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# Hakim mediates between Sadr, Maliki to make big alliance



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## Annual non-oil exports set to reach \$50b by March 2019

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN**—Iran's value of non-oil exports is planned to reach \$50 billion in the current Iranian calendar year, which ends on March 20, 2019, according to an official at Trade Promotion Organization (TPO). In a press conference on Tuesday, Mohammadreza Modoudi, the deputy head of TPO for development of

goods and services exports, also said that development of non-oil exports requires expansion of investment and banking ties; but despite the limitations in these fields, the country's trade balance was positive during the first four months of current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), Fars news agency reported. **→4**

## Pakistan's Imran Khan to visit Iran after swearing-in ceremony

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Pakistan's prime minister-in-waiting Imran Khan will visit Iran and Saudi Arabia following his swearing-in ceremony later this month.

Imran Khan was offered a state visit of Iran, Saudi Arabia by the respective heads of state to which he had agreed, the Times of Islamabad reported on Monday. Khan, chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-

e-Insaf (PTI) political party, accepted Iranian President Hasan Rouhani's invitation to visit Tehran. However, the visit will be finalized by the foreign ministries of the two countries after the PTI forms his government.

On August 4, Khan told Iranian Ambassador to Islamabad Mehdi Honardoost that Pakistan was "ready to play a constructive and positive role between Iran and Saudi Arabia".

## Corbyn and Netanyahu clash on Twitter

By staff & agencies

A furor over alleged anti-semitism in Britain's main opposition party widened when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn exchanged accusations on Twitter over Israeli bloodshed.

Labor has been wrestling accusations of anti-semitism for months.

Britain's right-leaning Daily Mail on Friday reported that Corbyn, on a visit to

Tunisia in 2014, had laid a wreath at the graves of members of a Palestinian group that killed 11 Israeli athletes and a German policeman at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

It said the cemetery houses a memorial to the dozens killed in the 1985 Israeli bombing of the Palestine Liberation Organization headquarters in exile in Tunis, as well as the graves of members of Black September, a PLO splinter group that carried out the Munich attack. **→13**



**EDITORIAL**

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## Why we don't negotiate with U.S.

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in his high-profile remarks on Monday, emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not enter into negotiations with the United States. There are some points in Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's statements that should be taken note of.

The first point is that the United States, especially Donald Trump's government, is to blame for the current situation by withdrawing the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear agreement and restoring primary and secondary sanctions against Iran.

Although President Trump has said he is ready to negotiate with Iran without preconditions and backed down from his previous positions, his withdrawal from the international nuclear agreement has left no room for dialogue.

Moreover, Trump is regarded unreliable even among the United States' allies in the world. Now, European countries are very worried that a person such as Trump has taken the helm at the White House.

Secondly, the only way forward is that Trump acknowledge this fact that all the United States' conspiracies against Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution have ended in failure. Trump should have been advised by senior political experts like Zbigniew Brzezinski, who served as national security adviser under the Jimmy Carter administration, to accept a "powerful Iran".

Undoubtedly, if Trump does not want or fails to accept such a fact, he must face the dire consequences which would come to haunt the U.S. in the region and the wider world. He must look at the record of extremist figures such as John Bolton, Mike Pompeo and Rudy Giuliani who form his inner circle. Each of these neo-cons symbolize the failure of the George W. Bush administration's policies.

Third, Iran will not negotiate with the Trump administration at all, because Trump as president is not even trusted by the closest people around him.

Even before Trump walked out of the multilateral nuclear treaty, the Barack Obama administration failed to comply fully with the agreement. Obviously, in such a situation, negotiations with a country that is challenging the world order would be totally useless and illogical.

## Iran's 50% share of Caspian Sea cannot be legally verified: expert

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — The director of the International Institute of Khazar Sea Studies (IIKSS) told Mehr News Agency that Iran's 50% share of Caspian Sea does not have a legal basis.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency Dr. Maysam Araee Daronkola, the director of the International Institute of Khazar Sea Studies (IIKSS) said on Monday that Iran's 50% share of Caspian Sea cannot be legally verified.

In response to a question whether Iran's 50% share of Caspian Sea can be verified according to 1921, 1940 agreements between Iran and the former USSR, Dr. Araee Daronkola said "politically speaking one can say that Iran and the Soviet Union's shares of this sea were 50%, and this is in line with our national interests, but if we look at these conventions from a legal perspective one

cannot elicit such a thing from them."

"These conventions explicitly stated that Iran and the Soviet Union had equal rights to the Caspian Sea, and this was only related to the shipping regime not to the sea bed or defining the boundaries and territories. They did not refer to territorial waters, or international waters based on modern international maritime law," Araee said.

He said that if Iran will benefit more if it refers to international laws as they will provide a solid ground in favor of Iran's interests.

He also said that the shares of littoral countries were not defined in the convention of the legal status of the Caspian Sea signed on Sunday by the five littoral states in the fifth summit in Kazakhstan's northwestern city of Aktau.

The convention regulates access to sea bed, surface water and also solves other issues such

as pipeline construction, fishing, oil extraction and environmental concerns. The document, in particular, bans the presence of any non-littoral states' armed forces in the water.

In response to a question what the biggest achievements of the Aktau's summit were, the director of IIKSS said "the fight against terrorism, the fight against organized crime, addressing environmental concerns, banning the presence of any non-littoral states' armed forces in the water were some of positive points of the yesterday's convention," while stressing that the negative aspects of the convention should not be neglected.

Dr. Araee, at the end, emphasized that the boundaries need to define in the future negotiations in order for the Parliament to be able to ratify the convention.

## U.S.-North Korea talks to yield no result: ex-Iranian envoy

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — The former Iranian ambassador to China highlighted the US government's non-commitment to its international obligations and expressed pessimism about the future of Washington-Pyongyang talks, saying the negotiations will likely produce no outcome.

"The evidence shows that there is no way for these negotiations to yield results," Javad Mansouri told the Tasnim News Agency.

"Because basically, the U.S. does not follow logic, law, and justice due to its reliance on power and wealth," the former diplomat noted.

"Given the fact that North Korea has several times experienced the U.S.'s reneging on its promises, it should not be expected that something important occurs in the region through negotiation; unless the White House sometime (in future) is forced to change its views and make

some of its commitments operational," he added.

On Thursday, North Korea's foreign ministry issued a scathing statement accusing some (unnamed) members of the Trump administration of "going against the intention of president Trump" to improve relations between the U.S. and North Korea.

"Some high-level officials within the U.S. administration are making baseless allegations against us and making desperate attempts at intensifying the international sanctions and pressure," the statement says.

The "high-level officials" they're referring to are almost certainly Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who is leading the negotiations on the U.S. side, and National Security Adviser John Bolton, who also coordinates efforts related to North Korea.

North Korea is mad that Bolton effectively blamed Pyongyang for the sputtering nuclear

talks and because the U.S. continues to restrict North Korea's interactions with the world.

That's upsetting to Pyongyang, the ministry says, because it has already made some concessions — like stopping missile tests and returning the purported remains of 55 American troops who served in the Korean War — and hoped Washington would do the same by offering concessions of its own.

"Expecting any result, while insulting the dialogue partner and throwing cold water over our sincere efforts for building confidence," the statement adds, is "a foolish act that amounts to waiting to see a boiled egg hatch out."

The statement — boiled eggs and all — is the latest sign that both sides have made little progress in their months-long talks to dismantle North Korea's nuclear program, according to the American news website Vox.



© IRNA / Motahaba Mohammadi

## Rice harvest season in northern Iran paddy fields

With more than half of summer already passed, farmers in the northern province of Gilan have started harvesting rice from the paddy fields.

Planting season begins in mid-spring when the weather gets warm in the region. Rice seeds are first planted close together in one flooded paddy and grows into seedlings that will be transplanted into paddy fields.

The province with 238,000 hectares of paddy fields ranks first in rice production nationwide.

## Mohamad bin Zayed, Zionist culprit in Mid-East

By Yosra Bakhakh

**TEHRAN** — The Arab media announced a meeting of a United Arab Emirates top security delegation with Tel Aviv officials late last week. The UAE delegation was led by Mahmoud al-Shamsi, head of the UAE's intelligence agency. He was accompanied by four other Emirati security personnel.

This is not the first time such reports have appeared. Last year, the Middle East Eye website reported on the UAE's security cooperation with Israel, according to which Abu Dhabi inked a contract with an Israeli company to secure the safety of important Emirati oil facilities. The agreement called for installation of a comprehensive regulatory network throughout the UAE, which allowed the authorities to monitor the activities of Emirati citizens and others in public places -- from the moment they would leave home until they returned.

In spite of the reports revealing a new secret agreement and cooperation between Israel and the UAE, once upon a time in the Emirate, Arab honor and ideal were upheld with resistance to Israel. Why has the UAE turned into one of the leading countries seeking relations with the Zionists in the past few years?

Mohammad Bin al-Mokhtar al-Shanghiti, professor of political ethics at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, blames the Emirate's new rulers for the change in attitudes towards Israel.

He believes that Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founder of the modern Emirate, felt he was affiliated with the Islamic and Arab Ummah, and therefore opposed the Zionists early on. However, Emirate's tendency towards Israel today is proof of its separation from its roots and values.

The new policy towards Israel of Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan's (MbZ) is derived from ignorance and arrogance. However, that is not everyone's view in the UAE. Imad Al-Din al-Juburi, a political commentator, believes that the younger leaders of the Arab states in the Persian Gulf such as Mohammed bin Zayed in the UAE and Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia are following in the footsteps of Egypt, Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization. When one of the largest Arab powers, Egypt, decides to make peace with Israel, the movement of the UAE towards Israel is more or less considered natural. **→13**



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## Zarif felicitates Lebanon on defeating Israel in the 2006 war

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday congratulated the Lebanese over their military victory over the invading Israeli army in 2006, known as the 33-day war.

In two separate messages to his Lebanese counterpart Jibril Bassil and Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Zarif offered his congratulations over the great victory of the Islamic resistance movement over Israel in the war.

In the 33-day war, Israel suffered a great military defeat at the hands of Hezbollah. Israel lost 121 military personnel. The five-member Winograd Committee, appointed to examine Israel's performance concluded that the war "was a big and serious failure" for Israel.



## U.S. must pay Iran \$110 billion in damages: VP

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Laya Joneidi, the vice president for legal affairs, has said the U.S. government must pay Iran \$110 billion in compensation over the damage it has done to the Iranian nation.

"Individuals and private companies harmed by U.S. measures over the past few decades have filed complaints in Iranian courts and verdicts have been issued in their favor. By now, the amount of compensation the U.S. must pay has crossed 110 billion dollars," Khabar Online quoted Joneidi as saying on Monday.

She added that following the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear pact with the Islamic Republic, Iranian courts have been receiving new cases against the U.S. government.



## Ban on Twitter won't be lifted: Judiciary

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Deputy Attorney General Abdolsamad Khorramabadi said on Tuesday that Iran would not lift the ban on Twitter, dismissing calls by ICT Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi to unblock the social networking service.

The committee which screens online websites for criminal content cannot oppose judiciary directives, so the issue of unblocking Twitter will not be discussed in the committee and the ban will remain in place, Khorramabadi said in a statement, ISNA reported.

The request made by the ICT minister for discussing the unblocking of Twitter in the committee is contrary to legal principles, he added.



## Majlis research center to review Caspian Sea convention

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Majlis research center chief Kazem Jalali announced on Tuesday that the body is slated to review the Caspian Sea legal status.

Jalali said that the convention does not deal with the water share, IRNA reported.

As President Hassan Rouhani earlier said in Aktau, the reason behind Iran's membership in the Caspian Sea convention is to prevent certain countries from building military bases there or try to meddle in other regional issues, he said.

Jalali also referred to the environmental concerns of the Caspian Sea, saying at the moment the inland sea faces major environmental problems.



## Council approves policies to counter psychological warfare

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Supreme Council for Economic Coordination on Tuesday approved the macro policies on informing the public about combating psychological warfare and economic issues, Fars reported.

In a meeting headed by President Hassan Rouhani, the members of the council discussed ways to raise public awareness about psychological warfare and encourage people's participation in the fight against economic corruption.

During the meeting, a number of proposals on ways to avoid a reduction in the supply of necessary goods were also examined. The members of the council also exchanged views on policies to prevent a rise in commodity prices.



## Trump after forcing Iran to negotiate: Rezaei

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Secretary of Iran's Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaei said on Tuesday that the U.S. president is trying to exert economic pressure on Iran to force Tehran to come to terms with the U.S.

"Today, our enemies have lined up against us with their utmost capacity. Mr. Trump wants to devalue our national currency and stop our oil export to force us to return to the negotiation table," said Rezaei.

He made the remarks at a meeting with entrepreneurs and start-up owners in the fields of science and technology. Hailing what the entrepreneurs are doing as pioneers of growth and economic flourishing, Rezaei said that entrepreneurs are warriors in the economic war.

## Shamkhani highlights role of private sector in 'economic war' on Iran

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Secretary of Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said on Tuesday that the private sector plays an important role in countering the "economic war" launched against Iran by the Trump administration.

"In the current economic war, the private sector plays the same role that Basij used to play during the eight years of sacred defense," Shamkhani said during a meeting with representatives from the chamber of commerce and entrepreneurs.

The resistance against the invasion of the Saddam army into the Iranian territory in the 1980s is known as "sacred defense".

Shamkhani said at the time that the "senior military strategists in the world were of the opinion that Iran would be defeated" in the war, Basij forces entered the scene and "foiled the hegemonic system's plots".



He noted that the current economic war is "more complicated than the military war" and suggested that the private sector can be of great help in economic policy-making.

The top security official said, "New mechanisms have been adopted to involve the private sector in the country's policy-making process."

U.S. President Donald Trump announced Washington's exit from the nuclear deal on May 8 and ordered restoration of sanctions against Iran.

The first batch of sanctions was snapped back on Monday, August 6. The second batch will be restored on November 4.

Back in May, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Washington will apply economic and military pressure against Iran and will impose "the strongest sanctions in history" on the Islamic Republic.

## All-inclusive talks prerequisite for Caspian seabed carve-up: expert

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — A senior political analyst believes all Caspian Sea littoral states should sit down for negotiations over carving up seabed of the Caspian Sea.

"The arguing is over the seabed and subsoil resources," Davoud Hermidas-Bavand, professor of political science and international law, told ISNA in an interview released on Tuesday.

"In the case of dividing the seabed, joint negotiations should be conducted and a reassessment should take place," he said of the oil-and-gas rich body of water, underlining that Iran's stake has been ignored during several two-sided agreements between Russia and the former Soviet states.

"The Russians previously divided Caspian Sea's seabed and subsoil resources under bilateral treaties, one of which was initially reached with Kazakhstan in 1998 followed by the ones by Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. Here, a very insignificant share was determined for Iran."

"They [the five littoral states] should have followed tradition to make decisions jointly, not through bilateral contracts. So



this issue has put Iran in an unpleasant situation... The issue should be raised for reassessment.

"The reconsideration should not be based on the length of the beaches, since the contracts of 1921 and 1940 were by no means dependent on the coast length and they considered the totality of the sea as common property."

As a result, Iran's portion of the seabed and substrate resources should go beyond what is now contemplated, the expert explained. "Iran previously assumed that it shared Caspian Sea jointly with the then Soviet Union, but currently, three other countries have been added so that if they want to consider a stake, it will be a 60 to 40 share. However, what has now been clinched [by the sides] is 15 miles of coastal waters," he concluded.

## Iran, Iraq sign agreement to beef up border security

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran and Iraq signed a cooperation agreement on Tuesday for a better guarding of common borders.

The agreement was signed by Iranian border chief Qassem Rezaei and Hamid Abdullah Ibrahim al-Hosseini, Iraq's border guards commander.

General Rezaei said Iran attaches great importance to expansion of cooperation given that the two countries share long borders.

"We believe that such cooperation will result in more security," he said.

The 1,609-km shared borders of Iran and Iraq render inevitable the joint specialized meetings between the border guards of the two countries, Fars news agency quoted him as saying.

Elsewhere, he said that Daesh was created by the hegemons to create instability in regional countries, including Iraq.

However, the enemies' plot was foiled thanks to God, he added.

"Annihilation of Daesh made the Iraqi people happy and this success made our responsibility to expand cooperation in boosting security in border areas heavier," he said.

## Iraqi PM walks back on commitment to U.S. sanctions on Iran

Iraq Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has contradicted his recent reluctant commitment to abide by renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran, saying his government only committed to not using dollars in transactions with Tehran.

Al-Abadi's remarks came at a news conference in the capital, Baghdad, on Monday, the same day that it was claimed that Iran cancelled an upcoming visit by him.

"I did not say we abide by the sanctions, I said we abide by not using dollars in transactions. We have no other choice," he said.

Asked if Baghdad would stop imports of commodities, appliances and equipment by government companies from Iran, he said the matter was still being reviewed.

"We honestly have not made any decision regarding this issue until now," added al-Abadi, who is heading a fragile caretaker government until a new one can be formed following Iraq's parliamentary election in May.

Last week, al-Abadi said Iraq disagreed with the U.S. sanctions on Iran, but would abide by them to safeguard its own interests, triggering criticism from Iran-allied Iraqi politicians and in the Islamic Republic.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Deputy foreign ministers of Caspian countries to meet

Deputy foreign ministers of the Caspian countries are planning to hold a meeting in Azerbaijan this fall to discuss the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea, Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov told reporters on Tuesday.

"This meeting should take place no later than six months according to the instruction given by the heads of state, and according to the agreements stipulated in the adopted documents. Moreover, there is already an agreement that the group will gather and start working directly this fall. According to the preliminary data, this refers to the meeting to be held in Azerbaijan," Abdrakhmanov said, TASS reported.

He noted that these consultations will concern the implementation of the agreements reached in the convention on the legal status of the inland sea on Sunday.

"According to the convention and in pursuance of it, the ministers of foreign affairs of the Caspian states, who held their meeting the day before the summit, decided to establish a special mechanism, a group under the auspices of the ministries of foreign affairs, which will engage



in implementation of the provisions of the convention, in particular, in the work over such a fundamental and important document as an agreement on the method of establishing the so-called straight base-lines," the foreign minister said.

Following the meeting of the fifth Caspian summit in Aktau on August 12, the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan signed the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea. The work on the document has been underway since 1996, and the draft convention was finally agreed upon at the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Caspian states on December 4-5, 2017 in Moscow. Several sectorial documents on cooperation in the region were also signed.

First Announcement



## INTERNATIONAL TENDERS NO.: 97/K-185

-**Tender Holder:** Security Paper Mill of the Central Bank of I.R. of Iran.

-**Tender subject:** Purchase, Installation and Setting up one set of Quality Control System for Paper/ Board Machines (QCS)

-**Tender deposit:** An unconditional and extendable bank guarantee from Iranian bank for the amount of 25,000 Euro or 1,265,000,000 Iranian Rial.

**Deadline for receiving tender documents:** Maximum Ten days after second advertisement -

-**How to get document:** Bidder can receive the tender documents by sending their written inquiry to Fax: +98 11 4313 2566 or sending letter to email address [Info@takab-cbi.ir](mailto:Info@takab-cbi.ir) or refer to national basic of tenders of Iran with address <http://lets.mporg.ir>

**Deadline for submitting offers:**

Maximum until dated 16.09.2018 (97/06/25).

- **Time of opening of technical offers:**

Maximum Three week after deadline submitting offer.

- **Validity period of financial offers:**

The offers must be valid for 180 days after 16.09.2018 (97/06/25).

-The offers no sign, conditional, altered and the offers that submit after the expiration of the period of bid submission will be considered as null and void.

-Tender Holder reserves the rights to reject some or all of the offers.

The winner of tender must be submitting an unconditional and irrevocable performance bond guarantee equal to 10% of value of the contract.

- **Place for receiving and submitting tender documents:**

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# Erdogan says Turkey will boycott U.S. electronics, lira steadies

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday Turkey will boycott electronic products from the United States, retaliating in a dispute with Washington that has helped drive the lira to record lows.

The lira TRYTOM=D3 has lost more than 40 percent this year and crashed to an all-time low of 7.24 to the dollar early on Monday, hit by worries over Erdogan's calls for lower interest rates and worsening ties with the United States.

The weakness of the Turkish currency has rippled through global markets. Its drop of as much as 18 percent on Friday hit U.S. and European stocks as investors fretted about banks' exposure to Turkey.

On Tuesday the lira recovered some ground, trading at 6.53 to the dollar at 0918 GMT, up around five percent on the day.

It was supported by news of a planned conference call in which the finance minister will seek to reassure investors concerned by Erdogan's control of the economy and his resistance to interest rate hikes to tackle double-digit inflation.

Erdogan says Turkey is the target of an economic war, and has made repeated calls for Turks to sell their dollars and euros to shore up the national currency.

"Together with our people, we will stand decisively against the dollar, forex prices, inflation and interest rates. We will protect our economic independence by being tight-knit together," he told members of his AK Party in a speech.

"We will impose a boycott on U.S. electronic products. If they have iPhones, there is Samsung on the other side, and we have our own Vestel here," he said, referring to the Turkish electronics company, whose shares rose five percent.

The United States has imposed sanctions on two Turkish ministers over the trial on



terrorism charges of a U.S. evangelical pastor in Turkey, and last week Washington raised tariffs on Turkish metal exports.

Erdogan said his government would offer further incentives to companies planning to invest in Turkey and said firms should not be put off by economic uncertainty.

"If we postpone our investments, if we convert our currency to foreign exchange because there's danger, then we will have given into the enemy," he said.

## ■ U.S. dispute

Although the lira enjoyed a small respite on Tuesday, investors say measures taken by the Central Bank on Monday to ensure liquidity fail to address the root cause of lira weakness.

"What you want to see is tight monetary policy, a tight fiscal policy and a recognition that there might be some short-term economic pain — but without it there's just no credibility of promises to restabilize things," said Craig Botham, Emerging Markets Economist at Schroders.

Dollar-denominated bonds issued by selected Turkish banks continued to fall on Tuesday, although sovereign bonds steadied.

Relations between NATO allies Turkey and the United States are at a low point, hurt by a series of issues from diverging interests in Syria, Ankara's plan to buy Russian defense systems and the detention of an American pastor, Andrew Brunson.

The White House on Monday said U.S.

national security adviser John Bolton met Turkey's ambassador to the United States to discuss the detention of Brunson. The pastor's Turkish lawyer launched a fresh appeal on Tuesday for his release.

Traders said news that Finance Minister Berat Albayrak will hold a conference call with up to 1,000 investors to discuss the economy might also have helped support the currency.

"I think the investor call Albayrak has scheduled has helped lira firm," said TEB Investment strategist Isik Oktu. "I believe the new and important topics will be discussed in this call, otherwise there would not be such an attempt."

"The concerns are ongoing in the market but it is possible to mention a limited optimism for the first time in a while," a foreign exchange trader said.

Turkey's business lobbies called on Tuesday for a tighter monetary policy to stabilize the lira, and for diplomacy to solve U.S.-Turkish disputes.

Following Monday's meeting between Bolton and Turkish ambassador Serdar Kilic, U.S. officials have given no indication that the United States has been prepared to give ground in the standoff between the two countries' leaders.

Ankara has repeatedly said the Brunson case was up to the courts and a Turkish judge moved Brunson from jail to house arrest in July. Infuriated by the move, which Washington said was insufficient, Trump sanctioned two Turkish ministers and doubled tariffs on metal imports, adding to lira's slide.

White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett said Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin was monitoring the financial situation in Turkey "very closely".

(Source: Reuters)

## With gun salutes, Pakistan marks 71 years of independence



Pakistan has kicked off a day of celebrations marking the country's 71 years of statehood and independence.

This year, the anniversary comes amid political change with a new government taking over following the July 25 general elections. Pakistan's former cricket-star-turned-politician Imran Khan is to become the next prime minister.

President Mamnoon Hussain hoisted the national flag at a ceremony in Islamabad on Tuesday while Pakistanis across the country raised the banner at their homes and on their cars.

Fireworks erupted over the capital, Islamabad, at midnight on Monday, ushering in the festivities. During the day, gun salutes were held in Islamabad and the four provincial capitals.

Festive rallies and school functions were also taking place. Pakistan gained independence when British left India and split the subcontinent in 1947.

(Source: AP)

## Trump signs \$717bn U.S. military budget into law; China, Russia prime targets

U.S. President Donald Trump has signed the 2019 U.S. military spending bill into law, authorizing the Defense Department to invest around \$717 billion into military strategies that will target Russia and China. Trump approved the massive budget on Monday during a signing ceremony at Fort Drum, a U.S. Army base which is home to the Army's 10th Mountain Division and has deployed the most troops to U.S. wars abroad since the 9/11 attacks.

"We believe our war fighters deserve the tools, the equipment, and resources they have earned with their blood, sweat, and tears," Trump said. "This authorization will give America's war fighters the firepower they need to win any conflict quickly and decisively."

The new act allows the Pentagon to spend \$639.1 billion in base funding, while earmarking another \$69 billion to fund wars overseas and some \$8.9 billion for obligatory military expenditures.

Trump said the budget was aimed at revitalizing the U.S. military, one of his key campaign promises.

"Hopefully, we'll never have to use it, but if we do, no one stands a chance," Trump said of the U.S. military prowess.

Under the new law, troops will get 2.6 percent pay rise, their first pay raise in around a decade.

More importantly, the act identifies emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, space and counter-space capabilities, cyber attacks, foreign influence operations, and hypersonic weapons as threats. It also singles out Russia, North Korea, China and Iran as adversaries that need to be countered.

## ■ Countering Russian aggression

The U.S. has long accused Russia of seeking to intervene in its democratic process, a claim that received much more attention following Trump's surprising victory over his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in the 2016 race for the White House.

Then-U.S. President Barack Obama and all 16 U.S. intelligence agencies alleged that Moscow had orchestrated a massive online campaign, including hack attacks against the Democratic Party, to turn the page in Trump's favor. The act specifically states that part of the massive military funding will go to "cyber warfare and influence operations to counter Russian aggression, cyber, and information warfare threats."

## ■ Stepping up pressure on China

The new budget will also fund Trump's Space Force, the sixth branch of the U.S. military which will specifically focus on militarizing the space.

Trump said an space force was necessary to confront what he called U.S. "adversaries" in space, specifically naming China.

"In order to maintain America's military supremacy, we must always be on the cutting edge," the president said. "That is why we are also proudly reasserting America's legacy of leadership in space. Our foreign competitors and adversaries have already begun weaponizing space."

"We'll be catching them very shortly," he added. "They want to jam transmissions, which threaten our battlefield operations and so many other things. We will be so far ahead of them in a very short period of time, your head will spin."

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence announced Thursday that the Space Force will come into force over the next few years.

Under the new act, products by Chinese tech giants Huawei and ZTE will largely be banned from use by the U.S. government and government contractors. The policies against Russia and China fall in line with Trump's new national security strategy, which was released earlier this year.

## ■ Afghanistan, Iraq

The Pentagon is allowed under the new budget to spend \$5.2 billion to prolong operations in Afghanistan, 16 years after the U.S. soldiers invaded the country on terrorism charges.

The U.S. military will also receive \$820 million to continue operations in Iraq.

## ■ New weapons purchases

The new act also authorizes \$7.6 billion to purchase 77 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, \$24.1 billion to fund the construction of 13 new ships and \$452.6 million for six additional AH-64E Apache attack helicopters. The U.S. Navy will also be allowed to purchase 24 F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jets and 10 P-8A Poseidon naval surveillance aircraft and 25 AH-1Z Cobra helicopters.

Additionally, the number of soldiers on active duty will be increased by 15,600 next year.

"The act sets active duty end strength for the Army at 487,500 in fiscal 2019, which begins Oct. 1, 2018. The Navy's end strength is set at 335,400, the Marine Corps' at 186,100 and the Air Force's at 329,100," according to Pentagon.

The next year's budget also bars the delivery of F-35 jets to NATO ally Turkey amid concerns over Ankara's purchase of Russian missile defense systems.

(Source: agencies)

# Italy motorway bridge collapses on Genoa buildings in heavy rains, 'dozens' feared dead

A motorway bridge collapsed on Tuesday over the northern Italian port city of Genoa, killing dozens of people according to the local ambulance service, in what the transport minister said was likely to be "an immense tragedy".

A section of the bridge crashed down from a height of about 50 meters over a river and some railroad tracks and buildings. It collapsed at about 11:30 a.m. (0930 GMT) during torrential rainfall, the local fire brigade said.

The head of the ambulance service said there were "dozens of dead", according to Italian news agency Adnkronos. At least 10 people were killed and 20 vehicles were involved, local police sources said.

Helicopter footage on social media showed trucks and cars stranded on either side of the roughly 80-metre long collapsed section of the bridge, which was built on the A10 toll motorway in the 1960s.

An ambulance official told Reuters the service could only confirm two injured people so far, "but we suppose there are unfortunately a lot of dead."

Restructuring work on the bridge, which was 1.2 km long



in total, was carried out in 2016. The highway operator said work to shore up the foundation of the bridge was being

carried out at the time of the collapse, adding that the bridge was constantly monitored.

The highway is a major artery to the Italian Riviera and to France's southern coast. Train services around Genoa have been halted.

A witness told Sky Italia television he saw "eight or nine" vehicles on the bridge when it collapsed in what he said was an "apocalyptic scene".

Transport Minister Danilo Toninelli said in a tweet that he was "following with great apprehension what seems like an immense tragedy".

The office of Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said he was heading to Genoa in the evening and would remain there on Wednesday. Defence minister Elisabetta Trenta said the army was ready to offer manpower and vehicles to help with the rescue operations.

Shares in Atlantia, the toll road operator which runs the motorway, were suspended after falling 6.3 percent after news of the collapse.

(Source: Reuters)

## Man suspected of terrorism attack on UK parliament after driving into pedestrians

A man deliberately drove a car into pedestrians and cyclists on Tuesday before ramming it into barriers outside Britain's parliament in what appeared to be the second terrorism attack on the building in just under 18 months, police said.

Three people were injured in the incident. The driver, a man in his 20s, was arrested by armed officers at the scene moments later. He was not co-operating with detectives, Britain's counter-terrorism police chief said.

"Given that this appears to be a deliberate act, the method, and this being an iconic site, we are treating it as a terrorist incident," London Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu told reporters.

In March 2017, Khalid Masood, 52, killed four people on nearby Westminster Bridge and stabbed to death an unarmed police officer in the grounds of parliament before being shot dead.

It was the first of five attacks on Britain last year which police blamed on terrorism, three of which involved vehicles being used as a weapon.

Basu said the suspect in Tuesday's incident was in custody but was not co-operating with detectives. Although he had not been formally identified, the man was not believed to be known to security forces, Basu added.

The BBC, citing unnamed sources, said the man was from the Birmingham area of central England and, while not known to the M15 domestic spy agency or Britain's counter-terrorism network, was known to police.

"At this early stage of the investigation, no other suspects at the scene have been identified or reported to police," Basu said. "There is no intelligence of further danger to



Londoners or the rest of the UK in connection with this incident."

Police said a silver Ford Fiesta was driven through a group of cyclists and pedestrians during the morning rush hour before hitting a barrier in front of the Houses of Parliament at 0637 GMT.

Camera footage showed the vehicle taking a wrong turn before veering across the road and into a security lane leading to parliament before smashing into the protective barrier as two police officers jumped to safety.

The man was detained on suspicion of terrorism offences and no weapons had been found, Basu said.

Two people were taken to hospital and one woman was still receiving treatment for serious but not life-threatening injuries. Armed officers swarmed the scene and

sealed off a large area around the parliament building in central London, usually bustling with tourists and government workers.

"I saw the cyclists, injured cyclists. I don't know if he's hit these people or if they've just dived to escape," witness Jason Williams told reporters. "It didn't swerve, there was not another car going behind him. It looked like it was planned."

Images shot by a Euronews journalist showed police pointing their guns at the vehicle shortly after the crash. Footage on social media showed a handcuffed man being led away by heavily armed police.

British Prime Minister Theresa May, who like other lawmakers is on holiday during parliament's summer recess, said her thoughts were with the people injured. Government security officials were due to hold a meeting

of their emergency committee at 1300 GMT to discuss the incident.

"All Londoners, like me, utterly condemn all acts of terrorism on our city," London's Mayor Sadiq Khan said on Twitter.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who has previously spoken out about security issues in London, said on Twitter: "These animals are crazy and must be dealt with through toughness and strength."

Cordons around parliament began to be lifted about six hours after the incident and Westminster Underground station, close to parliament, was reopened to the public. However, streets immediately surrounding the scene remained closed off.

Nigel Evans, a lawmaker from May's Conservative Party, said the incident had shown security measures at parliament were effective but might still need to be reviewed.

"I'm sure that (debate about) pedestrianization of Parliament Square and which vehicles should be able to access so closely in parliament will be reignited," he told BBC TV.

Britain is on its second-highest threat level of "severe", meaning an attack is considered highly likely and the authorities say a dozen extremist plots had been foiled since Masood's attack in Westminster last year.

Last week, a Muslim convert admitted plotting to kill more than 100 people by driving a truck into pedestrians on London's Oxford Street, the capital's major shopping thoroughfare.

In October last year, 11 people were injured when a car collided with pedestrians near London's Natural History Museum, raising fears of an attack, but police later said the incident was a road traffic accident.

(Source: Daily Star)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	130927.7
IFX	1501.42

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,923 rials
GBP	53,641 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$68.14/b
Brent	\$73.71/b
OPEC Basket	\$70.30/b
Gold	\$1,197.30/oz
Silver	\$15.11/oz
Platinum	\$810.15/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



**IMIDRO's  
underway project  
worth \$18b to  
be completed by  
March 2021**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of projects under implementation by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMI-DRO), which are planned to be completed by the end of the country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021), is \$18 billion, according to the head of the organization. Mehdi Karbasian also said that these projects will create jobs for over 32,000 people once they are put into operation, IRNA reported.



**Iran's oil  
production stands  
at 3.737m bpd in  
July: OPEC**

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — According to OPEC's latest monthly report published on August 13, oil production in Iran stood at about 3.737 million barrels per day (bpd) in July, falling 56,300 bpd from 3.793 million bpd in June, based on secondary sources. The OPEC's report also announced Iran's oil output based on direct communication. It said the country's oil production in July increased to 3.806 million bpd, a 4,000 bpd rise from 3.802 million bpd in June. Meanwhile, the report put the country's average heavy oil price at \$71.44 in July, a \$0.25 or 0.3 percent decrease from \$71.69 in June. The report put average Iranian heavy crude price at \$67.56 since beginning of 2018 up to the report publishing day.

Annual non-oil exports set to reach \$50b by March 2019

**1 →** Iran exported \$15.45 billion of non-oil products during the mentioned four-month period, with 14.69 percent rise from \$13.471 billion in the same time span of the past year, according to Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).



TPO Head Mojtaba Khosrotaj (2nd L) and TPO Deputy Head Mohammadreza Modoudi (2nd R) in a press conference on Tuesday. It is while the country's imports of non-oil goods stood at \$15.179 billion during the four-month time, with 4.05 percent fall from the figure of last year.

Addressing the same press conference on Tuesday, TPO Head Mojtaba Khosrotaj put non-oil exports to the neighboring countries at \$8.03 billion during the first four months of this year, which indicates 34 percent growth from the figure of the same time span in the past year, IRIB reported. Iran has exported \$47 billion of non-oil commodities in the past calendar year and as the Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Younes Sinaki predicted in mid-April, the figure will register \$8 billion annual increase to stand at \$55 billion in this year, some \$5 billion more than the figure anticipated by the TPO deputy head on Tuesday.

Bank of Japan's split message continues to puzzle market

Two weeks after the Bank of Japan tweaked monetary policy, the market still struggles to read a seemingly divided central bank that has promised broader fluctuations in yields while also trying to keep them ultralow. At a policy announcement on July 31, BOJ Gov. Haruhiko Kuroda suggested a wider band between plus or minus 0.2 percent for yields on 10-year Japanese government bonds. The bank had previously kept the yield movements within plus or minus 0.1 percent. (Source: Nikkei)

Iran welcomes investment by Swiss companies in water, energy projects

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said Iran welcomes Swiss companies to contribute in the country's water and energy projects, Iranian Energy Ministry's news portal, PAVEN, reported. The minister made the remarks in a meeting with Swiss Ambassador in Tehran Markus Leitner on Tuesday. Mentioning the two countries long history of cooperation in water and energy sectors, Ardakanian said, "Our cooperation goes back to 15 years ago when in 2002 I met with the Swiss ambassador at the time and we decided to start cooperating in water

sector". "At the time, it was decided to set up a task force to monitor the implementation of these cooperation", he added. Ardakanian further pointed to renewable energies as another potent area for bilateral cooperation between Iran and Switzerland, saying that Swiss companies could use Iran's infrastructure to produce and sell solar power to the neighboring countries like Afghanistan. Constructing small hydroelectric power plants, wastewater management, desalinization, water and wastewater treatment, collaboration with Regional



*Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian (1st R) met with Swiss Ambassador to Tehran Markus Leitner (C) on Tuesday.*

Center on Urban Water Management (RCUWM-Tehran) as well as managing border waters, were among other areas proposed for future cooperation. Leitner for his part expressed his country's

interest in bilateral and regional cooperation with the Islamic Republic saying "It is hoped that mutual cooperation will increase in the future and further collaborations will take place in water and energy sectors".

'NITC ready to confront sanctions'

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) is ready to confront the U.S.-led sanctions against the country, the company's board of directors' chairman emphasized. Seyed Ahmad Moqimi also said that Iran's oil export was not stopped even one time during the previous sanctions, Shana reported on Monday. Earlier in May, NITC Managing Director Nasrollah Sardashti had said that his company has made the necessary planning (to confront the sanctions) and NITC fleet is ready to operate under any condition. "We have an experience of five-year activity under the sanctions and now relying on our fruitful experiences of those years we have made necessary planning



for the sanctions condition", he asserted. NITC, which operates the largest tanker fleet in the Middle East and has the world's largest fleet of super tankers, transports Iranian crude and also acts as an independent entity in contracts with foreign concerns for crude oil transportation based on prevailing international freight rates.

UK unemployment falls to new 43-year low but pay growth slows

UK unemployment dropped to a new 43-year low in the three months through June but the pace of wage growth eased. The jobless rate stood at 4 percent, the least since February 1975, the Office for National Statistics said on Tuesday. Economists had expected it to stay at 4.2 percent. The decline helps to explain why the Bank of England increased interest rates this month. Policy makers believe inflationary pressures are building in the labor market as skill shortages force some employers to raise wages to attract and retain staff. There was little sign of overall wages taking off in the latest data -- pay growth slowed to a nine-month low of 2.4 percent between April and June -- but the BOE sees a pickup toward 3.5 percent this year. For policy, much depends on productivity. Without a significant improvement, firms may find their profit margins coming under pressure and increase prices to compensate. Flash figures for the second quarter show output per hour rose 0.4 percent, leaving productivity up just 1.5 percent on the year. The pound initially climbed after the data, before paring gains and trading 0.2 percent higher at \$1.2790 as of 9:41 a.m. in London. The market-implied probability of another BOE rate hike in May 2019 edged up to about 45 percent, from 39 percent on Monday.

**Rate hikes** BOE officials expect unemployment to fall to 3.9 percent this year and Governor Mark Carney has signaled that further rate hikes will be needed to return inflation to the 2 percent target, assuming Britain avoids a chaotic departure from the European Union next year. Wage growth excluding bonuses slowed to 2.7 percent, the weakest since January but still ahead of the 2.4 percent rate of inflation. Upward pressure on settlements is expected to come from the public sector, where millions of workers will this year benefit from the easing of a cap on pay increases in place since 2010. There were some signs of weakness in the labor market report. While vacancies were at a record, the jobless rate fell thanks to a drop in economic activity, and employment rose by just 42,000, less than half the increase expected. The employment rate dipped to 75.6 percent. The increase in employment over the past year was driven by UK nationals as foreigners arrive in fewer numbers since the Brexit vote. There was a record drop in employment among EU nationals, driven by citizens of the eight countries that joined the bloc in 2004. Separate figures showed a record drop in the number of people on a zero-hours contract in their main job, with 780,000 now working with no guarantee of hours from week to week. (Source: Bloomberg)

Top EU bank supervisor urges 'bold action' by Turkey to fix lira



bank bonds given the "tense" market environment and fallout from political risks, they said. **Unorthodox approach** While Turkey's central bank raised borrowing costs to 17.75 percent in June from 8 percent in April, it hasn't tightened since. In a July 24 policy decision, the first since Erdogan won re-election along with sweeping new powers, officials bowed to political pressure to refrain from raising rates again. Erdogan holds some unorthodox economic views, notably that cheaper credit leads to slower inflation. "A country that relies on foreign creditors for half of its financing needs can't lastingly ignore the rules of global financial markets without suffering damage," Wuermeling said in an interview in Frankfurt Monday. "Turkey shows the bad that

can happen if central bank independence is ignored." The lira rallied on Tuesday and was up 5.7 percent as of 9:54 a.m. in Istanbul. The currency has dropped more than 40 percent this year, making it the second worst global currency after Venezuela's bolivar. The depreciation has stoked an inflation rate that breached 15 percent last month, more than triple the official target. The Bloomberg banks index was up 0.5 percent as of 9:32 a.m. in Rome. Lenders with high exposure to Turkey such as Italy's UniCredit SpA and Spain's Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria were among the biggest gainers. The European Central Bank has the option of crisis-proofing lenders by ordering them to increase reserves for risks, he said. Wuermeling, who is a member of the ECB's supervisory board, said it hasn't yet seen the need to call an emergency meeting on Turkey. In times of turmoil, supervisors generally ask banks about their liquidity, their exposure to troubled markets and what collateral they hold. The Bundesbank doesn't see a need to make "supervisory demands," according to Wuermeling. While the country's banks, which have 20.8 billion euros (\$23.7 billion) of risk tied to Turkey, none of the major European lenders with extensive operations in Turkey are German. On the monetary policy front, the Bundesbanker said he doesn't see any reason to put in place currency swap lines to maintain Turkey's access to euros. "It's up to Turkish authorities to engage in confidence-fostering measures to ensure creditors don't withdraw their money," he said. (Source: Bloomberg)



# Oil edges up on Saudi output cut and Iran sanctions

Oil prices rose on Tuesday after Saudi Arabia said it had cut production in July, though concerns over a slowdown in global economic growth kept a lid on markets.

Benchmark Brent crude oil was up 50 cents at \$73.11 a barrel by 0855 GMT. U.S. light crude gained 55 cents to \$67.75.

Saudi Arabia told the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries that it had reduced crude output by 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 10.29 million bpd in July.

OPEC itself, using secondary sources, estimated in a report published on Monday that Saudi production was at a slightly higher level of 10.39 million bpd last month.

But both figures suggest the kingdom, de facto leader of OPEC, is keen to avoid a repeat of a global glut that has depressed prices over the past few years.

"We do not think that Saudi Arabia is interested in seeing Brent crude below \$70 a barrel," said SEB commodities analyst Bjarne Schieldrop.

Saudi Arabia is OPEC's biggest producer and the only major exporter that can easily adjust output to balance global supply.

The lower Saudi output comes at a time



of expected export declines from Iran as the United States re-imposes sanctions on Tehran's oil industry.

But output from non-OPEC countries,

particularly the United States, is rising quickly, limiting demand for OPEC oil.

OPEC expects oil supply by countries outside the cartel to increase by 2.13

million bpd next year, 30,000 bpd more than forecast last month, with much of the increase coming from new U.S. shale production.

U.S. oil output from seven major shale basins is expected to rise 93,000 bpd in September to 7.52 million bpd, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said in a monthly report on Monday.

Global oil demand is also rising, but not as fast as supply.

The OPEC report said it expected world oil demand to grow by 1.43 million bpd in 2019, down from 1.64 million bpd in 2018.

OPEC said the demand slowdown would come on the back of potentially lower economic growth as a result of trade disputes between the United States and China as well as turmoil in emerging markets.

China's economy is showing further signs of cooling as the United States prepares to impose even tougher trade tariffs, with investment in the first seven months of the year slowing to a record low and retail sales softening, data showed on Tuesday.

(Source: Reuters)

## OPEC revises down global oil demand growth estimate

OPEC revised slightly down on Monday its estimates for global oil demand growth in 2018 and 2019, while it revised up—for yet another month—its forecast for non-OPEC supply growth.

In its Monthly Oil Market Report published on Monday, OPEC revised down its oil demand growth forecast for 2018 by 20,000 bpd from the previous month's projection and now sees the world demand for oil increasing by 1.64 million bpd, due to weaker-than-anticipated demand in Latin America and the Middle East in the second quarter. Total global oil demand is expected to reach 98.83 million bpd this year, OPEC's latest estimates show. For 2019, global oil demand growth is expected to slow down from 2018, with growth forecast at 1.43 million bpd, some 20,000 bpd lower than OPEC's prediction last month. Next year, total world oil consumption is anticipated to cross the 100-million-bpd mark and reach 100.26 million bpd.

In 2019, the Americas will be the key OECD demand growth driver, while China and India will see the highest oil demand growth levels among non-OECD countries,

according to OPEC.

Referring to non-OPEC oil supply, OPEC revised up its forecast for 2018 by 73,000 bpd from the previous MOMR to 59.62 million bpd this year, an increase of 2.08 million bpd year-on-year, mostly due to higher-than-forecast Chinese supply. For 2019, the United States, Brazil, Canada, the United Kingdom, Kazakhstan, Australia, and Malaysia will be the main growth drivers, while Mexico and Norway are expected to see the largest declines, OPEC said, but noted that "the 2019 forecast is subject to many uncertainties."

"However, if any unexpected supply outages should occur due to natural disasters/technical shortcomings and these coincide with any geopolitical supply disruption, it could bring the market into an imbalanced situation," the cartel warned.

"Furthermore, investment has not yet returned to the levels seen prior to the price crash of 2014," OPEC said.

Apart from warning about insufficient investments and a much tighter oil market in case of several supply



disruptions at a time, OPEC cautioned that its current projections for the global economy are based on "no significant rise in trade tariffs" and the assumption that "current disputes will be resolved soon."

(Source: oilprice.com)

## U.S. dollar strength could soon become an 'unbearable burden' on the oil market, analyst says

The prospect of continued strength in the U.S. dollar over the coming months should constitute an even greater concern to bullish oil traders than an escalating trade war between the world's two largest economies, an analyst told CNBC on Monday.

Investors are currently seen weighing bullish factors that include potential supply disruptions to Iranian crude exports against more bearish indicators, such as broad greenback strength and a ramp-up in production by OPEC and its allied partners.

"There are lots of variables in the oil market, the most important of which is Iran. If 1 million barrels per day or more of Iranian exports go AWOL, the current fragile supply-demand balance will be upended — potentially sending oil prices above the May peak," Tamas Varga, senior analyst at PVM oil associates, said in a research note published Monday.

"The most obvious thing that could change this bullish view is not the U.S.-China trade war, but the strong dollar that, if (it) lasts, will put (an) almost unbearable burden on consuming countries," he added.

International benchmark Brent crude traded at around \$72.80 on Friday morning, little changed from the previous session, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) stood at \$67.43, down around 0.3 percent.

Meanwhile, the U.S. dollar climbed to a 13-month high against a basket of six major currencies on Monday, amid renewed financial turmoil in Turkey. The greenback edged around 0.1 percent higher during early afternoon deals, trading at 96.460 against major peers.

Typically, crude futures trade inversely to the greenback. A stronger dollar makes oil more expensive to much of the world, so oil prices tend to fall as the dollar rises.

To be sure, recent strength in the U.S. currency has fueled a cautious mood in oil markets. Yet, bullish sentiment found some support from expectations that looming U.S. sanctions against Iran could significantly hamper its crude exports.

"It feels like self-harm at the moment in the oil market," Paul Hickin, EMEA oil analyst at S&P Global Platts, told CNBC's "Squawk Box Europe" on Monday.

"With these risks from sanctions, from the escalating trade war with China and even from smaller local things like with Turkey, it all feeds into a risk to the demand picture further out," he added.

### Iran sanctions

The U.S. started reinstating sanctions against Tehran last week, with a second set of potentially more damaging measures due to follow in early November. Iran is OPEC's third-largest oil producer — behind Saudi Arabia and Iraq — and currently pumps around 3.65 million barrels per day, according to Reuters data.

The last time Iran was sanctioned, about half its current oil exports of some 2.4 million barrels were removed from the market. However, this time around, many energy analysts believe sanctions will remove far less, maybe around half the prior amount.

On Friday, the International Energy Agency (IEA) warned the energy market outlook could become "far less calm" as U.S.-imposed oil sanctions against Iran take effect.

(Source: CNBC)

RAYMOND WEIL  
GENEVE



SARMAN Co.

No. 1832, Dr. Shariati St., Next to Pol-E-Roomi, Tehran - Iran



## Saudi Arabia’s diplomacy has costs

By Bruce Riedel

Since the ascension to the throne of King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud in 2015 and the rise of his son Mohammed bin Salman first as defense minister and then as crown prince, the kingdom’s foreign policy has faced difficult choices in a fraught region. With rare exceptions the Saudis have lurched from one poor decision to the next; the Canada caper is the latest. The erratic diplomacy is hurting the kingdom.

The first tough decision of the new leadership is still their worst, to intervene in the Yemeni civil war. The Zaydi Shiite Houthis were on the doorstep of taking Aden, the last major city out of their control. Operation Decisive Storm turned into the world’s worst humanitarian catastrophe of our times. The Saudi bombing of a school bus this week is symptomatic of the Saudi coalition’s difficulties in avoiding civilian casualties in launching airstrikes against targets in a poor, backward country.

Two American presidents have colluded in the war, providing political and military support for the Saudi coalition — a black mark on our country. So has the United Kingdom. The war has no end in sight, and the total collapse of the poorest nation in the Arab world is an increasingly likely outcome, according to the United Nations.

The blockade of Qatar was also intended to produce a quick Saudi victory. The Qatari emir was excommunicated from Wahhabism and was then to be deposed. As in Yemen, the Saudi leadership had no concept of how to implement its decision; Riyadh and its allies had a goal but no serious scheme to achieve it. Some reliable evidence suggest that they were planning a military invasion of Qatar but U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson vetoed the plan (probably without President Donald Trump’s knowledge).

The Saudis ended up in open-ended and expensive quagmires in Yemen and Qatar with no strategy to achieve success. Fortunately for Riyadh, the usual leader of the international community, America, under Trump is largely oblivious to the damage done. The palace’s biggest success has been in courting a president who does not care about human rights, humanitarian catastrophes or regional stability. The relationship was cemented by Trump’s visit to Riyadh last year and Prince Mohammed’s trip to the United States this year. A visit to Washington by the king is in the works.

Congress, on the other hand, is turning against the kingdom, as is the press and the public. Mohammed is increasingly seen as an autocrat who can’t tolerate any dissent, rather than as a modernizer opening up the country. Criticism and dissent is not tolerated, even if it is the dissenting opinion of women who fought for the right to drive in the only country in the world that ever made driving a gender-based issue.

Indeed, the international business community has come to a very different conclusion about the country’s policies, especially in the wake of Mohammed’s shakedown of his own people last fall to pay for his expensive adventures. Hundreds were detained without charge, and then forced to turn over their assets to the government. Foreign direct investment in the kingdom dropped 80% from over \$7 billion in 2016 to \$1.4 billion in 2017, according to the United Nations, and down from over \$12 billion when King Abdullah was still on the throne. Jordan and Oman each attracted more foreign investment last year than Saudi Arabia. The number of companies also fell significantly. Concerns about the rule of law and arbitrary detention are also encouraging capital flight.

Foreign investment is crucial to Saudi Arabia’s ambition to diversify the economy and create new cities; Vision 2030 needs robust foreign investment. It was entirely predictable that the erratic policies of the royal palace would discourage investors who value stability and predictability — open-ended wars and feuds do not encourage confidence in decision-making.

The Saudi decision to expel the Canadian ambassador from Riyadh, freeze trade ties and withdraw 15,000 Saudis from Canadian schools and hospitals in response to the Canadian foreign minister protesting the detention of female critics is another poor call by the Saudi leadership. Saudi flights to Canada was halted Aug. 14. This is reckless. More Saudis than Canadians will have their lives disrupted.

Riyadh is undoubtedly pleased by the weak response of Washington to the Saudi moves; the administration has again shown its total disregard for human rights. But the Saudis have gotten little concrete support from their Arab allies in the Canada boycott.

The most disturbing piece of the Saudi war on Canada is a tweet. It was quickly removed, but it raises profound questions about the kingdom and its current leadership — questions Salman should very much want to avoid. The tweet, which was posted in English, French and Arabic, showed a picture of a passenger plane descending into Toronto and was accompanied by a threat against anyone who criticizes the kingdom.

The message was clear: Toronto will suffer a catastrophic terrorist attack like 9/11. It was also an implicit endorsement of the 2001 al-Qaeda attacks on America.

The U.S. and Canadian Intelligence services ought to be seeking the answer to who posted such a threat. The press has linked the site involved to the royal palace but that is unconfirmed. The timing suggests that it was posted by parties in the know about what the government was planning to do. The Saudi media is carefully controlled by the palace. The quick withdrawal of the message does not alter the fact that it was sent for a purpose — indeed that may have been the intention.

Conspiracy theorists have long claimed that the Saudi government was either deliberately blind to the al-Qaeda 9/11 plot, or, worse, complicit in it. The evidence and multiple investigations do not support such theories. But they remain persistent and at least one points a finger at one of the king’s sons, who died under allegedly suspicious circumstances. That theory is laid out in a book titled “Secrets of the Kingdom.” The Toronto photo tweet will only reinforce questions about Saudi behavior.

The entire spat is certain to further discourage investment in Saudi Arabia. It is very much like a similar tangle with Sweden last year. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is standing strong in his position, as he should. He should go further and suspend Canada’s \$12 billion arms deal for infantry fighting vehicles with the kingdom until the war in Yemen ends. That would get the Saudis’ attention. America should stand with its friend and ally and suspend its own arms supplies to the kingdom until it stops the war.

(Source: Al Monitor)

# Watch out Trump, China is taking Africa from under your nose

By David A. Andelman

Look out Donald Trump, while you’re not watching, China is quietly stealing a continent from you. And India may not be far behind.

Currently, the battle for supremacy on the African continent is being fought out between the leaders of Asia’s two superpowers -- China and India -- and, for the most part, the United States is nowhere to be seen.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi all but tripped over each other last month crisscrossing the continent on personal goodwill visits.

Meanwhile, the President of the African Development Bank had to come hat in hand to Washington, where, a source with knowledge of the situation told me, all he got to see were some officials in the Treasury Department

President Trump has still not visited the continent and has not announced plans to do so.

Why should we care? China and India care deeply. After all, Africa is home to Nigeria -- poised to become the world’s third most populous country and all the challenges that poses in terms of more jobs for an increasingly youthful population, not to mention food and infrastructure.

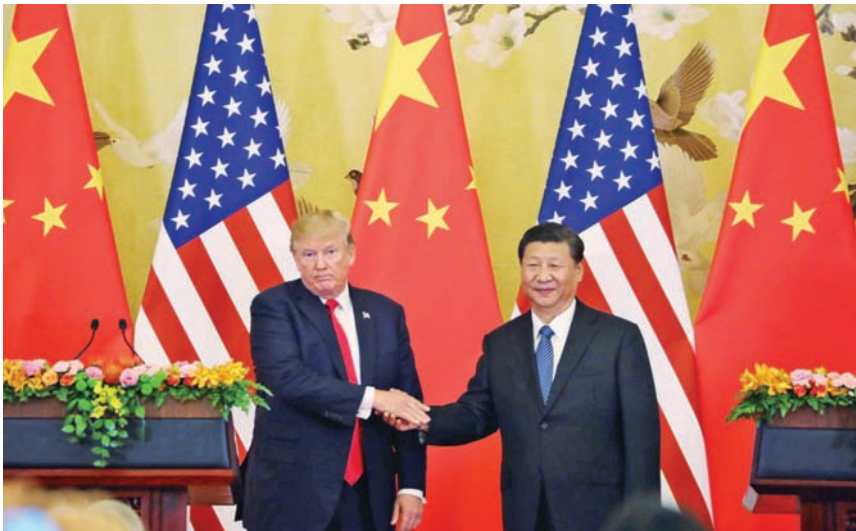
But it’s also where critical, strategically essential minerals including lanthanum, cerium and neodymium, essential for the electric cars of the future, are located.

And as Akinwumi Adesina, the President of the African Development Bank, told me this week, “there are 400 million hectares of arable land in the savannas of Africa” that will “determine the future of food in the world.”

Not surprisingly, Modi announced in an address to the Ugandan Parliament, the first by a serving Indian Prime Minister, that India would be opening 18 new embassies, “deepen[ing] our partnership and engagement across the vast expanse of Africa.”

Xi came with an even grander proposal -- membership in China’s mega development project: the Belt and Road initiative, initially involving development of massive land and trading corridors across Eurasia and extending its scope even more broadly. Already, it has loaned some \$94 billion to African governments and state-owned companies.

But these Chinese-led initiatives and this push into Africa have only been accompanied by considerable peril and deep challenges to the United States and its interests there.



U.S. President Donald Trump, left, and Chinese President Xi Jinping hold their joint press conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Thursday, Nov. 9, 2017.

## As China and the U.S. are embarking on a virulent trans-Pacific trade war, China is embedding itself in country after country across Africa.

Public debt in sub-Saharan Africa has soared from 28.5% of gross domestic product in 2012 to 48% of GDP this year, according to the International Monetary Fund, meaning broad swaths of the continent must use large chunks of their output just to service their debt.

All too often, pledged against this debt are the natural resources ranging from oil in Nigeria and Angola to rare minerals in Congo and deeply important geo-strategic locations like Djibouti.

At the same time, two-way trade between the U.S. and Africa has plummeted from roughly \$142 million in 2008 to \$55 million last year, largely because the U.S. has become increasingly energy self-sufficient, removing the need for African crude oil.

Meanwhile, as China and the U.S. are embarking on a virulent trans-Pacific trade war, China is embedding itself in country after country across Africa.

Take Djibouti, the tiny nation barely the size of Vermont, which occupies a strategic corner of Africa overlooking the Gulf of Aden,

through which some 12.5% to 20% of global trade passes annually.

The U.S. maintains Camp Lemonnier with 4,000 personnel stationed in what the Navy describes as “the primary base of operations for U.S. Africa Command in the Horn of Africa.”

As it happens, the base is located not far from a massive new billion dollar Doraleh Container Terminal complex that includes roads and a hotel, in addition to the port, all built by Dubai-based DP World, the mammoth owner and operator of ports and related facilities in more than 40 countries. Last year, China opened its first overseas military base right next door.

On February 22, armed Djibouti troops, without any warning, seized control of the DP World facility and claimed it for Djibouti’s government.

The London Court of International Arbitration ruled the seizure illegal.

“Before the Chinese arrived, we had no problems here,” Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem,

## Pakistan’s 72nd Independence Day celebrated in Tehran

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** TEHRAN — Pakistan’s 72nd Independence Day was celebrated in Tehran with traditional fervor. An impressive ceremony was held in this morning at the Residence of Ambassador of Pakistan in which a large number of members of Pakistani community from all walks of life participated.

The ceremony commenced with hoisting of the national flag by Ambassador Riffat Masood whilst the children from Pakistan Embassy International School and College, Tehran



TEHRAN: AMBASSADOR OF PAKISTAN TO IRAN RIFFAT MASOOD AND OTHERS ARE ADDRESSING PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CEREMONY IN TEHRAN ON AUGUST 14, 2018.

recited the national anthem. The messages of the honorable President Mammoun Hussain and Prime Minister Justice (Rtd) Nasir-ul-Mulk were read out on this auspicious occasion.

Ambassador Riffat Masood, in her address, extended felicitations to members of the Pakistani community living in Iran on the Independence Day and urged them to renew

their pledge to serve their country with dedication.

The Ambassador said that Pakistan was moving on the path of democracy and this is the third parliament being convened. Referring to the oath taking ceremony of the newly elected parliamentarians, she described it as a victory of the people of Pakistan. She said the participation of youth, women and minorities in the recent elections was high and encouraging, which is a sign of continuation of democratic process in the country. Referring to the scourge of terrorism and extremism in the country during the past years, she said the anti-terrorism operations of Zarb e Azb and Radd ul Fassad launched by the armed forces have broken the back of terrorists. She said the law and order situation in the country has also improved.

The Ambassador said the people and the government have joined hands for the progress and development of the country and several mega project are underway which would bring economic stability in Pakistan.

Referring to the Kashmir issue, the Ambassador said Pakistan will not leave the Kashmiri brothers alone and would continue to stand with them extending full support in their just struggle to achieve self-determination.

Saying that several posters have been placed on billboards in Tehran and Mashhad with congratulatory message of Iran’s Supreme leader on the occasion of Pakistan’s Independence Day, the Ambassador described it as a sign of deep Pakistan-Iran friendship. A group of students from Pakistan Embassy International School and College sung national songs.

The ceremony ended with prayer for peace and prosperity of Pakistan.



TEHRAN: AMBASSADOR OF PAKISTAN TO IRAN RIFFAT MASOOD HOISTING NATIONAL FLAG ON PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY IN TEHRAN ON AUGUST 14, 2018.

## The Jordanian ‘No’

By Mohammed Abu Rumman

Jordan has barely emerged from one diplomatic battle in the aftermath of the Trump administration’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, before being engaged in another. This one is about Washington’s attempt to abolish the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) by reducing and then eventually cancelling U.S. donations to the agency, which make up 40 per cent of its total budget, both operational and emergency.

An important report published by Foreign Policy magazine, reveals Jared Kushner’s plan for UNRWA; it is he, you may recall, who oversees U.S. policy on the “deal of the century”. The report contains serious leaks about the administration’s real intentions behind its position; as stated clearly, the U.S. wants to strip millions of Palestinian of their refugee status. A large number of them are in Jordan.

“The Trump administration appears ready

to reset the terms of the Palestinian refugee issue in Israel’s favor,” said the report, “as it did on another key issue in December, when Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.” This means that the deal of the century is in full swing with the influence of the powerful team in Washington, which is focusing more on Israel’s interests than the Israeli right-wing itself is.

Perhaps these are the facts that prompted former Jordanian Prime Minister Taher Al-Masri to wonder indignantly, in response to the leaks regarding the date of the deal’s proposal or postponement, what is actually left of it. We can read the same gist in another important article by Robert Fisk in Britain’s Independent. We are facing hasty U.S. action to end the final solution issues: Jerusalem, refugees and even the Jewish identity of Israel, as resolved by its recently approved Nation State Law.

Jordan has been aware of the dimensions of what is happening, and about five months ago rushed to prepare the Rome Conference

in support of UNRWA in order to secure alternative financial support that would counter the political agenda behind the attempts to eliminate the agency altogether. The Hashemite Kingdom announced at the time that countries pledged \$100 million in donations, out of the \$450 million needed by UNRWA.

There are 122,000 students in Jordan studying in UNRWA schools, and around 7,000 people work in them. In light of the current economic and financial situation in the Kingdom, it would be a huge burden to the state if the world were to abandon its responsibilities to fund the UN agency.

However, what is more important to Jordan than all of this is that UNRWA is also an issue of the Kingdom’s national security, according to a senior Jordanian official. This was told to the Americans very clearly when they offered Jordan direct U.S. aid as an alternative to UNRWA. Jordan said, “No.”

King Abdullah’s position was clear:

chief executive of DP World, told me in an interview. “But as soon as the Chinese moved in, of course, the Chinese basically loaned them more than what they needed — to the point there the government became helpless.”

China has failed to take any note of this, while the Djibouti government has said it was simply rewriting the terms of its contract with DP. The London Arbitration Court disagreed and termed it an outright seizure.

Sultan Sulayem paused and continued, “What is killing Africa is the infrastructure is collapsing and the only way to improve it is through public-private partnerships. And now, after Djibouti, who is going to invest?”

Djibouti is hardly the only African nation to be seduced by what would appear to be easy Chinese money that will be difficult if not impossible to repay without selling its patrimony of raw materials at wholesale prices, thereby holding them hostage to or tying them ever closer to the Chinese sphere.

Nigeria agreed to a three-year \$2.5 billion currency swap to boost its reserves with the understanding that the yuan would become a Nigerian reserve currency.

The African Development Bank, Adesina told me, has a number of programs designed to stem this drift away from western-style capitalism. But China’s commitments may be simply too large and too seductive.

The U.S. has few such profound ties to Africa. Yet it has become quite clear since the late years of the Obama administration that Africa is where instability can quickly morph into direct attacks on American security. Al Qaeda and ISIS have discovered vast new reservoirs and support in terms of manpower, funding and easy plunder in several African nations.

American troops have begun dying in terrorist incidents, most recently in Niger, where four U.S. soldiers died in an ambush by ISIS. Yet American interests diverge quite dramatically from China’s in many corners of this complex continent. China has little interest in building strong, democratic institutions and states. Its goal is to create dependencies that will advance its own agenda of control and security.

So, it is long past time for Trump to pay more than lip service to Africa’s needs and undertake a substantive visit to this region where he is losing a vast and potentially quite deadly war.

(Source: CNN)

## he believes that the UNRWA-Palestinian refugee issue is one of the final status issues in the Palestinian cause along with Jerusalem, Israel’s and Palestine’s borders, sovereignty and land. It is, indeed, a political issue before being a humanitarian, financial or economic issue.

The decision-makers in Amman view the UNRWA issue from this critical perspective and believe that, as much as it affects the Palestinian cause, it is also linked to Jordan’s domestic situation at various levels.

Unfortunately, on the Arab side, Jordan is fighting the UNRWA battle on its own. The question remains that if the threat of stopping U.S. support is ultimately in favor of Israel and the liquidation of the Palestinian cause, can’t the Arabs, at the very least, say, “We will offer ourselves as the full financial alternative to support the Palestinian refugees, as a form of a strong Arab power card, which we will lose in the event that Kushner’s project is implemented?”

(Source: Middle East Eye)



# Why Trump cancelled Iran Deal

By Eric Zuesse

The following is entirely from open online sources that I have been finding to be trustworthy on these matters in the past. These sources will be linked-to here; none of this information is secret, even though some details in my resulting analysis of it will be entirely new.

It explains how and why the bottom-line difference between Donald Trump and Barack Obama, regarding U.S. national security policies, turns out to be their different respective estimations of the biggest danger threatening the maintenance of the U.S. dollar as the world's leading or reserve currency. This has been the overriding foreign-policy concern for both Presidents.

Obama placed as being the top threat to the dollar, a breakaway of the EU (America's largest market both for exports and for imports) from alliance with the United States. He was internationally a Europhile. Trump, however, places as being the top threat to the dollar, a breakaway of Saudi Arabia and of the other Gulf Arab oil monarchies from the United States. Trump is internationally a Sunni-phile: specifically a protector of fundamentalist Sunni monarchs — but especially of the Saudis themselves — and they hate Shia and especially the main Shia nation, Iran.

Here's how that change, to Saudi Arabia as being America's main ally, has happened — actually it's a culmination of decades. Trump is merely the latest part of that process of change. Here is from the U.S. State Department's official historian, regarding this history: By the 1960s, a surplus of U.S. dollars caused by foreign aid, military spending, and foreign investment threatened this system [the FDR-established 1944 Bretton Woods gold-based U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency], as the United States did not have enough gold to cover the volume of dollars in worldwide circulation at the rate of \$35 per ounce; as a result, the dollar was overvalued. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson adopted a series of measures to support the dollar and sustain Bretton Woods: foreign investment disincentives; restrictions on foreign lending; efforts to stem the official outflow of dollars; international monetary reform; and co-operation with other countries. Nothing worked. Meanwhile, traders in foreign exchange markets, believing that the dollar's overvaluation would one day compel the U.S. government to devalue it, proved increasingly inclined to sell dollars. This resulted in periodic runs on the dollar.

It was just such a run on the dollar, along with mounting evidence that the overvalued dollar was undermining the nation's foreign trading position, which prompted President Richard M. Nixon to act, on August 13, 1971 [to end the convertibility of dollars to gold].

When Nixon ended the gold-basis of the dollar and then in 1974 secretly switched to the current oil-basis, this transformation of the dollar's backing, from gold to oil, was intended to enable the debt-financing (as opposed to the tax-financing, which is less acceptable to voters) of whatever military expenditure would be necessary in order to satisfy the profit-needs of Lockheed Corporation and of the other U.S. manufacturers whose only markets are the U.S. Government and its allied governments, as well as of U.S. extractive industries such as oil and mining firms, which rely heavily upon access to foreign natural resources, as well as of Wall Street and its need for selling debt and keeping interest-rates down (and stock-prices — and therefore aristocrats' wealth — high and rising). This 1974 secret agreement between Nixon and King Saud lasts to the present day, and has worked well for both aristocracies. It met the needs of the very same “military-industrial complex” (the big U.S. Government contractors) that the prior Republican President, Dwight Eisenhower, had warned might take control of U.S. foreign policies. As Bloomberg's Andrea Wong on 30 May 2016 explained the Nixon system that replaced the FDR system, “The basic framework was strikingly simple. The U.S. would buy oil from Saudi Arabia and provide the kingdom military aid and equipment. In return, the Saudis would plow billions of their petrodollar revenue back into Treasuries and finance America's spending.”

This new system didn't only supply a constant flow of Saudi tax-money to the U.S. Government; it supplied a constant flow of new sales-orders and profits to the military firms that were increasingly coming to control the U.S. Government — for the benefit of both aristocracies: the Saudis, and America's billionaires.

That was near the end of the FDR-produced 37-year period of U.S. democratic leadership of the world, the era that



had started at Bretton Woods in 1944. It came crashing to an end not in 1974 (which was step two after the 1971 step one had ended the 1944 system) but on the day when Ronald Reagan entered the White House in 1981. The shockingly sudden ascent, from that moment on, of U.S. federal Government debt (to be paid-off by future generations instead of by current taxpayers) is shown, right here, in a graph of “U.S. Federal Debt as Percent of GDP, 1940-2015”, where you can see that the debt had peaked above 90% of GDP late in WW II between 1944-1948, and then plunged during Bretton Woods, but in 1981 it started ascending yet again, until reaching that WW II peak for a second time, as it has been ever since 2010, when Obama bailed-out the mega-banks and their mega-clients, but didn't bail out the American public, whose finances had been destroyed by those bankers' frauds, which Obama refused to prosecute; and, so, economic inequality in America got even more extreme after the 2008 George W. Bush crash, instead of less extreme afterward (as had always happened in the past).

Above 90% debt/GDP during and immediately following WW II was sound policy, but America's going again above 90% since 2010 has reflected simply an aristocratic heist of America, for only the aristocracy's benefit — all of the benefits going only to the super-rich.

Another, and more-current U.S. graph shows that, as of the first quarter of 2018, this percentage (debt/GDP) is, yet again, back now to its previous all-time record high of 105-120%, which had been reached only in 1945-1947 (when it was justified by the war).

Currently, companies such as Lockheed Martin are thriving as they had done during WW II, but the sheer corruption in America's military spending is this time the reason, no World War (yet); so, this time, America is spending like in an all-out-war situation, even before the Congress has issued any declaration of war at all. Everybody except the American public knows that the intense corruptness of the U.S. military is the reason for this restoration of astronomical ‘defense’ spending, even during peace-time. A major poll even showed that ‘defense’ spending was the only spending by the federal Government which Americans in 2017 wanted increased; they wanted all other federal spending to be reduced (though there was actually vastly more corruption in military spending than in any other type — the public have simply been hoodwinked).

But can the U.S. Government's extreme misallocation of wealth, from the public to the insiders, continue without turning this country into a much bigger version of today's Greece? More and more people around the world are worrying about that. Of course, Greece didn't have the world's reserve currency, but what would happen to the net worths of America's billionaires if billionaires worldwide were to lose faith in the dollar? Consequently, there's intensified Presidential worrying about how much longer foreign investors will continue to trust the oil-based dollar.

America's political class now have two competing ideas to deal with this danger, Obama's versus Trump's, both being about how to preserve the dollar in a way that best serves the needs of ‘defense’ contractors, extractive firms, and Wall Street. Obama chose Europe (America's largest market) as America's chief ally (he was Euro-centric against Russia); Trump chose the owner of Saudi

Arabia (he's Saudi-Israeli centric against Iran) — that's the world's largest weapons-purchaser, as well as the world's largest producer of oil (as well as the largest lobbies).

The Saudi King owns Saudi Arabia, including the world's largest and most valuable oil company, Aramco, whose oil is the “sweetest” — the least expensive to extract and refine — and is also the most abundant, in all of the world, and so he can sell petroleum at a profit even when his competitors cannot. Oil-prices that are so low as to cause economic losses for other oil companies, can still be generating profits — albeit lowered ones — for King Saud; and this is the reason why his decisions determine how much the global oil-spigot will be turned on, and how low the global oil-price will be, at any given time. He controls the value of the U.S. dollar. He controls it far more directly, and far more effectively, than the EU can. It would be like, under the old FDR-era Bretton Woods system, controlling the exchange-rates of the dollar, by raising or lowering the amount of gold produced. But this is liquid gold, and King Saud determines its price.

Furthermore, King Saud also leads the Gulf Cooperation Council of all other Arab oil monarchs, such as those who own UAE — all of them are likewise U.S. allies and major weapons-buyers.

In an extraordinarily fine recent article by Pepe Escobar at Asia Times, “Oil and gas geopolitics: no shelter from the storm”, he quotes from his not-for-attribution interviews with “EU diplomats,” and reports:

After the Trump administration's unilateral pull-out from the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), European Union diplomats in Brussels, off the record, and still in shock, admit that they blundered by not “configuring the eurozone as distinct and separate to the dollar hegemony”. Now they may be made to pay the price of their impotence via their “outlawed” trade with Iran. ...

As admitted, never on the record, by experts in Brussels; the EU has got to reevaluate its strategic alliance with an essentially energy independent US, as “we are risking all our energy resources over their Halford Mackinder geopolitical analysis that they must break up [the alliance between] Russia and China.”

That's a direct reference to the late Mackinder epigone Zbigniew “Grand Chessboard” Brzezinski, who died dreaming of turning China against Russia.

In Brussels, there's increased recognition that US pressure on Iran, Russia and China is out of geopolitical fear the entire Eurasian land mass, organized as a super-trading bloc via the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Eurasia Economic Union (EAEU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), [and] the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), is slipping away from Washington's influence.

This analysis gets closer to how the three key nodes of 21st century Eurasia integration — Russia, China and Iran — have identified the key issue; both the euro and the yuan must bypass the petrodollar, the ideal means, as the Chinese stress, to “end the oscillation between strong and weak dollar cycles, which has been so profitable for US financial institutions, but lethal to emerging markets.” ...

It's also no secret among Persian Gulf traders that in the — hopefully unlikely — event of a US-Saudi-Israeli war in Southwest Asia against Iran, a real

scenario war-gamed by the Pentagon would be “the destruction of oil wells in the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council]. The Strait of Hormuz does not have to be blocked, as destroying the oil wells would be far more effective.”

And what the potential loss of over 20% of the world's oil supply would mean is terrifying; the implosion, with unforeseen consequences, of the quadrillion derivatives pyramid, and consequentially [consequently] of the entire Western financial casino superstructure.

In other words: it's not the ‘threat’ that perhaps, some day, Iran will have nuclear warheads, that is actually driving Trump's concern here (despite what Israel's concerns are about that matter), but instead, it is his concerns about Iran's missiles, which constitute the delivery-system for any Iranian warheads: that their flight-range be short enough so that the Saudis will be outside their range. (The main way Iran intends to respond to an invasion backed by the U.S., is to attack Saudi Arabia — Iran's leaders know that the U.S. Government is more dependent upon the Saudis than upon Israel — so, Iran's top targets would be Saudi capital Riyadh, and also the Ghawar oil field, which holds over half of Saudi oil. If U.S. bases have been used in the invasion, then all U.S. bases in the Middle East are also within the range of Iran's missiles and therefore would also probably be targeted.)

Obama's deal with Iran had focused solely upon preventing Iran from developing nuclear warheads — which Obama perhaps thought (mistakenly) would dampen Israel's (and its billionaire U.S. financial backers') ardor for the U.S. to conquer Iran. Israel had publicly said that their concern was Iran's possibility to become a nuclear power like Israel became; those possible future warheads were supposed to be the issue; but, apparently, that wasn't actually the issue which really drove Israel. Obama seems to have thought that it was, but it wasn't, actually. Israel, like the Saudis, want Iran conquered. Simple. The nuclear matter was more an excuse than an explanation.

With Trump now in the White House, overwhelmingly by money from the Israeli lobbies (proxies also for the Saudis) — and with no equivalently organized Jewish opposition to the pro-Israel lobbies (and so in the United States, for a person to be anti-Israel is viewed as being anti-Semitic, which is not at all true, but Israel's lies say it's true and many Americans unfortunately believe it) — Trump has not only the Saudis and their allies requiring him to be against Iran and its allies, but he has also got this pressure coming from Israel: both the Big-Oil and the Jewish lobbies drive him. Unlike Obama, who wasn't as indebted to the Jewish lobbies, Trump needs to walk the plank for both the Saudis and Israel.

In other words: Trump aims to keep the dollar as the reserve currency by suppressing not only China but also the two main competitors of King Saud: Iran and Russia. That's why America's main ‘enemies’ now are those three countries and their respective allies.

Obama was likewise targeting them, but in a different priority-order, with Russia being the main one (thus Obama's takeover of Ukraine in February 2014 turning it against Russia, next door); and that difference was due to Obama's desire to be favorably viewed by the residents in America's biggest export and import market, the EU, and so

his bringing another member (Ukraine) into the EU (which still hasn't yet been culminated).

Trump is instead building on his alliance with King Saud and the other GCC monarchs, a group who can more directly cooperate to control the value of the U.S. dollar than the EU can. Furthermore, both conservative (including Orthodox) Jews in the United States, and also white evangelical Protestants in the U.S., are strongly supportive of Israel, which likewise sides with the Arab oil monarchs against Iran and its allies. Trump needs these people's votes.

Trump also sides with the Saudis against Canada. That's a matter which the theorists who assert that Israel controls the U.S., instead of that the Saudis (allied with America's and Israel's billionaires) control the U.S., ignore; they ignore whatever doesn't fit their theory. Of course, a lot doesn't fit their theory (which equates “Jews” with “Israelis” and alleges that “they” control the world), but people whose prejudices are that deep-seated, can't be reached by any facts which contradict their self-defining prejudice. Since it defines themselves, it's a part of them, and they can never deny it, because to do so would be to deny who and what they are, and they refuse to change that. The Saudis control the dollar; Israel does not, but Israel does the lobbying, and both the Saudis and Israel want Iran destroyed. Trump gets this pressure not only from the billionaires but from his voters.

And, of course, Democratic Party billionaires push the narrative that Russia controls America. It used to be the Republican Joseph R. McCarthy's accusation, that the “commies” had “infiltrated”, especially at the State Department. So: Trump kicked out Russia's diplomats, to satisfy those neocons — the neoconservatives of all Parties and persuasions, both conservative and liberal.

To satisfy the Saudis, despite the EU, Trump has dumped the Iran deal. And he did it also to satisfy Israel, the main U.S. lobbyists for the Saudis. (Americans are far more sympathetic to Jews than to Arabs; the Saudis are aware of this; Israel handles their front-office.) For Trump, the Saudis are higher priority than Europe; even Israel (who are an expense instead of a moneybag for the U.S. Government) are higher priority than Europe. Both the Saudis and Israel together are vastly higher. And the Saudis alone are higher priority for Trump than are even Canada and Europe combined. Under Trump, anything will be done in order to keep the Saudis and their proxy-lobbyists (Israel) ‘on America's side’.

Consequently, Trump's political base is mainly against Iran and for Israel, but Obama's was mainly against Russia and for the EU. Obama's Democratic Party still are controlled by the same billionaires as before; and, so, Democrats continue demonizing Russia, and are trying to make as impossible as they can,

any rapprochement with Russia — and, therefore, they smear Trump for anything he might try to do along those lines.

Both Obama and Trump have been aiming to extend America's aristocracy's dominance around the world, but they employ different strategies toward that politically bipartisan American-aristocratic objective: the U.S. Government's global control, for the benefit of the U.S. aristocracy, at everyone else's expense. Obama and Trump were placed into the White House by different groups of U.S. billionaires, and each nominee serves his/her respective sponsors, no public anywhere — not even their voters' welfare.

An analogous example is that, whereas Fox News, Forbes, National Review, The Weekly Standard, American Spectator, Wall Street Journal, Investors Business Daily, Breitbart News, InfoWars, Reuters, and AP, are propagandists for the Republican Party; NPR, CNN, NBC, CBS, ABC, Mother Jones, The Atlantic, The New Republic, New Yorker, New York Magazine, New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Huffington Post, The Daily Beast, and Salon, are propagandists for the Democratic Party; but, they all draw their chief sponsors from the same small list of donors who are America's billionaires, since these few people control the top advertisers, investors, and charities, and thus control nearly all of the nation's propaganda. The same people who control the Government control the public; but, America isn't a one-Party dictatorship. America is, instead, a multi-Party dictatorship. And this is how it functions.

Trump cancelled the Iran deal because a different group of billionaires are now in control of the White House, and of the rest of the U.S. Government. Trump's group demonize especially Iran; Obama's group demonize especially Russia. That's it, short. That's America's aristocratic tug-of-war; but both sides of it are for invasion, and for war. Thus, we're in the condition of ‘permanent war for permanent peace’ — to satisfy the military contractors and the billionaires who control them. Any U.S. President who would resist that, would invite assassination; but, perhaps in Trump's case, impeachment, or other removal-from-office, would be likelier. In any case, the sponsors need to be satisfied — or else — and Trump knows this.

Trump is doing what he thinks he has to be doing, for his own safety. He's just a figurehead for a different faction of the U.S. aristocracy, than Obama was. He's doing what he thinks he needs to be doing, for his survival. Political leadership is an extremely dangerous business. Trump is playing a slightly different game of it than Obama did, because he represents a different faction than Obama did. These two factions of the U.S. aristocracy are also now battling each other for political control over Europe.

(Source: Modern Diplomacy)

First Announcement



Permit No. 1397.2258

**NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY  
AHVAZ-IRAN**

**TENDER NO. : 01-31-9646010**

**National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends  
to purchase the following goods**

Items	Material Description	Quantity
9	P/F"COOPER-BESSEMER" CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMPRESSOR TYPE: RB7-6B, RB6-5B & RB4-2B REF. COOPER-BESSEMER	255

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their “Intention To participate” Letter via fax to the following number, not later than 14 days after the second announcement.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 9, 876 EURO or 509,526,152, RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Iranian vendors shall submit their resume according to Quality Assessment Forms, available at: [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir)

**FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT**  
**Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex**  
**Kouy-e Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran**  
**Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437**

**Public Relations**  
**[www.shana.ir](http://www.shana.ir)**  
**[www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir)**  
**<http://iets.mporg.ir>**

روزنامه: تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۷/۵/۲۴ نوبت دوم: ۹۷/۵/۲۴



# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

## Apartment

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 Fereshteh  
200 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., unfurn  
spj, parking, elevator  
**\$2500**  
**Mr.Shayan: 09128440156**

Apt in a Garden Tower in  
Zafarani  
6<sup>th</sup> floor, 189 sq.m, furn  
1 master room with 2 Bdrs.  
parking, spj, good light, lobby  
man, cctv camera, servant  
**\$4500**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in a Garden Tower in  
Farmanieh  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, 225 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.  
fully furn, 3 Bathrooms parking  
**Mr.Shayan: 09128440156**

Apt in Elahieh  
2<sup>th</sup> floor, 90 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.  
furn, elevator, parking  
**\$1500**  
**Mr.Shayan: 09128440156**

Apt in Shahrak Qarb  
145 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., 2 bath rooms  
fully furn, parking  
**\$2300**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

## Villa

Duplex Villa in Fereshteh  
300 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., fully renovated  
green yard, parking  
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# Big data enables algorithm that predicts risk of developing deadly diseases

A new kind of genome analysis has been developed that is claimed to be able to combine a large volume of different genetic variants into a single polygenic risk score that can determine how likely a person is to develop a number of common diseases, including coronary artery disease and inflammatory bowel disease. It's hoped the tool can identify people at high risk of developing a disease, even when they don't exhibit warning signs.

It seems that not a day goes by without the discovery of yet another gene that is somewhat responsible for a certain disease hitting the headlines. However, the hurdle in implementing these discoveries into clinical applications is that the majority of diseases are polygenic in nature. This means that it rarely comes down to a single gene significantly increasing a person's risk for developing a certain disease, but is rather a combination of a large number of variants all coalescing to signal a meaningful risk.

A large research team of scientists from the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), and Harvard Medical School, has now developed a computational algorithm that can calculate a single polygenic risk score based on a variety of small genetic variants. This risk score is produced by compiling a massive number of small variants across an individual genome and reducing this mass of data into a single number that represents a person's risk factor for developing certain diseases.

"We've known for long time that there are people out there at high risk for disease based just on their overall genetic variation," explains Sekar Kathiresan, senior author on the new research. "Now, we're able to measure that risk using genomic data in a meaningful way. From a public health perspective, we need to identify these higher-risk segments of the population so we can provide appropriate care."

The research initially focused on developing algorithms for tracking five common but serious diseases: coronary artery disease, atrial fibrillation, type 2 diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, and breast cancer. Testing coronary artery disease, for example, involved an algorithm studying over 6.6 million different locations in a individual



**A new kind of genome analysis has been developed that is claimed to be able to combine a large volume of different genetic variants into a single polygenic risk score that can determine how likely a person is to develop a number of common diseases.**

genome. The dataset in the study encompassed more than 400,000 people from the UK Biobank database.

From that dataset the algorithm targeted eight percent of people that were three times more likely to develop coronary

artery disease just based on genetic variation. On closer inspection these results meant that less than one percent of people identified with the lowest polygenic risk scores developed coronary artery disease, while 11 percent of people with the top

scores developed the disease.

The researchers do note the current system has limitations that will need to be resolved before any kind of broader implementation. The current study was only using UK Biobank data composed mostly of people with European ancestry, so if algorithms were more widely applied they will need to be optimized for other geographical and ethnic groups with much more data.

"Ultimately, this is a new type of genetic risk factor," says Kathiresan. "We envision polygenic risk scores as a way to identify people at high or low risk for a disease, perhaps as early as birth, and then use that information to target interventions – either lifestyle modifications or treatments – to prevent disease. For heart attack, I foresee that each patient will have the opportunity to know his or her polygenic risk number in the near future, similar to way they can know their cholesterol number right now."

While the researchers do suggest this approach should be considered as something potentially implemented into future clinical contexts, there are undoubtedly a huge amount of legal and ethical issues that would need to be resolved before GPs could safely deliver polygenic risk scores to patients. Alongside the general concern often raised with genetic risk scores triggering undue anxiety when patients are delivered these kinds of results, security is also a profoundly important factor. It isn't hard to imagine medical insurers being keen to get their hands on polygenic risk scores so insurance premiums can be personalized based on how likely a person may be to develop certain diseases.

Ultimately this research is a compelling display of how big data can be crunched by modern computing technologies to generate results we could never have dreamed of just one or two decades ago. As these algorithms crunch more and more numbers they will inevitably increase their accuracy, meaning we can better tailor personalized medical treatments to prevent serious health issues.

The new research was published in the journal Nature Genetics.

(Source: New Atlas)

## New technique treats prostate cancer in just five radiotherapy sessions

A new clinical trial shows the benefits of an innovative form of radiation therapy, which delivers the radiation in only five sessions instead of the usual 37.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) estimate that prostate cancer affects over 160,000 people in the United States. In 2018, almost 30,000 people will die from the disease.

As with most forms of cancer, treatment options range from surgery to radiation therapy, hormone therapy, and chemotherapy.

Usually, radiotherapy involves 37 sessions. That said, a new clinical trial tests a radical form of radiotherapy that could reduce that number down to just five.

The trial examined the effects of stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SABR), a highly targeted form of radiotherapy that uses several beams of radiation at once.

The beams intersect at the tumor, delivering a high dose of radiation to the malignancy but a very low dose to the surrounding healthy tissue.

However, SABR may have some side effects, including tiredness, itchy or dry skin, and soreness or swelling where the treatment was applied. In the case of prostate cancer, radiation therapy may cause urinary problems, bowel problems, and even impotence.

In the new trial, however, the participants also benefited from SpaceOAR, which is a hydrogel previously shown to minimize the side effects of radiation therapy in prostate cancer.

The trial was jointly led by Suneil Jain, a clinical senior lecturer at Queen's University in Belfast, United Kingdom, together with Ciaran Fairmichael, a clinical research fellow also at Queen's University.

The researchers published the results of the trial in the British Journal of Radiology.

### ■ Spacer improves high-dose treatment

SpaceOAR is a minimally invasive hydrogel rectal spacer. Co-lead researcher Fairmichael explains. "One of the complications from using radiotherapy is the potential damage that can be inflicted on neighboring tissues."

"In this trial," he adds, "we are evaluating the performance of the SpaceOAR hydrogel which is inserted between the prostate gland and the rectum of the patient."

"This creates a greater distance between the prostate tumor and other tissues, which allows us to concentrate the radiotherapy dosage provided to the tumor and thus reducing the chance of radiation harming other tissues close to the tumor such as the bowel."

The trial tested the tolerability and toxicity of inserting this spacer in six people living with prostate cancer. The researchers used computed tomography (CT) scans to plan the insertion, delivered local anesthetic, and used CT scans again to assess the position of the spacer.

Inserting the spacer minimized the probability of side effects and reduced rectal bleeding. "This is one of the first studies to investigate the efficacy of a hydrogel spacer in prostate SABR treatments," write the authors.

(Source: Medical News Today)

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## Central Insurance of Iran's services to go online

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — Central Insurance of Iran, known as Bimeh Markazi, plans to provide a broad range of online services to its clients in the near future, the head of High Council of Insurance Gholamreza Soleimani said in a press release on Tuesday, ILNA reported.



The Central Insurance's system for management, supervision and notification for sales network (with Persian acronym of SANHAB) provide infrastructure for online services, he added.

"We should accelerate transformation in technology field since hesitation make us to remain behind the world," Soleimani said.

The development of SANHAB will solve a great part of the problem in the field of online supervision and services, he said.

The accurate information and the accessibility of the information have great impact on the insurance industry nationwide, he said.

## SOCIALLY SAFE

### How to shop online safely?

It's important to take steps to protect yourself when shopping online.

From the convenience of making purchases at your fingertips and next-day delivery to getting great deals and the endless catalogue of purchasable items, online shopping has only grown in popularity. While the increased availability of online shopping is convenient, it also makes it more lucrative for scammers to trick buyers into paying for goods they won't receive or obtain their personal information for financial gain. So, what can you do about it?



Being a safe and secure shopper starts with STOP. Take security precautions, think about the consequences of your actions online and enjoy the conveniences of technology with peace of mind while you shop online.

#### Online shopping tips

- Conduct research: When using a new website for purchases, read reviews and see if other consumers have had a positive or negative experience with the site.

- When in doubt, throw it out: Links in emails, posts and texts are often how cybercriminals try to steal your information or infect your devices.

- Personal information is like money: value it and protect it: When making a purchase online, be alert to the kinds of information being collected to complete the transaction. Make sure you think it is necessary for the vendor to request that information. Remember, you only need to fill out required fields at checkout.

- Use safe payment options: Credit cards are generally the safest option because they allow buyers to seek a credit from the issuer if the product isn't delivered or isn't what was ordered.

- Don't be disappointed: Read return policies and other website information so you know what to expect if the purchase doesn't go as planned.

- Protect your \$\$: When shopping, check to be sure the site is security enabled.

#### Shopping on the Go

Now you see me, now you don't: Some stores and other locations look for devices with WiFi or Bluetooth turned on to track your movements while you are within range. Disable WiFi and bluetooth when not in use.

Get savvy about WiFi hotspots: Limit the type of business you conduct over open public WiFi connections, including logging in to key accounts like email and banking. Adjust the security settings on your device to limit who can access your phone.

#### Basic safety and security tips

- Keep a clean machine: Keep all software on internet-connected devices – including PCs, smartphones and tablets – up to date to reduce risk of infection from malware.

- Lock down your login: Fortify your online accounts by enabling the strongest authentication tools available, such as biometrics, security keys or a unique one-time code through an app on your mobile device. Your usernames and passwords are not enough to protect key accounts like email, banking and social media.

- Make your password a sentence: A strong password is a sentence that is at least 12 characters long. Focus on positive sentences or phrases that you like to think about and are easy to remember (for example, "I love country music."). On many sites, you can even use spaces!

- Unique account, unique password: Having separate passwords for every account helps to thwart cybercriminals. At a minimum, separate your work and personal accounts and make sure that your critical accounts have the strongest passwords. (Source: staysafeonline.org)

# Iran to promote export of nano-tech products

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — The Communication and Information Technology Ministry plans to promote export of nanotechnology products.

The export of nano-tech products should be promoted since nanotechnology has a crucial role in improving efficiency, minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said on Monday, IRNA reported.

Azari Jahromi and vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari paid a visit to the Iran Nanotechnology Initiative Council on Monday.

Azari Jahromi was assigned as the head of the Iran-Indonesia joint nanotechnology commission according to an agreement between the countries in 2016.

"We should invest on countries like Indonesia and Malaysia and focus on special markets like medicine, petrochemistry or marine products," he said.

He urged the council to introduce the target companies in Indonesia and the ministry to facilitate the cooperation process.

Azari Jahromi said that the ministry will do some negotiation with the ministry of industries and mining to boost nano-tech exports.

Nanotechnology has a great capacity, which can be used in national products, he concluded.

During their visit, the secretary of the council Saeid Sarkar elaborate on the role of nanotechnology in industry and trade in Iran and worldwide.

The council began its activity since March 2017 and has already held 15 trade meetings in different fields of medicine, health, car, marine industry and textile with Indonesian companies, he said.

The council is now able to export an-



Communication and Information Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi (in the center) visits members of Iran Nanotechnology Initiative Council on Monday

### 'The export of nano-tech products should be promoted since nanotechnology has a crucial role in improving efficiency'

tibacterial textile, masterbatch and compound, anti-fouling paint, anti-corrosion coating as well as anti-cancer drugs.

Recognizing the great importance of nanotechnology, Iranians have had boost-

ed researches in the field year on year.

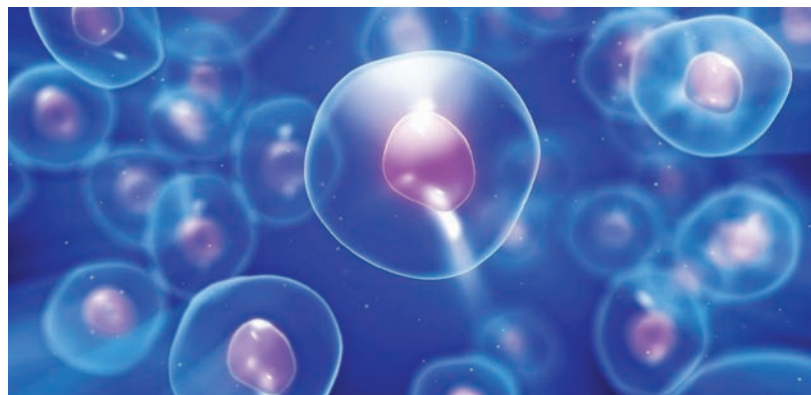
There are 257 companies active in this field, 33 percent of which working on nano-materials.

These companies have manufactured

376 different products using the nontech-nology, showing that this is a field with huge economic and practical advantages.

These products are exported to 47 different countries.

## Iran's stem cell council bidding for investment



**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — The Council for Stem Cell Sciences and Technologies plans to attract investors for research projects, the council's secretary Amirali Hamidieh announced on Tuesday, Mehr reported.

With the support of investors, the council can develop stem cell science, which leads to generate income for the country he said.

He said that the council will hold the third edition of the 3rd National Festival and International Congress on Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine.

The event, which focuses on the

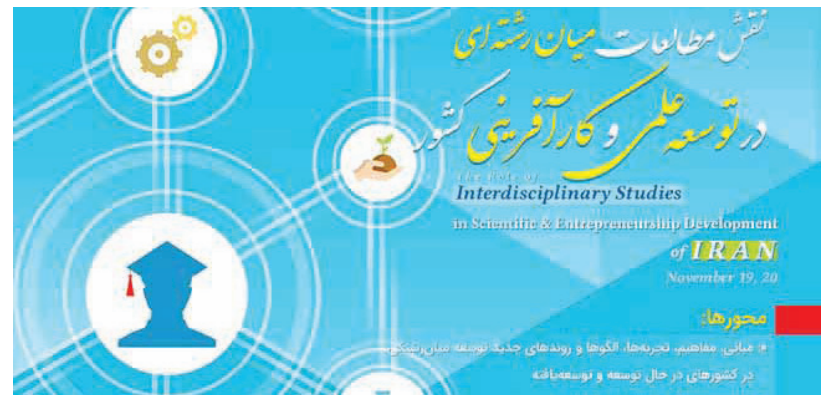
regenerative medicine and regenerative pharmacology, will be held from November 28 to December 1.

The festival will also host startup weekends and tech-market on the side-line of the event.

The national document of the Council for Stem Cell Sciences and Technologies was approved as part of the Iran's national scientific map in September 2013 at the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

Iran's headway towards stem cell sciences and regenerative medicine, despite limited investments, reveals the country's enormous potential to grow in this field.

## Conference to discuss impact of interdisciplinary studies on entrepreneurship



**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — The University of Tehran will hold a conference on November 19 and 20 on the role of interdisciplinary studies in scientific and entrepreneurship development of Iran, ecosystem.ir reported.

The event will be held at the campus of the University of Tehran in Karaj city, Alborz province.

Concepts, experiences and process of interdisciplinary studies in developed and developing countries, the structural needs, interdisciplinary, scientific and entrepreneurship development, and interdisciplinary, industry and university relationship are amongst the themes of the event.

The event aims to elaborate the importance of interdisciplinary studies in scientific development of the country and to highlight its role in entrepreneurship and job creation.

According to The Guardian, in modern world open, flexible boundaries are likely to become increasingly important for academics and students, as emphasis within universities shifts from structure to cooperation.

Everyone is set to benefit: researchers will receive wider input, ideas and energy, teaching staff will no longer feel excluded from higher-status activities, and students will gain experience and skills from being part of live projects.

## Days 1-30: The start-up checklist



Wouldn't it be great if there was a start-up cheat sheet for budding business owners? Well, now there is!

With the help of some of the country's top start-up businesses, we've compiled an essential checklist of the key tasks and activities that need to be considered in the first 100 days of starting any business.

As most people aren't familiar with the steps to start a business, this checklist covers everything you need to know pre-launch and post-launch; from market research to domain names and business banking. If you've got a business idea, then this checklist will help ensure your start-up hits the ground running...

#### Join an online business community

As well as talking to people you know and trust, joining an online business community such as Bizcrowd, which has around 35,000 members or the Startups forum will open the door to connecting with others who have faced similar quandaries. Pose questions or ask for feedback on your plans to get a sense of whether you're on the right track.

#### Define your customer profile

You need to know who you'll be selling to so draw up a customer profile by considering attributes such as age, gender, income, relationship status, hobbies, car ownership, housing type, and more.

(Source: startups.co.uk)

## What does it mean to be data driven?



It's not because someone is collecting huge amounts of data or is continuously looking into their dashboards or any other tools that he or she is data driven. The volume of data you are gathering and the way you follow-up on their evolution are only starting points in the path for being or becoming truly data driven.

#### What does it take to be (come) data driven?

Being data driven is a vision companies want to achieve. Reaching this objective requires three crucial elements. First, the mindset and the culture that is developed within the company. Second, the model that is applied in the day to day tasks. Third, the execution process

which is the connector between culture and model, between theory and practice. In short - operations. It describes how stakeholders will set the model in music in the unique context of their project based on the common culture they share. The execution process encompasses the interactions between stakeholders and the way decisions are made within the scope of the project.

Being data driven is a challenge for everyday's project. From making a successful media campaign to launching a new website or even running a business. Being data driven is not a project, it's a philosophy.

(Source: semetis.com)



# Engineered wood is fire retardant and super strong, scientists find

Engineers have created a new wood that could change what buildings are made of and takes just a few hours to make.

Scientists from Chinese institutions developed the new wood that won't catch fire, according to a new study. Published in Science on Friday, the study showed that the wood is just as strong as natural wood, unlike other engineered woods.

"This time-efficient strategy contrasts strikingly with the decades or hundreds of years needed to grow natural wood," the team of scientists wrote in their paper. "Our artificial woods exhibit not only good controllability in microstructures but also comparable mechanical properties with those of natural wood."

A natural polymer called lignin makes natural wood strong. Lignin binds small crystallites of cellulose together in a web-like structure. The scientists replicated lignin with resol, a synthetic polymer. Resol also has a web-like structure and can bind crystallites together to create strength.

### ■ Crystallites can be changed

The crystallites can be changed based on which wood someone wants. They can change the color or other properties by adding or switching out the crystallites that the resol holds together.



The engineered wood will adopt a cell-like structure when those crystallites cure, similar to natural wood's cell structure. When the wood is compressed, it's able to resist, just like natural wood.

The scientists were inspired by natural wood, which is why they copied so many of its components.

Other engineered wood, like the kind that's often used to build outdoor

**The crystallites can be changed based on which wood someone wants. They can change the color or other properties by adding or switching out the crystallites that the resol holds together.**

porches or fences, is less strong. Those plastic-wood composites are favored because people don't need to stain, paint, or sand them.

This wood is more effective than those plastic-wood composites due to its strength, but also its ability to resist fire because resol is fire retardant.

### ■ Residential building fires

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, there were 364,300 residential building fires in 2016. Of those fires, 1,800 were fatal and 7,000 resulted in injuries.

"Further, in contrast to natural wood, they demonstrate preferable corrosion resistance to humidity and acid with no decrease in mechanical properties," the team wrote. This means the wood could likely resist extreme weather events, allowing for even more protection.

It also provides thermal insulation, keeping people warmer inside their homes but also making the wood usable for environments like manufacturing that might need that protection.

"As a kind of biomimetic engineering materials, this new family of bioinspired polymeric woods is supposed to replace the natural wood when used in harsh environments," the scientists wrote.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Scientists find new properties of H2O

A team of scientists has uncovered new molecular properties of water -- a discovery of a phenomenon that had previously gone unnoticed.

Liquid water is known to be an excellent transporter of its own autoionization products; that is, the charged species obtained when a water molecule (H2O) is split into protons (H+) and hydroxide ions (OH). This remarkable property of water makes it a critical component in emerging electrochemical energy production and storage technologies such as fuel cells; indeed, life itself would not be possible if water did not possess this characteristic.

Water is known to consist an intricate network of weak, directional interactions known as hydrogen bonds. For nearly a century, it was thought that the mechanisms by which water transports the H+ and OH ions were mirror images of each other -- identical in all ways except for directions of the hydrogen bonds involved in the process.

### ■ Fundamental asymmetry

Current state-of-the-art theoretical models and computer simulations, however, predicted a fundamental asymmetry in these mechanisms. If correct, this asymmetry is something that could be exploited in different applications by tailoring a system to favor one ion over the other.

Experimental proof of the theoretical prediction has remained elusive because of the difficulty in directly observing the two ionic species. Different experiments have only provided glimpses of the predicted asymmetry.

A team of scientists at New York University, led by Professor Alexej Jerschow and including Emilia Silletta, an NYU postdoctoral fellow, and Mark Tuckerman, a professor of chemistry and mathematics at NYU, devised a novel experiment for nailing down this asymmetry. The experimental approach involved cooling water down to its so-called temperature of maximum density, where the asymmetry is expected to be



most strongly manifest, thereby allowing it to be carefully detected.

It is common knowledge that ice floats on water and that lakes freeze from the top.

### ■ Water molecules

This is because water molecules pack into a structure with lower density than that of liquid water -- a manifestation of the unusual properties of water: the density of liquid water increases just above the freezing point and reaches a maximum at four degrees Celsius (39 degrees Fahrenheit), the so-called temperature of maximum density; this difference in density dictates that liquid is always situated below ice.

By cooling water down to this temperature, the team employed nuclear magnetic resonance methods (the same type of approach is medically in magnetic resonance imaging) to show that the difference in lifetimes of the two ions reaches a maximum value (the greater the lifetime, the slower the transport). By accentuating the difference in lifetimes, the asymmetry became glaringly clear.

As noted previously, water consists of one oxygen atom and two hydrogen atoms, but the hydrogen atoms are relatively mobile and can hop from one molecule to another, and it is this hopping that renders the two ionic species so mobile in water.

(Source: Science Daily)

## Researchers discover the tiny brains of bees and wasps can recognize faces

Recognizing faces is essential for how we interact in complex societies, and is often thought to be an ability that requires the sophistication of the large human brain.

But new evidence we published in Frontiers in Psychology shows that insects such as the honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) and the European wasp (*Vespa vulgaris*) use visual processing mechanisms that are similar to humans', which enables reliable face recognition.

This is despite the tiny size of the insects' brains. They contain fewer than one million brain cells, compared with the 86 billion that make up a human brain.

Understanding what size of brain can enable complex tasks to be efficiently solved is certainly interesting, but also has practical implications.

### ■ Large brains evolved

It allows us to understand how large brains may have evolved, and how to think about designing artificial intelligence (AI) that might mirror the efficiency of biological brains.

We are really good at recognizing familiar faces. Think of the situation of meeting a friend at a train station where there are hundreds of people passing, all moving in different directions. Suddenly, a glimpse of a familiar face in the distance means we've found the right person.

This seems effortless, but AI solutions often struggle to recognize faces in complex situations.

Our expertise at recognizing faces is largely based on "holistic processing" -- the gluing together of different facial features to provide superior recognition.

This is thought to be a sophisticated cognitive process that develops with experience at viewing faces. Once we are familiar with a face, the different features -- like eyes, nose, mouth and ears -- are processed together as a "gestalt" (a unit that incorporates all elements) to allow us to reliably recognise individuals.

Interestingly, while holistic processing is most typically used for recognising faces,



when we become experts in other visual tasks -- like being a judge at dog shows or collecting classic cars -- then our brain also employs holistic processing to enable superior recognition abilities in those areas too.

### ■ Holistic processing

Holistic processing may therefore be a general principle for recognizing important objects.

This is useful more broadly, because it means that holistic processing could be of value for developing improved AI solutions, such as for fast and accurate identification of invasive plants in the rapidly growing AgTech industry.

We were interested to know how general the principle of holistic processing might be in different animals, so my colleagues and I set about testing how insects might solve facial recognition tasks.

The honeybee is a very accessible animal for understanding visual processing. Individual bees can be trained to learn complex problems in return for collecting a sweet sugary reward. Recently we developed methods for testing wasps in the same way.

Other evidence -- from a U.S. research group -- shows that paper wasps (*Polistes fuscatus*) can very reliably learn the faces of other paper wasps, and appear to have evolved specialized brain mechanisms for wasp face processing.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Omega Centauri probably doesn't have any sign of life, scientists say

Humans may need to do more space exploration to search for extraterrestrial life because researchers have discovered that Omega Centauri has none.

Omega Centauri is a densely packed global star cluster that is estimated to have around 10 million stars. The chunk of stars is located 16,000 light-years from Earth in the constellation Centaurus.

Because of the cluster's colossal size, it has been a subject of observation for decades. The stars span a staggering 150 light-years away and weigh around 4 million Suns.

Because of how big it is, this has led many people to believe that the stellar body contains exoplanets in its "Goldilocks Zone," a region where another world is far enough from its

star to have liquid water and life, just like Earth.

According to Stephen Kane, an associate professor of planetary astrophysics at the University of California, Riverside and lead author of the study, as the type of star cluster that exists across the universe, it is an intriguing area to look for habitability. Despite many stars that are concentrated on its core, the presence of exoplanets still remains unknown.

### ■ Sitting in the chunk's core

Because of this, Kane and his colleagues explored the cluster, hoping to find a place that would foster habitability. The team first looked at the age and temperature of around 500,000 stars sitting in the chunk's core.

The study revealed that the majority of the bodies has

suitable conditions to contain planets in the habitable zone. Kane stated that the core of Omega Centauri could possibly have a plethora of planetary systems sitting close to a host star that harbors habitable planets.

One example of such a system is a miniature version of the Milky Way called the TRAPPIST-1. The said system sits 40 light-years away from Earth and is one of the most promising locations to find alien life.

The densely packed stars in Omega Centauri's core presumably means that the bodies would interact with its neighbors. The forces that are made from the encounter would be too much to endure any form of microbial life on the planets situated in its habitable zones.

(Source: Tech Times)

## Chadormalu Co. Kicks Off Mapping Operations in D19 Zone: CEO

Eng. Mahmoud Nourian Chief Executive of Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company said that his company has kicked off mapping operation from Zone No. D19, the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

After organizing expert-level sessions and removal of some major concerns of the experts at the Department of Environment (DoE), mapping mineral zone number D19 started, he maintained.

As located in the vicinity of mining and mineral units and concentrate processing units, it is predicted that more than 100

million tons of iron ore can be extracted from Chadormalu Company's Mineral Zone No. D19.

Turning to the production performance of the company in the past year, he said, "72,660,000 tons of waste rock and also 15,195,000 tons of iron ore were produced in the past year (ended March 20, 2018)."

In the same direction, 3,517,000 tons of pellet, 515,300 tons of graded iron and also 428,000 tons of steel ingot were produced at the company in the past year, Nourian opined.

With regard to the expansion projects of the company, he added, "this year, construction operation of two new development projects for the company is underway, one of which is related to the Sponge Iron Production Unit with the capacity of 1,550,000 tons at large."

He pointed to Abarkuh Steel Ingot Smelting and Production project as the other development plan of the company, he said, adding, "a major portion of parts and equipment of these units have been totally provided in the country."



## Meteorite bombardment likely to have created the Earth's oldest rocks

Scientists have found that 4.02 billion year old silica-rich felsic rocks from the Acasta River, Canada - the oldest rock formation known on Earth - probably formed at high temperatures and at a surprisingly shallow depth of the planet's nascent crust.

The high temperatures needed to melt the shallow crust were likely caused by a meteorite bombardment around half a billion years after the planet formed. This melted the iron-rich crust and formed the granites we see today. These results were presented for the first time at the Goldschmidt conference in Boston on 14 August.



Scientists have long known that the Acasta rocks are different to the majority of felsic rocks we see today, such as the granites widely used as a building or decorative material.

Scientists believe that the primitive crust largely comprised dark, silica-poor mafic rocks, so there has been a question over how the Acasta River felsic rocks could have formed.

"Our modelling shows that the Acasta River rocks derived from the melting of pre-existing iron-rich basaltic rock, which formed the uppermost layers of crust on the primitive Earth", said team leader Tim Johnson, from Curtin University, Perth.

"We used phase equilibria and trace element modelling to show that the Acasta River rocks were produced by partial melting of the original mafic rocks at very low pressures. It would have needed something special to produce the 900°C temperatures needed to generate these early felsic rocks at such low pressures, and that probably means a drastic event, most likely the intense heating caused by meteorite bombardment.

We estimate that rocks within the uppermost 3km of mafic crust would have been melted in producing the rocks we see today.

(Source: eureka! org)

## Team discovered a colorful new seahorse the size of a grain of rice

Researchers have discovered a tiny new species of pygmy seahorse that inhabits the boulder-strewn coasts of Japan.

They're easy to overlook, as their color makes them look like little bits of floating seaweed. Their coloration is "very special," says Kevin Conway, associate professor and curator of fishes at Texas A&M University. "It's like a seahorse wearing a paisley pattern."

Scientists have named the creature *Hippocampus japapigu* -- using the Latin for "Japan pig," the name adopted for it by divers who have seen it in southeastern Japan.

It earned that appellation "because to the locals, it resembles a tiny baby pig," says Graham Short, an ichthyologist at the California Academy of Sciences and lead author of a study describing the new species in the journal ZooKeys.

Although the tiny seahorses have been observed by divers for several years, it wasn't until Short and colleagues began to study them that the researchers realized they hadn't been described before, and were unique.

The new species differs in several respects from its cousins, for example possessing an odd ridge on its upper back made of triangular struts of bone. The purpose of the ridge is unclear, though it could have evolved as a way to attract a mate, a process known as sexual selection.

When Short first saw these bones on a CT scan, he "did a double-take," he says.

Like other pygmy seahorses, it has a wing-like structure on its back, the function of which is unclear. But unlike the other pygmies, which have two pairs, it only has one.

(Source: nationalgeographic.com)

## Long-sought carbon structure joins graphene, fullerene family: new study

The discovery of buckyballs surprised and delighted chemists in the 1980s, nanotubes jazzed physicists in the 1990s, and graphene charged up materials scientists in the 2000s, but one nanoscale carbon structure -- a negatively curved surface called a schwarzite -- has eluded everyone.

University of California, Berkeley, chemists have proved that three carbon structures recently created by scientists in South Korea and Japan are in fact the long-sought schwarzites, which researchers predict will have unique electrical and storage properties like those now being discovered in buckminsterfullerenes (buckyballs or fullerenes for short), nanotubes and graphene.

The new structures were built inside the pores of zeolites, crystalline forms of silicon dioxide -- sand -- more commonly used as water softeners in laundry detergents and to catalytically crack petroleum into gasoline. Called zeolite-templated carbons (ZTC), the structures were being investigated for possible interesting properties, though the creators were unaware of their identity as schwarzites, which theoretical chemists have worked on for decades.

Based on this theoretical work, chemists predict that schwarzites will have unique electronic, magnetic and optical properties that would make them useful as supercapacitors, battery electrodes and catalysts, and with large internal spaces ideal for gas storage and separation.

UC Berkeley postdoctoral fellow Efreem Braun and his colleagues identified these ZTC materials as schwarzites based of their negative curvature, and developed a way to predict which zeolites can be used to make schwarzites and which can't.

"We now have the recipe for how to make these structures, which is important because, if we can make them, we can explore their behavior, which we are working hard to do now," said Bernd Smit, an adjunct professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at UC Berkeley and an expert on porous materials such as zeolites and metal-organic frameworks.

(Source: phys.org)



## SDSs 60 times above the safe levels haunting Sistan

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Sand and dust storms (SDSs) reaching speeds up to 100 kilometers per hour, and particulate matters (PM) concentration peaking at 60 times above the safe levels, led to the closure of offices in Sistan, south-eastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, on Sunday, ISNA reported.

The level of particulate matters has reached 9,075 micrograms per cubic meter in the region, the report added.

Regarding the high rate of PM concentration causing great discomfort to the people in eastern part of the country, offices and business units have been closed down on August 21-22, in five cities of Sistan including Zabul, Hirmand, Hamoun, Zahak and Nimroz.

So far, some 541 residents have been injured due the severe SDSs in Sistan-Baluchestan province, Fars quoted, Hassan Nouri, deputy director for Iran Emergency medical services as saying on Tuesday.

Rasoul Rasheki Head of Sistan-Baluchestan Red Crescent Society announced on Tuesday that over the past three days some 40,700 masks were distributed among residents of 25 villages in the regions.

Earlier in August, an official with Sistan-Baluchestan provincial meteorological organization Reza Azadmanesh also said that while the standard level of particulate matters is 150 micrograms per cubic meter it has reached 1,852 micrograms per cubic meter in the region.

Sistan region, located north of Sistan-Baluchestan province, is frequently hit by sand and dust storms, as well as drought and even destructive floods.

## Mountain hare population in Scotland at 1% of 1950s level

The mountain hare population of the moorlands in the eastern Scottish Highlands has plummeted by 99 per cent since the 1950s.

Culling by gamekeepers is thought to be among the causes of the “severe” decline of these native mammals, which was recorded in a long-term study by the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and the RSPB.

The research focused on moorland managed for red grouse shooting, as well as nearby mountains.

From 1954 to 1999, hares on moorland sites decreased by almost 5 per cent every year, and the decline accelerated to 30 per cent per year between 1999 and 2017.

Alpine sites also saw a decline over the past 10 years following years of population growth, but their numbers did not reach the lows observed at lower altitudes.

Land use changes, such as the loss of grouse moors to conifer forests, were partly to blame for the moorland trend, the study concluded, as was intervention by local moorland managers.

Specifically, the increased decline in the past two decades coincided with a boost in hare culling by gamekeepers, with the intention of controlling the spread of ticks and protecting these fragile environments.

The findings, published in the Journal of Applied Ecology, were revealed after the annual grouse shooting season began on Monday.

Dr Adam Watson of the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, who led the study, said he was “delighted and relieved” to see the results published.

“Having counted mountain hares across the moors and high tops of the eastern highlands since 1943, I find the decline in numbers of these beautiful animals both compelling and of great concern,” he said.

Campaigners believe that despite the supposed positive effects of hare culling, the practice is both “indiscriminate and ruthless”. The RSPB said urgent action is needed to protect mountain hares.

(Source: The Independent)

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Natural Disasters

Bob: Those are the headlines for today, and now for the international weather report with Mike Sanderson.

Mike: Thank you, Bob! This past week has been the beginning of Armageddon for many, a series of unprecedented meteorological events occurred around the world. In Switzerland, a major avalanche was reported in the Alps. Fortunately, no one was injured. Due to the extreme cold this winter, a **blizzard** has struck the US Midwest, causing classes in schools and universities to be temporarily canceled. Mike: Moving to Latin American, Ecuador has suffered a six-month **drought** that has not only affected farming, but has also forced the closure of the hydroelectric power plant that provides electricity for the entire country. In Chile, a major earthquake that registered seven point five on the Richter scale struck the southern region. Losses are reported to be in the billions. Authorities have not yet released an official statement.

Bob: Not a great week for the world! Any good news?

Mike: I'm afraid not, Bob. One of the major volcanoes in Mexico has erupted, causing major floods and landslides in the region. Meanwhile, Mexico 's coast has been hit by **hurricane** Liliana and officials say that all the **seismic activity** leads them to believe that a **tsunami** may hit Central America, affecting Honduras, Guatemala and Panama. That's all the news we have for today, but stay tuned for updates on the six o'clock news. Back to you Bob.

#### ■ Key vocabulary

**blizzard**: great snow

**drought**: a prolonged period of scanty rainfall

**hurricane**: very big rain and wind storm

**seismic activity**: something that tech relating to or caused by an earthquake

**tsunami**: a large sea wave produced by an earthquake

#### ■ Supplementary vocabulary

**hail**: small pieces of ice that fall from the sky instead of rain

**tornado**: A strong whirl of air that moves quickly

**typhoon**: A tropical cyclone occurring in the western Pacific or Indian oceans

**hurricane**: A severe tropical cyclone having winds greater than one hundred kilometers per hour

**heat wave**: A period of unusually hot weather

(Source: irlanguage.com)

# Tehran to host traditional medicine, medicinal herbs festival

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The fourth festival of medicinal herbs, natural products and traditional medicine aiming to showcase Iran's potential in the field of medicinal herbs will be hold on November 12-15 in Tehran, secretary of headquarters for developing medicinal herbs and traditional medicine science and technology headquarters has said.

“Each province has a special ecology and climate condition compatible with the cultivation of different medicinal plants, which will be namely presented at the festival,” IRNA quoted Mohammad Hassan Osareh as saying on Tuesday.

Part of the capacity in the provinces will be featured in the event, he said, adding that research centers, incubators and science and technology parks affiliated to the public sector will also showcase their latest achievements in the event.

One of the goals of this festival and exhibition is to introduce the achievements of the private and public sectors, as well as encouraging producers and those active in the industry to exchange views about challenges in this sector.

Also presenting the latest scientific achievements in cultivation, harvesting and export of medicinal plants, as well as commercializing medicinal plants are also among the objectives of the event, he added.

On the sidelines of the event, a place will be allocated to tech markets to present new ideas, as a way to connect innovators and investors, Osareh highlighted.

The festival is a major commercial and scientific event in the country's natural herbs industry, he stated, adding, “it is expected that 400-500 companies active in various fields of cultivation, harvesting and processing of medicinal plants, as well as various



**The festival aims at introducing the latest scientific and industrial achievements in the technological products of medicinal plants in order to shift from an oil-based economy, and remove the barriers and challenges the development of the medicinal plant industry is facing.**

pharmaceutical products, beverages, flavors and cosmetic colors participate in the event.”

“In this event, it is scheduled to provide opportunities through presenting the latest technological achievements of the companies which are active in this sector, especially

knowledge-based companies,” he concluded.

The fourth festival of traditional herbal medicine aims at introducing the latest scientific and industrial achievements in the technological products of medicinal plants in order to shift from an oil-based economy,

and remove the barriers and challenges the development of the medicinal plant industry is facing.

Efficient synergy to implement the roadmap of the national document for medicinal plants and traditional medicine; promoting the culture of knowledge-based economy as a driving force for transition to a resilient economy based on entrepreneurship, are the other features of the festival.

In July, Javad Mirarab an official with the Ministry of Agriculture said that Medicinal plants are cultivated on some 188,000 hectares of lands in Iran.

He also said that exports of the aforesaid medicinal plants brought \$450 million for Iran last year, and saffron with a value of \$325 million constituted the largest share of exports.

Meanwhile, head of the natural products department at Food and Drug Administration Mahnaz Khanavi said that natural and herbal medicines constitute 4 percent of the total amount of medicines used in the country.

According to the World Health Organization, Traditional (WHO) herbal medicines are naturally occurring, plant-derived substances with minimal or no industrial processing that have been used to treat illness within local or regional healing practices. Traditional herbal medicines are getting significant attention in global health debates.

Global herbal market size is estimated approximately \$72 billion which is predicted to reach \$7 trillion by 2050. Medicinal plants are used in various industries which are worth around \$80 billion.

Europe is the largest herbal product market valued at \$7.5 billion and has 40% market share. China has the highest number of medicinal plants and also is the leader in export of medicinal plants globally having 15% sharing global export under this category.

## 330 ha of Miankaleh peninsula turns into ashes

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The wildfire which started on Friday night in Miankaleh peninsula, northern province of Mazandaran, has so far burnt around 330 hectares, the province's chief of the department of environment has said.

The fire sweeping through the Miankaleh peninsula was caused by human, but whether or not it was deliberately set is not clear yet, Nasimonline quoted Hosseinali Ebrahimi as saying on Monday.

“We are trying to find out the reason to the fire flared up on the peninsula in cooperation with judicial system,” he stated.

Referring to the wind igniting the fire, he highlighted that dried vegetation and plant species burns more quickly and help spreading the fire.

“The wildfire was contained on Saturday morning in cooperation with the provincial departments of environment of Golestan and Mazandaran provinces,”

he said, regretting that over 330 hectares of the lands burnt in the first 24 hours.

In [the third Iranian calendar month] Khordad (May 22-June 21) the area caught fire three times and at least 12 hectares of the vegetation and forested areas was turned into ashes.

In [the fourth Iranian calendar month] Tir (June 22-July 22) some 2 hectares of the peninsula also burnt in fire.

Last year (March 2017-March 2018) some 300 hectares of the wetland also burnt in fire.

Miankaleh peninsula, a UNESCO biosphere reserve, is one of the richest ecological havens in West Asia and perhaps in the whole world. The peninsula is a narrow but long peninsula north of Iran situated in the extreme south-eastern part of the Caspian Sea. It is home to many unique Caspian bird and reptile species native to this region. It's also a very important internationally recognized refuge for migratory birds.

## Relief foundation earmarks \$10m for marriage of the underprivileged

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has allocated over 410 billion rials (nearly \$10 million) in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21) to facilitate marriage for financially struggling individuals.

“One of the important aims of the Foundation is supporting underprivileged youth to have a cost effective marriage by covering some of the expenses,” Majid Zare'ei-Fard, deputy director of the Foundation said, IRNA reported on Monday.

The fund has been provided to some 16,600 young individuals over the same period, he added.

Referring to the money which has been donated by the Foundation to help support the marriage of young people, he noted that the minimum fund per annum is 15 million rials (about \$360).

Pointing to the Foundation offering marriage counseling courses to all young

couples under the Foundation's coverage, he said that counseling services and workshops on preventing social harm is provided to the couples before marriage and after marriage.

“The youth who are not under coverage of the Foundation also can receive a fund of 10 million rials (about \$238) for marriage,” he highlighted, adding that in addition, individuals struggling financially also can receive loans up to 50 million rials (nearly \$1,190).

#### ■ Families with three members to get houses

Ebrahim Bazian, deputy director for housing department of the Foundation, also said that over 50,000 houses will be transferred to low income families with three members.

While the first priority to provide housing goes to three-member families, in special circumstances, households with two members will also be given the priority, he concluded.

## Cheetah cub wounded in car crash suffers irreversible spinal cord injury



**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — An Asiatic cheetah cub which had been wounded on August 7 in a car accident on Abbasabad-Mayami road, north-central Semnan province, has suffered irreversible spinal cord injury, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The one-and-a-half-year cheetah cub was transferred to Tehran and undergone surgery but the damage to spinal cord was so severe that has affected its body functions, the report added.

The animal is now being kept in rehabilitation center of Pardisan park in Tehran.

The Asiatic cheetah mainly inhabits the desert areas around Dasht-e Kavir in the eastern half of Iran, including parts of the Kerman, Khorasan, Semnan, Yazd, Tehran, and Markazi provinces. Most live in five protected areas, Kavir National Park, Touran National Park, Bafq Protected Area, Dar-e Anjir Wildlife Refuge, and Naybandan Wildlife Reserve. The cheetah has been listed as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List since 1996.

Based on the sightings the number of remaining Asiatic cheetahs can be estimated at almost 50. However due to the shortcomings of trap cameras installed in the protected areas and other techniques of counting cheetahs it is not easy to tell the

gender composition.

The cheetah/livestock interactions and the presence of human beings and guard dogs in cheetah's habitats, road accidents and habitat fragmentation due to human encroachment are of the threats making the cheetah's future uncertain.

Cheetahs don't usually stay in one place and might move from one habitat to another. Mining development and road construction near reserves or between fragmented habitats also threaten the population and over the past years the unsafe roads and careless drivers have resulted in increased road kills.

One of the highest casualty rates in the country occurs on the Abbasabad-Mayami road. Road crashes [the ones recorded by the Department of Environment] accounts for 52 percent of the cheetahs fatality rate.

Hamid Zohrabi, deputy environment chief for Department of Environment (DOE) natural environment and biodiversity directorate have criticized Transport Ministry incompetence in fencing the roads which has worsened the situation, ISNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

Majid Kharrazian-Moqaddam, director of aquatic wildlife and biodiversity office at the DOE, also said on Tuesday that fencing projects have already started in area since last week.

#### First Announcement



Permit No. 1397.2293

TENDER NO. : **01-31-9580032**

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Description	Quantity.
P/F" RUSTON" GAS TURBINE, TYPE TA 1500	15 Items including 260 Nos.

Vendors who intend to participate in the A/M tender are requested to send their resume & tendency letter via faxl mail to the following address not later than 14 days after the second announcement. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide a bid bond of Euro 4,858 I Rls 250,624,100 in favor of NISOC. Iranian vendors shall submit their resume Acc. to forms Nos. 01, 02 and 03 which are available at [www.shana.ir](http://www.shana.ir) and [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir)

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPT

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# Hakim mediates between Sadr & Maliki to make big alliance

By staff & agencies

The final official results of Iraq's legislative elections showed that Sadr's Muqtada al-Sadr-backed alliance won the largest number of seats in the country, making future alliances the final say in shaping the new government.

According to the final results of the High Electoral Commission, none of the electoral coalitions exceeded the 55 seats in parliament following a May 12 vote that saw the lowest turnout since the first multi-party vote in 2005, two years after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime.

The Sadoun alliance, which combines Sadr, the Communist Party, and some technocratic parties, is in the first place with 54 seats. The Fath Alliance led by Hadi al-Amri, which includes the popular factions, played a crucial role in supporting the security forces to defeat a second. And the third with 24 seats of the coalition "victory" headed by Abadi, while the coalition of the rule of law headed by al-Maliki in the fourth place with 26 seats, and formed post-Saddam Iraq, the political system in a complex way to impose parliamentary alliances, which began negotiations over a week ago.

After every legislative election, the winning blocs enter into long negotiations to form a majority government. It is not necessarily that the first bloc winning the legislative elections loses its ability to form a government, due to alliances



between the parliamentary blocs, so it is theoretically and theoretically possible to exclude "seculars" from the government formation. As in 2010 the formation of a parliamentary coalition that collects the largest number of parliamentary seats, and calls the Prime Minister.

Observers believe that the visit by the leader of the stream of wisdom, Ammar al-Hakim to Hananah and his meeting with the leader of the coalition of the followers of Moqtada al-Sadr did not come out with actual results on the ground through which

can be a starting point of consensus between them towards other forces and start dialogue with the largest bloc to ensure the formation of the new government.

According to informed sources, "the ways of the wise door of the chest to find approaches and the appropriate ground under the conditions prepared for the declaration of an alliance, especially that Hakim aware of the harmony of the list of wisdom, unlike Souron, which has a complex ideological."

According to political analyst Wael Rikabi, Hakim adopted mediation between Sadr and

Maliki to soften the situation between them.

"The last meeting between al-Sadr and al-Hakim in al-Hananah marked the formation of the largest bloc, but the difference between al-Sadr and al-Hakim is that the first can not negotiate and dialogue with the existence of a state of law with them, unlike Hakim, who has no veto over anyone," he told al-Rikabi.

"Despite the meeting of the two parties did not escape much, but I imagine that Hakim asked Sadr to soften the situation with Maliki and there is a return to the National Alliance and to subject the Sadrist movement to the opinion of the largest bloc in the event of inability to form.

Sadr said after the press conference held with Hakim that he is past "reform and will not give up, and explained the chest in his twitter to him." Take the positions and chairs, go home."

Since his election victory, Sadr has reiterated that the next government will be a "patriarchal" government that is far from partisan quotas.

Observers explained that the vision of Sadr in the formation of the next government is different from the vision of the wise and this may lead to a decline in opportunities for rapprochement between them.

At the same time moving on the other party leader of a coalition of state law, Nuri al-Maliki towards the largest bloc, which seeks to form a government of the majority.

## Taliban seize army base in northern Afghanistan, capture 40 soldiers



The Taliban militant group has overrun large parts of an army base in Afghanistan's northern Province of Faryab and captured dozens of soldiers there, officials say.

Mohammad Tahir Rahmani, the head of the council, said on Tuesday that the militants had captured tanks and ammunition in the Chenayeeha army base in Faryab's Ghormach district after they began an offensive on the base on Sunday.

"We have not been able to enter the base. Large parts of the base are still under the Taliban control," he said.

The Taliban have reportedly killed at least 14 soldiers and wounded over a dozen in the fighting.

Another provincial official said the Taliban had also captured 40 soldiers, adding that 30 militants had also been killed in the fighting.

Intensified fighting

The offensive coincides with fierce fighting between Afghan forces and Taliban militants over the embattled city of Ghazni, in the country's southeast, which has claimed the lives of about 100 police-

men and soldiers, as well as at least 20 civilians since last week.

The multi-pronged assault on Ghazni, located barely 120 kilometers from the capital Kabul, began on Friday, with militants reportedly infiltrating people's homes and slipping out into the night to attack Afghan forces.

Both the government and the militants have claimed to be in control of the strategic city amid ongoing intense fighting.

S-led forces invaded Afghanistan and toppled a ruling Taliban regime some 17 years ago. That war has failed to bring stability to the country despite the presence of thousands of foreign forces.

A recent survey found that the Taliban were active in two-thirds of the country and were fully controlling four percent of it.

While the Taliban have intensified their attacks in Afghanistan, they have rejected an offer of peace talks by the Kabul government but have been talking to the U.S. in negotiations the details of which are unclear.

(Source: AP)

## 40 Yemeni children killed in Saudi-led strike on Yemeni bus: ICRC



The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) says 40 children were among 51 civilians recently killed during a Saudi airstrike on a school bus in north-western Yemen.

In a new toll on Tuesday, the ICRC said that 56 children were also among the 79 people wounded in Thursday's strike on Sa'ada Province, one of the deadliest attacks on civilians in the three-year-old Saudi-led war.

The children were returning from a trip organized by a religious seminary when the bus came under attack. Images later circulated online, showing pieces of a US-made bomb on the scene.

Over the past days, Yemeni cities have been the scene of protests against the new Saudi crime. Thousands of mourners attended a funeral procession for many of the dead children in Sa'ada's provincial capital of the same name on Monday, venting their anger against Riyadh and Washington.

The crowd held pictures of the children and chanted slogans against Saudi Arabia and its ally and key arms supplier, the United States.

The Supreme Revolutionary Committee

of Yemen has held the U.S. -- the main weapons supplier to the Riyadh regime -- responsible for the carnage.

The UNICEF, the United Nations' children fund, called the carnage the single biggest attack. The Saudi-led coalition however described the attack as "legitimate," with coalition spokesman Turki al-Malki even claiming that the strikes "conformed to international and humanitarian laws."

Geert Cappelaere, the regional director in the Middle East and North Africa at UNICEF, has said there is "no excuse" for the continued complacency towards the war on Yemen.

The United Nations Security Council has called for a "credible and transparent" investigation into the airstrike.

The Al Saud regime along with some of its allies, particularly the UAE, has been waging a deadly war against impoverished Yemen since March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and crush the popular Ansarullah movement.

(Source: Press TV)

## Trump thought there was a country called "Nipple"

The president has often perplexed foreign officials and his own aides as he learns how to deal with the world beyond America's borders.

Several times in the first year of his administration, President Donald Trump wanted to call Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the middle of the afternoon. But there was a problem. Midafternoon in Washington is the middle of the night in Tokyo -- when Abe would be fast asleep.

Trump's aides had to explain the issue, which one diplomatic source said came up on "a constant basis," but it wasn't easy.

"He wasn't great with recognizing that the leader of a country might be 80 or 85 years old and isn't going to be awake or in the right place at 10:30 or 11 p.m. their time," said a former Trump NSC official. "When he wants to call someone, he wants to call someone. He's more impulsive that way. He doesn't think about what time it is or who it is," added a person close to Trump.

In the case of Abe and others, Trump's NSC staffers would advise him, for instance, that "the time is messed up, it's 1 o'clock in the morning" and promise to put the call on his calendar for a more diplomatically appropriate time. Former national security adviser H.R.



McMaster would assure him: "We can try to set it up."

Trump's desire to call world leaders at awkward hours is just one of many previously unreported diplomatic faux pas Trump has made since assuming the presidency, which go beyond telephone etiquette to include misconceptions, mispronunciations and awkward

meetings. Sometimes the foibles have been contained within the White House. In one case, Trump, while studying a briefer's map of South Asia ahead of a 2017 meeting with India's prime minister, mispronounced Nepal as "nipple" and laughingly referred to Bhutan as "button," according to two sources with knowledge of the meeting.

A White House official said others who were at the meeting don't remember Trump making those remarks and that he asked appropriate questions.

The mistakes may not be surprising for a leader inexperienced in foreign affairs and accustomed to flouting convention. But some seasoned former diplomats say they risk doing real harm to America's image -- and interests -- overseas.

"The underlying premise of protocol is respect for other people," said Wendy Sherman, a former senior State Department official in the Clinton and Obama administrations. "When the president doesn't follow protocol, it's a sign of disrespect."

Trump's defenders call such talk overblown, noting that all presidents learn on the job and that Trump has never been a stickler for fine etiquette.

(Source: Politico)

## U.S., Israeli embassies in Berlin receive letters with powder

Berlin police say threatening letters containing a white powder have been sent to both the American and Israeli embassies in the German capital.

Police spokeswoman Kerstin Ismer told The Associated Press on Tuesday

that the Israeli Embassy received a letter July 24 and the U.S. Embassy on July 26. Ismer says police have opened two investigations on suspicion of disturbing the peace by threatening a crime.

She says both contained a powder but would not comment on whether it had been determined to be dangerous or other details due to the ongoing investigation. She would also not say whether the two letters were thought

to be connected or whether there were any suspects yet.

Neither embassy had any immediate comment, saying in general they do not comment on security issues.

(Source: AP)

## 'Kurdish-led delegation holds fresh talks with Syria govt. in Damascus'

The political wing of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) has visited the Syrian capital Damascus for a second time since the central government extended an offer of negotiation to the mainly Kurdish militant group.

The group's political branch, known as the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), held talks with Syrian authorities on local administration and decentralization, Syria's al-Watan daily reported, quoting its co-chair Riad Darar as saying on Tuesday.

"All the discussions happening now are ... to find out the other side's point of view," he said. The talks "need a lot of reflection to make decisions, and so the matter was left to other meetings," Darar added.

A delegation, including SDF members, held talks with Damascus earlier this month and agreed to continue negotiations on ways to end the violence in Syria.

Back in May, Syria's President Bashar al-Assad had said he was "opening doors" for talks with the group.

The SDF is led by People's Protection Units (YPG), a Kurdish militant outfit.

The Kurdish militants controlling areas in northern Syria have been facing a Turkish offensive since January. That operation was launched out of Ankara's anger over growing U.S. support for the Kurdish militants, which it associates with the homegrown Kurdistan Workers' Party militants.

In the face of the incursion, the Kurds turned to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and asked for the central government's help.

Months into Turkey's military intervention, the Kurds lost the Afrin region to Ankara, which threatened to take its offensive to the nearby city of Manbij.

Amid Ankara's advances, the U.S. softened its staunch support for the Kurds and agreed to a roadmap with the Turkish government, which would see a complete withdrawal of Kurdish militants from Manbij.

Observers say Washington's failure to stand by the Kurds against Turkey pushed them closer to the central government.

Ankara has also been propping up other militants to confront the YPG in Syria.

The talks between the SDF and Damascus are underway amid reports that the Turkish-backed militants are creating a "national army" with Ankara's support in the Arab country's northwest.

The reports say that the militants are sewing up rifts within their ranks towards building the force. It comprises some 35,000 members from the biggest factions that have been waging militancy against Syria since 2011.

(Source: Press TV)

## Corbyn and Netanyahu clash on Twitter

➔ Labor said Corbyn, a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause, was in Tunis to honor the victims of the 1985 raid. Unimpressed, Netanyahu said in a tweet:

"The laying of a wreath by Jeremy Corbyn on the graves of the terrorists who perpetrated the Munich massacre and his comparison of Israel to the Nazis deserves unequivocal condemnation from everyone -- left, right and everything in between."

Corbyn responded: "Netanyahu's claims about my actions and words are false. What deserves unequivocal condemnation is the killing of over 160 Palestinian protesters in Gaza by Israeli forces since March, including dozens of children."

The Labor Party said Corbyn did not lay a wreath at the graves of anyone linked to Black September and he condemned the Munich attack. Corbyn however told reporters on Monday: "I was present when (a wreath) was laid. I don't think I was involved in it," adding that the visit was a peace-seeking exercise.

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

"I stand with the tens of thousands of Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel demonstrating for equal rights at the weekend in Tel Aviv" Corbyn said.

On June 13, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, sponsored by Turkey and Algeria, condemning Israel for Palestinian civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip.

## Mohamad bin Zayed, Zionist culprit in Mid-East

➔ Egypt and Jordan made peace with Israel on the pretext of having their occupied lands returned, and the Palestinian authorities came to terms with Israel for the sake of a partial solution to the Palestinian issue. But the UAE's reconciliation with the Zionist regime, which is far from the occupied lands, is none of that.

Interestingly, the UAE has not succeeded in normalizing relations with Israel, but the newly-formed bond between the UAE and Israel has strengthened the Zionist lobby and turned the UAE in to Israel's tool in the region.

One of the most prominent Zionist lobbies, collaborating with the Emirates, is the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, known also as FDD, an anti-Iranian foundation originated from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Letters from the UAE ambassador to the United States, Yousef Al Otaiba, revealed that Abu Dhabi has close ties with the Zionist lobby AIPAC, and during Barack Obama's presidency, the UAE had made great efforts to prevent any nuclear deal with Iran.

In the past year, the UAE has also taken advantage of this foundation to put international pressure on Qatar. Indeed, the UAE has sold its soul to the devil in the name of democracy. The FDD has been protecting the interests of the Zionist regime and pursuing the objectives of the Likud Party headed by Netanyahu in the Middle East. The foundation's activities have not been limited to exerting pressure on U.S. officials to oppose a nuclear deal, but it is also trying to impose Netanyahu's view on resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict which is in conflict with the two-state concept.

The Emirates, well-aware of the power and impact of the Zionist lobbies in the United States, have been working hard over the past few years to spend millions of dollars on these lobbies to secure their interests in the U.S. Congress. This alignment with Israel by the rulers of the UAE and Saudi Arabia has happened because Muhammad bin Zayed and Mohammed bin Salman know too well that these institutions have clout. They also want to get closer to this source of power and contribute in planning and determining the policies of the region.



## Nigeria and Ghana could face bans over interference - FIFA

Nigeria and Ghana could face international football bans this month over political interference with their football associations, world soccer's governing body FIFA said on Tuesday in a final warning to the two African nations.

FIFA said the Nigerian federation (NFF) must be led by its elected president, voted in back in 2014, and its executive committee amid domestic challenges to the federation leadership.

"The Bureau of the FIFA Council decided that if by Monday, 20 August 2018, at 12:00 (CET), the Nigeria Football Federation offices are not handed back to the legitimate NFF executive committee under President Amaju Melvin Pinnick... the NFF will be suspended with immediate effect," FIFA said in a statement.

"The suspension would be lifted only once the NFF, under President Amaju Melvin Pinnick and General Secretary Mohammed Sanusi, confirms that it has been given back effective control of the NFF and its offices."

FIFA said any ban would not affect the Nigerian team currently competing in the women's Under-20 World Cup in France as the tournament was already under way. Nigeria also took part in the men's World Cup in Russia in June.

Ghana will also be banned this month if an order to liquidate its FA is not withdrawn.

"The Bureau of the Council considers that the petition introduced by the Attorney General to the High Court of Justice to start the liquidation process of the GFA constitutes undue influence in the affairs of the GFA in contravention of art. 14 par. 1 i) and art. 19 par. 1 of the FIFA Statutes," FIFA said.

"Under these circumstances, the Bureau decided that if the petition to start the liquidation process of the GFA is not withdrawn by Monday, 27 August 2018 at 12:00 (CET), the GFA will be suspended with immediate effect. The suspension would be lifted only once the above-mentioned petition is withdrawn and FIFA is given written proof thereof."

(Source: Eurosport)

## Liverpool refer Salah to police over alleged phone use while driving

Liverpool have referred forward Mohamed Salah to the Merseyside Police over a video which appears to show the Egyptian using his mobile phone while driving.

No specific details have been released about when or where the video was taken, or by whom.

"The club, after discussion with the player, have made Merseyside Police aware of the footage and the circumstances surrounding it's capture," an LFC spokesman told British media.

"We have spoken to the player also and will deal with any follow-up internally.

"Neither the club or player will be making any further comment on this matter."

Merseyside Police confirmed they were aware of the footage. "We have been made aware of a video believed to show a footballer using a mobile phone whilst driving," the Merseyside Police Contact Centre said on their official Twitter account.

"This has been passed to the relevant department."

(Source: Mirror)

## Police investigating Harden's alleged role in nightclub incident

Houston Rockets guard James Harden allegedly was involved in a nightclub incident that is under investigation by the Scottsdale (Ariz.) Police Department.

The incident took place around 2:30 a.m. Saturday, police said.

A TMZ report said a member of Harden's entourage got into a fight at the club, and when a woman started to record the scuffle, Harden grabbed her wrist and threw her phone onto a nearby roof. The woman, who was treated for a wrist injury at a local hospital, said one of Harden's associates offered her \$200 for the phone and that Harden later gave her \$300 to pay for a replacement.

Police confirmed Monday that they are looking into the allegations but told the Arizona Republic that it was "far too early in the investigation" to know Harden's role in the incident.

Harden, who played at Arizona State in nearby Tempe, is the NBA's reigning Most Valuable Player after averaging 30.4 points, 8.8 assists and 5.4 rebounds per game. He helped the Rockets reach the Western Conference finals, where they lost to the eventual champion Golden State Warriors. In 17 postseason games, Harden averaged 28.6 points, 6.8 assists and 5.2 rebounds.

(Source: Reuters)

## Pouille outlasts Murray in Cincinnati opener

Andy Murray's comeback following hip surgery hit another roadblock after he was beaten 6-1 1-6 6-4 by France's Lucas Pouille in the first round of the Cincinnati Open.

The Scot went under the knife in January but has had a frustrating time since he came back to the ATP circuit in June.

The former world number one had hoped to build on the momentum that had carried him into the quarter-finals of the Citi Open before he pulled out of the Washington tournament citing fatigue. But it was world number 17 Pouille who proved to be the more resourceful as he claimed his first win in five tries against Murray. Murray, whose ranking plummeted into the 800s last month but has now risen to 375, has fallen at the first hurdle in two of the four tournaments he has contested this year.

"I only lost four more points in the match than him," said Murray, who won 82 points to Pouille's 86.

"It was tight. He's a top 20 player. If I can improve by 10, 15 percent, you turn a lot of those matches around."

Pouille said he was pleased with how he fought against the former world number one. "I'm very happy, especially with the way I fought until the end," he said. "I tried to do my best in the third set and then until the end I played very aggressive and I'm very pleased with that."

(Source: Reuters)

# Real face up to life without Ronaldo

Following up Zinedine Zidane's treble Champions League success with Real Madrid was always going to be a difficult job for Julen Lopetegui, but having to do it without Cristiano Ronaldo is a monumental challenge.

Real Madrid finished third in La Liga last season after a thoroughly disappointing campaign, 17 points behind arch-rivals and champions Barcelona, but Zidane papered over the cracks by guiding the team to a third European cup in a row.

The coach decided to walk away while he was on top and his surprise departure in May was followed by another, as Ronaldo joined Juventus.

Over the previous nine years Ronaldo was crowned the best footballer in the world five times, helping Real Madrid to four Champions Leagues, with 450 goals in 438 games for the club.

However, in that period Ronaldo only won La Liga in 2012 and 2017, often losing out to Lionel Messi's Barcelona.

While Barcelona have reinforced in the transfer window, Real have not replaced Ronaldo and have found it hard to secure their reported targets.

They have only added Real Sociedad defender Alvaro Odriozola and Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who is expected to replace Keylor Navas in the team and they can also use young Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior, although he is primarily expected to feature for the B team.

Los Blancos need both Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema to step up a level to cover for Ronaldo's absence and Marco Asensio will also be given a more prominent role.

Lopetegui, sacked by Spain on the eve



of the World Cup after Madrid announced he would take over from Zidane, was reportedly not one of the club's top choices for the role.

Other coaches turned Madrid down, conscious of the difficulty of following in Zidane's footsteps, but Lopetegui said taking over was the happiest day of his life.



"It's an exciting challenge reinventing the team without Ronaldo, making it competitive and capable of winning titles," said Lopetegui. "I have no doubt that it will happen with these players that we have."

Madrid president Florentino Perez has not proved patient at the best of times and if Lopetegui does not deliver on those words

his time in the Spanish capital may be quickly curtailed.

An early test against crosstown rivals Atletico Madrid in the European Super Cup on Aug. 15 may set the tone for the Spanish coach. Win and the transition begins smoothly, lose and worries will surface.

(Source: Reuters)

## Raheem Sterling is targeted by racism, says Ian Wright



Criticism of Manchester City and England winger Raheem Sterling is motivated by racism, says former Arsenal striker Ian Wright.

Sterling, 23, has faced frequent media disapproval, most recently for a tattoo of a rifle on his leg but also for purchasing clothes from Primark and buying his mother a house.

He was also criticized over his World Cup performances for England in Russia.

"How many people do you see get the criticism Sterling gets?" Wright said.

"The football criticism is something every player has to deal with, but what he gets I don't see any other footballer getting," former England forward Wright added on BBC Radio 5 live's Monday Night Club.

"They don't get that stick because for whatever reason they don't rub up the people in the corridors of power the wrong way. I think there is an agenda against him."

"There is an element of people at high end of the media who want to keep that guy down. Simple."

"When you look at the wave of criticism that he takes, there is a certain amount of racism towards it - what else can it be?"

"They are picking on him because of the background he has come from and they want to keep him down, drag him back down. They don't want him to continue to be a success."

"People say you are playing the racism card, but you give me a good reason why Raheem Sterling gets the stick he gets for just being a footballer."

Sterling received consistently low ratings on the BBC Sport website's Player Rater tool during the World Cup. His average rating was 4.66 - leaving him above only Phil Jones and Danny Welbeck.

During the tournament in Russia, Sterling wrote a blog post for The Players' Tribune in which he said he no longer worries about the media "picking on him".

Ex-Chelsea striker Chris Sutton, also speaking on 5 live, said: "I think the outside stuff did affect his World Cup performances."

He added: "I don't understand it because last season for City he really matured into a top player. He was one of the reasons why they were so devastating."

"There seems to be an element of people in this country who delight in kicking him and I don't get it."

(Source: BBC)

## Tottenham Hotspur delays stadium opening over safety concerns



English Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur has been forced to postpone the opening of its new stadium over "issues with the critical safety systems."

The north London club had been due to play upcoming league games against Liverpool on September 15 and Cardiff City on October 6 at the new 62,000 capacity White Hart Lane venue, which has reportedly cost over \$1 billion.

Spurs had been also due to host the NFL game between Seattle Seahawks and Oakland Raiders on October 14, but that will also be switched to Wembley stadium. Last season Spurs used Wembley to play its home games. Spurs chairman Daniel Levy asked the club's fans for their "continued patience and forbearance."

"We know this will be disappointing for all our season tickets holders, premium members and our fans worldwide," said Levy in a statement. "We appreciate the support our partner the NFL has shown since the extent of this issue became evident today."

"Urgent follow up meetings" with contractors will take place and after "re-testing and rectifying" they would be in a better position to release a revised timetable for when the club might be able to move into its

new home. NFL vice-president Mark Waller said that he "totally understood the issue" and would continue to work with Spurs to make future games a "huge success."

"Everyone has been so excited about the prospect of playing in the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and I know all at the Club are very disappointed, but determined to clear this final hurdle," said Waller in a statement. "The new stadium will be an amazing venue for the NFL and we are very excited about our long-term partnership with Tottenham Hotspur."

The venue for Spurs' game against Manchester City on 28 October is also yet "to be confirmed," while the delay will also impact at least one of the club's Champions League group games. The draw for the Champions League group stages takes place on August 30, with match days one, two and three taking place on September 18 and 19, October 2 and 3 and October 23 and 24.

The Premier League had already granted Spurs special permission to play their opening game on Saturday against Fulham in Wembley. The Premier League did not immediately respond to CNN Sport's request for comment.

(Source: CNN)

# 'More than half of Premier League clubs could play in empty stadiums and make money'

More than half of Premier League clubs could have played in empty stadiums and still made a pre-tax profit in the first season of the current broadcast deal, BBC research has found.

In 2016-17, during which clubs benefited from a record £8.3bn in global TV revenue, match day income contributed less than 20p in every £1 earned by 18 top-flight outfits.

The number of clubs that would have recorded pre-tax profits even if match day income was taken away rose from two in 2015-16 to 11 in 2016-17.

Dr Rob Wilson, a sport finance specialist at Sheffield Hallam University, said the previous £3.018bn broadcast deal struck in 2012 signaled a permanent change to top-flight football as a business in England.

"That is when the focus really went toward generating TV money rather than match day ticket receipts," he told BBC Sport.

"The revenue structures of those clubs are fairly well there to stay now."

"When you get a £120m payout from the Premier League for kicking a ball around, you can play in an empty stadium if you need to."

"From a revenue generation perspective, clubs do not



rely anymore on match day ticket income."

Bournemouth, with the smallest ground capacity in the Premier League of just 11,450 and who intend to build a bigger stadium, had a turnover of almost £136.5m in 2016-17, with £5.2m from tickets. That is less than 4p in every £1 of its income for the season.

So just how important is it to have fans coming through

the turnstiles?

"I'd say they are the most important element," said Football Supporters' Federation chair Malcolm Clarke.

"Players and managers come and go, but we are always there. The reason that they can get lucrative TV deals is because the product shows the crowd, the noise, the away fans and the atmosphere - it is all part of it."

"On one level they don't need the fans because they have got so much money from broadcasters, but at another level they do need fans to keep an attractive product."

"How boring would it be to watch a Premier League game in an empty stadium?"

In a statement, the Premier League said clubs "work hard to fill their stadiums" through a number of ticketing offers, highlighting the £30 cap on away tickets introduced at the start of the 2016-17 season.

"The high-quality football produced by clubs, combined with the commitment of fans, led to an extremely high stadium utilization of 96% in the Premier League last season, and similar levels have been achieved for many consecutive years," the statement continued.

(Source: BBC)



# Kimia Alizadeh could retire from taekwondo, coach says

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian woman taekwondo athlete Kimia Alizadeh may be forced to retire from the sport forever, Mahroo Komrani said.

Alizadeh, who had been selected to carry Iran's flag at the 2018 Asian Games, missed the Games due to a torn ACL.

Alizadeh won a bronze medal at the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. This made her the first Iranian woman to win a medal at the Olympic Games.

But now, her coach says she will likely announce retirement from the sport forever.

"For someone who has undergone surgery several times, is very difficult to return to the sport once again," Komrani said.

"Kimia made history for Iran in the Olympic Games but our girls have the potential to make a splash in the Asian Games in Indonesia," she added.

Kimia Alizadeh made a name for herself in the women's 63-kg class at the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games by winning a gold medal.

A year later, Alizadeh beat London 2012 gold medalist Jade Jones at the 2015 World Championship to win a bronze medal.

Kimia won a silver medal at the 2017 World Taekwondo Championships.

Iranian woman shooter Elaheh Ahmadi replaced her to carry the flag in the Games.

The 18th edition of the Asian Games will be held in Indonesia between August 18 and September 2.



## Son eager to lead Korea Republic's charge



Tottenham Hotspur forward Son Heung-min is looking forward to spearheading Korea Republic's defence of the Asian Games gold medal.

Son, who arrived in Bandung on Monday to join the Korea Republic U-23 squad, said he will use the coming days to familiarise with his teammates.

"I have to get friendly with other younger teammates," he said. "I'll approach them first and will give them some advice. It's my job to help my teammates to play their best game."

Son arrived in Bandung after playing in Tottenham's opening 2-1 English Premier League win over Newcastle United on Saturday.

"On my flight to Indonesia, I thought a lot about the Asian Games," Son said. "I feel more responsibility as a wild card member and I have to play a good game."

Son, 26, is one of the three wild card players for Korea Republic at the 2018 Asian Games Indonesia. The other two

are Daegu FC goalkeeper Jo Hyeon-woo and Gamba Osaka striker Hwang Ui-jo.

The men's football competition at the Asian Games is an U-23 affair.

Korea Republic are in Group E with Bahrain, Malaysia and Kyrgyz Republic. Although expected to progress to the Knockout Stage, Son cautioned against underestimating their challengers.

"Like we beat Germany at the FIFA World Cup, we could also lose to other Asian teams," he said. "Football is a sport in which 11 players compete. We need to stay focused."

Son scored two goals at the 2018 FIFA World Cup, including Korea Republic's second goal in their 2-0 win over Germany.

Korea Republic open their Asian Games campaign against Bahrain on Wednesday before facing Malaysia (August 17) and Kyrgyz Republic (August 20) to complete the group stage.

(Source: the-afc)

## Samuel Eto'o joins Qatar Sports Club



Veteran Cameroon star Samuel Eto'o has signed for Qatar league side, Qatar Sports Club, it was announced Monday, just days after he ended a brief stay at Turkish side Konyaspor.

The former Barcelona, Inter Milan and Chelsea striker will be unveiled on Tuesday, said Qatar Sports Club, the latest big-name edition to Qatar's domestic league as it gears up to host the 2022 World Cup.

The club said on social media that it would "present the international star Samuel Eto'o" at a press conference. It is understood he underwent a medical earlier in the day.

The four-time African player of the year will join former colleagues in Qatar, including ex-Barcelona teammate Xavi Hernandez, who plays for Al Sadd, and Wesley Sneijder who was at Inter with Eto'o.

In 2009, Eto'o won the Champions League with Barcelona playing alongside Xavi. A year later he won the same trophy with Inter in the same team as Sneijder.

The Dutchman now plays for Al Gharafa in Qatar's domestic competition, the Qatar Stars League.

The signing is a coup for Qatar Sports Club, who finished in mid-table last season and currently have little hope of winning any domestic titles.

Earlier on Monday Eto'o said Ligue 1 clubs had contacted him after he announced he was leaving Turkey last week. The 37-year-old is now in the twilight of a fabulous career.

He enjoyed five hugely successful seasons with Barcelona from 2004 to 2009, before helping Jose Mourinho's Inter team to win the treble of Champions League, Serie A and Coppa Italia titles in his first season in Italy.

He then had brief stints at Chelsea and Everton in the Premier League. Eto'o also scored 56 times for his country in 118 appearances and won two African Cup of Nations with Cameroon.

(Source: Firstpost.com)

## Qatar handball thump Malaysia in opener

Asian Games defending champions in handball, Qatar began their campaign on a resounding note by registering an emphatic 64-11 win over Malaysia in the Group A match in Indonesia, yesterday.

Anis Zouaoui led Qatar charge by top scoring with 18 goals while Abdulrazzaq Murad got his name on the scoreboard ten times.

Coach Valero Rivera team, winners of the Men's Handball Team Championship in 2014, 2016 and 2018, besides the Asian Games title in Incheon four years back, went into the half time break leading 33-7 and they continued to

dominate in the second session to emerge runaway winners.

"It was a good game. We have done our best and we will try to do so, Inshallah [God willing] until the final match. This is the first time we have participated in the Asian Games," Alhail Yosuf, Qatar's handball manager said while talking to reporters after the match.

Qatar next face Iran in their group match on August 17 and Yosuf said all matches will not be easy.

"The opponents will be very strong and we will think of other strategies in the next matches. Everything here is very good, Indonesians are very friendly. I am very satisfied

with the transportation service as it only took 30 minutes from the athletes village to go here," he added.

Malaysia coach Muhammad Ali Shamsul Nizam was disappointed with the loss but said it was good learning experience.

"Qatar knows all our games, because we often play together. We have learned new experiences from these games. Some of our players are injured, while others are exhausted. We will try to change the strategy for the next game," Nizam said.

(Source: Thepeninsulaqatar.com)

## Iran B into 6th AVC Cup final

Iran made a step closer to retaining their title after brushing off hosts Chinese Taipei in three-setter 25-19, 25-20, 25-23 in the semi-finals of the 6th AVC Cup for Men at the University of Taipei (Tianmu) Gymnasium on Tuesday.

The first set saw Chinese Taipei and Iran trade blows before Iran led 20-16 thanks to their impenetrable blocks. Iran allowed the rivals three more points to take the opener 25-19 with their aggressive services.

In the second set, a quick timeout called by Chinese Taipei due to their ineffective offense helped them catch Iran at 8-8 before Iranians advanced with four points clear at 12-8

by beautiful digs against threatening attacks from Chinese Taipei. Trailing in vain, Chinese Taipei went down the second set 25-20.

Boosted by home spectators' support, Chinese Taipei led in the third set with two powerful spikes 7-5. Taking advantage in net faults produced by Chinese Taipei, Iran advanced again and remained irresistible. Iran wrapped up the set 25-23 and won the final berth.

"This was our second time to play Chinese Taipei. We played better on the court because we had done more analysis and got familiar with this great team, who beat Kazakhstan yesterday," said Iran head coach Behrouz

Ataei Nouri.

"We cared too much about reaching new heights (in AVC Cup for Men) to perform well on the court. Also, that is my bad thing to have insufficient instructions to the problems we met," said Chinese Taipei head coach Chen Yu-an.

"Iran's aggressive service troubled our reception so much that we could not spread our wings comfortably on the court. We should improve it tomorrow and regain our form," said Tai Ju-chien, setter of Chinese Taipei.

Yali Porya scored match-high 16 points including 14 kills from 25 attempts and two blocks, while Salehi Meisam added 13 points including 12 kills from 20 attempts and an ace.



Chinese Taipei will go up against Japan on Wednesday to fight for the third place, with Qatar and Iran fighting for the championship.

(Source: asianvolleyball)

## Ronaldo discharged from Ibiza hospital after heavy flu

Former Brazil and Real Madrid striker Ronaldo was discharged from an Ibiza hospital on Tuesday after suffering "heavy flu" while on holiday.

The 41-year-old was admitted on Friday after reportedly suffering from pneumonia. Hospital sources told Spanish media that Ronaldo left on Tuesday.

Ronaldo, who won the World Cup's Golden Boot as Brazil

won a record fifth title in 2002, assured fans on social media on Sunday that he was fine and would soon be ready to go home after suffering "a heavy bout of flu."

On Tuesday, he wrote: "Hi guys! I'm already at home after a few days at the clinic. Thank you all for your kind messages and positive energy! Thank you very much to the team of doctors and nurses. Now let's focus on football!

This season will be incredible and promises a lot of news."

Ronaldo retired from football in 2011 following a hugely successful career which featured stints at PSV Eindhoven, Barcelona, Inter Milan, AC Milan, Brazilian sides Corinthians and Cruzeiro as well as Real Madrid.

He won the Ballon d'Or award for the best player in the world in 1997 and 2002.

(Source: ESPN)

## Carlos Queiroz to stay as Iran coach until 2019 AFC Asian Cup

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Carlos Queiroz will remain as Iran national football team coach until the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

The Portuguese has yet to extend his contract with Iranian federation but Deputy Sports Minister Mohammad Reza Davarzani says he will lead Team Melli in the competition in the UAE.

Carlos Queiroz has been recently linked with a move to South Korea and Colombia.

"Queiroz will remain as Iran coach in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup," Davarzani said.

Iran national football team have been drawn with Iraq, Yemen and Vietnam in Group D of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

## Iranian Asian Games' squad off to Indonesia

**IRNA** — Several Iranian national sports teams departed for Indonesia on Monday evening to attend Jakarta Palembang 2018 Asian Games, it was reported on Tuesday.

The Iranian squad comprising 13 teams including wushu, taekwondo, fencing, swimming, gymnastics, paragliding, badminton, kabaddi, beach volleyball, tennis, sepak takraw, and sailing.



A medical team is also accompanying the Iranian squad. The Iranian outfit at the 2018 Asian Games comprises 280 sportsmen and 98 sportswomen who will compete in 42 sports fields.

The 2018 Asian Games is slated to start on August 18 and will wrap up on September 2 in the Indonesian cities of Jakarta and Palembang.

Over 11,000 athletes from 45 Asian countries will attend the competition.

The 2018 Asian Games, officially known as the 18th Asian Games and also known as Jakarta Palembang 2018, is a pan-Asian multi-sport event scheduled to be held from August 18 to September 2, 2018 in the Indonesian cities of Jakarta and Palembang.

## No Trabzonspor agreement for Iran's Pouraliganji

**TASNIM** — Morteza Pouraliganji's future should be decided in the 'the next couple of days' after the Iranian international defender didn't reach an agreement with Turkish football club Trabzonspor.

Pouraliganji was reportedly on the verge of joining Trabzonspor but two parties failed to finalize the deal due to financial issues.

Reports in the Turkish media emerged on Tuesday Trabzonspor have given up interest in signing Pouraliganji.

The 26-year-old defender, who most recently played in Qatar's Al Sadd, had traveled to Istanbul to watch Trabzonspor and Basaksehir.

Trabzonspor have already signed Iranian midfielder Vahid Amiri and defender Majid Hosseini.

## Persepolis best Iranian club in world ranking

**IRNA** — Persepolis football team remain as the best Iranian club at the ranking released on Monday by clubworldranking.com.

The Reds, who have won Iran Professional League back-to-back title, sit first with 3194 points.

Persepolis's arch-rivals Esteghlal are second in the ranking with 2911 points, followed by Zob Ahan (2226) and Saipa (1070) respectively.

Spanish trio Real Madrid, Barcelona and Atletico Madrid remained unchanged as top three teams.

Jeonbuk Motors of South Korea are the best Asian team in the ranking.

## Basim Qasim returns as Air Force Club head coach

Iraq's Air Force Club have announced Basim Qasim's appointment as head coach ahead of the 2018 AFC Cup West Zonal Final.

The 59-year-old former Iraqi international's most recent appointment was as the Iraq national team head coach, with a friendly against Palestine earlier in August his final match in charge.

Qasim also previously handled the Iraq U-17 and U-19 teams as well as several clubs in Iraq and Yemen.

His major success was guiding Air Force Club to their inaugural AFC Cup title in 2016, before leaving shortly after to coach the Iraqi team.

The Falcons went on to secure their second consecutive club Continental title the following year.

Qasim's first task is to prepare Air Force Club for the 2018 AFC Cup West Zonal final against Jordan's Al Jazeera.

The first leg is on September 18 with the return tie on October 2.

(Source: the-afc)



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Iran selects nominees for Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iran has announced its nominees for the 2019 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, a prestigious Swedish honor to promote children’s and youths’ literature in the world.



The nominees are celebrated writer and playwright Jamshid Khanian and researcher and children literature expert Ali-Asghar Seyyedabadi.

The nominees have been selected by Iranian Association of Writers for Children and Youth.

The decision was announced in a meeting held at the association by director Fereidun Amuzadeh Khalili on Tuesday.

Khanian is a researcher and a playwright. Among his credits are “A Half Day in the Interrogation Room” and “Compass”. He is also the writer of several stories, including “Money” and “Where is My Joseph”, which have been translated into English, Russian and Polish.

Seyyedabadi is a researcher and writer. His credits include “Whom Did Aunt Suska Marry?”, “The Wedding of Bijan and Manijeh”, and “Rainbow in My Pocket”.

The prize worth SEK 5 million (about \$600,000) is the largest international children’s and young adults’ literature award in the world.

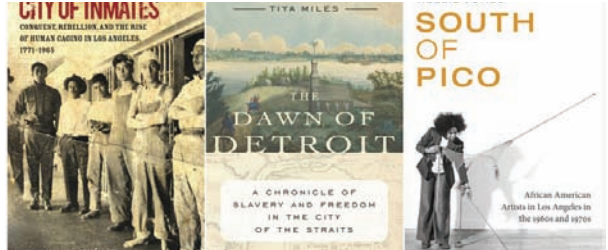
The award was established in 2002 by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs to commemorate writer Astrid Lindgren and to promote children’s and youths’ literature from around the world.

The list of the nominated candidates is presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October.

Children’s author Hushang Moradi Kermani was nominated for the award last year.

American Book Awards honor cultural diversity

NEW YORK (AP) — Books on human caging, early Detroit and African-American culture in Los Angeles are among this year’s winners for works reflecting the country’s diversity.



This combination photo of book cover images shows “City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965,” by Kelly Lytle Hernandez, from left, “The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits,” by Tiya Miles and “South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s,” by Kellie Jones. AP

The American Book Awards were announced Monday by the Before Columbus Foundation, founded in 1976 by author-poet Ishmael Reed.

Winners included Kelly Lytle Hernandez’s “City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965” and Kellie Jones’ “South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s.” Tiya Miles was cited for her history “The Dawn of Detroit.”

Other recipients were Victor Lavalle for “The Changeling: A Novel,” Valeria Luiselli for “Tell Me How It Ends”, Tommy Pico for “Nature Poem” and Rena Priest for “Patriarchy Blues”.

Oliver Stone plans next film “White Lies” with Benicio Del Toro to star

LOS ANGELES (Hollywood Reporter) — Oliver Stone is reteaming with Benicio Del Toro on his next turn in the director’s chair, “White Lies”.

The New York-set drama follows Jack (Del Toro), a child of divorce that is now repeating his parents’ mistakes in his own marriage and with his troubled son. Feeling trapped, he embarks on a lust-filled journey to free himself, but only becomes more lost. When he meets a woman whose life is the opposite of his own, he begins a journey of rediscovery. Stone will direct from his own script.

“White Lies” will shoot in spring 2019 in New York City.

Nighthawk Capital Limited is financing the film, which will be produced by Fernando Sulichin with Ross Katz. Sulichin’s New Element Media, which has worked with Stone on movies including Snowden and the Del Toro-starring Savages, raised the finance.

“Subdued” named best film at Hafez Awards

A R T TEHRAN — “Subdued”, director Hamid Nematollah’s drama about an emotional journey, has been named best film at the 18th Hafez Awards, Iran’s first and only private awards in the film industry and TV productions.

The Hafez Awards were presented at the Milad Hall in Tehran on Monday night as all winners commemorated Ali Moallem, the founder of the awards who died of a heart attack in March, 2017.

Moallem’s colleagues in his Persian cinematic monthly Donya-ye Tasvir, which is the organizer of the Hafez Awards, and his family were also present at the ceremony.

Leila Hatami won the award for best actress for her role in the movie “Subdued”. Hatami’s co-star, Kurosh Tahami, also received the best actor award.

The film also brought Sohrab Purnazeri the best composer award, and Masumeh Bayat won the best screenwriter award, while Homa Shajarian won the best film music award.

“Subdued”, is about Mina who is recently divorced from her drug addict husband. With her mother deceased and estranged from her father, she leads an independent life. After finding a job in a restaurant, she strikes up a friendship with its attentive manager. She starts having feelings she has never before experienced. These feelings, eventually shared, are shaken when the manager begins to distance himself from her. Thus commences a tumultuous emotional journey.

One more award was presented in the best actor category and Hadi Hejazifar received the award for his role in “Lottery”, and one more in the best actress category which was handed to Parinaz Izadyard for her role in “The Villa Tenants” by Monir Qeidi.



“Subdued” director Hamid Nematollah (L) holds the best film award he received at the 18th Hafez Awards ceremony held at the Milad Hall on August 13, 2018. Actor/director Hooman Seyyedi is also seen in the photo.

The award for best director was presented to Fereidun Jeirani for “Asphyxia”.

Bahram Afshari won the best comedy actor award for his strong performance in “Paytakht 5”, the popular Iranian TV series that was broadcast on IRIB’s Channel 3 during the Noruz holidays in March.

Roya Mirlemi also won the best comedy actress award for her role in the TV series

“The Licentiates”.

“The Home” director Asghar Yusefinejad won the Abbas Kiarostami Award, which was launched by the organizers last year in honor of the world renowned filmmaker. The award is presented to an innovative filmmaker.

Veteran stage and cinema director Ali Rafiei was next honored with a lifetime achievement award, while writer Hiva Masih

received a lifetime achievement award.

“Zero to Podium”, a documentary by Sahar Mosayebi about the lives of Shahrbanu, Soheila and Elaheh Mansourian, three Iranian sisters who are Wushu fighters from the small Iranian town of Semirom, was named the best documentary.

The best host award went to Mehran Modiri for his talk show “Dorehami”.

Kerman museum to showcase illustrations from Bratislava biennial



A poster for an exhibition of a collection of illustrations from the Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava in Kerman

A R T TEHRAN — A selection of works from the various editions of the Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava (BiB) will be showcased in an exhibition in the Sanati Museum of Contemporary Art in Kerman.

The exhibition, which will open today, has been organized in collaboration with the Kerman branch of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA).

Iranian illustrator Narges Mohammadi, who won a Golden Apple for her works in the book “I Was a Deer” at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava in Slovakia last

year, is scheduled to hold a workshop at the museum on Thursday.

The exhibit will be running for one week.

Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural Center was the first host of the exhibit in April. The exhibit later moved to Sanandaj, Kordestan Province in July.

The first edition of the Slovakian biennial was held in 1967. In the course of 50 years of BiB history, and its 25 exhibitions, a total of 7,580 artists from 110 countries have presented 59,860 original illustrations and over 9,500 books, the BiB has said on its website.

AP Source: Soul icon Aretha Franklin is seriously ill

NEW YORK (AP) — Fans and friends, including Mariah Carey and Missy Elliott, offered prayers and well wishes to Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin, who is seriously ill.

A person close to Franklin, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the person was not allowed to publicly talk about the topic, told The Associated Press on Monday that the singer is seriously ill. No more details were provided.

Carey, who considers Franklin one of her biggest influences, wrote on Twitter that she is “praying for the Queen of Soul.” Missy Elliott said that the public has to celebrate iconic artists before they die.

“So many (of them) have given us decades of Timeless music,” the rapper wrote on Twitter.

Mark Frost, Andy Cohen and Ciara also posted about Franklin, who is considered one of the greatest singers of

all-time and is known for hits like “Respect” and “(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman.”

Franklin, who had battled undisclosed health issues in recent years, canceled planned concerts earlier this year after she was ordered by her doctor to stay off the road and rest up. She was originally scheduled to perform on her 76th birthday in March in Newark, New Jersey, and at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in April.

Last year, the icon announced her plans to retire, saying she would perform at “some select things.” One of those select events was a gala for Elton John’s 25th anniversary of his AIDS foundation in November in New York City, where Franklin closed the event with a collection of songs including “I Say a Little Prayer” and “Freeway.”

Abdul “Duke” Fakir, the lone surviving original member of the Four Tops, told the AP on Monday morning they

Mark Millar launching comic “Prodigy” for Netflix

LOS ANGELES (Hollywood Reporter) — Comic book author Mark Millar is teaming up with Batman artist “Albuquerque for Prodigy”, a new release that marks the prolific creator’s second title since setting up shop at Netflix.

Millar, the co-creator of such titles as “Wanted”, “Kick-Ass” and “Kingsman”, sold his publishing company Millarworld in a much ballooned deal in 2017. His inaugural comic under that acquisition deal was “The Magic Order”, whose first issue was published June 13.

According to Netflix, which made the announcement, “Prodigy” centers on Edison

Crane, the world’s smartest man, who isn’t content with running the world’s most successful business: “His brilliant mind needs constant challenge and so he’s become the go-to guy for governments around the world when a problem arises they just can’t handle. A Nobel Prize-winning scientist, a genius composer, an Olympic-level athlete and an expert in the occult, Edison Crane is as addicted to the mysteries of the world as he is to sitting at the top of the Fortune 500. These are the tales of the world’s most exceptional man and this story marks his first published adventure.”

“I wanted to write the smartest thing I’ve ever written and at the same time top any action set pieces I’ve ever managed in the past and I honestly couldn’t be happier with how this has turned out,” said Millar in his familiar enthusiastic patois. “Edison Crane is by far the best character I’ve created in my career and I’m delighted that my genius friend [Rafael] Albuquerque is drawing the comic book side of all this. He’s really one of the best artists in the world.”

“Prodigy” will hit comic book stores via Image Comics as well as online Dec. 5.

Seven animated movies to compete in Isfahan film festival



A scene from “Monster Island”, an animated horror comedy film directed by Leopoldo Aguilar

A R T TEHRAN — The organizers of the 31st International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan have released the international animation lineup.

A selection of seven animated movies from different countries will be competing in the international section of the festival running from August 30 to September 5.

The lineup includes “Mullewapp 2” by Tony Loeser, Theresa Strozyk from Germany, “Monster Island”, an animated horror comedy film directed by Leopoldo Aguilar from Mexico, “The Stolen Princess”, a 3D animated fantasy film directed by Oleg

Malamuzh from Ukraine, and “The Last Fiction” by Ashkan Rahgozar from Iran.

Also included are the animated Czech/Belgian/Russian coproduction “Harvie and the Magic Museum”, the American musical fantasy romantic comedy film produced by Walt Disney “Enchanted”, and the Russian animated adventure movie “Mission Kathmandu”.

“The Cushion” by Mani Vatandust from Iran is also an animation to go on screen in the non-competitive section of the festival.

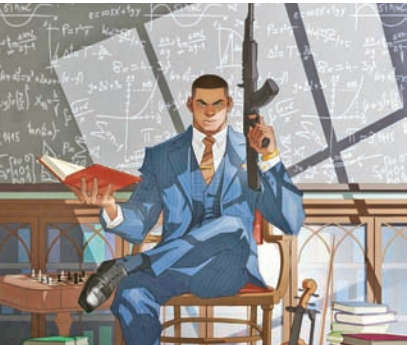
A selection of 15 films from different 14 countries have also been selected to compete in the international section of the festival.

have been “very close” for decades and their most recent conversation was about a week ago by phone. Fakir said they talked after Franklin had stopped by his Detroit house when he wasn’t there.

“She was telling me she rides around the city every now and then — she talks about how beautiful it is again,” Fakir said. “We were reminiscing about how blessed we were — only a couple two of us are around from that era. We were just kind of reminiscing about the good times we had.”

Fakir, who calls Franklin “baby sis” because he’s older than she is by six years, said despite her health troubles “she was talking about the future.”

“She talked about this great, big special she was going to have in New York, with all her great friends performing,” he said. “It made me feel good as well — she was still hoping and wishing and dreaming as we do in this business.”



Netflix/Ozgur Yildirim