds it receives above a certain threshold (say £1,000) are declared.

The Charity Commission announced last week that it has decided to examine the role of the IEA, to see whether it has broken its rules. I don't hold out much hope. In response to a complaint by Andrew Purkis, a former member of the Charity Commission's board, the commission's regulatory compliance department claimed that the IEA provides a "relatively uncontroversial perspective accepted by informed opinion". If the commission sees hard Brexit, privatizing the NHS and defending tax havens as uncontroversial, it makes you wonder what circles its members move in.

I see such organizations as insidious and corrupting. I see them as the means by which money comes to dominate public life without having to declare its hand. I see them as representing everything that has gone wrong with our politics.

(Source: *The Guardian*)

# How Europe can survive the Trump era



By Dirk Kurbjuweit

Politicians are used to engaging in politics -- either with or in opposition to other politicians. Traditionally, the foreign policy of one nation-state or alliance is confronted by the foreign policy of another nation-state or alliance. That's the way it has been for hundreds of years. But that's not the way it is at the moment. When Donald Trump is involved, politics is not confronting politics. Rather, politics is confronting the bizarre.

There is no precedent for such a situation in the history of the West. That fact is also contributing to the difficulties of practicing politics in this day and age.

Politicians, after all, frequently look to the history books for examples to follow and traditions to pursue. But in the history of democracies, the chapter on the bizarre is rather thin.

Someone like Trump is a totally new beast and requires a completely novel approach to politics. That fact can no longer be in doubt following the U.S. president's trip to Europe, including his stopovers in Brussels, London and Helsinki.

It makes little sense to hope that Trump might improve. He is the way he is and politicians from other countries have to get used to it. They have to develop a specific strategy for the period during which this president is in office.

### ■ The appropriate UN strategy

For the European Union, the appropriate strategy can be expressed in a single word: hibernation. But that isn't quite as easy as it might sound. We're not talking here about the long, restorative slumber of a bear in her cave.

Hibernation in the Trump era requires a complex political concept that Brussels should pursue in lockstep with all member states to the degree possible. Should that happen, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and perhaps even before.

Trump's embarrassing behavior during his trip has two primary causes: his explosive narcissism and his adherence to an extremely vulgar form of capitalism.

In 1989, back when Trump was nothing more than a real-estate tycoon, he suddenly said during a television interview with Larry King: "Your breath is very bad, it really is. Has this ever been told to you before?" Later, Trump explained this impertinence by saying it was a demonstration of his negotiating strategy: putting people on the defensive.

The last week has shown that it is a concept he apparently pursues in politics as well. He sought to unsettle German Chancellor Angela Merkel by claiming that Germany is a "captive of Russia" on the eve of his meeting with her. And he did the same to British Prime Minister Theresa May, saying just before their face-to-face that her rival Boris Johnson would make a good prime minister.

It is vulgar. And it is ineffective. All it does is darken the mood and make it more difficult to find common ground. That, though, is the primary goal of foreign policy -- something that Trump is apparently incapable of grasping.

### ■ Trump and his narcissism

Regarding narcissism: Trump is constantly employing superlatives to praise his own deeds. Whatever he does, says or thinks necessarily has to be the best, the greatest of all time. On days when he is feeling modest, he might add a qualifier like "probably."

One gets the feeling that he is seeking to insulate himself from overwhelming self-doubt. And that is what makes his narcissism so explosive. When doubts arise about his self-proclaimed magnificence, he is more

or less capable of anything -- including uttering sentences that many, and not just his opponents, view as treasonous.

His election victory was not nearly as dazzling as he likes to portray it. Hillary Clinton received almost 3 million more votes than he did, with Trump only becoming president due to the peculiarities of the American electoral system.

Close advisers and members of his family stand under suspicion of having maintained dubious contacts with Russians during the campaign. U.S. intelligence agencies have evidence that Russian agents interfered in the campaign.

The legitimacy of his election victory -- the greatest triumph of this small man's giant ego -- is thus suspect. And that is why Trump threw his intelligence services under a bus in Helsinki, why he betrayed all that America stands for and acted like a lackey to Russian President Vladimir Putin. All subsequent attempts to walk back the comments have only made the situation worse. It is comedy and tragedy at the same time.

That doesn't mean that Trump is unable to make the correct, logical move on occasion.

Andrew Johnson, widely considered to be one of the worst presidents in U.S. history, bought Alaska from the Russians in 1867. It was a great deed, but it can't compensate for the fact that following the Civil War, Johnson wanted to refuse equality to the newly freed slaves, which marked the beginning of an eternal disaster in American society.

In the early 1970s, Richard Nixon pursued a sensible policy on China, which helped put the Soviet Union on the defensive, but he is primarily remembered for his crimes -- as the Watergate president -- and rightly so.

The reverse is true for Ronald Reagan. In the 1980s, he was widely considered among peace activists and beyond as a madman who posed a real threat of starting a nuclear war. But Reagan realized that rapprochement had primarily served to extend the Cold War and he felt it should be ended. His contribution to the fall of the Berlin Wall was significant.

**Another European interest is that of maintaining good yet critical relations with China. Europe should play the role of third party, with the other two parties -- China and the U.S. -- confronting each other as superpowers.**

Reagan was laughed at for being a former actor, but he was a real politician who learned the ropes as governor of California and with roots in the Republican Party.

Despite a couple of bizarre speeches and adventures, most notably he cannot be compared to Trump.

With his aimless meanderings, Trump belongs more in the category of someone like former Argentine football great Maradona, who has now become the president of a football club in Belarus.

### ■ Trump is an outlier

Trump is a historical outlier and that is how he should be treated. But his tenure in office is finite: It may end in two-and-a-half years; in the worst-case scenario, we may have to wait until 2021 if he is re-elected. And that is something we must prepare for given that Trump is a quasi-religious figure for his followers. They have faith in him, and that faith is not necessarily rooted in fact.

What, then, should be done? Europe could not commit a larger mistake than that of tailoring its policies to Trump and allowing him to dictate the agenda. It is tempting to fixate on Trump, something we journalists well know, but long-term political trends are much more important. They began long before Trump and will continue long after he is gone.

Nothing is ending with Trump. Nothing is beginning with Trump. That has to be Europe's guiding principle. We must avoid conflating him with the United States.

There is no community of values with this president, but that doesn't mean that the West is at an end. Perhaps it is on ice, perhaps it is currently handicapped, but the U.S. remains the founder of modern democracy and its traditions have deep roots.

Trump does not mark the beginning of an era of the bizarre. His successor will very likely be a real politician. That successor may continue some of the trends that Trump has started -- the tendency toward isolationism,

for example. But that is a trend that existed long before Trump and in recent years, it has been among the long-term trends of American politics.

Europe can deal with that, assuming European politicians have capable counterparts -- real politicians -- on the other side of the Atlantic. Until then, Europe must avoid getting carried away and must shy away from escalation, particularly when it comes to the trade dispute.

Reactions to Trump should be adequate, but not vengeful. Cool-headed politics are needed. Trump will go, but the U.S. will remain -- and should remain Europe's friend.

It has frequently been said that because of Trump, the European Union must further close ranks, establish a joint security policy and be more aggressive in asserting its own interests. That argument gives Trump too much credit: Europe must do those things no matter who is in the White House.

Europe has been doing too little on that front for the last several years and Trump has only served to highlight that failure.

There is, for example, hardly an awareness regarding what should be the top priority of European foreign policy: the stabilization of North Africa and the Middle East. That is where many refugees are coming from, that is where the origins of terror are to be found -- and that has consequences for European politics and society, especially now that there is a threat of war between Israel and Iran/Syria.

Europe must focus its energies on this region and do all it can to promote peace and development. That is much, much more important than a couple of unscrupulous tweets from Donald Trump.

### ■ EU's relations with China

Another European interest is that of maintaining good yet critical relations with China. Europe should play the role of third party, with the other two parties -- China and the U.S. -- confronting each other as superpowers.

Europe cannot resume its role as accessory as it was during the Cold War, a period when America determined the Western approach to the Soviet Union.

Europe is not involved in this clash, it is independent of it. Free trade, fair economic relations, a gentle but insistent promotion of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law in China: Those should be the guidelines followed by the EU in its relations with Beijing.

The same holds true for the relationship with Russia, though the security aspect for Europe plays a much greater role here.

Russia is also a European military power -- one that can rapidly cause significant harm if it wants.

Europe must craft a benign security policy that is as optimistic as it is pessimistic. The Russians don't want war either, but if it were to start one, the European Union would be prepared.

Brussels must plan for the long-term lack of an American security umbrella.

Such are the foreign policy tasks that have to be taken care of during hibernation and thereafter. They are tasks that must be addressed by real politicians.

And here is the opportunity offered by the Trump era: the rehabilitation of professional politics. Politicians have a chance to show that they are needed, because only they can address the challenges that face us.

(Source: *spiegel.de*)

## Why I don't understand the black affluent class

By Donald Earl Collins

It's amazing how similar middle-class and well-positioned African Americans are to white elites in their perspectives on U.S. politics. They continue to play in the sandbox of respectability politics and civility, as if only since the election of Donald Trump as president has racial and socioeconomic progress been in jeopardy.

The "honor - or from, my point of view, blame" for strengthening the right-wing hold on the Supreme Court "goes to those citizens who did not vote for a presidential candidate in 2016," he wrote in a recent column. He added, "I thought the case (for Hillary Clinton) was strong. Sadly ... Black voter turnout fell from 66.6 percent of eligible voters in 2012 to 59.6 percent four years later."

King's words reflect the thoughts of many middle-class and affluent African Americans who've despaired over Trump and the GOP's control of all three branches of government as a sign of the apocalypse. Like King, many have scorned black voters who decided to abstain from voting or not vote for Clinton because they didn't see her as having African Americans' interest in mind or working to combat poverty, as her campaign platform demonstrated.

The reality is that every president since Lyndon Johnson has forgotten about America's poor, and especially, poor Americans of color. Most politicians rarely use the words "poor" and "poverty" in their speeches, unless they intend to criticize the poor for their lot in life.

Yet the black affluent class continues to emphasize racial progress and social mobility as if it's 1978, with Jimmy Carter as president and sitcom *Different Strokes* (starring black actors Gary Coleman and Todd Bridges) an NBC primetime hit.

Democratic Senator Cory Booker implied as much last month in his defense of Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders who, last month, was asked to leave a restaurant

by its owner. "Not to lead with love and to do it in a way that is more reflective of the values we are trying to reject in our country is not acceptable to me," Booker said on MSNBC.

These words and "values" ring hollow to anyone who's experienced extreme hunger and homelessness, a "Jane Crow" removal of children, or a white person threatening to call the police on them for existing.

### ■ Millions living off the excess

Emphasizing harmony while knowing that millions of Americans of color are living off the crumbs of alleged racial progress is the mentality of an affluent African American who's struck a Faustian bargain.

Another example of this contradiction would be Trump's predecessor. Barack Obama's presidency oversaw a rapid rise in the racial wealth gap and more than 2.5 million deportations of mostly brown undocumented people.

President Obama's lofty language often contained thorns of chastisement towards blacks living in poverty. During his Dallas speech in July 2016, Obama said to "protesters" of police brutality, "You know how dangerous some of the communities where these police officers serve are. And you pretend as if there's no context."

As crunk feminist Brittany Cooper put it in her book "Eloquent Rage", the absurdity of this is that most middle-class blacks are "only 1.5 generations" removed from black poverty.

A black middle class that cares more about civility and less about speaking out about structural racism and inequality is one that is difficult to understand. It makes them unwitting partners in white supremacy, patriarchy and socioeconomic inequality.

I've found that I've needed to reassess my own thinking about the contradictions between racial and class-based oppression and my own middle-class strivings. I turned 11 in December 1980, a month after the election of Ronald Reagan, the champion of the "welfare queen" and "strapping young buck" myths, which denigrated black and poor Americans.

I didn't know I was growing up in working poverty in suburban New York until I entered my middle school magnet program in 1981. There, I found myself in a classroom with affluent white and middle-class black kids for the first time.

At age 13, I learned that poverty was like Dante's nine circles of hell after my mother lost her Mount Vernon Hospital job. Our family fell into welfare poverty during the double-dip recession in 1983. Between the ages of 18 and 29, I went through three periods of unemployment and a two and a half years of underemployment.

### ■ Social welfare programs

My delayed entry into the middle class was no accident. Since the days of President Richard Nixon, nearly every president, every Congress, and every Supreme Court has worked to weaken reproductive rights, affirmative action, criminal justice protections, and social welfare programs. All these actions and more have stalled social mobility in the U.S., especially for Americans of color living in poverty.

It didn't matter that I exercised middle-class pragmatism and voted for the "lesser of two evils" President Bill Clinton while living in Pittsburgh in 1992 and 1996. It didn't matter that I wrote "Jesse Jackson" on my New York State absentee ballot when I voted in 1988. That I and others managed to "make it" in this 50-year-old war against poor people is somewhere between a miracle and dumb luck.

I am not suggesting that African Americans like myself should forsake a more prosperous life, but beyond the practical considerations of paying off debt and having wealth to manage, blacks and other Americans of color should ask if being middle class in thought and politics is really worth it. Especially if the endgame only leads to a larger class of Americans engaging in structural racism and class oppression through rhetorical flourishes and support of racist and anti-poor policies.

(Source: *aljazeera.com*)



# Venezuela says Iran lucky to have no U.S. embassy; ‘petro’ main tool for bypassing U.S. sanctions

By Lachin Rezaian

**TEHRAN, (MNA)** — Venezuela's Ambassador to Tehran Jesus Gregorio Gonzalez Gonzalez hailed Iran's chance to have no US embassy, saying what Americans do in all the embassies throughout the world is only to interfere in their affairs and their illegal demands are not met, they push for other measures, plots and coups.

Venezuela's Ambassador to Tehran Jesus Gregorio Gonzalez said when it comes to the cut in oil production, everybody talks about it being at zero level, however this is not true; Venezuela's oil output is not headed toward zero, he stressed, adding, “yes, production level has declined around a third of its previous level which is due to two reasons: first is the result of financial crisis of 2007–2008, during which many countries faced the liquidity problem and foreign exchange shortage which led to the steep fall in oil output; because of that, investment was not possible because there was no money, and this was not a problem only in Venezuela, but in the whole world which were forced to reduce their oil production level. Second, in political matters, Venezuela was hit by economic sanctions imposed by the United States, which also had its own consequences. They made some restrictions on our technologies and what we need to produce oil. And this is another reason that affects Venezuela's oil production.

The said reasons are considered as a political tool US used against Venezuela's economy to achieve its goals; however, Venezuela is doing its job in the oil market, as before. It continues to export oil to the United States as before, e.g. we are selling oil to eight refineries in the US, but we face payment difficulties caused by sanctions.

And this also has a series of effects on our investment, especially in the oil field, so that they can use it as a tool to attack us.

He ensured Venezuela is now more seriously pursuing some policies than last year, so that it can compensate for the shortfalls, during the next four years.

“Many of our allies like China, India and Russia help us in this area and as you know, investing in the oil field needs a large amount of capital,” he explained.

Responding to a question on Venezuela's oil import from



shown many contradictions in its approaches to oil issues, constantly changing its position. On the other hand, due to the fact that it produces a large amount of oil, it affects other members of the OPEC, including the UAE.

Commenting on Saudi Arabia's promise to US president to produce 2 million barrels of oil per day and whether this violates OPEC's rules, Gonzalez said “it definitely violates the rules, but the problem is they are not able at all to produce that much oil; Saudi Arabia pledges to OPEC, but does not have the potential and capacity to keep this promise.”

The Venezuelan ambassador to Iran, responding to a question on the critical status of Venezuela's national oil company PDVSA's debts and the payment strategies in President Maduro's new term, said “all important and big companies are in debt. They take loans to develop their activities, and this leads to debt creation. But there are two issues here: one is that all the companies have debts, and the other is that PDVSA is one of the largest oil companies in the world, which has many financial statements. Venezuela owns the world's largest oil reserves and needs some funds to make use of all its reserves for investment. Suppose you have an apple garden covering an area of at least 100,000 acres; you want to harvest your garden. In this case, you need to get a loan and spend a lot of money. But when your product volume is high, you may not have anything at that time to tap your garden, but your credit is the 100,000 hectares where you can get apple from. Venezuela's oil company is also like this garden. PDVSA has a lot of resources in the oil field, but due to financial problems and lack of sufficient funds, it cannot make use of them to achieve whatever it wants.

Venezuelan ambassador, responding a question on oil-backed ‘petro’ cryptocurrency and its role in improving the economic crisis in Venezuela, said “each petro coin is backed by Venezuela's massive oil reserves.”

Gonzales asserted that the petro price is correlated with one barrel of oil, adding that Venezuela is preparing a new cryptocurrency called “petro gold” that will be backed by precious metals.

He added that petro is said to have raised more than \$5 billion from investors throughout the world so far, and will undoubtedly keep rising, and that the state-backed virtual currency reaffirms Venezuela's economic sovereignty.

Venezuelan ambassador stressed “maybe \$5 million is a big money for a person, but for a country, it is a negligible amount. \$5 billion is not enough to improve a falling economy of a country; Venezuela definitely needs much higher amounts to cope with its crisis, because our debts are far more than that. Anyway, petro is a way in which the government of Venezuela can get around the harsh US sanctions imposed upon us.

On the other hand, he added, petro helps us pay the global trade. It helps us not to be dependent on any international entity such as the World Bank, and we have the freedom to act on our international payments.

Mr. Ambassador said “currently, only the United States does not allow trading with petro, because we can circumvent the restrictions imposed by the US sanctions, through petro,” adding “all countries, depending on their financial power, can use cryptocurrency, like the way petro has also

entered the global trading system.”

In response to the question on whether the Venezuelan government, in its new term, will implement plans other than petro to salvage its economy from crisis, he said “the new government will take office in January 2019, and it has new plans, including mining;” we have mineral products besides gas and oil, he added.

Jesus Gregorio Gonzalez asserted that, “as we have an active role in the steel industry in the world, we can also increase aluminum and iron production.”

He also pointed to the tourism industry as the other section to be considered during the new term.

Pointing to some agreements signed in agricultural and industrial fields, he said, “for the implementation of these accords, we have to wait for some domestic Venezuelan issues to be resolved. In the near future, we will implement our plans for the export of rice, coffee, cocoa, gold, and precious stones.”

Mehr News also discussed with Gonzales the US accusations against the Venezuelan elections and calling it a “sham” and President Nicolas Maduro's decision to expel the top US diplomat in Venezuela and his deputy for conspiring against the government and trying to sabotage the presidential elections.

Asked whether President Maduro made a good decision to expel US diplomats regarding the current situation and the possibility of imposing next round of sanctions, he said “the first thing is that we do not have Iran's chance to have no US embassy in Venezuela. Americans are not in Iran, and this is undoubtedly considered an advantage for Iran. What Americans do in all the embassies throughout the world is only to interfere in their affairs. When their illegal demands are not met, they push for other measures, plots and coups. They planned a coup against Chavez, all controlled by the US embassy. This is one of the reasons why Venezuela expels some American diplomats, including US former ambassador; Americans have conspired and tried to sabotage against the government, and took lots of measures to destabilize Venezuela.”

“Americans are constantly trying to accuse Venezuelan elections as “fake” and “illegitimate”, Gonzalez said, adding “I think President Maduro was very tolerant and kind with them, since he expelled only two of them, instead of firing all of US diplomats from the embassy.”

We are after communications with all the countries, in case they respect our sovereignty and independency; we have proved this in action several times before: Venezuela released American missionary Joshua Holt on the weapons charges and released many other prisoners of opposition groups, he noted, adding “however, US is after hostile policies against Venezuela; they have and will impose sanctions on us, and nothing will change their behavior.”

“Americans are constantly trying to accuse Venezuelan elections as “fake” and “illegitimate”, Gonzalez said, adding “I think President Maduro was very tolerant and kind with them, since he expelled only two of them, instead of firing all of US diplomats from the embassy.”

US will keep on plotting against Venezuela, as they are doing against Iran during past 40 years, and against all people and all the governments throughout the world, he underlined.



the Islamic Republic, and the possibility of any increase in the amount in President Maduro's new term, he said “Venezuela imports 400,000 barrels of light crude from Iran and combines it with heavy oil of Venezuela to prepare it for export. Iran also faces some restrictions on its oil production.

Regarding the question on the agreement by major oil producers to pump more crude to help reduce prices and prevent a supply shortage, which is a significant reversal of OPEC's strategy of curbing output over the past 19 months, Jesus Gregorio Gonzalez said Iran's position on the issue is clearly announced, however, Saudi Arabia does not have an independent policy on the oil issue; Saudi Arabia, together with Russia, the world's two biggest oil producers, generate 11 million bpd per day, and this is due to their less problems with the United States.

“We have a single position on oil in OPEC, but Saudi's position is influenced by the political conditions. Indeed, Saudi Arabia does not have a consistent view on this issue, but anyway, they want to increase oil production, which is in line with the position of other members of OPEC so that they could cope with rising prices,” he noted, adding “since Saudi Arabia lacks a definite, constant, and especially independent policy on the oil issue, so its potential performance in the future cannot be evaluated.”

Gregorio Gonzalez underlined that Saudi Arabia has

## American unilateralism and the world crisis

➔ Earlier, the first World Economic Conference in Geneva, 1927, which observed the symptoms of recession and the Great Depression in world economy, called for all countries to remove tariffs and boost international trade in a bid to improve the economic growth. In the United States, 1028 economists expressed their protest against imposing limitation on trade in a petition addressed to Hoover. But, pressed by the Congress, Hoover implemented the plan and raised the tariffs on imported goods by 59%. In retaliation, the other countries also raised their tariffs on American commodities. Although at the beginning, the tariff act introduced by two Republicans, Representative Willis C. Hawley and Senator Reed Smoot increased the employment rate and the number of production agreements, due to the retaliatory measures taken by other countries, the American exports sharply dropped by 61% and the GDP fell to less than a half within the next four years.

On the other hand, the unemployment rate which was 8%, hiked up by 25% in just three years. Many historians and economists believe that the Hawley–Smoot Tariff Act and unilateralist policy adopted by the U.S. government were the key factors in the con-

tinuation and exacerbation of rescission in the global economy as it reduced the scale of world trade to 33% and prepared the ground for World War II at the end of the 1930s. Despite their populist slogans, Smoot and Hawley could not even save their House seats and had to leave office two years later. Once again, the egoistic and unilateralist attitude of the American statesmen pushed their country and the entire world to a major crisis and an unprecedented destructive war. The American arrogance led the humankind to a catastrophe which cost the lives of more than 60 million people across the world.

3. Nowadays, the world is hit over again by a new wave of populist unilateralism. The current mindset which claims that simply gives priority to the interests of the American nation without trammeling the other nations' rights has taken action against the international agreements. Recently, the incumbent U.S. president announced that his country withdraws from Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Likewise, the American statesmen have since violated regional trade agreements such as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and have set high tariffs on imports

of steel and aluminum and automobiles from other countries.

The U.S. has also withdrawn from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program. All such decisions clearly trammel the rights of people in other countries and damage life and business environment throughout the world. They launch a global trade war, which paves the way for economic recession and in turn threatens the world security.

This dangerous approach is rooted not only in profiteering in business, but also in an egomaniac view of the one who sees himself superior to the others and falsely believes that has the right to determine the fate of others. Such an arrogant view is evident in the decision to ban travel of people from some Muslim countries to the United States and inhumane separation of illegal immigrants' children from their parents.

4. But, our time differs crucially from the 19th and 20th centuries in terms of growing public awareness of the events and politics. Even if it has a disadvantage, the online world and internet data has also a great advantage as it facilitates transparency and conveys the demands of people so rapidly. In the age of information explosion, archaic and outdated

nineteenth century minds are less likely to dominate public opinion. Therefore, they look less impressive and their long-term consequences will become evident in a short period of time. At the moment, all people throughout the world understand the true meaning of “America First” [chanted by the incumbent U.S. president] which indeed means “All for the Powerful of America”, and immediately respond to that. All over the world, including the United States, a consciousness is growing toward the catastrophic policies of the U.S. government which has caused widespread negative responses.

Governments of other countries are also challenging the unilateral measures taken by American statesmen, for instance in the fight over tariff rates. The upcoming midterm elections of the United States in November will show to what extent the American voters are aware of the looming threat. In order to avoid a global tragedy, the governments across the world should respond seriously and clearly to unilateralist, hostile measures taken by the American government. Those who know the past and can foresee the future are tasked with playing a significant role on the scene of the world's public opinion and increase people's awareness.

## Sanctions to make U.S. more isolated than Iran: ex-adviser

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — A former U.S. government adviser praised Iran as “very strong in diplomacy” and said the U.S. sanctions due to be re-imposed on the Islamic Republic later in November will make Washington more isolated than Tehran.

“Ultimately, if the U.S. intends to boycott the countries that refuse to boycott Iran, it is likely to backfire, with the result that the U.S. will be isolated more than Iran,” Paul Larudee from San Francisco said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency.

Larudee is an Iranian-born American political activist and human rights volunteer, who works with the International Solidarity Movement. He is a former contracted U.S. government adviser to Saudi Arabia and a founder of the Free Gaza and Free Palestine Movements.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ The Trump administration recently threatened to cut Iranian oil exports to zero, saying that countries must stop buying its oil from Nov. 4 or face financial consequences. Washington later softened its threat, saying that it would allow reduced oil flows of Iranian oil, in certain cases. Since oil is a strategic product and countries around the world always demand it, would the U.S. be able to carry out this threat at all?

A: It seems unlikely that Washington will be able to carry out its threat effectively, and so will retreat. We can recall that both the Obama and Trump administrations made threats and warnings, and each time delivered only a fraction of what they had threatened. Examples are the air invasions of Syria and the threats to hit the Syrian army in its recovery of Deraa. Ultimately, the U.S. backed down.

In the case of blocking the Strait of Hormuz, most of the rest of the world, including Europe, Japan, China, and many more will not stand for it. There are other ways to ship the oil, such as expedited construction of new pipelines, as well as shipment from other ports in smaller tanker ships. Ultimately, if the U.S. intends to boycott the countries that refuse to boycott Iran, it is likely to backfire, with the result that the U.S. will be isolated more than Iran.

■ Iran is perceived to have threatened to block oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz, a key Persian Gulf waterway, in retaliation for U.S. efforts to reduce Iranian oil sales to zero. Analysts say that crude oil prices could jump as high as U.S.\$250 a barrel if Iran goes through with its threat to close the strait. What do you think? In your opinion, what other measures can Iran do to counteract U.S. pressures?

A: Iran is very strong in diplomacy, and most countries are not interested in reducing their purchases of Iranian oil, so I believe that Iran will have a lot of support for its position without blocking the Strait of Hormuz. Iran can begin – and has probably already begun – to negotiate options for delivering its product in spite of a U.S. attempt to block it. In addition, it may be wise for Iran to develop logistical options for delivering oil to buyers in case the (Persian) Gulf route becomes an issue. It may be costly to do this, but it is always good to have strategic options.

■ As you know, Trump's threat is part of his walking away from the Iran nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He also plans to reinstate anti-Tehran sanctions from November 4. In the meantime, the European Union has put forward a package of economic measures to offset the U.S. pullout from the JCPOA. What do you think about the EU's role in reducing Washington's pressures against Tehran?

A: The EU is declaring its independence from the U.S. They are not willing to allow the U.S. to damage their economies long term. The only way the U.S. can retain influence on Europe is to behave responsibly and to demonstrate that it can act to the benefit of the Europeans. An aggressive use of power is symptomatic of its loss, and the U.S. is gradually losing its ability to threaten others.

It is also the case that when the U.S. destroys another country, they do not bring peace or calm, but rather continued resistance. This is because the population has nothing left to lose when all is destroyed, and will never give up. Therefore, even the U.S. does not benefit from such tactics. There is only one country that benefits and prospers from eternal war, and that is Israel. It is therefore proper to look closely at the influence of Israel upon the U.S., and its relation to U.S. policy, as well as to take note that the majority of U.S. war making in the 21st century has been in Israel's neighborhood, and to reflect upon whether this is mere coincidence or whether there is a cause and effect relationship.

## Europe keeps to play on the U.S. Ground

➔ It might be imagined that due to the United States withdrawal from the nuclear deal, the joint US-EU project on the JCPOA and its change has come to an end. Though many western sources talk of tensions raised in transatlantic relations, it seems that behind the Western media's hustle and bustle, something else is going on. The fact is that despite the official withdrawal of the Trump's government, the Americans and Europeans' negotiations over how to deal with the nuclear accord are still ongoing.

Part of these negotiations are officially conducted during the American officials' visits to European countries and vice versa. But the most important part of these are conducted in the form of “secret diplomacy” and between the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the ministers of the three European countries. Europe's recent package of proposals well indicates that the US-EU cooperation on changing the content of nuclear deal has not been halted, but rather entered a new phase after Washington's withdrawal from the JCPOA.

“Postponing talks with Iranian officials” by European authorities is entirely in the US interest. On the other hand, the European authorities' refusal of offering their package of proposals until November is totally in line with their strategy of intensifying the “impact of US secondary sanctions” on Iran.

The United States and the European Union are still trying to assemble the pieces of this puzzle together, and draw a single image in opposition to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA shouldn't be regarded as “the end of this joint project” by the United States and Europe, but it simply means “redefining” it.

Distinguishing between the policies of the United States and Europe, and beyond that, labelling the tensions and disputes among Washington and the European troika as “strategic confrontation between America and Europe” is a serious and irreparable mistake in the field of diplomacy and foreign policy of our country.

Now is time for our diplomacy system to clearly see and recognize the “signs”: Signs such as the offer of a disappointing package by Europe, the Europeans' effort not to hold negotiations with Iran until August (the time of the introduction of US secondary sanctions), etc. all should be considered as a “warning” for Our officials. Even when the apparent disagreement between US and European officials on the JCPOA, attracts the attention of the proponents of “the nuclear deal as defined by the European authorities”, the joint attempt of the West against Iran is slowly and secretly underway.



# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

## Apartment

Apt in Zafaranih  
3<sup>th</sup> floor, 240 sq.m, 4 Bdrs.  
fully furn, 2 parking places  
**\$3000**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Shahrak e Qarb  
1<sup>th</sup> floor, 116 sq.m, 2 Bdrs. fully  
furn, lobby, pkg  
**\$2500**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in South Dibaji  
3<sup>th</sup> floor, 150 sq.m, 2 Bdr.  
fully furn, spj, lobby  
**\$2000**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Darous  
new, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, 80 sq.m, 2 Bdrs. fully  
furn, sauna, lobby, gym  
parking, storage, **\$1800**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Elahieh  
18<sup>th</sup> floor, 270 sq.m, 4 Bdrs.  
almost new, equipped kitchen  
unfurn, balcony, luxury lobby spj  
gym saloon, good access  
**\$6000**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Super luxury Apt in Mahmoodieh  
230 sq.m to 250 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.  
new, fully furn, nice balcony  
luxury lobby, spj, high security  
parking, good access  
**\$5000**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

## Villa

Villa in Niavaran  
650 sq.m built up, 450 sq.m land  
duplex villa with one extra apt  
indoor pool, spj, pkg, **\$10000**

*Suitable for  
Residency or Embassy*  
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Villa in Zafaranih  
Duplex, 564 sq.m, 6 Bdrs. fully  
furn, spj, yard, pkg, renovated  
**\$5500**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Luxury Villa in the North  
duplex, 1200 sq.m built up, 2000  
sq.m land, 5 Bdrs., big saloon  
servant, indoor pool spj renovated  
beautiful and green garden, semi furn  
**\$18000 negotiable**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Villa in Valiasr-Park way  
triplex villa, 500 sq.m built up 600  
sq.m land, 5 Bdrs., modern  
renovated, barbeque, garden  
servant quarter, luxury furn  
outdoor pool, cozy & beautiful  
**\$12000**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Unbelievable Villa in  
North of Tehran  
7000 sq.m land, 2200 sq.m built  
up, duplex, 7 Bdrs., big saloon  
garden, renovated, waterfall  
*Suitable for  
Embassy or Residency*

Ms.Diba: 09128103206



Holder of

ISO 9001:2008

ISO 10004:2012

ISO 10002:2014

From Oxford Cert Universal

**Best Consultation  
Best Services, Best Result**

Intl. Department Manager "Tina 09128103205"

Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

**Hot Line: 28141**  
info@parsdiplomatic.com  
**www.parsdiplomatic.com**

## Building & Office

New Whole Building in Zafaranih  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, each floor one unit  
each unit 150 sq.m with 3 rooms  
parking, lobby  
**Price negotiable**

*Suitable for  
Residency & Embassy*  
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Office in Jordan  
1<sup>th</sup> floor, 130 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.  
remodel & renew, lobby  
high security, pkg, guest parking  
full of foreign companies, good  
access, near to Mellat Park  
**Price per each sq \$36**  
**Tax not included**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Whole Building in Jordan  
15 apts, 25 Bdrs., new, excellent  
furn, lobby, parking good access  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Whole Building in Farmanieh  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, each floor 2 apts each apt  
200 sq.m with 3 Bdrs., unfurn 2  
sides entrances, meeting room spj  
garden, pkg  
*Suitable for  
Residency & Embassy*

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Nice Office in Jordan  
120 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., almost new  
parking, lobby  
full of foreign companies  
**Price per each sq \$40**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

## Ideal Offers

Apt in Velenjak  
brand-new flat in a garden  
85 sq.m, tower, 1 Bdr.  
fully furn with sauna, pool &  
Jacuzzi, parking & storage  
**\$3000**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Elahieh  
just 5 floors, each floor one Apt  
2<sup>th</sup> floor, 270 sq.m  
4 Bdrs., fully furn, lobby, pkg spj  
nice balcony, **\$4200**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Elahieh  
3<sup>th</sup> floor, 320 sq.m, 4 Bdrs  
fully furn, good access to highway  
garden, spj diplomatic building  
nice balcony, **\$4500**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Zafaranih  
220 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., fully furn very  
quite & cozy, parking, spj  
**\$2700**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Elahieh  
2<sup>th</sup> floor, 270 sq.m, 4 Bdrs  
luxury furn, small balcony, spj  
small garden, **\$4500**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Jordan  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, 120 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.  
fully furn, lobby, pkg diplomatic  
**\$1500**

Ms.Diba: 09128103206

مالکین محترم

ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آپارتمان،  
ویلا، مستغلات، اداری و تجاری) به ما بسپارید.

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سروس، بالاترین رضایت

مالکین محترم املاک مبله و غیرمبله، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا و مستغلات  
شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شرکت های خارجی نیازمندیم.

مالکین محترم

ویلاهای شما را جهت اجاره به منزل سفیر و مدیران  
شرکت های بین المللی در مناطق شمالی تهران  
نیازمندیم.

**PARSIAN Real Estate**

**SHANON**  
Shanon\_zt@yahoo.com  
+989121907875  
Tel : 88745542

Elahieh (\$3200) 200sq.m, 3bdrs S/p, S, J, & F.F	Farmanieh Apt 180sq.m, 3bdrs (\$2200)	Tajrish Villa (\$7000) 5bdrs, 1200sq.m S/p, yard, & F.F
Jordan (\$1400) 2bdrs, 120sq.m S/p, S, J, & F.F	Darrous Apt 220sq.m, 3bdrs (\$3000)	Fereshteh bldg 4storey, 10bdrs yard (\$10000)

**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

**www.DeltaHOME.ir**  
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

**HOME**  
Real Estate  
Member of DELTA Real Estate Group  
(021) 88888865

Advertising Dept:  
times1979@gmail.com

**TEHRANTIMES** +9821 430 51 450  
Iran's Leading International Daily  
www.tehrantimes.com

**TEHRAN TIMES**  
Iran's Leading International Daily

**Advertising Dept**

Tel: **021 - 430 51 450**  
times1979@gmail.com

## TASHRIFAT REAL ESTATE

**We give service with a difference... We care!**

✓ Long & Short term rentals

✓ Purchase Properties

**FURNISHED - UNFURNISHED**  
**Villa-Apartment-Office-Building**



**Mr. Shahin**

Nobody does it better

**09121081212**

Since: 1987

مالکین محترم املاک مسکونی و اداری شما را جهت اجاره به خارجی نیازمندیم

Tel: **22723121**

**tehranfirstchoice@gmail.com**

**SATISFACTION  
GUARANTEED**





Taj Mahal Hotel & Indian Restaurant



Mahi Mahi Gilaki Restaurant

Plot No 29, Sout Sheykh Bahayi Street, Molasadra Blvd, Vanak Sq, Tehran, Iran

[www.Tajmahalhotel.ir](http://www.Tajmahalhotel.ir) [@tajmahal\\_hotel](https://www.instagram.com/tajmahal_hotel) Tel: +98(21)-88035444



## Iran reassessing official foreign currency rate for outbound passengers



**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — On Saturday, hundreds of Iranian outbound passengers stood in long queues to grab discounted currency allocation from selected banks after rumors spread about cutting the privilege, ISNA reported.

The Central Bank of Iran is deemed to reverse its policy of giving foreign currencies to people traveling abroad at official rate in the face of mounting public pressure and criticism.

The move is in line with the policy to counter shortage of foreign currency as the Trump administration is restoring sanctions against Iran, mainly targeting Tehran's oil revenues.

## ‘New eco-lodges to generate 16,000 jobs in Iran’



A view of Noghli House, a tradition eco-lodge in Kashan, central Iran.

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Building new eco-lodges will create some 16,000 jobs in Iran, the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization's director has said.

The organization aims to launch 2,000 new eco-lodges by 2021, CHHTO director Ali-Asghar Mounesan added.

On May 13, government spokesman Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht pledged support for ecotourism by providing loans to applicants seeking to build eco-lodges.

Iran has a very diverse nature where sightseers may even stay with a nomad or rural family or enjoy an independent stay to feel its rustic routines, agriculture, wildlife as well as traditional arts and culture.

## Ardebil to host specialized embossing exhibit

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — An exhibition of embossing works is scheduled to open its doors to the public this evening at the khataei Gallery in Ardebil, northwest Iran.

Pieces crafted by Ahmad Ataei, Mahsa Ghanbarzadeh and several other artisans have been selected for the event, CHTN reported.

The exhibit will be running through July 29 at the galley, which is located on the premises of the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The embossing operation is commonly accomplished with a combination of heat and pressure on a metal piece, depending on what type of embossing is required.

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Historic Centre (Old Town) of Tallinn

The Historic Centre (Old Town) of Tallinn is an exceptionally complete and well-preserved medieval northern European trading city on the coast of the Baltic Sea.

Located in modern Estonia, the city developed as a significant center of the Hanseatic League during the major period of activity of this great trading organization in the 13th-16th centuries.

The combination of the upper town on the high limestone hill and the lower town at its foot with many church spires forms an expressive skyline that is visible from a great distance both from land and sea.

The upper town (Toompea) with the castle and the cathedral has always been the administrative center of the country, whereas the lower town preserves to a remarkable extent the medieval urban fabric of narrow winding streets, many of which retain their medieval names, and fine public and burgher buildings, including town wall, Town Hall, pharmacy, churches, monasteries, merchants' and craftsmen's guilds, and the domestic architecture of the merchants' houses, which have survived to a remarkable degree. The distribution of building plots survives virtually intact from the 13th-14th centuries.

The Outstanding Universal Value of the Historic Centre (Old Town) of Tallinn is demonstrated in its existence as an outstanding, exceptionally complete and well preserved example of a medieval northern European trading city that retains the salient features of this unique form of economic and social community to a remarkable degree.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Solar bikers traverse Iran en route from France to China

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A North Vancouver-based couple Justin Lemire-Elmore and Anne-Sophie Rodet has recently toured parts of Iran along their adventurous itinerary commenced in mid-June in Lyon.

China's Guangzhou would be the ultimate destination for the couple who are riding on a DIY back-to-back tandem with an aim of promoting solar-powered vehicles.

They are two of approximately 40 participants in this year's Sun Trip, an event that challenges participants to ride on solar electric bicycles.

We arrived Iran crossing Bazargan border post and our itinerary includes some cities dotted on the south Caspian Sea region and ends in Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport, Khabaronline quoted Lemire-Elmore as saying on July 18.

"It is very unfortunate that we cannot visit other Iranian cities such as Isfahan or Shiraz, and this is the path that the company has set for us... moreover our time is very limited."

Our biggest challenge in this journey is that we have to go 200 kilometers each day and there are some great attractions that we would like to visit... but every time we do that we fall behind the schedule... seeming a probability of losing our flight from Tehran, the couple added.

Before they hit the road, Lemire-Elmore told the North Shore News: "I'm super looking forward to facing backwards on a rowing machine and looking at all the reactions."

"This is our first foray doing anything directly with solar," Lemire-Elmore explains. "Now that I've actually experienced what it's like to have the battery pack just charge itself throughout the day with no hunting around to find a spare outlet – it's such a



Anne-Sophie Rodet and Justin Lemire-Elmore ride a solar-powered tandem in Iran and en route their adventure from Lyon to Guangzhou.

liberating sensation."

"When I found out that this trip for 2018 was going from Lyon – which is the hometown of Anne-Sophie – to the Guangzhou region of china, which is where we get a ton of components and parts supplies ... it seemed pretty special to be linking those two parts of the world by solar powered e-bikes, which is the entire domain of light low-powered

electric assist that intrigues and interests us," he said.

The participants started riding from Lyon to Guangzhou with a freedom to take any route they want along the way.

"I'm really interested in the beginning, so the first five days we ride all together and we get to know the other teams. I think it's going to be interesting because after that we'll be

really interested in following and knowing where the other riders will be," Rodet says.

On a 12,000 km route crossing 10 countries, the Sun Trip 2018 rides along the "New Silk Roads" to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Lyon-Canton (Guangzhou) twinning, the cities being respectively the second- and the third-biggest cities of France and China.

## Blackberry festival held to promote rural tourism in Tehran



**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A vast blackberry festival featuring variety of related dishes, workshops and handicrafts was held in Sulgan rural district on Thursday and Friday in a bid to encourage tourism across villages of in northwest Tehran.

The event also hosted farmers, artisans and travel-associates from several other provinces, Mehr reported on Saturday.

"Holding such festivals encourages transfer of cultures and also fuels boom in countryside tourism... by the means of launching small accommodations, traditional restaurants and package tours," said Ali Nozarpour, the mayor of district 22 of Tehran.

The region is teemed with lush gardens and fresh air and it also features some deep valleys and scenic eroded rock forms known to natives as "rocky ghosts".

## 22.8% rise in Azerbaijanis visiting Iran in H1



**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A total of 579 Azerbaijani nationals visited Iran during the first half of 2018, increasing 22.8 percent from a year ago, IRNA reported.

Meanwhile, number of Iranians visiting the neighboring country dropped by 18.8 year-on-year percent from March to June, the report added.

Over the past couple of months, the number of Iranian outbound passengers to some destinations including Azerbaijan has decreased, largely in tandem with the rise of foreign currency prices in the country.

Statistics indicate that 99,158 Iranians visited the country during the first three months of the year.

Currently, citizens of 15 countries including Iran can obtain Azerbaijan visas via self-service terminals upon arrival at the Heydar Aliyev International Airport in Baku.

# Life after Concorde: Bringing back supersonic air travel

Imagine being able to travel from Washington DC to London in three-and-a-half hours. Currently, you'd be lucky to get there in seven.

But from 1976 to 2003, Air France and British Airways' Concorde made such trips possible until soaring maintenance costs and poor ticket sales forced the supersonic jet out of operation.

Since then, only a handful of companies have dared to step into the void left by the airliner by developing their own superfast jets, and by finding ways to overcome flaws that led to Concorde's demise.

Among the brave is aerospace start-up Boom Supersonic,



which was founded in Colorado less than four years ago,

and Aerion in Nevada, which kick-started the race to revive supersonic air travel 16 years ago.

Both American enterprises are developing airliners that could transport passengers above 50,000 feet (15,200m) in the air – about 15,000 feet (4,500m) higher than commercial air traffic – in order to reach speeds of at speeds of 1,000mph (1,609kmh) and more.

Boom founder and CEO Blake Scholl, and Aerion's Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer Ernie Edwards spoke to Euronews about their mission to break the sound barrier at the Farnborough International Airshow.

(Source: Euronews)

# Hawaii town hopes lava tourism will bring economic relief

Stunning images of Hawaii's erupting Kilauea volcano have captivated people around the world. But ironically it's nearly impossible for residents and visitors on the ground to see the lava – a fact that's squeezing the tourism-dependent local economy.

Big Island businesses are calling for a lava viewing site, but authorities say they're finding it difficult to set one up while keeping people safe.

The risks posed by the volcano came into sharp focus this week when lava flowing into the ocean triggered an explosion that sent a hot rock the size of a basketball crashing through a tour boat's roof. One woman broke her leg, while nearly two dozen others suffered minor burns and scrapes.

Diane Ley, Hawaii County's director of research and development, said she's been working on setting up a lava viewing site for nearly two months, consulting with federal scientists and the county's civil defense administrator. The injuries from the tour boat only validate the county's caution, she said.

"That's a challenge – to find us a site that is safe from volcanic hazards, emissions and can afford the ability for large numbers to be able to come in and view," she said.

Still, pressures are mounting from merchants, tour guides and others on the island, where tourism has dropped since Kilauea began erupting in a residential neighborhood and burning down homes in May.

Downtown Pahoa, which is just a few miles from where the volcano is pumping a river of molten rock into the ocean, has been hit particularly hard. The small, rural town serves as a gateway to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which is normally the state's most popular tourist attraction but has closed indefinitely because of dangers to visitors and staff.

As recently as April, travelers could watch molten rock in the park's lava lake and hike to remote spots to see flowing lava.

State Sen. Russell Ruderman said the county needs to urgently set up a lava viewing site to bring visitors back to Pahoa.

"Our town is dying very, very fast and very, very dramatically," said Ruderman, who owns a natural foods store in Pahoa. "It's needless because if we could get the word out that our town is open for business, we could still save it."

Currently, only helicopter and boat-tour passengers – paying about \$250 each – are able to see the lava in person.

The area where lava is bursting from the ground is under a mandatory evacuation order. Residents nearby may go to their homes, but the county restricts access for everyone else except scientists, authorities like the National Guard and a handful of escorted media.

Officials have cracked down on violators, issuing citations to more than 80 people for loitering in a restricted disaster area.

Kilauea, which has been erupting continuously for 35 years, has long attracted travelers. About 5,000 people a day descended on an official county lava viewing spot in May 1990 as molten rock slowly consumed the town of Kalapana, the Honolulu Advertiser reported.

That's even though the spot offered views of cooled, not flowing, lava. County workers set aside some newly hardened rocks for tourists to touch as consolation.

Ley noted Kilauea is behaving differently than in the past, when lava flowed from a different spot and through uninhabited land. It also is producing more lava – erupting as much as 3,500 cubic feet (100 cubic meters) per second now compared with about 141 cubic feet (4 cubic meters) two years ago.

She doesn't know when the county will be ready but envisions a viewing site where tour buses could go and not private cars. The county may select several sites and open them as conditions allow, she said.

John Tarson, owner of Epic Lava Tours, said the current restrictions are crushing him.

"They've effectively cut my business' legs off. And there's nothing that can be done to save it unless they reopen the tourism industry, unless they stop criminalizing people for wanting to see lava," Tarson said.

(Source: CNBC)



# An eye drop for macular degeneration shows promise in animal studies

Drugs such as Roche's Lucentis and Regeneron's Eylea help slow down the progression of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of blindness in people over age 65. But those medicines have to be injected into the eye, making them inconvenient for patients.

Scientists at the University of Birmingham have been developing an alternative treatment — this one in the form of an easy-to-use eye drop. After proving the drop has a similar therapeutic effect as injections do in rodents last year, the team began investigating the drug in rabbits and pigs, which have eyes that are similar to those of humans.

The team discovered that the drop can deliver an effective amount of AMD-fighting drug to the larger mammals. They reported their results in the journal *Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science*.

## ■ A must-read source

Biopharma is a fast-growing world where big ideas come along every day. Our subscribers rely on FierceBiotech as their must-read source for the latest news, analysis and data in the world of biotech and pharma R&D.

The eye drop contains a peptide that can penetrate cells in the retina. It is now being developed by a startup in the U.S. called Macregen, according to a statement. The company is working with the University of Birmingham team to complete proof-of-concept studies.



"From the outset, we (realized) that delivering drugs through eye drops would mean that patients can administer their treatment themselves, and this would be less costly, save time for patients and healthcare providers,

and reduce the potential complications that can arise from injections," said Felicity de Cogan, a research fellow at the University of Birmingham's Institute of Microbiology and Infection, in the statement.

**After proving the drop has a similar therapeutic effect as injections do in rodents last year, the team began investigating the drug in rabbits and pigs, which have eyes that are similar to those of humans.**

## ■ Inhibiting the protein VEGF

As successful as Lucentis and Eylea have been, improving on them has been challenging. The drugs work by inhibiting the protein VEGF, which subsequently plugs up the leaky blood vessels that are a hallmark of AMD. Regeneron tried combining its drug with the Bayer antibody nesvacumab, but disappointing trial results prompted the partners to scrap a planned phase 3 study last year.

Meanwhile, a race is on to develop alternative AMD therapies. Last year, New Jersey-based PanOptica raised \$11 million in venture capital to move its AMD drop into phase 1/2 trials. And Gemini

Therapeutics of Cambridge, Massachusetts, hauled in \$42.5 million to develop AMD drug candidates that target genetic abnormalities behind the disease.

More recently, a team led by the University of Southern California's Roski Eye Institute reported promising results from a small clinical trial of a retinal implant they made from embryonic stem cells. They are testing the implant for the treatment of the "dry" form of AMD.

Macregen and the University of Birmingham team are aiming to start clinical trials of their eye drop next year. The trials could start as early as spring, the company predicted.

(Source: fiercebiotech.com)

## White clover can be an annoying weed and may hold secrets to urban evolution



The ubiquitous plant alters its defense systems in a tougher environment, prompting researchers to call it a perfect test species for study as urban areas expand.

It's considered a nuisance or a weed when it pops up in luscious suburban lawns, long the bane of gardeners and homeowners sodding, sprinkling and nurturing the greenest of grasses.

But in other places, white clover has become a plant that marvels. It is one of the most rapidly evolving species of flora, learning quickly how to survive in the toughest of urban environments. Some green thumbs would not be surprised at its stubborn spread, while others might welcome a haven for bee recovery let alone any semblance of flowers bursting through crowds and concrete.

According to a study in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, white clover (*Trifolium repens*) adapts equally well to cities of all sizes — with 20 studied in Ontario, Canada, from London, with a population near 400,000 to tiny Everett, population 1,670.

Researchers had previously explored cities as large as New York, and now they are expanding their explorations to more than 180 cities across the world, in an effort called the Global Urban Evolution Project or GLUE.

## ■ Great natural test

Cities work as great natural test cases

for evolution, said Marc Johnson, the director of the Centre for Urban Environments at the University of Toronto, Mississauga, who led the research. "In many ways it's an unplanned experiment happening throughout the world over and over again," he said.

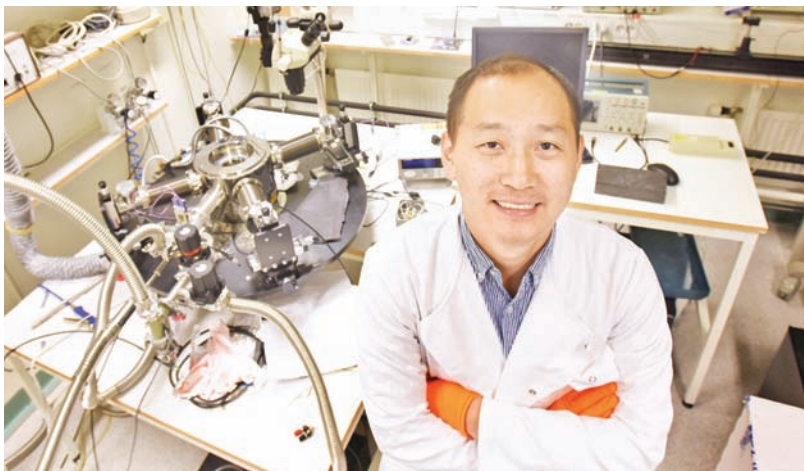
With climate change advancing and more than half the world's population living in cities — a figure expected to jump to 70 percent by 2050 — Dr. Johnson said it would be crucial for scientists to figure out how human encroachment and activity affect the plants and animals that surround us.

White clover makes for a good test species because it has already displayed the stamina to survive in climates from Norway to southern India, Dr. Johnson said. The plant also helps nourish soil with nitrogen and serves as an important source of nectar for bees and other pollinators.

The clover adapts to colder climates by losing its ability to make hydrogen cyanide or HCN, a toxin the plant produces to protect itself from predators, like snails, insects and voles, and in the country, cows, sheep and goats. The number of plants that produce hydrogen cyanide increases with every mile away from the city center, the study found, with small cities showing the same effect as big ones.

(Source: The NYT)

## How to build efficient organic solar cells



Twenty-five researchers from seven research institutes have put their heads together to draw up rules for designing high-efficiency organic solar cells. The research is led by Feng Gao, associate professor at Linköping University, Sweden.

Organic solar cells, made from carbon-based materials, present unique advantages compared with other solar cell technologies. For example, they can be manufactured through low-cost printing technologies, and they can be made semi-transparent with selectable colors, which can be used architecturally in building integration. Their flexibility and low weight make them perfect for powering the sensors for the internet of things applications.

"We have formulated some rational design rules to minimize energy losses in organic solar cells. Following these rules, we present a range of examples with low energy losses and high power conversion efficiencies", says Feng Gao, associate professor at the Division of Biomolecular and Organic Electronics at Linköping University.

## ■ Organic solar cells

Using these design rules, organic solar cells promise to catch up with their competitors with respect to power conversion efficiency, which measures the fraction of the energy in the sun's radiation that is converted to electricity.

The theoretical limit for the fraction of the sun's energy that can be obtained in solar cells is around 33%. Laboratory experiments with silicon-based solar cells have achieved 25% at best. Researchers have until now believed that the limit for organic solar cells is lower.

"But we now know that there is no difference - the theoretical limit is the same for solar cells manufactured from silicon, perovskites or polymers", says Olle Inganäs, professor of biomolecular and organic electronics, Linköping university.

When photons from the sun are absorbed by the semiconducting polymer in a solar cell, electrons in the donor material are raised to an excited state, and holes are formed in the ground state to which the electrons remain attracted. In order to separate these bound electrons and holes, an acceptor material is added. However, this acceptor material usually results in extra energy losses, an issue that has bothered the organic solar cell community for over two decades.

The article in *Nature Materials* presents two fundamental rules to minimize energy losses for highly efficient organic solar cells: - Minimize the energy offset between donor and acceptor components. - Make sure that the low-gap component in the blend has a high photoluminescence.

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

## Eating processed meats is linked to serious psychiatric problems

Nitrate-cured meats - things like beef jerky or bacon - have been linked to extensive periods of hyperactivity, insomnia, and attention loss in people experiencing manic episodes.

Research conducted by Johns Hopkins University on patients receiving care for manic symptoms found they were over three times more likely to have ever eaten processed meat products than patients being treated for other psychiatric conditions, such as schizophrenia.

"We looked at a number of different dietary exposures and cured meat really stood out," says the study's lead author Robert Yolken.

The exact mechanism behind the link isn't yet clear, but a follow-up experiment on rats fed jerky with their plain old rat chow resulted in increased movement and altered signaling in their hippocampus.

Changes were also noted in the rats' gut microflora, hinting at a possible stepping stone between the nitrates in the meat and effects on their nervous system.

## ■ Mania-related conditions

Taken all together, the results provide a strong suggestion that a diet rich in many varieties of ham, jerky or salami just might play a role in the development of mania-related conditions in at least some people.

Bipolar disorder is a chronic mental health condition characterized by dramatic swings in mood and energy levels,



including mania. Episodes can last weeks, or even months, and can coincide with depression and psychosis.

The condition affects as many as one in 25 people at some time in their life, significantly impacting productivity and taking a serious toll on personal and community wellbeing.

Surprisingly little is known about the condition's causes. There are strong hints of a genetic predisposition, though as with most neurological conditions there's a lot more going on than a wonky gene or two.

## Europe's life-hunting Mars rover needs a name

The UK Space Agency has launched a public competition to name the UK-built ExoMars rover, which is scheduled to launch toward the Red Planet on a life-hunting mission in 2020.

"Mars is a fascinating destination, a place where humans will one day work alongside robots to gather new knowledge and search for life in our solar system," European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut Tim Peake, who announced the contest on July 20 at the Farnborough International Airshow in England, said in a statement from ESA.

The "ExoMars rover is a vital part of this journey of exploration, and we are asking you to become part of this exciting mission and name the rover that will scout the Martian surface," Peake added.



The contest is open only to residents of ESA member states and "associate members." So, you're eligible if you live in Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland or the UK.

The competition runs through Oct. 10. The person who submits the winning moniker (which, hopefully, won't be Rovey McRoverface) gets a tour of the Airbus facility in Stevenage, England, where the ExoMars rover is being built.

The life-hunting, drill-equipped rover is the second phase of the two-part ExoMars program, which is led by ESA with Russia as junior partner. Phase one consisted of a landing demonstrator called Schiaparelli and the Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO), which launched together in March 2016.

Schiaparelli crashed on the Martian surface in October 2016, but TGO reached its desired orbit and recently began sniffing for methane and other potential signs of life in the Red Planet's atmosphere.

(Source: space.com)

## Mobile phone radiation may affect memory performance in adolescents, study finds

Radiofrequency electromagnetic fields may have adverse effects on the development of memory performance of specific brain regions exposed during mobile phone use, suggests a recent study involving nearly 700 adolescents in Switzerland.

Radiofrequency electromagnetic fields may have adverse effects on the development of memory performance of specific brain regions exposed during mobile phone use. These are the findings of a study involving nearly 700 adolescents in Switzerland. The investigation, led by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH), will be published on Monday, 23 July 2018 in the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies (ICT) goes along with an increase in exposure to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields (RF-EMF) in our daily life. The most relevant exposure source to the brain is the use of a mobile phone close to the head. Several studies have been conducted to identify potential health effects related to RF-EMF, though results have remained inconclusive.

The research conducted by scientists at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) looked at the relationship between exposure to RF-EMF from wireless communication devices and memory performance in adolescents. The study follows up a report published in the scientific journal *Environment International* in 2015 with twice the sample size and more recent information on the absorption of RF-EMF in adolescent brains during different types of wireless communication device use. These are the world's first epidemiological studies to estimate cumulative RF-EMF brain dose in adolescents.

(Source: Science Daily)

## Scientists create the world's fastest spinning object

Scientists have created the fastest spinning man-made object in the world: an incredibly small "dumbbell" that can complete more than 60 billion rotations per second, which is around 100,000 times faster than a high-speed dental drill.

The researchers from Purdue University, Peking University, Tsinghua University, and the Collaborative Innovation Center of Quantum Matter in Beijing say that the object will help them to study quantum mechanics — the bizarre physics of the very small — among other applications.

The spinning dumbbell has been described in a study published in the journal *Physical Review Letters*.

"This study has many applications, including material science," Tongcang Li, an assistant professor of physics and astronomy, and electrical and computer engineering, at Purdue University, said in a statement. "We can study the extreme conditions different materials can survive in."

The tiny dumbbell or nanoparticle is about the size of a virus — measuring about 170 nanometers wide and 320 nanometers long — which the researchers synthesized from silica, a colorless, white chemical compound made up of the elements silicon and oxygen. For reference, one nanometer is a billionth of a meter.

The team, which was led by Li, levitated this nanoparticle in a vacuum using a laser that can either make it spin at unprecedented speeds or vibrate.

When it spins, the dumbbell functions as a rotor, but when it vibrates it acts like an analogue of torsion balance — an instrument used to measure very weak forces. Both of these states could help the scientists to learn about quantum mechanics and the properties of a vacuum.

"People say that there is nothing in vacuum, but in physics, we know it's not really empty," Li said. "There are a lot of virtual particles which may stay for a short time and then disappear. We want to figure out what's really going on there, and that's why we want to make the most sensitive torsion balance."

(Source: Newsweek)

(Source: sciencealert.com)



## Protecting forests is key to conserve water resources, says expert

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Forest are essential to water cycle and protecting forest plays a key role in saving water and reducing evaporation, a professor of geology at Shahid Beheshti University has said.

“Unfortunately we have overlooked the significance of protecting forest and afforestation and we have just kept losing forests for the past few year, while forest can be instrumental in saving water supplies,” ISNA quoted Mohammad Yazdi as saying.

In [Iranian calendar year of] 1320 (March 1941 to March 1942) forests in Iran stretched over 20 million hectares of lands, Yazdi said, adding that by [Iranian calendar year of] 1357 (March 1977 to March 1978) the area of forest land declined to an estimated 17 million hectares.

Yazdi went on to say that figures indicate that now the forest area in Iran is measured at 14 million hectare which constitute 8 to 9 percent of the country’s total land area and is relatively speaking pretty low.

In an article published in April 2017 in Sciencing website titled “how does deforestation affect the weather?” it is stated that deforestation, the depletion of forests and other wild flora in woodlands, has significant negative effects on the weather. These range from local distortions to contributions to global climate change. Deforestation removes the ability of the forest to sequester carbon, absorb sunlight, process water and block the wind.

Deforestation both releases carbon dioxide from the plants that are cut down and removes the ability of the forest to sequester carbon. Additionally deforestation causes land to reflect more sunlight, altering the air currents above and increasing the variance of local temperatures, which become more sensitive to changes in sunlight.

## Irrigation of Tehran’s green spaces limited: councilor

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** —Tehran city councilor Nahid Khodakarami announced a ban on irrigating Tehran’s green spaces from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., YJC reported on Friday.

“On behalf of citizen’s request, Irrigation of green spaces in Tehran is banned from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the violators would be fined,” Khodakarami wrote on her tweeter account in Persian on Friday.



“Considering Tehran’s water scarcity, keeping the grass green is not a priority but growing some plants compatible with the capital’s climatic characteristics makes more sense.”

Earlier this month Tehran’s governor general Mohammad Hossein Moqimi said that average precipitation level in Tehran has decreased by about 24 percent, and the capital’s groundwater level has faced a dramatic decline.

He also noted that every household in Tehran consumes about 250 liters of water per day, which is twice above the international average.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Volleyball

A: It’s a beautiful day here in New Zealand at the Men’s Volleyball world championship. My name is Rick Fields and I’m joined by the man with the plan, Bob Copeland.

B: Thank you, Rick. We’ve got a very exciting **encounter ahead of us** today as **powerhouse** teams, Brazil and China, face off against each other and try to **qualify** for the next round. Without a doubt, both teams are **in top shape** and this will prove to be a competitive match.

A: The ref signals the start of the game and here we go. Ribeiro **serves** and China quickly receives the ball. Chen **bumps** it to the setter, and... a very nice **set** by Chen!

B: Xu **spikes** it! Wow, what a great hit! The Brazilian blockers **anticipated** the play and tried to block him but he managed to get the ball in! Great play.

A: It’s China’s service now. What a superb **jump serve** by Li, oh, and we have a **let serve**. The ball was coming in fast and almost made it over the net.

B: Brazil calls for a **time out** and we’ll be right back, after a short commercial break.

#### ■ Key vocabulary

**encounter**: meet for a game or battle

**ahead of (someone)**: in the future

**powerhouse**: a highly energetic, strong team

**qualify**: to reach the later stages of a selection process or contest by competing successfully in earlier rounds

**in top shape**: in their best condition

**serve**: hits the ball to start a set of the game

**bump**: to pass (a volleyball) by redirecting it with the forearms

**set**: the action of putting ball in the air so as to be driven to opponents’ court

**spike**: strongly hit the ball to opponents’ court using the palm of the hand

**anticipate**: to foresee and act in advance of

**jump serve**: a serve with the ball firstly thrown overhead and then the player jumping to hit it

**let serve**: the ball touches the net in a serve but still crosses into the opponents’ court

**time out**: a pause during a game

#### ■ Supplementary vocabulary

**side out**: when the team that served the ball loses the rally, causing the other team to serve the next point

**whiff**: a mishit when a player attempts to hit (or spike) the ball with the open hand and nearly misses the ball

**dig**: the ability to prevent the ball from touching one’s court after a spike or attack, particularly

**coin toss**: the practice of throwing a coin in the air to resolve a dispute between two parties

# ‘Austro-Iranian ascent to Mt. Damavand signals that Europe and Iran will make good on their promises’

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

**TEHRAN** — On July 31 some 100 Austrian and Iranian mountaineers together with a group of European ambassadors will jointly ascend the Mount Damavand, sending a strong signal that Europe and Iran will make good on their promises to engage in an ever-increasing number of sectors and areas, Stefan Scholz, Vienna’s ambassador to Tehran has said.

Scholz made the remarks on the occasion of the Damavand Anniversary Project 2018, here on Friday. The two-day event marked the 175th anniversary of the first Austrian ascent of Mount Damavand by the botanist and scholar Theodor Kotschy in 1843.

Austria is also celebrating other anniversaries this year in Iran, underlining many centuries of Austro-Iranian friendship including 160 years of full diplomatic relations, 500 years of partnership, 700 years of documented contacts as well as 60 years of Austrian Cultural Forum and 25 year of interreligious dialogue.

“Iran is more than a country, it’s a civilization in its own right and one of the most ecologically diverse places in the world,” the Austrian ambassador said.

“These assets present a great touristic potential which if diligently used can contribute to building a vibrant private sector based economy creating diversified employment opportunities in sectors like accommodation, food and beverage establishments, transportation services, travel agencies and tour operators for some one million young Iranians who are entering the labor market each year.

“Austria stands ready to partner in further developing Iran’s great tourism potentials in a



**“Our joint ascent to the summit of Iran’s highest mountain will form a culture of togetherness and I wish with all of my heart that it may gain ground in our communities, in our countries and in the whole of Europe and the wider Middle East.”**

sustainable way, protecting natural resources and supporting the life and culture of mountain populations. This new sector partnership is part of Austria’s bilateral contribution to preserving and maintaining the JCPOA by bringing concrete and measurable economic benefits to the Iranian people.”

Scholz further highlighted that on order to promote Iran’s great mountain riches also visually in Austria, a film team will also docu-

ment the ascent of Mt. Damavand by the mountaineering legends Peter Habeler and Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner.

“I am confident that this documentary will inspire many more Europeans to discover the wonders of Iran.”

Through this joint ascent “we should find new friends in east and west and go on to shape a common future.”

“Our joint ascent to the summit of Iran’s

## Poor environmental policies lead to degradation of wetlands in Iran

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Poor policies currently being carried out in Iran are the main reason behind the degradation of many wetlands in the country, an environmental official has said.

Commenting on Anzali wetland, northern province of Gilan, Ehsan Hadipour, head of Bandar-Anzali department of environment, explained that setting fire on the regions around Anzali wetland and land use changes, has led to the degradation of a wide range of animals and plants species.

Financial problems have forced locals to use farmlands located on the basin of the wetland for agricultural purposes and this caused the water level of the wetlands face reduction and fertilizer return to the wetlands, YJC quoted Hadipour as saying on Friday.

Planting saplings around the wetland is also causing the wetlands to deplete, he regretted.

“Locals living around wetlands are called wetland beneficiaries worldwide, but the term is not well defined in Iran.”

He went on to say that farming and planting saplings



cannot be a source of sustainable income for locals, as these are destructive and soon bring irreparable damages to the wetland.

There are many reasons behind Iran’s wetlands degradation in recent years, poor waste management policies and

locals’ lack of knowledge regarding benefits of the wetland as well as digging semi-deep wells around the wetland has led to many drying up wetlands.

Earlier in June, Masoud Bagerzadeh, the deputy environment chief for the wetlands, said there are some 105 wetlands in Iran, stretching 3 million hectares of lands, which about 1.3 million hectares of these wetlands are affected by drought, which led to the total dryness of some 60 wetlands, ILNA reported.

Saeed Pourali Iranian professor of cross-cultural environment management at the Phoenix University Excessive has told Khabaronline in early July that groundwater and surface water withdrawals, along with continuous droughts, has reduced groundwater levels, resulting in depletion of rivers, lakes and wetlands.

He also added that in addition to climate change, lack of proper use of modern sciences coupled with lack of attention to warnings by officials about water shortage have aggravated the situation.

## ‘A death sentence for polar bears’: Trump administration seeks changes to endangered species protections

Conservation groups are fighting tooth and nail against Donald Trump’s administration in an effort to stop proposed revisions to the implementation of the Endangered Species Act from taking effect.

Wildlife organizations responded with outcry after federal agencies announced plans to “modernize” and “streamline” the legislation, which protects species on the brink of extinction, and other animals facing significant threats to their population. Under the new changes, species listed as “threatened” would no longer receive the same protections of those listed as “endangered,” according to a joint statement from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Marine Fisheries Service.

Brett Hartl, the government affairs director at the Centre for Biological Diversity, described some of the proposed changes as a “death sentence for polar bears” in an interview with The Independent.

“This is the Trump administration quietly — but very surely — saying that when it comes to wildlife, you’re out luck and on your own,” he said.

Under the proposed revisions, the administration would no longer evaluate areas for protected habitats where a species could be expected to live if its population were to recover. This would severely limit the size and scope of protected habitats for species impacted by climate change, according to Mr Hartl.

Another proposed change would reduce the amount of consultation between government agencies and wildlife services, potentially allowing projects with adverse effects on the surrounding environment to be approved with little oversight.

“Cumulatively, when you put all of these proposals together what you’re seeing is a dramatic reduction of protections afforded to endangered species,” Mr Hartl continued. “Moving forward, threatened species will live in a world where they get almost no protections, making their recovery all the more difficult.”

However, the government claims the backlash is unwarranted.

Gavin Shire, chief of the office of public affairs at the US Fish and Wildlife Service, told The Independent that no species will lose

protections under the proposals. Rather, the department will individualize protections for newly-listed species.

“It won’t strip protections from any species currently listed as threatened that is covered by the blanket 4D rule,” he said, citing the rule which provides the same protections to both threatened and endangered species. “Those protections will remain in place.”

In a statement announcing the proposals, Interior Department deputy secretary David Bernhardt said the changes “will be protective and enhance the conservation of the species”.

“At the same time we hope that they ameliorate some of the unnecessary burden, conflict and uncertainty that is within our current regulatory structure,” he said.

The World Wildlife Fund said the proposals are “of grave concern” in a statement, describing the move as an “effort to weaken the Endangered Species Act” that would ultimately “put our planet’s imperiled wildlife further at risk.”

“By keeping these precautionary measures under the ESA intact, we can ensure the survival of America’s remarkable wildlife while



also doing our part to stem the sweeping loss of biodiversity we are seeing globally,” said Ginette Hemley, senior vice president of the World Wildlife Fund.

The Centre for Biological Diversity told The Independent it plans on continuing to speak out against the proposed changes, and will sue the Trump administration if they eventually go into effect.

“Many of the things they’re proposing are plainly illegal,” he said. “We’ll fight them in court and eventually I think we’ll prevail, though they’ll cause significant damage in the meantime.”

(Source: Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Tehran councilor proposes to set up ‘water entity’

Tehran city councilor Zahra Nejad Bahram has proposed establishment of an institute specially to address water scarcity problem in the metropolis. An institute for water is required to be set up in Tehran due to the increasing water shortage in the country, she said, Mehr reported on Tuesday. Officials including the minister of energy, the Tehran city council chairman, the mayor of Tehran, the deputy Interior minister, and the governor general of Tehran would be members of the proposed institute, she suggested.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “bucco-”

#### ■ Meaning: cheek or mouth

■ **For example:** The **buccolingual** inclination of the second molar in the long-faced subjects was significantly smaller than short-faced subjects.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Hound somebody out of something

■ **Meaning:** to make things so unpleasant for someone that they are forced to leave a place, job etc.

■ **For example:** The family were hounded out of their home by 18 months of abuse.

## IDIOM

### Paddle one’s own canoe

■ **Explanation:** to do what you want to do without help or interference from anyone

■ **For example:** He decided to paddle his own canoe and set up his own company.

## نهاد آب شهر تهران تشکیل شود

زهره نژادبهرام، پیشنهاد داد به دلیل بحرانی بودن وضعیت آب، نهادی تحت عنوان نهاد آب شهر تهران، تشکیل شود.

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر، عضو شورای شهر تهران پیشنهاد کرد به دلیل بحرانی بودن وضعیت آب، نهادی تحت عنوان نهاد آب، شهر تهران، تشکیل شود.

پیشنهاد من تشکیل نهاد آب، با حضور وزیر نیرو، رئیس شورا و شهردار تهران معاون عمرانی وزیر کشور و استاندار تهران است.



# Lieberman threatens war on Gaza

**I→** Elsewhere in his remarks, Barhoum said that Hamas had fired projectiles into the occupied lands in an “immediate response” to Tel Aviv meant to “deliver the message” to the Israeli regime.

However, Israeli minister of military affairs Avigdor Lieberman held Hamas responsible for the fresh Gaza flare-up.

“Hamas leaders are forcibly leading us into a situation where we will have no choice, a situation in which we will have to embark on a painful, wide-scale military operation,” he said during a visit to the city of Sderot.

Lieberman also warned that a new military operation on Gaza “will be larger and more painful than Operation Protective Edge,” referring to the 2014 Israeli war on the coastal enclave.

He further expressed his frustration with Palestinians sending flaming kites into the occupied territories.

Hamas deputy chief in Gaza Khalil Al-Hayya responded to the threat, saying the Palestinians would resist any Israeli aggression.

“In the face of Zionist threats, we say the resistance will continue, the marches will continue and its tools will continue to vary and take different forms, including the kites,” he said.

Israel carries out regular air raids on Gaza, citing Hamas targets but the attacks mostly kill civilians. The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli siege since 2007 and witnessed three wars since 2008.

Tensions have been running high near the Gaza fence since March 30, which marked the start of a series of protests, dubbed “The Great March of Return,” demanding the right to return for those driven out of their homeland.

The Gaza clashes reached their peak on



May 14, the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Nakba Day (the Day of Catastrophe), which coincided this year with the United States embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Irked by the siege and use of lethal force by the regime forces, the people in Gaza send kites loaded with flammable material to the occupied lands in a show of protest.

## ■ Israel unveils new tank for guerrilla warfare

Earlier this week, the Israeli army released details of a new tank designed more for use in guerrilla warfare conditions, a code for urban battles.

The “dual-use” Merkava 4 Barak tank is expected to be operational in three years.

The new tank has a sensor system, which gives its commander a full view of the surroundings in his helmet, and can be equipped with a computer system based on artificial

intelligence, the Israeli military said.

## ■ Four Palestinians killed, 120 others injured as Israeli military strikes Gaza Strip

Meantime, at least four Palestinians have lost their lives and nearly 120 others sustained critical injuries when Israeli military aircraft and battle tanks hit targets throughout the Gaza Strip as Tel Aviv presses ahead with its acts of aggression against the besieged coastal sliver.

Two Palestinians were killed on Friday evening after Israeli artillery units fired two shells reportedly at an observation post belonging to Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Hamas resistance movement, east of the city of Khan Yunis, located about 25 kilometers south of Gaza City, Arabic-language Ma’an news agency reported.

The deceased Gazans were later identified

as Mohammed Abu Farhana and Shaaban Abu Khater.

A third Palestinian was killed after Israeli jets carried out airstrikes east of the border town of Rafah. He was identified as Mahmoud Qeshta.

According to Palestinian medical sources, another Palestinian, identified as Mohammed Sharif Badwan, was killed in the Zeitoun district of Gaza.

Separately, two Palestinians were wounded when Israeli forces opened fire at Palestinian houses east of Abasan city. A 14-year-old Palestinian boy was also shot and is now in critical condition.

Israeli artillery units also fired shells at observation posts near al-Awda refugee camp in the eastern part of the Gaza Strip as well as Bureij refugee camp in the central sector of the sliver.

Meanwhile, Israeli media outlets reported that an Israeli soldier was killed after being targeted by a Palestinian sniper in the southern part of the Gaza Strip.

Hebrew-language Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper reported that the Israeli trooper was injured after Palestinian resistance fighters and Israeli military forces engaged in an exchange of gunfire.

## ■ Step back from the brink of war

Shortly after the Israeli attacks, the United Nations envoy for the Middle East peace process, Nickolay Mladenov, called on both sides to “step back from the brink” of war.

“Everyone in Gaza needs to step back from the brink. Not next week. Not tomorrow. Right NOW”, he tweeted, adding, “Those who want to provoke Palestinians and Israelis into another war must not succeed.”

(Source: agencies)

## Mattis slams ‘authoritarian’ Turkey but still wants it to buy F-35 jets

U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis reportedly lambasted Turkey’s authoritarianism and human rights record, but warned that removing Ankara from F-35 program would result in the aircraft’s production break and delivery delays.

“I understand and agree with Congressional concerns about the authoritarian drift in Turkey and its impact on human rights and rule of law including the detainment of American citizens such as Pastor [Andrew] Brunson,” James Mattis reportedly said in a letter to the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), dated July and seen by CNN.

Brunson, an American Christian preacher, has been detained in Turkey on terrorism and espionage charges since May. His case, as well as the purchase of Russian-built S-400 air defense systems by Ankara, has contributed to spiraling tension between U.S. and Turkey.

The latter prompted U.S. lawmakers to threaten Turkey with sanctions and ban the sale of F-35’s by passing an amendment to the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act in June. Submitting the bill, the Senate cited two reasons, namely Turkey’s plans to purchase S-400s from Russia and the detention of Pastor Brunson.

But for Mattis, it wasn’t an argument strong enough to halt F-35 delivery to Washington’s NATO ally. Noting the administration “is pressing Turkey on these issues,” he

argued: “At this time, I oppose removal of Turkey from the F-35 program.”

The move could spell “a supply chain disruption for the U.S. military and our partners, as well as increase other program costs.” The Pentagon chief added that Turkey that has been in the F-35 development program since 2002, had poured \$1.25 billion in the controversial project.

If the Turkish supply chain was disrupted immediately, it would result in an aircraft production break and delay delivery of 50 to 75 F-35s, he stressed. In the meantime, it would take approximately 18 to 24 months for the program to “re-source and recover,” the Mattis’ letter said.

Turkey, which eventually plans to acquire 100 F-35s, had already promised it will go elsewhere if the U.S. fails to deliver on its sale of the jets. Issuing the warning, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu explained that the F-35 deal was a “substantial legal agreement,” noting that Turkey has made all of its regular payments. Procurement of F-35s “has nothing to do with our procurement of the S-400s,” Cavusoglu said.

Twelve countries participate in the F-35 program. The nine nations that participated in the jet’s development are the U.S., Turkey, the UK, Canada, the Netherlands Italy, Australia, Denmark and Norway. Israel, Japan and South Korea have already took delivery of the aircraft through



Pentagon’s foreign military sales.

Meanwhile, the F-35 program isn’t free of setbacks. Aside from staggering costs, the jet’s shortcomings include an ejector seat that can cause neck injuries, an unusable helmet-mounted display system, failing oxygen-supply systems and a mid-air refuelling probe that can break off during use.

In total, the F-35 had 996 unresolved flaws as of January 2018, according to a Pentagon audit. Of these, 111 were considered ‘Category 1’ deficiencies, namely faults and flaws that could seriously jeopardize pilot safety or security.

(Source: RT)

## Queen reaped £20 million from private estate, Brexit a risk: report

Brexit could pose a “strategic risk” to private finances of Queen Elizabeth II, who receives a multimillion-pound profit from her ancestral estate each year, according to a report.

The annual report of the Duchy of Lancaster, the estate that has provided a private income to the monarch for the last eight centuries, recorded a £20.2 million surplus in fiscal year 2017-18, an increase of 4.9 percent compared to the previous year, The Guardian reported.

The profit is almost three and half times larger than it was in 2000, when it stood at £5.8 million.

“This has been another positive year for the duchy with strong growth in almost all our business sectors,” the report said.

The 60-page report mentioned Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union under the heading “strategic risk.”

“Each year the duchy carries out a five-year business plan as well as preparing rolling forecasts for the year ahead,” read one passage in the section.

“As part of this process, a review is undertaken of long-term trends to assess options for continued and ongoing viability of duchy operations – this would include any outcomes from Brexit negotiations,” it added.

Most of the duchy’s income, 64 percent, came from commercial activities, according to the report. Agriculture accounted for 18 percent, while financial activities and residential income stood for 18 percent and 10 percent respectively.

Britain Queen’s use of public funds to renovate the royal palace has angered many taxpayers.

The net value of the 753-year-old estate increased by 2.9 percent to stand at £533.8

million last year.

## ■ No mention of Paradise Papers

Last year, the Paradise Papers revealed that the duchy invested millions of pounds of the estate in a Cayman Islands fund as part of an offshore portfolio.

However, the report made no mention of the income from the offshore investment, said David McClure, who has authored Royal Legacy, an investigation into the royal finances.

“It is as if the Paradise Papers were a mirage and the bad press a bad dream. Her financial advisers should have had some knowledge of the offshore holdings and ought to have questioned whether they were appropriate or could do reputational damage to the monarchy,” he said.

The duchy report suggested that the investment portfolio was managed in-

dependently.

“The management of the quoted portfolio has been predominantly placed in the hands of a single manager, Newton Investment Management Limited, which has helped to enhance accountability and reduce administration,” it said.

The royal family’s finances and extravagant expenditure have long been subject to criticism.

“The duchy of Lancaster is not the Queen’s private property but a land portfolio gifted to her by parliament,” said Graham Smith, the chief executive of Republic, a group campaigning for an elected head of state in Britain.

“Our head of state does not need this £20m income when people are struggling to put food on the table and at a time when there is such economic uncertainty.”

(Source: Press TV)

## Exiled Afghan Vice President Dostum due to return home on Sunday

Afghanistan’s Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who left the country last year amid allegations of sexual abuse and torture, will return home on Sunday after more than a year in exile and resume his duties, officials said.

Government spokesman Haroon Chakansuri confirmed on Saturday that Dostum would return home on a chartered aircraft on Sunday and would be given an official reception. Accusations against him would be handled independently by the courts, he said.

“Legal issues are a matter for judicial authorities,” the spokesman told a news conference in Kabul.

The return of Dostum followed days of sometimes violent protests by supporters in northern Afghanistan over the arrest of a militia commander loyal to him. Officials said that negotiations for the return have been going on for weeks.

Chakansuri also said the commander, Nizamuddin Qaisari, who was arrested after a violent dispute with security officials in the northern province of Faryab, would stay in prison pending an investigation, while other militia commanders accused of abuses would be pursued.

Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek veteran of decades of Afghan-



istan’s bloody politics, faced outrage from Western donor countries including the United States after reports in 2016 that his guards had seized Ahmad Eshchi, a political rival and subjected him to beatings, torture and violent sexual abuse.

He denied Eshchi’s accusations but amid international demands that he be held accountable, he left the country in May last year, ostensibly to seek medical treatment in Turkey and has not returned since.

Once described by the U.S. State Department as a “quin-

tesstantial warlord” Dostum has for years faced accusations of serious human rights abuses, including killing Taliban prisoners by leaving them in sealed cargo containers.

He joined President Ashraf Ghani in the disputed 2014 elections, helping to deliver support from the ethnic Uzbek community in northern Afghanistan and his return from exile comes ahead of the next presidential election in early 2019.

Dostum’s expected return adds to an already volatile mix ahead of separate parliamentary elections in October that are seen as a dry run for the more important presidential elections next year.

Protestors calling for his return closed a number of voter registration offices and threatened to disrupt the parliamentary ballot, seen as a key test of Afghanistan’s political stability.

While in exile, he formed a loose coalition with Atta Mohammad Noor, the powerful former governor of Balkh province with wide support among ethnic Tajiks as well as Mohammad Mohaqiq, a leader of the Hazara minority.

(Source: Reuters)

## Ex-FARC rebels sworn into Colombia’s Congress

Colombia’s former FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army/Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo/FARC—EP) rebels have taken their seats in Congress as part of a peace deal after more than five decades of war against the government.

At the swearing-in ceremony on Friday, outgoing President Juan Manuel Santos, who signed the landmark agreement in 2016, urged the country to protect nascent peace and put an end to violence.

“Many - we must admit it - don’t like seeing them in this place of debate and civility,” Santos said.

“In my case, and I’m sure it’s shared by millions of Colombians, it fills me with satisfaction that those who for more than half a century fought with arms against the state and its institutions, today submit to the Constitution and the laws of Colombia, as we all do,” he added.

Under the terms of the 2016 peace deal between the FARC and the government, the group formed a political party, kept its famous acronym as the Revolutionary Alternative Common Force, and was awarded five seats each in the 108-member Senate and the 172-member lower house through 2026.

Zeuxis Pausias Hernandez, a FARC leader also known as Jesus Santrich, was unable to take his seat in the House of Representatives because he is under arrest on charges of drug trafficking. He was detained on April 9 after the United States justice department requested his extradition.

Protesting his detention, another prominent FARC leader, Ivan Marquez, withdrew from his seat, accusing the government of breaching the peace deal. Former FARC rebel, Israel Zuniga, also known as Benkos Bioho, took his seat instead, according to local media.

## ■ Colombians deeply divided

The peace accord, for which Santos won the Nobel Peace Prize, has deeply divided Colombians, with conservatives saying it goes too easy on the former rebels.

Right-wing President-elect Ivan Duque will replace Santos next month and seek to guide key economic reforms - pension and tax - through the new Congress. He will also try and adjust the peace accords.

Duque and his Democratic Center party want to scrap an amnesty for FARC commanders who committed crimes, including engagement in the cocaine trafficking that helped bankroll the group, and prevent them from participating in politics until they serve prison sentences.

Duque, a 41-year-old protege of former President Alvaro Uribe, whose hardline battle offensive against the rebels helped push them to the negotiating table, has said he is incensed that there would be “criminals” in Congress shaping laws after decades of kidnapping, extortion and killing.

He said he would alter the peace accord by forging alliances in Congress, where his party holds just 51 of 280 seats, and by generating a national consensus.

The FARC’s presence in Congress promises to create tension. Uribe, whose hatred for the rebels was born after his father was killed in a botched kidnapping, has a seat in the Senate.

He and his party will likely seek to block votes on initiatives put forward by the FARC for having participated in a conflict that left 220,000 dead and millions displaced.

But while Duque may make minor changes to the peace accord, it would be almost impossible for him to make substantive alterations, analysts have said.

The left parties have said they will join forces to seek to block any changes.

“We want to build a democratic, intelligent and collective opposition with aspirations to govern,” Angela Maria Robledo, a lower house legislator from the leftist coalition of parties, told reporters.

Left-wing Gustavo Petro, Duque’s rival in the presidential race, will lead the opposition in the Senate.

(Source: agencies)

## Trump says “perhaps illegal” for lawyer to tape client

U.S. President Donald Trump said that it was “perhaps illegal” for a lawyer to record a client, a day after reports his onetime attorney had recorded them both discussing buying the rights to a story by a woman who said she had an affair with Trump.

“Inconceivable that the government would break into a lawyer’s office [early in the morning] - almost unheard of,” Trump tweeted, in a possible reference to an FBI raid on the office of his former lawyer Michael Cohen in April.

“Even more inconceivable that a lawyer would tape a client - totally unheard of & perhaps illegal. The good news is that your favorite President did nothing wrong!” Trump added.

(Source: Reuters)

## Xi’s visit to UAE highlights China’s rising interest in Middle East

**I→** In 2013, Xi outlined the Belt and Road initiative which involves billions of dollars of infrastructure investment to reinvigorate the ancient overland silk road trade route and develop a new sea equivalent. The UAE sits close to both routes.

China’s commerce minister Zhong Shan said that his country was ready to cooperate with the UAE to promote globalization.

“This future of cooperation is broad as both UAE and China are advocates of the economies and multilateralism. On this we have mutual interest and a joint position,” he said.

China has traditionally played little role in Middle East conflicts or diplomacy despite its reliance on the region for oil, but has stepped up its involvement since Xi came to power six years ago. Beijing has had to tread carefully, though, with Persian Gulf Arab states like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as China also has close ties with their rival Iran.

(Source: Reuters)



## Historic gold for joint Korea team

A table tennis mixed doubles pairing with one player from North Korea and one from South Korea has become the first inter-Korea sports team to win a gold medal for almost three decades.

Jang Woo-jin from the South and Cha Hyo Sim from the North beat a Chinese team 3-1 at the Korea Open in Daejeon.

The last gold medal also came in table tennis, with a women's joint team crowned world champions in 1991.

"The cheers from the crowd gave me goosebumps," said Jang.

"I saw Hyo Sim crying during the ceremony and it broke my heart that we have to say goodbye soon."

Four joint teams competed at the Korea Open, with the men's doubles team winning bronze on Friday.

It is the latest show of unity between the two nations after they entered under the same flag at the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in February, following months of tension in the Korean peninsula.

In April, the South's President Moon Jae-in held a summit with the North's leader Kim Jong Un, during which they vowed to increase their co-operation in sport.

The countries announced recently they will field joint teams in canoeing, rowing and women's basketball at the Asian Games in August.

(Source: BBC)

## Trump wants suspensions for NFL players who kneel during anthem

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that National Football League (NFL) players who do not stand for the national anthem should be suspended for the season without pay.

The comments come a day after the NFL and the union representing its players said they were working on a resolution to the league's national anthem policy.

The policy, which was announced in May, followed Trump's denunciation of pregame protests which were intended to call attention to what critics say is often brutal treatment of minorities by U.S. law enforcement.

Trump and others have blasted the gesture as a sign of disrespect to the U.S. flag and the military.

"The NFL National Anthem Debate is alive and well again - can't believe it!," Trump said on Twitter.

"First time kneeling, out for game. Second time kneeling, out for season/no pay.

"The \$40,000,000 Commissioner must now make a stand," he said in reference to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.

The players union, the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA), recently filed a grievance over the league's new requirement that players stand for the national anthem or wait in their dressing rooms.

The NFLPA claimed the new policy was inconsistent with the collective bargaining agreement and infringed on player rights.

The NFL and NFLPA said on Thursday no new rules relating to the anthem will be issued or enforced for the next several weeks while the confidential discussions are ongoing.

(Source: Reuters)

## Roma owner James Pallotta gets three-month Uefa match ban

Roma owner James Pallotta has been banned from attending any Uefa game for three months - and his club fined 19,000 euros (£17,025) - after their Champions League defeat by Liverpool.

Pallotta was sanctioned for calling the match officiating an "absolute joke".

The club were charged over insufficient organisation and a blocked stairway at the match in Rome on 2 May, and for fans setting off fireworks.

Liverpool lost the semi-final second leg 4-2, but won 7-6 on aggregate.

Roma's fine follows a 50,000 euros (£43,632) penalty for crowd trouble at the first leg on 24 April. Liverpool fan Sean Cox suffered serious head injuries in an attack outside Anfield before that game.

Two Italian men have been charged with violent disorder in relation to the incident.

(Source: BBC)

## Benzema has agreed to join AC Milan, claims Sky Italia

According to Sky Italia, the player's representatives held talks in Milan on Monday, but his agent has laughed off the rumours on Twitter.

Just a day since Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis denied that the club wanted Karim Benzema, Sky Italia claims that AC Milan is in talks to sign the Frenchman.

According to journalist, Gianluca Di Marzio, intermediary Ludovic Fattizzo and Benzema's representatives held a meeting with coach Rino Gattuso and sporting director Massimiliano Mirabelli at Milanello, AC Milan's sporting center, on Monday.

Apparently, Gattuso himself contacted the player directly some days ago and Benzema agreed to join the club, who yesterday, were cleared to play in the Europa League next season after having a ban for breaching financial fair play rules overturned on Friday.

Reportedly, AC Milan have promised to match his €9 million annual salary at Real Madrid, and have offered him a contract until 2022, which is one year longer than his current contract at the Bernabeu. Everything now depends on Florentino Perez, who, according to Sky, will not stand in the way of the move if Benzema wants to go.

Although the player's agent Karim Djaziri seems to have denied the claims on Twitter, by posting laughing emoticons in response to the story.

(Source: Marca)

# Russian club deny racism after cancelling deal for black player

Russian third-tier side Torpedo Moscow have cancelled plans to sign defender Erving Botaka-Yobama - denying that they have done so because he is black.

Torpedo faced fan protests after announcing the signing of Botaka-Yobama - who is Russian and Congolese descent - last Saturday.

The club said the deal for the 19-year-old, a former Torpedo youth player, had been cancelled for financial reasons.

"Skin colour is never a criterion when selecting a player," the club said. "Racism has no right to exist. We adhere to this point of view."

The club added that Lokomotiv-Kazanka Moscow, who the player was joining from, had demanded a transfer fee, causing the deal to be called off.

Earlier in the week, a group of fans known as the Zapad-5 Ultras wrote on Russian social media site Vkontakte: "Black may be one of our club's colours, but we only want whites in our ranks."

Those comments were condemned by Alexander Zotov, head of the All-Russian Union of Footballers.

He said: "There have been changes in the minds of people after the World Cup but there is still a group of idiots."

"I read a lot of statements about the football player. Some were openly racist. These people with limited horizons exist in any country. We saw how open our society and people are [during the World Cup].

"There are fans of Torpedo who are normal, and do not welcome the behaviour of that group in relation to Botaka."

The Russian Football Union was fined £22,000 by world governing body Fifa in May for racist chants by fans in Russia's friendly with France in March.

Liverpool complained to Uefa about alleged racist abuse directed at winger Bobby Adekanye during a Uefa Youth



League match at Spartak Moscow last September.

And in January, Spartak Moscow were criticised for a

'racist' tweet about their own players.

(Source: BBC)

## Karl-Heinz Rummenigge tees off on the 'amateurs' at the DFB



Germany head coach Joachim Löw told reporters outside of the German football association (DFB) headquarters in Frankfurt on Friday that he had presented the executive board with a "detailed analysis" of why the national team failed to advance past the group stage in Russia. However, following two days of talks with senior officials including Oliver Bierhoff, the general manager of the national team, Löw declined to provide any details of their talks or his analysis. He said his next move would be to speak to each of the national team players individually, before making any possible decisions on personnel changes.

At just about the same time as Löw was speaking to reporters in Frankfurt, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (pictured above, right) held a scrum of his own in Munich. Speaking at an event to honor former coach Jupp Heynckes (above, left), the Bayern Munich chairman took the opportunity to lambaste almost everything about the DFB - except its decision to stick with Löw as Germany coach.

■ **A bunch of 'amateurs'**  
"For me, there has been a lack of clear professionalism in efforts to manage a crisis situation," Rummenigge said. "At the same time, I'm not surprised given that the DFB is filled with amateurs."

"They demonstrated this again yesterday when they invited in all of the bosses of the regional (football) associations and - apparently using a lot of valium - managed to calm them down for now," he added.

He was referring a meeting on Thursday, after which the DFB issued a statement saying all of the regional bosses supported its current course of action.

■ **Ozil criticism 'over the top'**  
Specifically he criticized the DFB over its handling of the controversy after national team players Mesut Ozil and İlkay Gündogan met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan shortly before the World Cup.

In the immediate aftermath of the tournament, both Bierhoff and DFB President Reinhard Grindel came under fire when they seemed to blame Ozil for Germany's failure in Russia, although they later clarified their words. "It obviously was not handled well, but to now portray Mesut Ozil as the sole scapegoat? Sorry, I think that's excessive," Rummenigge said.

■ **Philipp Lahm to the rescue?**  
He also offered a solution to what he perceives as the DFB's amateurism, suggesting that it hire the retired Bayern player who captained Germany to the 2014 World Cup title.

"I think Philipp Lahm and his agent Roman Grill are the perfect fit for the DFB because Philipp has the quality to possibly work for an association," Rummenigge said. A position like vice president would allow Lahm "to give the board a bit more professionalism."

As for Löw, Rummenigge said he deserved to remain in his post after having done an "outstanding" job over a period of 12 years.

(Source: AFP)

## IOC wants to cut dead wood from 2026 Games bids



The International Olympic Committee said on Friday it wants to further streamline the bidding procedure for Summer and Winter Games, ensuring only the most viable cities - ideally two - reach the final voting stage.

Following a two-day meeting of the Executive Board, IOC President Thomas Bach also said that weightlifting and boxing could still be kicked out of future Games and that there was probably a long way still to go before esports would be part of the Olympics.

He also confirmed that the swimming finals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics are likely to be held in the morning, to suit U.S. audiences.

The IOC has long-recognised that bloated bidding processes and hosting regimes need to be consigned to history and has carried out "dry runs" for minor events where only two are left in the final vote.

Next on the horizon is the 2026 Winter Olympics, currently in the "dialogue phase", with five interested cities - Calgary Canada, Sapporo Japan, Stockholm, Erzurum Turkey and a yet-to-be determined Italian venue.

"We need a procedure that is producing fewer losers, so at the end you have a limited number of candidates, and ideally this happens after co-operation with the candidate cities," Bach told a news conference.

"We want a limited number, all in line with our reforms of making the process less expensive. We don't want cities making in-

vestments when we don't think they can win." Bach said that all five potential hosts said they were able to bid only because of the reforms that encouraged the use of more existing facilities.

There is an average of 80 percent existing venues across all five candidates compared to 60 percent for 2018 and 2022, while the budget of 1.7 billion U.S. dollars is lower than the two billion of 2018 and 2022.

Turning to the Summer Games, Bach said that weightlifting's place at Paris 2024 "remains provisional" after years of doping issues. "We need to see more federation support for the IWF (International Weightlifting Federation) for their new and laudable fight against doping," Bach said.

Concerns about governance in boxing prompted Bach to say: "we reserve the right to not include boxing in 2028."

By then esports could be an established part of the Games and IOC officials are holding a forum on Saturday to discuss all things "e".

"We are going to the forum with a very open mind," Bach said. "There is still a wide range of questions and I still see no unity in the most basic of them - is it a sport?"

"My personal view is that these pro players prepare and compete in a way that can be compared to those in some traditional sports. They need concentration, quick reaction, tactical understanding - they need to be not only mentally fit but physically fit."

(Source: Reuters)

# Pochettino faces battle to get Tottenham ready for new season with stars on holiday

Mauricio Pochettino is preparing to start the season without many of his World Cup stars.

Premier League managers all face tricky decisions as they race time and wrestle with their instincts to have their strongest team out on the opening day of the Premier League season.

But none have seen their plans hit quite as squarely as the Spurs boss. Nine of his senior players were involved in the final weekend of the World Cup and they played nearly 1,000 minutes more football in Russia than others from the Premier League who reached the last four.

Pochettino wants to give all his players a 21-day break; time to rest, recharge and disconnect from the emotion of the competition.

This means Hugo Lloris, Harry Kane, Dele Alli, Danny Rose, Eric Dier, Kieran Trippier, Toby Alderweireld, Jan Vertonghen and Mousa Dembele will not return to training until six days before Tottenham's campaign starts with a Saturday lunchtime TV game at Newcastle on August 11.

Each player has been given a summer programme to keep them ticking over and Pochettino will stay in regular contact via his WhatsApp groups.

Some will visit the training ground in Enfield when Spurs

are in the United States on the pre-season tour and others will receive visits from coaches to perform tests or help them with fitness work.

All nine might report back and claim they are ready to play at Newcastle, but Pochettino and his staff will assess them individually and determine who, if anyone, will travel to Tyneside.

Without them, Spurs - who have yet to make a signing this summer - could still field a team of internationals: Vorm; Aurier, Sanchez, Wanyama, Davies; Sissoko, Winks; Lamela, Eriksen, Moura; Llorente.

Pochettino is aware of the increased risk of injury to those underprepared and of the potential impact on his fringe players if he drives them hard through pre-season and then overlooks them to rush back the stars.

Managers love to say it's a squad game. Usually the depth in the squad comes into the equation as the season grinds on. This year, the depth will be important in the opening weeks of the campaign.

For Pochettino it is a new test, although he will have learned from the European Championship two years ago. Spurs players involved in Euro 2016 did not go on tour but joined the squad for the final pre-season friendly against

Inter Milan in Norway and were thrown into the season opener at Everton.

Lloris, having played for France in the final against Portugal on July 10, pulled a hamstring making a sprint in the first half.

Rose and Dembele also suffered early season muscle injuries early.

Erik Lamela, who was in the Argentina squad beaten in the final of Copa America in 2016, suffered a hip problem which kept him out for a year.

In 2016, there were 34 days between France's loss to Portugal in the final and Tottenham's 1-1 draw at Everton. This year there are only 27 days between the World Cup final and the first Saturday of the League season.

In his book Brave New World, a diary of the 2016-17 season, Pochettino wrote: 'The most important thing is the players' fitness. Footballers aren't machines, they need rest and training regimes to be able to compete for 10 months.'

'Whenever there is a World Cup or European Championship it makes for a tricky pre-season. Players report back later than usual and are often burnt out, short of motivation.'

(Source: Daily Mail)



# Vahid Amiri officially joins Trabzonspor

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran international winger Vahid Amiri officially joined Turkey's Trabzonspor on Saturday.

The 30-year-old player underwent a medical examination on Friday and penned a contract with the Turkish club.

Amiri has signed a two-year contract with Trabzonspor for an undisclosed fee.

Both Trabzonspor president Ahmet Agaoğlu and Vahid Amiri expressed happiness over this contract. Turkish Haber61 channel broadcasted the event live.

"I am very happy to join Trabzonspor. I hope to meet their expectations of me," Amiri said.

The Turkish club have already negotiated with Iranian international defenders Majid Hosseini and Pejman Montazeri.

Amiri, who represented Iran national football team against Morocco, Spain and Portugal in Group B of the 2018 World Cup, played a key role in Persepolis helping the Reds Iran Professional League (IPL) back-to-back title.

Al-Rayyan of Qatar and Ukraine's Dynamo Kiev had also showed interest in signing the midfielder.

Amiri is Trabzonspor's first signing in the summer transfer window.

Trabzonspor is a professional Turkish football club located in the city of Trabzon, Turkey. Formed in 1967 through a merger of several local clubs, Trabzonspor have won seven Süper Lig championship titles.



## William Jones Cup: Iran B beat Indonesia



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran B basketball team defeated Indonesia 66-62 in penultimate match of the 2018 William Jones Cup.

On Saturday, in the match held at the Xinzhuang Gymnasium in New Taipei City, Vahid Dalirzahan became Iran's top scorer with 18 points while Kore White led Indonesia with 23 points.

Iran B, who stand second after Canadian team 3D Global Sports, have been scheduled to face Ateneo Blue Eagles from the Philippines on Sunday.

Iran B have defeated LSU-Atletas from Lithuania 76-48, Japan B 78-61, Chinese

Taipei Blue 87-75, South Korea 80-69, Chinese Taipei White 102-56 and Indonesia 66-62 and lost to 3D Global Sports 77-67 so far.

The 2018 William Jones Cup is the 40th staging of William Jones Cup, an international basketball tournament held in Taipei, Taiwan.

The men's tournament is being held from July 14 to 22 with participation of 11 teams. The competition is being played in single round robin format.

The U.S. are the most decorated team with 15 titles and the Philippines and Iran have won five titles each.

## Jahanbakhsh's agent confirms transfer talks with unnamed club



The agent of reported Leicester City target Alrieza Jahanbakhsh has confirmed transfer talks with an unnamed club, sparking speculation over the Iranian winger's potential destination.

Amir Hashemi, representative of AZ Alkmaar winger Jahanbakhsh, told Dutch media on Friday afternoon: "We are actually discussing a transfer, but I cannot say which team is involved, but it is not a Dutch club."

City and Premier League rivals Brighton have both been linked with the Iranian international, who last night posted a picture of himself on an Austrian Airlines flight.

That sparked further talk that a move was imminent, although Dutch outlet NH report that Jahanbakhsh is due to return to AZ for pre-season on Saturday.

The Brighton Argus have confirmed the Seagulls' interest in the 24-year-old with their sources suggesting a move to the south coast is on the cards.

Despite playing out wide, Jahanbakhsh was top scorer in the Eredivisie last season, scoring 21 goals.

Jahanbakhsh's value has soared in his two seasons at AZ. He has been linked with a move to Napoli, and West Ham United.

## Majid Farzin seeks further glory at Asia-Oceania C'ships

Iranian Siamand Rahman is always in the spotlight. Everyone expects great things from the world's strongest powerlifter each time he faces the bar.

But, almost stealthily, his compatriot Majid Farzin also continues collecting trophies and setting records.

After winning the World Championships in Mexico City last year, Farzin is hoping to extend his winning streak twice on the regional level.

The 34-year-old will first compete in the Asia-Oceania Open Championships in Kitakyushu, Japan, from 8-12 September. He will then fly to Jakarta, Indonesia, for the Asian Para Games between 7 and 12 October.

"After winning in Mexico City I felt happiness and pride," said Farzin, who took his second Worlds gold last year. Ahead of Kitakyushu 2018, he says to be feeling "fantastic. All is going well, thank God."

But Farzin knows he will have a strong opponent in Chi-



na's Gu Xiaofei. "He is my toughest rival." It will be one of many Iranian-Chinese head-to-heads as those are the two most successful Asian countries in the sport.

Farzin beat Gu at London 2012 and Rio 2016, as well as at Mexico City 2017. But the Chinese emerged triumphant

the only time they compete against each other at a regional event, at the 2014 Asian Para Games.

The two events will only be a prelude to the two more prestigious competitions held on his home continent: the 2019 World Para Powerlifting Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, and the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan.

Farzin will attempt to equal Egypt's Sherif Osman as the only man to win three Paralympic gold medals in powerlifting.

"I believe anyone standing on the podium at the world and Paralympic level is the best around the world regardless of his weight category," said Farzin, who holds a world record of 240kg in the men's up to 80kg.

"(My goals are to) Have my best performance and hopefully break a record in the Games, God willing."

The Asia-Oceania Open Championships will take place in Kitakyushu, Japan, between 8 and 12 September.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

## Arsene Wenger not in running to become next Japan manager

Arsene Wenger is not the frontrunner for the vacant Japan national team job, despite various reports, with Hajime Moriyasu set to be appointed next week.

Wenger left Arsenal in May after 22 years with the club and, due to his availability and successful 18-month spell in charge of Nagoya Grampus prior to heading to London, it was no surprise that the Frenchman's name has been mentioned as a replacement for Akira Nishino, who will step down at the end of the month.

"It is true that there was a chat with Arsene Wenger during the World Cup," a Japan Football Association (JFA) official told ESPNFC. "The talks didn't really go anywhere and that was that. Since then, we have been looking more at domestic coaches."

Nishino replaced Bosnian Vahid Halilhodzic in April on a temporary contract

and took Japan to the round of 16 at the 2018 World Cup. Following that showing in Russia, especially Japan's impressive performance in a last-minute 3-2 loss to Belgium in the round-of-16 showdown, the JFA has come to the conclusion that the national team should continue to be managed by a Japanese coach.

Moriyasu, who assisted Nishino at the World Cup, has impressive credentials. The 49-year-old took Sanfrecce Hiroshima to a first-ever J.League title in 2012. Two more championships followed in 2013 and 2015 and he then took over Japan's under-23 team last year in preparation for the 2020 Olympic Games that will be held in Tokyo.

Moriyasu's appointment is expected to be announced on Thursday following a meeting of the JFA's executive committee. (Source: ESPN)

## Iran sweep China at Asian U20 Volleyball Championship



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran started the 2018 Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championships on a high note on Saturday.

Behrouz Ataei's men defeated China in straight sets (25-22, 25-13, 25-22) in Riffa, Bahrain.

Iran will play South Korea in Pool A on Monday.

The 2018 Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship is the 19th edition of the Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship, a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Bahrain Volleyball Association (BVA). The tournament is being held in Riffa, Bahrain, from 21 to 28 July 2018.

The top two teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship as the AVC representatives.

## Mahdavikia named Hamburger SV U21 assistant coach

**Named PLDC** — Iran legend football player Mehdi Mahdavikia has been named as assistant coach of Hamburger SV U21.

HSV U21 coach Steffen White has confirmed the news.

"Mehdi Mahdavikia will continue to do the job until further notice during the summer vacation. I am also very happy with that," Weiss explained.

The 40-year-old Iranian was most recently assistant coach of HSV U16, where he assisted head coach Bastian Reinhardt.

In 2015, Mahdavikia founded the KIA Football Academy. Soon after he became the head coach of the Hamburger SV youth team.

Mahdavikia played for HSV from 1999 to 2007 and scored 26 goals in 208 matches.

His nickname in Hamburg was The Carpet (der Teppich) for his ability to "magically glide past" his opponents like the enchanted carpet.

## Iranian women officials invited to Asian Games

**TASNIM** — Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Referees Department has invited three Iranian women officials to the 2018 Asian Games.

Mahsa Ghorbani has been invited as referee, Bahareh Seifi Nahavandi will partake at the Games as assistant and Masoumeh Shakoobi participate as match supervisor.

After the Iranian men referees drew plaudits for their performances at the 2018 World Cup, now it's the women's turn to steal the show.

The women's football tournament at the 2018 Asian Games will be held from August 16 to 31 in Palembang, Indonesia.

North Korea is the defending champion.

## Iran's women 9<sup>th</sup> at World ParaVolley

Iran came ninth at the World ParaVolley Sitting Volleyball Women's World Championship.

The Iranian team defeated Japan 3-1 (21-25, 25-15, 25-12, 25-17) in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Iran started the competition with a win over Slovenia but suffered two defeats against China and Italy.

Also, Iran's men's sitting volleyball team played Ukraine in the competition's semis.

The 2018 World ParaVolley Championships are being held in five cities across the Netherlands with the winner qualifying for Tokyo 2020.

(Source: World ParaVolley)

## IPC President proposed for IOC membership

The President of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Andrew Parsons has been nominated for International Olympic Committee (IOC) membership at the next IOC session. Parsons, 41, was elected IPC President in September 2017 and made strengthening the relationship with the IOC and securing the future of the IPC and Paralympic Movement his number one priority. Within his first six months, he signed a historic long-term agreement with the IOC through to 2032 which deepens existing co-operation between the two organizations and provides the Paralympic Movement with even greater stability.

Andrew Parsons, said: "It is a tremendous honor to be nominated by the IOC Executive Board for membership. Although this is an individual membership, I truly believe this is further evidence of the growing collaboration and relationship between the IOC and IPC. By working together, we can do more to grow

sport around the world, and use sport as a catalyst to social change. We have an exciting future working together."

Parsons is one of nine officials proposed for membership by the Executive Board. The election of new Members will take place during October's IOC Session in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Before becoming President, Parsons served the Paralympic Movement in multiple roles. He was previously the IPC's Vice President (2013-2017), Governing Member (2009-2013), and Chairperson of the Paralympic Games Committee from 2009-2013. Additionally, he was the President of the Americas Paralympic Committee (2005-2009) and President of the Brazilian Paralympic Committee (2009-2017).

Parsons also represents the IPC in the IOC Coordination Commission for Tokyo 2020 (since 2013) and as member of the Olympic TV Channel Commission (since 2015).

(Source: Paralympic.org)

## Iran held by Qatar at Asian Junior Handball Championship

**TASNIM** — Iran were held to a 26-26 draw by Qatar in the 2018 Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship on Saturday.

On Friday, Iran had drawn 19-19 with Japan in Group II of the competition underway at the Al-Saada Indoor Hall in Salalah, Oman. The Iranian team have already defeated India 48-17, Yemen 49-19 and Oman 26-17 in Group D.

Iran will play Saudi Arabia on Sunday.

The 2018 Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship, which is the 16th edition of the championship, is underway in Oman from July 16 to 26 under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation.

It acts as the qualification tournament for the 2019 Men's Junior World Handball Championship.

Top three teams from the championship will directly qualify for the Junior World Championship to be held in Spain.



INTERNATIONAL DAILY  
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari

■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
editor@tehrantimes.com

» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450

» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603

» www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.  
Tel: 88911433

» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com

» Printed at: Rooztab - ISSN: 1017-94

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

Scholars to discuss position of Persian language in the world

**C U L T U R E** **TEHRAN** — A number of Persian language scholars will gather on Sunday during a meeting at the Sadi Foundation, the Tehran-based organization that promotes the Persian language abroad, to discuss the status of the Persian language in the world.



The scholars are coming from Uzbekistan, Turkey, Syria, Albania, Serbia, Kenya, Tunisia, India, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Uganda, the foundation announced in a press release published on Thursday.

A review of the problems of teaching the Persian language in different countries and the educational needs of non-native Persian language learners are among the major topics to be discussed at the meeting.

Several other scholars from Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) are also expected to attend the meeting.

The meeting is part of the 85th Persian Language and Literature Refresher Course held annually at the foundation for a selected group of Persian literature aficionados from around the globe.

Doc to portray impact of inflation on quality of workers' lives in Iran

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Mohammad-Hossein Soltani is making a documentary that is scheduled to show how an employee with a good salary fails to make enough money to cover the increased cost of living due to the current rising rate of inflation in Iran.



In a press release published on Saturday, Soltani said that he used his cellphone to shoot the documentary titled "The 1397 Life" in the northern Iranian city of Noshahr.

"This method seems to give a natural image of life to the people who will later watch the documentary," he added.

"This documentary show how an employee is always the loser in the race against rising inflation and price escalations in the country, therefore he never can find peace," he mentioned.

Rising inflation and price increases in Iran are most threatening to those employees living and working in small communities.

Taylor Swift cast in movie version of "Cats"

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Taylor Swift has been cast in a big screen version of the stage musical "Cats", in what will be the pop singer's biggest movie role so far, entertainment publications Variety and the Hollywood Reporter said on Friday.

The 28-year-old "Look What You Made Me Do" singer will join Oscar-winning singer and actress Jennifer Hudson, talk show host James Corden and veteran British actor Ian McKellen in the movie, the publications said.

Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Cats", based on a book of poems by T.S. Eliot, was first staged in London in 1981 and has been produced around the world. The movie version is a production of Working Title Films, which did not return requests for comment on the reports.

Swift, a 10-time Grammy winner whose "Reputation" album was the biggest seller of 2017 in the United States, made her film acting debut in the 2010 romantic comedy "Valentine's Day".

The Hollywood Reporter, citing sources close to the production, said Hudson was expected to play Grizabella, whose character sings the show's famous "Memory" ballad.

Culture and Art Orchestra to celebrate 50 years of music with Farhad Fakhreddini

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Culture and Art Orchestra will go on stage at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on August 2 and 3 to celebrate 50 years of the career of 80-year-old maestro Farhad Fakhreddini.

The program titled "Nights with the Honor of Iranian Music" has been organized by the orchestra's permanent conductors, Shahram Tavakkoli and Ali-Akbar Qorbani, and music director Sussan Taqipur.

"I have returned to the stage after several years and I hope to see art lovers at the concerts," Fakhreddini said in press release on Saturday. "Surely, they will like it," he added.

Fakhreddini will accompany the orchestra as guest conductor during the concerts.

A repertoire featuring pieces that Fakhreddini has composed over the past 50 years will be performed at the concerts. "Vague Pain", "For My daughter", "Wave", "Persian Gulf", "The Homayun Suite" and "The Avicenna Suite" are among the pieces selected for the performances.

"I will eagerly be waiting to see people's smiling faces at the Vahdat Hall," said Fakhreddini who founded Iran's National Orchestra in 1998 and conducted it until 2016, when he resigned due to a lack of cooperation from cultural officials.



Maestro Farhad Fakhreddini conducts an orchestra in an undated photo.

Tehran hosts art exhibits on Hajj



**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Art Bureau, a Tehran-based center affiliated with the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, is currently playing host to two art exhibitions on Hajj.

The bureau's Gallery No. 1 is displaying a collection of 44 photos in the four categories of "Hajj Rituals", "In the Mirror of History", "Politics" and "Nations", the bureau announced in a press release published on Saturday.

The photos have been taken by veteran photographers Saeid Janbozorgi, Ali Fereiduni, Manuchehr Yeganedoost and Rajabali Qahremani.

Part of the exhibition has been dedicated to photos depicting the massacre of 400 Iranian Hajj pilgrims by the Saudis in 1987. The photos are from a collection by Fereiduni

In addition, the Abolfazl Aali Gallery of the bureau is displaying a selection of paintings, graphic designs and posters by 35 artists.

The exhibits will be running until Wednesday.

"Women with Gunpowder Earrings" to come into focus at DEFC



**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) will review Iranian director Reza Farahmand's acclaimed documentary "Women with Gunpowder Earrings" this evening.

Critic Omid Najvan and Farahmand will attend the review session, which will follow after a screening at 5 p.m., the DEFC announced on Saturday.

The film is about Nur, a female journalist who covers stories about Syrian and Iraqi women and children in the war against the ISIS terrorists.

In December 2017, the film won the best feature-length documentary award at the 11th Cinema Verite festival, Iran's major international festival of documentary cinema that is organized by the DEFC every year.

It also brought Farahmand the award for best director in the national competition section.

The film is also an entry to the 71st Locarno International Film Festival, which is scheduled to be held in the Swiss city from August 1 to 11.

Moon landing drama "First Man" to open Venice Film Festival

**MILAN (Reuters)** — Space drama "First Man", which looks at the mission of U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong to become the first man to walk on the moon, will open this year's Venice Film Festival, organizers said on Thursday.

Oscar-winning director Damien Chazelle will once again kick off the 11 days of red carpet premieres and parties in the picturesque Italian city later this summer, two years after his critically-acclaimed musical "La La Land" opened the 2016 edition of the world's oldest film festival.

Chazelle reunites with his "La La Land" lead actor Ryan Gosling, who portrays Armstrong, for the movie, which also stars "The Crown" actress Claire Foy.

Based on the book by James R. Hansen, "First Man" follows Armstrong from 1961 to 1969 as NASA worked to land a man on the moon.

Commander of the Apollo 11 mission, Armstrong set foot on the moon on July 20, 1969, famously saying: "That's one small step for (a) man, one giant leap for mankind."

"It is a very personal, original and compelling piece of work," festival director Alberto Barbera said in a statement.

"(The film is) wonderfully unexpected



*Damien Chazelle poses with his Oscar for Best Director for the film "La La Land" at the 89th Academy Awards, Hollywood, California, U.S. February 26, 2017. (Reuters/Lucas Jackson)*

within the context of present day epic films, and a confirmation of the great talent of one of the most important contemporary directors of American cinema."

Chazelle, 33, said he looked forward to screening the film's world premiere at the festival.

"I am humbled by Venice's invitation and am thrilled to return," Chazelle said. "It feels especially poignant to share this news so close to the moon landing's anniversary."

The 75th edition of the Venice Film Festival will run from Aug. 29 to Sept. 8.

Collection of late actor Robin Williams to hit auction block

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Artwork, memorabilia, personal possessions and other ephemera from the collection of actor Robin Williams and his former wife Marsha will hit the auction block in October with a portion of proceeds benefiting causes they supported, Sotheby's said on Friday.

The "Creating a Stage" auction will take place on Oct. 4, Sotheby's said, featuring noteworthy sculpture and contemporary art as well as more personal items such as bicycles, wristwatches and Hollywood memorabilia, including Williams' Hollywood Walk of Fame Award.

Williams, the Oscar-winning star of "Good Will Hunting" who was beloved for his manic humor, died in August 2014 at age 63 in a suicide in his Northern California home that shocked fans worldwide.

The sale, slated for Oct. 4 in New York, will encompass works and items spanning the couple's "diverse interests and careers, all reflecting their shared passion for collecting," the auction house said in a statement.

Marsha Williams, a producer, was the actor's second wife. They divorced in 2010.

Highlights include a Hogwarts School robe worn by Daniel Radcliffe in the first "Harry Potter" movie estimated at \$10,000 to \$15,000, and a Deborah Butterfield horse



*Billy Crystal takes the stage to pay tribute to the late Robin Williams, shown on a large screen, during the 66th Primetime Emmy Awards in Los Angeles, California August 25, 2014. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)*

sculpture, "Madrone (Cody)," estimated at \$220,000 to \$280,000.

Hollywood memorabilia has historically soared to many times the presale estimates.

Also offered are autographed scripts, awards, props and wardrobe associated with projects across the Williams' careers, as well as furniture from their homes and decorative items, including art by British graffiti artist Banksy.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit The Juilliard School, Wounded Warrior Project, the Challenged Athletes Foundation and the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.

CBS announces four-part series of short "Star Trek" episodes

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — CBS Corp's next voyage into the "Star Trek" universe will come in the form of a four-part series of 10-to-15-minute episodes released starting this fall on the CBS All Access streaming service, the network said on Friday.

"Star Trek: Short Treks" will be released monthly, and each episode will tell a separate, closed-ended story, CBS said in a statement.

The network announced the series at San Diego Comic-Con, a convention for fans of science fiction and pop culture.

CBS said "The Office" actor Rainn Wilson will play con artist Harry Mudd in one episode. Another installment will focus on a man who finds himself the only human on board a deserted ship.

Each of the "Short Treks" episodes will reveal clues about the story unfolding on "Star Trek: Discovery", a series that is heading into its second season, co-creator and executive producer Alex Kurtzman said.

The original "Star Trek" debuted in 1966 as a U.S. television series depicting

the adventures of the Starship Enterprise. It was created by the late Gene Roddenberry and featured characters including Captain James T. Kirk, played by William Shatner, and Vulcan officer Mr. Spock, played by the late Leonard Nimoy. The franchise has persisted through several movies and TV shows.

CBS announced in June that it would further expand the "Star Trek" franchise with new series, mini-series and animation under a production deal with Kurtzman.



Actor Rainn Wilson speaks during the Clinton Global Citizen award ceremony at the Clinton Global Initiative's annual meeting in New York, September 27, 2015. (Reuters/Lucas Jackson)