



**Concerted effort needed to reform banking system** **2**



**Iran protests disrespect for Islamic headscarves at Tbilisi airport** **2**



**Iranian students win second prize at China spacecraft contest** **10**



**Iran down DPR Korea in Asian Games** **15**

# “Master actor” Ezzatollah Entezami dies at 94



See page 16

## EU's imports from Iran boost 23% in H1 on year

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Exports of Iranian goods to the European Union countries hit €6.11 billion in the first half of 2018, increasing 23 percent in comparison with the same time in the preceding year, European Commission press release database has reported. According to the report, Iran-EU trade witnessed an eight-percent rise and reached €10.68 billion in the said time in 2018, from its

previous €9.9 billion in the first half of 2017. Spain, France, Greece, and Italy were among the top importers of Iranian goods, the report added.

It is while European exports to Iran decreased by seven percent into €4.57 billion in the said time from its previous €4.94 billion in the first half of 2017, Germany, Spain, France, and Italy were the four major European exporters to Iran.

## Tehrani citizens to enjoy riding IoT-based bikes

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian startup set out to provide a system based on Internet of Things (IoT) for its bike sharing service in Tehran in coming months.

IoT is the network of physical devices, vehicles, home appliances, and other items embedded with electronics, software, sensors, actuators, and connectivity which enables these things to

connect and exchange data.

Tehrani citizens can enjoy cycling in different parts of the city through downloading the startup's app on their smartphone.

The bikes were used for the first time by a group of Tehrani reporters, during a ceremony held by Tehran Municipality for a short biking tour on Friday, ISNA reported. **→10**

## Afghan president congratulates armed forces for Ghazni victory

President Ashraf Ghani congratulated Afghanistan's armed forces in Ghazni on Friday for their victory over Taliban insurgents in the strategically important city after clashes that killed at least 150 soldiers and 95 civilians.

The Taliban's five-day siege of Ghazni eased on Wednesday after Afghan offi-

cials declared that they had regained complete control of the city by killing hundreds of Taliban fighters.

Ghani met officials in Ghazni, a central Afghanistan city on the main highway linking the capital, Kabul, with the south, to assess security, and also met families of the victims and prayed for the deceased. **→13**



### EDITORIAL

**Mohammad Ghaderi**  
Tehran Times editor-in-chief  
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## Crisis in the Republican Party of U.S.

Many Republicans in the United States are worried about the failure of this year's congressional elections. Democrats will come to power if Republicans can not maintain their majority in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Many analysts believe that the probable victory of Democrats in this year's congressional elections is an introduction to their victory in the 2020 presidential election. On the other hand, many Republicans believe that in the event of a failure in the congressional elections, there is no reason to continue their tacit support of Donald Trump. Still others believe that they should be loyal to the Trump until the presidential elections in the year 2020.

Senior Republican Party officials in the United States do not know what to do in the face of complex circumstances!

Over the past months, there have been whispers in the U.S. political environments and the country's media regarding Republicans bypassing Trump. The rejection of some Republican prominent senators, including McCain, with Trump, as well as the opposition of some of the United States former presidents, including George W. Bush, has aggravated this trend.

However, few thought that at the end of 2018, while only about two years has passed since the presence of Trump at the White House, the confrontation between the dissatisfied Republicans and the U.S. President would become public.

The fact is that Republicans in the United States are now worried about the country's 2020 presidential elections. Surveys in this country have shown that Trump's popularity has fallen by about 38%. Even in some surveys, Trump's popularity has dropped to 35% and below.

Although the president of the United States claims that the polls are all fake, it is obvious that the popularity of Trump with American citizens has fallen since the time of the presidential elections in 2016.

Some Republican senators say they should not be more tolerant of the current president of the United States. A few years ago a Republican senator made unprecedented sentences on this issue. **→13**

## Kabul school attack underscores threat to Afghanistan's future

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

**TEHRAN** — “How could they attack a classroom,” a friend asked, noticeably angry and outraged. There are no easy answers to that. A human mind cannot come to terms with the atrociousness of such horrendous crimes against humanity. Barging inside a packed classroom and blowing up young school children is no chivalry. It is an act of cowardice and spinelessness. The victims were not carrying arms and they were not on the frontlines of war. They were inside a classroom, preparing for university entrance examination.

More than 50 young children, mostly girls, were killed in cold blood when a suicide bomber attacked Maw'ood Education Center in Shia-dominated neighborhood of western Kabul on Wednesday. They were high-school students preparing for their Kankor examination. Most of them had come to Kabul from far-flung areas and had rented rooms in the congested Dasht e Barchi area.

These young children were the assets of Afghanistan. They represented the future of their country. They had dreams and were chasing those dreams against heavy odds. They didn't harm anyone. They

didn't understand proxy wars. All they wanted was good education, to achieve something in life, to come out of the grinding web of poverty, and to do their country and parents proud.

Now they have vanished into thin air. Their dreams have been buried with them. We are left behind to make sense of this madness. It has brought back the harrowing memories of 2014 school attack by Tehreek Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Peshawar city of Pakistan, which had claimed the lives of 149 people, including 132 schoolchildren. And more recently, we saw 44 schoolchildren being killed in Yemen in a Saudi airstrike. There is a common thread that runs through all these attacks. The attackers are driven by the same radical, extremist ideology that is designed to breed hatred.

Moments after the ghastly Kabul attack, social media was flooded with posts describing gory details of the mayhem, and heart-wrenching pictures from the scene. It was a massacre. Small disfigured bodies were strewn all around the place, which used to be a buzzing classroom, a happy place. The survivors were screaming, calling for help. **→7**

## Turkish diplomat: It is ‘impossible’ to stop buying oil from Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Riza Hakan Tekin, Ankara's ambassador to Tehran, has said that it is “impossible” for Turkey to stop purchasing Iran's oil.

Turkey imports half of its needed crude oil from Iran and “it is impossible to meet the U.S. demand on stopping purchasing Iran's oil,” ISNA quoted him as saying in an interview with Anadolu Agency.

He noted that sanctions should “conform to international law” and be “based on international consensus”.

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 August 6. The second batch, which will include banking and oil boycott, will be restored on November 4.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu issued a statement in June saying that Turkey does not have to

act in compliance with “unilateral” U.S. decisions on Iran.

Cavusoglu said on Thursday that Turkey is determined to expand ties with Iran despite the U.S. threats to punish governments that violate economic sanctions against Tehran.

“Time and again we have made it clear that we will not implement U.S. sanctions against Iran,” Press TV quoted him as saying during a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's special envoy Mahmoud Vaezi in Ankara. Turkish Energy Minister Fatih Donmez said on Wednesday that Ankara will continue to buy gas from Iran.

“We adopted the United Nations sanctions on Iran in the past. Even the European Union is extremely annoyed by today's situation. We are conducting legitimate trade here, which is of great importance in terms of supply security,” he said. Iran is one of the biggest suppliers of natural gas and oil to Turkey, according to Press TV.

## اولین نمایشگاه بین المللی صنعت گاز ایران

# 1<sup>st</sup> Int'l Iran Gas Show

تهران - ۱۰ تا ۱۳ شهریور ماه ۱۳۹۷

Tehran, 1~4 Sep. 2018

gasshow.ir

بزرگراه خلیج فارس، مرکز نمایشگاه های بین المللی شهر آفتاب، ساعت بازدید ۱۰ تا ۱۸

Shahr-e-Aftab International Exhibition Complex, Khalij-e-Fars Highway, Visit Hours: 10~18



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani  
condoles Italy  
on fatal bridge  
collapse

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday sent a letter to his Italian counterpart expressing his condolences over the collapse of a giant motorway bridge in Genoa, which led to the deaths and injuries of dozens of people.

In the letter to President Sergio Mattarella, Rouhani said he was deeply saddened by the news of deaths of Italians in the collapse of the Morandi Bridge in the city of Genoa, Tasnim reported.

Italian officials say 39 people were killed when dozens of vehicles fell 45m (148ft) from the Morandi Bridge during torrential rain on Tuesday.



Cleric: Concerted  
effort needed to  
reform banking  
system

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Friday prayer leader Mohammad-Hassan Aboutorabi Fard says concerted effort by all three branches of the government is needed to reform the banking system, IRNA reported.

"The Leader of the Islamic Revolution has strictly demanded a reformation in the banking system from the government," Aboutorabi Fard told worshippers on Friday.

He said this entails planning and consensus among "scientific and political elites".

He further said the governor of the central bank should demand the independence of the bank from the government and parliament, adding that without such independence, the economic problems cannot be overcome.



Anti-corruption  
trials to be  
broadcast on TV:  
prosecutor

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Jafar Montazeri, Iran's prosecutor general, said on Thursday that trials of the financially corrupt individuals will be broadcast on TV.

Montazeri said numerous cases related to economic issues have been brought to the court and they are under investigation, Tasnim reported.

"Given the large amount of the cases, handling these crimes will be time-consuming but this does not mean that we will back out," he added.

He also warned that any act of profiteering will be faced with a "decisive response" from the Judiciary.



Iran protests  
disrespect for  
Islamic headscarves  
at Tbilisi airport

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi says Tehran has lodged its strong protest with Georgia after several Iranian passengers had their Islamic headscarves disrespected during security check for a flight from Tbilisi to Isfahan, the Foreign Ministry website reported on Thursday.

"After the release of a report by the Foreign Ministry's representative office in Isfahan and after the authenticity of the report was confirmed through phone contacts by the Iranian ambassador to Georgia with a number of the passengers on board the flight, the Iranian embassy in Tbilisi expressed its strong protest at the Georgian Foreign Ministry and Tbilisi Airport security police," Qassemi stated.



Assyrian MP:  
U.S. doesn't do  
anything in our  
favor

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian Assyrian lawmaker said on Friday the U.S. does not take any steps in favor of the Iranian nation, stressing Iran should primarily rely on its domestic capabilities rather than looking abroad.

"If a country wants to be thriving, it should not trust America," said Yonathan Betkolia, who represents the Assyrian and Chaldean Communities, Fars reported.

He further emphasized that the U.S. not only seems unreliable presently but it hasn't been proved reliable over the course of its history.

"What is important is that we should preserve our national unity in the current situation and rely on our inner capacity."



'Iran deal was  
a monument  
to the power of  
diplomacy'

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Former U.S. Secretary of Defense William J. Perry on Friday criticized U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, saying the deal was a "monument to the power of diplomacy in action."

"This diplomatic achievement is greatly attributable to the tenacity and dedication of @wendyrsherman and her team," Perry tweeted, adding, "They performed a great service for our country and the world."

The nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was forged in July 2015 between Iran and six world powers — the U.S., China, Russia, England, France and Germany — after nearly two years of high-level intensive negotiations.

# Unity will vaccinate country against sanctions: senior MP

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A senior member of the Majlis says that while the country is under sanctions and foreign pressure, internal unity is the most prominent remedy, believing that unity will "vaccinate" the country against sanctions and plots by ill-wishers.

"I believe that now more than any other time we need unity and integrity," Masoud Pezeshkian, the deputy speaker of the Majlis, told ISNA in an interview published on Friday.

His remarks addressed a case of mudslinging a few days ago during the impeachment of labor minister Ali Rabii.

"Society has to judge how fair the surrounding issues of the impeachment session were. Nobody is free of mistakes," he stressed.

He said that while the U.S. is imposing sanctions to create hardship in Iran "we should try not to find faults and instead focus on strong points."

"It would be injustice to people when we swear at each other. If we find a weak point and repeatedly magnify it and drive



everything else to the margin, it would be an unforgivable treason."

He stressed that officials could suffice to a simpler lifestyle and instead increase

## Zarif says U.S. isolated itself by leaving JCPOA

"Today America's closest allies, apart from a few of our neighbors, are no longer aligned with Washington," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said during a televised interview on Wednesday night.

Zarif said the U.S. withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name for the nuclear deal, has perfectly manifested the country's isolation on the global stage.

"America is trying to create a psychological atmosphere" against Iran, Zarif added.

"Basically the entire goal is to psychologically affect our nation and to affect the psychological vibe of our trade partners across the globe," the foreign minister stated, stressing that "the world is not ready to follow America."

The JCPOA was signed in 2015 by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, including the U.S., plus Germany under then U.S. President Barack Obama.

Under the deal, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions. U.S. President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the

nuclear agreement in May, and said that he plans to impose "the highest level" of economic bans on the Islamic Republic.

The European Union has said the international community has an obligation to maintain economic relations with Iran.

Zarif noted that the EU has so far lived up to its commitments, but they have to "move beyond words."

"The Europeans say the JCPOA is a security achievement for them. Well, you ought to pay for your security. No one finds security without investment," he added.

(Source: Press TV)

## Pompeo forms group to spearhead anti-Iran actions

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — State Secretary Mike Pompeo announced on Thursday that the U.S. State Department has formed an "Iran Action Group" to coordinate and run an aggressive U.S. policy toward the Islamic Republic.

Pompeo said that the initiative would be "directing, reviewing and coordinating all

aspects of the State Department's Iran-related activity," according to the State Department website.

The group will be headed by senior policy adviser Brian Hook, who is currently the State Department's director of policy planning. He will report directly to Pompeo.

"Our hope is that one day soon we can

reach an agreement with Iran but we must see major changes in the regime both inside and outside of its borders," Pompeo said in a brief address at the State Department.

The top U.S. diplomat went on to say that the State Department is committed to a whole of government effort to change Tehran's "behavior."



Shiraz Water & Wastewater Company

**Shiraz Water & Wastewater Company**  
**Invitation for the prequalification of bidders**

شرکت آب و فاضلاب شیراز  
فراخوان ارزیابی کیفی مناقصه گران

**Shiraz Water & Wastewater Company** intends to  
call for a tender for the following works:

شرکت آب و فاضلاب شیراز در نظر دارد نسبت به برگزاری  
مناقصه ذیل اقدام نماید:

**Project subject and specifications:**

<b>Subject :</b> Design, procurement of equipment and construction of two modules for the Shiraz city's wastewater treatment plant with a capacity of each 50,000 m <sup>3</sup> /d using international finance (EPC+ F) <b>Bidders Category and Grade :</b> A joint venture of foreign and domestic contractors having technical experience and business license for the subject of this invitation, domestic contractors having grade 1 in water works as well as grade 1 in installation and equipment , and domestic consultants of grade 1 in water & wastewater projects <b>Execution Duration :</b> 36 months <b>Operation Period :</b> 24 months
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<b>موضوع و مشخصات پروژه :</b> <b>موضوع :</b> طراحی، تامین تجهیزات و ساخت دو مدول تصفیه خانه فاضلاب شهر شیراز به ظرفیت هر یک 50,000 مترمکعب در شبانه روز به روش فاینانس بین المللی (EPC+F) <b>رشته و پایه مناقصه گران :</b> پیمانکاران خارجی یا مشارکت پیمانکاران داخلی دارای سوابق و توان فنی (Business License) متناسب با موضوع مندرج در این آگهی، به صورت مشارکت به همراه پیمانکاران داخلی پایه یک آب و توما" پایه یک تاسیسات و تجهیزات و مشاورین داخلی پایه یک آب و فاضلاب <b>مدت اجرای :</b> 36 ماه <b>مدت بهره برداری :</b> 24 ماه
---

**General conditions:** loan and interest repayment will be guaranteed by the Plan & Budget Organization.

**Supervision body :**Iranab consulting Engineers

**Dates to receive prequalification documents** is as of August 20,2018 upto September 3,2018 and prequalification documents submission deadline the end of official hours of October 6,2018.

**Address of receiving and submitting documents** :Iranab Consulting Engineers: #5, Jila Alley, Bassiri St., DorahiGholhak, Dr. Shriati Ave., Tehran  
**Tel.:** 22633047-53

Bidders, having good financial, technical and performance experience in this regard, having deposited IRR 3,000,000 in bank account number of 73151730/48 (Bank of Mellat-Tehran Mirdamad Branch-Code of 65078) in the name of IranabConsulting Engineers, presenting the original receipt of the deposit and a valid letter of introduction could buy the documents. It is noteworthy that the prequalification documents will only be delivered to bidder's representatives having valid letter of introduction and identified subject in.

**شرایط کلی:** بازپرداخت اصل و سود تسهیلات مالی توسط سازمان برنامه و بودجه کشور تضمین خواهد شد.

**دستگاه نظارت :** مهندسین مشاور ایراناب

**مهلت دریافت اسناد ارزیابی** از تاریخ 97/5/29 تا 97/6/12 و آخرین مهلت تسلیم اسناد ارزیابی کیفی پایان وقت اداری مورخ 97/7/14 می باشد.

**نشانی دریافت و تحویل اسناد ارزیابی :** تهران - خیابان دکتر شریعتی، دوراهی قلهک، خیابان بصیری، کوچه زیلا، پلاک 5 شرکت مهندسین مشاور ایراناب .  
تلفن 53- 22633047

بدینوسیله مناقصه گران محترم که دارای امکانات مالی، فنی و سابقه اجرایی مناسب در این زمینه می باشند می توانند با مراجعه به آدرس فوق، اسناد ارزیابی کیفی را پس از واریز مبلغ 3٠000٠000 ریال به حساب جاری شماره 73151730/48 نزد بانک ملت شعبه میرداماد تهران (کد شعبه 65078) بنام شرکت مهندسین مشاور ایراناب با ارائه اصل رسید واریز وجه و معرفی نامه معتبر، خریداری نمایند. اسناد و مدارک ارزیابی فقط به نماینده مناقصه گران با ارائه معرفی نامه معتبر و با قید موضوع، تحویل خواهد شد.



"He seeks to humiliate the Islamic Republic and say that he brought the Iranians to the negotiating table," he told Fars news agency in an interview published on Friday.

He noted that Trump sought to cause division inside Iran through his psychological warfare.

In a joint press conference with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte on July 30 in the White House Trump said he is ready to meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani without any pre-conditions.



# Turkey will respond if U.S. imposes more sanctions: minister

Turkey Friday threatened to respond if the United States levied further sanctions over the detention of an American pastor, which has sparked a diplomatic standoff and battered the Turkish currency.

"We've already responded based on the World Trade Organisation rules and will continue to do so," Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan was quoted as saying by the state-run Anadolu news agency.

Washington warned on Thursday that it would impose more sanctions unless pastor Andrew Brunson, described by U.S. President Donald Trump as a "hostage", was released.

Brunson's detention since October 2016 on terror-related charges has soured relations between the two NATO allies, sending the Turkish lira into a tailspin.

The lira, which earlier this week traded at well over seven to the dollar, was at 5.8 against the dollar and 6.7 against euro on Friday.

Last week, Trump tweeted that his administration was doubling aluminum and steel tariffs for Turkey, and in response Ankara sharply hiked tariffs on some U.S. products.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin suggested Thursday the next spiral of tit-for-tat sanctions was coming soon, in a sign of a deepening spat.



Trump prefaced Mnuchin's remarks by saying that Turkey had not been a very good friend to America. Referring to Brunson, Trump said: "They have a great Christian pastor there, he's a very innocent man."

■ **Currency fluctuations**  
On Thursday, Finance Minister Berat Albayrak addressed hundreds of foreign investors from the US, Europe and Asia via a conference call in a bid to soothe the markets. "Turkey will emerge stronger from these [currency] fluctuations," Albayrak was quoted

by state-run TRT television as saying.

He rejected seeking a bailout from the IMF, an option never seen as likely given that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan often boasts of paying off Turkey's past IMF debts in May 2013.

The lira has clawed back some ground over the last two days - after losing almost a quarter of its value on Friday and Monday - but economists are warning that Turkey must urgently address its economic imbalances to avoid more trouble. The lira's months-

long slide has accelerated as a result of the diplomatic standoff with Washington over Brunson's detention. A Trump tweet last week announcing a doubling of aluminum and steel tariffs for Turkey triggered the rout in the currency markets.

The lira's drop in value is certain to further fuel inflation, which is already near 16 percent.

■ **Market consolidation**  
Qatar has pledged to channel \$15bn of direct investment into Turkey, a sign of burgeoning ties between the two countries.

Analysts say Turkey is also likely to seek a more dynamic economic relationship with China and Russia, with whom ties have warmed considerably in recent years.

Turkey has also in recent days shown an interest in repairing ties with Europe after a crisis sparked by Ankara's crackdown on alleged plotters of the 2016 failed coup.

President Erdogan and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron agreed in a phone call to foster trade ties, according to a Turkish presidential source.

Albayrak has also spoken with his German counterpart Olaf Scholz and they agreed to "take steps in order to reinforce economic cooperation", his office said.

(Source: AFP)

## India's Kerala flood death toll jumps to 164



The death toll from major floods in India's tourist hotspot Kerala has jumped to 164, State Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Friday, issuing a fresh heavy rainfall warning for the battered region.

Kerala's government has described the crisis - one of the worst in decades - as "extremely grave" and rescue operations are underway to help thousands who remain trapped by floodwaters. "The chief minister has confirmed 164 deaths. Around 100 people died in the last 36 hours alone," an official in the Kerala government's public relations department told AFP. Local reports indicated an even higher toll with thousands still waiting for relief and rescue across the flood-ravaged state. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday said that he had discussed the flood situation with Vijayan as more troops and rescue workers were deployed across Kerala.

"Later this evening, I will be heading to Kerala to take stock of the unfortunate situation," Modi said on Twitter.

The state, famed for its palm-lined beaches and tea plantations, is always pommelled by the annual monsoon but this year's damage has been the most severe in almost a century. More than 150,000 people made homeless across the state have moved into some 1,300 relief camps.

Vijayan's office Friday posted a fresh warning for around 33 million residents

of Kerala. "Alert: all districts apart from Kasargod are under red alert... heavy rains may affect these 13 districts. Everyone please be cautious," his office tweeted.

Even before the latest warning, locals like Ajo Varghese have been posting desperate appeals for relief and rescue on social media.

"My family and neighboring families are in trouble with flood in Pandanad nakkada area in Alappuzha," Varghese said in a viral Facebook post. "No water and food. Not able to communicate from afternoon. Mobile phones are not reachable and switch off. Please help... No rescue is available," he added. A state official told AFP that apart from the new rainfall warnings, a breakdown of the local communication system was making it difficult for them to reach local people who may be in urgent need in the worst-affected areas.

The government says 10,000 kilometers of Kerala roads have been destroyed or damaged and tens of thousands of homes partially or completely damaged.

The gates of at least 34 major dams and reservoirs across the state have been opened in the last few days as water levels reached danger levels.

North and central Kerala has been worst-hit by the floods with the international airport in main city of Kochi shut until at least Aug. 26.

(Source: AFP)

## Pentagon says China military 'likely training for strikes' on U.S. targets



China's military has expanded its bomber operations in recent years while "likely training for strikes" against the United States and its allies, a Pentagon report released said.

The assessment, which comes at a time of heightened U.S.-China tensions over trade, was contained in an annual report that highlighted China's efforts to increase its global influence, with defense spending that the Pentagon estimates exceeded \$190 billion in 2017. "Over the last three years, the PLA has rapidly expanded its overwater bomber operating areas, gaining experience in critical maritime regions and likely training for strikes against U.S. and allied targets," the report said, using an acronym for China's People's Liberation Army.

The report comes as China and the United States plan to hold trade talks, offering hope they might resolve an escalating tariff conflict that threatens to degenerate into an all-out trade war.

The report said that while the PLA had continued to extend operations, it was not clear what message Beijing was seeking to send by carrying out the flights "beyond a demonstration of improved capabilities."

The Chinese embassy in Washington could not immediately be reached for comment.

This year China's air force landed bombers on islands and reefs in the South China

Sea as part of a training exercise in the disputed region.

In January the Pentagon put countering Beijing, along with Russia, at the center of a new national defense strategy.

While Washington and Beijing maintain a military-to-military relationship aimed at containing tensions, this has been tested in recent months, notably in May when the Pentagon withdrew an invitation to China to join a multinational naval exercise.

In June, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis became the first Pentagon chief to visit China since 2014.

The Pentagon report said that despite a projected slowdown in economic growth, China's official defense budget would be more than \$240 billion by 2028. The Pentagon report also said China's space program was progressing rapidly.

"The PLA continues to strengthen its military space capabilities despite its public stance against the militarization of space," it said. This month, President Donald Trump's administration announced an ambitious plan to usher in a new "Space Force" as the sixth branch of the military by 2020.

One of the arguments in favor of developing such a force is that American rivals like China appear increasingly ready to strike U.S. space-based capabilities in the event of a conflict.

(Source: Reuters)

## Yemeni fugitive government and Houthis invited to Sept 6 peace talks

The United Nations has invited Yemen's fugitive government and Houthis to Geneva next month for talks on resolving the country's civil war, a spokeswoman said Friday.

"I can confirm that the Office of the Special Envoy sent out invitations to the government of Yemen and to Ansarullah," UN spokeswoman Alessandra Vellucci told reporters.

The UN's Yemen envoy Martin Griffiths has said the talks due to open Sept. 6 will be aimed at charting a path forward to revive UN-backed negotiations which broke down in 2016.

Vellucci said she had no information on whether representatives from Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - another key government backer - had also been invited to Geneva.

Yemen's government has said it has low expectations for the talks. The UN has repeatedly described Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Saudi Arabia and its allies launched a brutal war, code-named Operation Decisive Storm, against Yemen in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall Hadi, a staunch ally of Riyadh, and crush the Houthis. The offensive initially consisted of a bombing campaign, but was later coupled with a naval blockade and the deployment of ground forces into Yemen.

The imposed war, however, has so far failed to achieve its goals, thanks to stiff resistance from Yemeni troops and allied Houthi fighters. Several Western countries have been supplying Saudi Arabia with advanced weapons and military equipment.

Yemen is now suffering from the worst humanitarian crisis in the world due to the Saudi aggression and siege.

(Source: agencies)

## Russian, Turkish defense ministers discuss Syrian refugees

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu discussed the return of Syrian refugees to Syria with his Turkish counterpart Hulusi Akar during talks in Moscow Friday, the TASS news agency cited the Russian ministry as saying.

The talks also touched on the humanitarian situation in Syria as well as on cooperation between Turkey and Russia's defense ministries.

■ **Russia says Syria base attacked by 'sophisticated' drones**

Russia says drones used to attack its Hmeimim airbase in Syria are too sophisticated to have been assembled by terrorists and that experts believe terrorists use foreign help to launch the raids which have increased. Russia's Defense Ministry spokesman Major General Igor Konashenkov said Thursday that drones downed by Hmeimim air defense assets appeared primitive but had a range of 100 kilometers and used advanced technologies.

The drones, equipped with explosive devices, navigation gadgets and control systems, could not have been assembled by militants "without any outside help", he said.

Experts who have analyzed the downed UAVs have reached the conclusion that the assembling work is based on "a clear instruction developed by specialists", Konashenkov said.

Terrorists, he said, have also launched the attacks based on a clear line of expert directions. According to Konashenkov, Russian air defense assets have over the past month successfully downed 45 drones during attacks on the Hmeimim airbase located in Syria's Latakia. The attacks were launched by Idlib-based militants and the number of such attacks has recently increased.

The Hmeimim airbase is the hub of Russian operations in the Arab country and the largest base in Syria run by foreign troops.

Idlib, a governorate on the Turkish border, is one of the last strongholds still held by foreign-backed militants in Syria.

(Source: agencies)

## Netanyahu questioned again over alleged graft

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu went through a new round of questioning Friday over one of several graft cases that have threatened to topple him, media reports said.

Investigators arrived at the premier's Jerusalem residence in the morning to interview him over allegations of corruption involving local telecoms giant Bezeq and its largest shareholder, Shaul Elovitch, according to Israeli media reports.

Israeli police and Netanyahu's office do not confirm that such hearings have taken place until they are over.

It would be the 12th time Netanyahu has been questioned in various cases, either as a suspect or a witness.

In the Bezeq case, Netanyahu is alleged to have sought favorable coverage from another Elovitch company, the Walla news site, in exchange for government policies that could have benefited the mogul's interests to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

After a previous round of questioning in July, Netanyahu's office said there was no such trade-off.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu has never made a deal with Elovitch in exchange for supportive coverage," it said, adding that the Walla site had consistently covered the premier "in a hostile manner." Elovitch was arrested in February along with six other people including Nir Hefetz, a former media adviser to the Netanyahu family. In addition to the premiership, Netanyahu also held the communications portfolio between November 2014 and February 2017, covering the run-up to the March 2015 elections, when he is alleged to have made the deal with Elovitch.

Netanyahu was interrogated for more than five hours in July, reportedly over the same affair. In a separate case, his wife Sara was charged in June with misusing state funds to buy catered meals costing \$100,000 by falsely declaring there were no cooks available at the premier's official residence.

In February, police recommended the premier be indicted in two cases, though the attorney general has yet to decide whether to do so. Netanyahu, prime minister for around 12 years in total, has maintained his innocence in all of the cases, talking of a "witch hunt" and saying he was determined to stay in his job.

He would not be legally obliged to resign if charged. So far his coalition partners have stood by him despite the allegations, but the investigations have gradually ratcheted up speculation over whether he will eventually be forced from office.

(Source: AP)

## Vatican in 'shame and sorrow' over abuses in Pennsylvania

The Vatican expressed "shame and sorrow" Thursday over a scathing Pennsylvania grand jury report about clergy who raped and molested children in six dioceses in that state, calling the abuse "criminally and morally reprehensible" and says Pope Francis wants to eradicate "this tragic horror."

In a written statement using uncharacteristically strong language for the Holy See even in matters like the long-running abuse scandals staining the U.S. church, Vatican spokesman Greg Burke sought to assure victims that "the pope is on their side."

Pope Francis himself wasn't quoted in the statement, and there was no mention of demands in the United States among some Roman Catholics for the resignation of Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the archbishop of Washington. The grand jury report made public this week accused the cardinal of helping to protect some molester priests while he was bishop of the Pennsylvania city of Pittsburgh. Wuerl has defended his actions in Pittsburgh while apologizing for the damage inflicted on victims. Burke said the incidents of abuse graphically documented in the report were "betrayals of trust that robbed survivors of their dignity and their faith."

"The church must learn hard lessons from its past, and there should be accountability for both abusers and those who permitted abuse to occur," he said.

Victims and their advocates for decades



have lamented that top Catholic churchmen repeatedly put the reputation of the church ahead of obligations to protect children from harm from pedophile priests.

In a sign that Pope Francis wants to end that pervasive mind set among church hierarchy, including bishops and cardinals, he recently accepted the resignation from cardinal's rank of former Washington archbishop Theodore McCarrick amid allegations that the American prelate had engaged in sexual misconduct.

Resignations by cardinals are extremely rare, and McCarrick's was the first time a prelate lost his cardinal's rank in a sexual abuse scandal.

Burke said Francis "understands well how much these crimes can shake the faith and the spirit of believers and reiterates the call to make every effort to create a safe environment for minors and vulnerable adults

in the church and in all of society."

The grand jury report documented how pedophile priests were often protected by church hierarchy or moved to other postings without the faithful being told of the priests' sexual predatory history.

The long-awaited grand jury report was full of vivid examples of horrendous abuse. In one such example, a young girl was raped by a priest visiting her while she was in a hospital following surgery to remove her tonsils. In another, a priest tied up a victim with a rope in a confessional booth, and when the victim refused to perform sex, the priest assaulted him with a crucifix.

Speaking about Francis, Burke said: "Those who have suffered are his priority, and the church wants to listen to them to root out this tragic horror that destroys the lives of the innocent."



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	130476.9
IFX	1500.84

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,763 rials
GBP	53,404 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$66.84/b
Brent	\$42.10/b
OPEC Basket	\$69.77/b
Gold	\$1,177.95/oz
Silver	\$14.69/oz
Platinum	\$779.75/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



**TPO head discusses trade affairs with foreign commercial attaches**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Mojtaba Khosrotaj, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), discussed Iran's exports capacities and imports priorities with commercial attaches and economic representatives from 44 countries in a meeting on Thursday, IRIB reported.

As reported, five representatives were from Arabian and African countries, 22 came from European countries, and 15 ones were from Asia and Oceania.

During this meeting, held in Tehran, the participants were briefed about the latest Iran's foreign trade data and policies.



**TEDPIX falls 0.8% in a week**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) lost 1,045 points to 130,476 during the five dealing days (Saturday-Wednesday) of the past Iranian week ended on Friday, Tasnim news agency reported.

Some 8,236 billion securities worth 24.976 trillion rials (about \$594.6 million) were traded through 550,000 deals in TSE, indicating 47 percent and 36 percent drop in the number and value, respectively, while 29 percent decrease in the number of deals.

The first market's index dropped 501 points to 95,269 and second market's index fell 3,364 points to 263,937, showing 0.5 percent and 1.26 percent decrease, respectively, in the mentioned week.

Greece set to exit bailout, still faces daunting challenges

Greece exits the last of its three bailouts on Aug. 20 and hopes to be able to borrow again in international markets after a nearly nine-year debt crisis that shrank the economy by a quarter and forced it to implement painful austerity measures.

The crisis has proven deeply traumatic for Greeks who had enthusiastically swapped drachmas for euros in 2001. Adoption of the single currency ushered in an era of cheap credit that funded a splurge in private consumption and public spending that sent Greece's budget and current deficits ballooning.

Since the debt crisis exploded in early 2010, four successive governments have fought to keep bankruptcy at bay, relying on the biggest bailout in economic history, more than 260 billion euros lent by Greece's euro zone partners and the IMF.

As Athens now eyes a return to normality and reclaiming its economic sovereignty, the scars remain - banks are saddled with huge bad loan portfolios and Greece's public debt load is still the highest in the euro zone, at 180 percent of national output.

But sunshine is breaking through the clouds. The economy, which shrank by 26 percent in the crisis years, has started to grow, tourism is booming and unemployment is slowly coming down - to 19.5 percent from a peak of almost 28 percent.

"If there is a lesson that we learned from the crisis it is that, under any circumstances, you must try to protect macroeconomic stability," said Panos Tsakloglou, chief economist of the previous coalition government.

"Populist policies that may win some votes today and have disastrous effects some years down the road must be avoided at all costs. Otherwise, sooner or later we will end up in the situation we are in now," he said.

Greece's economy grew for a fifth straight quarter in January-to-March, the expansion picking up pace to a yearly 2.3 percent, a sign the recovery is gaining traction, helped by net exports. The EU Commission sees 1.9 percent growth this year.

But skepticism remains, including at the International Monetary Fund which sees the recovery strengthening and growth reaching 2 percent this year and 2.4 percent in 2019, but says that "external and domestic risks are tilted to the downside".

Post-bailout, Athens has committed to attain primary budget surpluses - excluding debt servicing outlays - of 3.5 percent of GDP until 2022, and 2.2 percent until 2060.

Debt relief agreed with Greece's euro zone partners in June, which extends maturities on some loans and softens the interest rate burden on others, will help cushion the country's return to markets.

(Source: Reuters)

Up to 9GW of new power capacity needed to avoid outages: energy min.

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said the country needs to add up to 9 gigawatts (GW) of power generation capacity in order to be able to avoid electricity outages in the next summer, IRNA reported on Thursday.

Speaking in a meeting in the northern province of Mazandaran, the minister noted that of the mentioned capacity, 5GW is ought

to be provided through investment in 25 new power plants.

"Hopefully, another 4GW will be supplied through consumption management," he added.

According to the data released by Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as TAVANIR), the country's current installed power capacity stands at around 77,000 megawatts (MW), most of which is



accounted for thermal power plants.

During the hot season in Iran, over-usage of airconditioning appliances leads to a significant jump in electricity consumption among the household consumers which consequently results in a series of daily

power outages across the country.

There are various factors and reasons which could contribute to the current electricity shortage in Iran's power network. Lack of enough power plants and drought could be mentioned as two of such factors.

S. Korea to support companies affected by Iran sanctions

South Korea to extend financial support for companies affected by reimposed sanctions on Iran, the trade ministry in Seoul said Thursday.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy convened a meeting with trade promotion agencies and banks, as well as local refiners, automakers and construction companies doing business in Iran to discuss various support options available.

Washington's new sanctions, which took effect Aug. 7, target numerous areas of Iranian economic activities, including

autos, gold, graphite, aluminum and steel. U.S. sanctions on Iran's energy sector are set to be re-imposed after a 180-day wind-down period ending Nov. 4.

The ministry said it has held two consultations with the U.S. government to get exemptions on Iranian crude imports and will continue the efforts before the energy sanctions go into force in November. Seoul received a waiver during previous sanctions on Tehran.

"The Korean government will continue to consult with the

U.S. government to get relief on Iranian crude purchases to minimize the effect of the reimposition of Iran sanctions on the Korean economy and doing business with Iran," Kang Sung-cheon, vice trade minister, said in a task force meeting.

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups will ease qualifications for the emergency business fund for small and medium-sized companies and extend the maturity by one year, and the Korea Trade Insurance Corporation will expand insurance coverage on local exporters.

(Source: Yonhap)

After edging away from abyss, Turkey faces new sanctions threat

After stabilizing its currency and staving off a full-blown crisis this week, Turkey faces the prospect of renewed turmoil with a looming court decision on the American detainee at the heart of a dispute with Washington.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin urged President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government on Thursday to free American pastor Andrew Brunson or face more sanctions. An appeals court in the coastal city of Izmir is set to rule by Saturday on a bid by Brunson's lawyer to release him.

While reassuring pledges by Treasury and Finance Minister Berat Albayrak on a global investor conference call Thursday and a crackdown on betting against the currency have helped the lira bounce by 10 percent

against the dollar this week -- after plunging 27 percent the previous week -- the prospect of renewed conflict with U.S. has markets on edge.

"It still looks like we're headed to more conflict," Kathy Jones, chief fixed-income strategist at Charles Schwab Inc. "Neither side seems to be backing down yet."

The lira was up 1.2 percent higher at 5.7678 per dollar at 9:34 a.m. in Istanbul on Friday, paring its loss for the year to 35 percent.

Market turmoil was triggered this month when the U.S. first sanctioned two ministers in Erdogan's government over the continued detention of Brunson for what Turkey says was his role in a failed 2016 coup. It is now set to make its biggest weekly gain since 2001 on the back of a stealth interest rate hike by the

central bank and a limit by banking regulators on swaps that cut down on short selling lira.

Erdogan, who has rejected concerns that Turkey might need a rescue package from the International Monetary Fund, also expanded his diplomatic outreach this week, speaking to leaders of Germany and France and striking a deal with Qatari emir which will see an inflow of \$15 billion into the economy.

With Turkish companies weighed down by increasingly costly foreign-currency debt and confronting double-digit inflation, another flash point is a scheduled review by S&P Global Ratings on Turkey's credit worthiness. The rating agency already holds Turkey at BB-, three levels below investment grade.

"The market turmoil in Turkey is the latest



in a series of fragilities amplified by gradually tightening financial conditions this year," according to Wei Li, BlackRock Inc.'s head of iShares EMEA strategy in London. "Investors should prepare for further bouts of volatility ahead."

(Source: Bloomberg)

First Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97-05/155

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

**Subject of Two-Stage Tender:**  
**Preparation and Installation of Computer Room Air Handler Units (CRAH) (Tehran IRIB Center) according to the tender documents**

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

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

**Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:**  
The amount of **USD 11,500** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

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

**Time and Place of Opening Envelopes**  
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m. on Saturday September 29, 2018** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.  
It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.

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

Public Relations Dept. of IRIB



# Oil's on its longest losing run since 2015 on turmoil and supply

Oil headed for the longest run of weekly declines in three years, dragged down by everything from an emerging-market rout to rising global supplies and lingering concerns over a spat between the world's biggest economies.

Futures in New York were headed for a 3.3 percent drop this week, their seventh straight decline. Turmoil in Turkey this month has reverberated across financial markets in developing economies, U.S. crude inventories expanded by the most since 2017, OPEC raised output in July while the outlook for a Chinese-American trade standoff is still uncertain.

The bearish sentiment has brought prices down to about \$65 a barrel, near the lowest level since early June. While the standoff between China and the U.S. could ease after they showed a willingness to resume negotiations, an earlier breakdown in talks have left investors skeptical about the outcome.

Adding to macro-economic concerns is the risk of contagion from Turkey's market rout, which seeped into the world of oil as investors grew anxious over a potential slide in global energy consumption from falling economic growth. Meanwhile, increased output from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries as well as a surprise increase in U.S. crude stockpiles have added to worries that supplies may outstrip demand.

## ■ Stoking concerns

"If the Turkish crisis worsens further, it will stoke concerns over the negative impact



on the global economy, which already faces a U.S.-China trade war," Satoru Yoshida, a commodity analyst at Rakuten Securities Inc. in Tokyo, said by phone. "Prices will also be negatively impacted if U.S. crude inventories continue to rise in the coming weeks as stockpiles tend to drop in August."

West Texas Intermediate crude for September delivery traded at \$65.40 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, down 6 cents, at 3:46 p.m. in Tokyo. Total volume traded was about 51 percent below the 100-day

average. Prices are down about 12 percent over the last seven weeks and are headed for the longest stretch of weekly losses since August 2015.

Brent for October was at \$71.36 a barrel on the London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange, down 7 cents. Prices have fallen about 2 percent this week. The global benchmark crude traded at a \$6.54 premium to WTI for the same month.

Futures for December delivery were little changed near 500 yuan a barrel on the

Shanghai International Energy Exchange. The contract is set to drop 1.8 percent this week.

## ■ Market selloff

Broader risk assets also took a beating this week, with Asian equities to emerging market currencies and commodities sliding lower after the Turkish lira's plunge sent shockwaves through markets. The U.S. escalated a diplomatic row over the release of an American pastor, tipping Turkey's economy deeper into crisis and raising fears that the tumult will spread to other economies.

Meanwhile, America's trade spat with China, which has been weighing on the market for the past few months, continued to leave investors skittish. This week's announcement that the countries will hold talks in Washington in late August is spurring some optimism. Still, U.S. President Donald Trump is also pushing the Asian nation to offer more and said he won't do "any deal until we get one that's fair to our country."

As well as political concerns, oil market fundamentals have also dragged on prices. Nationwide stockpiles in the U.S. rose by 6.81 million barrels last week, despite expectations for a decline, while inventories at the key storage hub of Cushing in Oklahoma expanded for the first time since May. Also OPEC raised production in July, with Libya now producing more than 1 million barrels a day as it ramps up its production after a conflict in the nation led to disruptions.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Kurdish officials: Iraq, Turkey can't export Kirkuk oil without Kurdistan deal

Iraq and Turkey must reach a deal with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) first in order to export oil from the Kirkuk fields in northern Iraq via Turkey, Kurdish officials told local media this week.

Around 300,000 bpd of crude oil previously pumped and exported in the Kirkuk province have been shut in since the Iraqi federal government moved in last October to take control over the oil fields in Kirkuk from Kurdish forces.

Before Baghdad seized control of the oil fields, the Kurdistan Region was exporting the crude oil via the Kurdish-operated pipeline to the Ceyhan port on the Turkish Mediterranean coast.

Earlier this week, Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi visited Ankara, where he discussed many issues, including oil exports via Turkey, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

According to the Kurdistan 24 outlet, the two leaders reportedly reached an initial deal to sell Kirkuk's crude oil via Turkey, possibly through a new pipeline closer to the Syrian border that would cross only a small portion of land controlled by the KRG.

Kurdish officials, however, argue that Turkey and Iraq will need first to strike a deal with Kurdistan before proceeding with plans to export Kirkuk's oil.

"It is in the best interest of Baghdad to resume the export of Kirkuk's oil through the Kurdistan Region's pipeline as they would benefit more from the revenue than the KRG," Rebwat Talabani, the head of



the Kirkuk Provincial Council (KPC), told Kurdistan 24. According to the Kurdish official, it is 'unrealistic' to think that Iraq's federal government could export oil from Kirkuk via the Nineveh province because security and safety concerns persist in the area.

"Turkey and Iraq cannot take any steps regarding Kirkuk's oil export without first reaching an agreement with the Kurdistan Region. The oil pipeline is completely under the control and protection of the Kurdistan Region," Bewar Khinsi, an adviser on natural resources to the Kurdistan Region Security Council (KRSC) Chancellor, Masrour Barzani, said.

Last week, KRG's Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani said that exporting Kirkuk's oil via Turkey was at the top of the agenda for the talks between Kurdistan and Iraq.

Currently, fields controlled by KRG export around 350,000 bpd via the pipeline to Ceyhan, roughly half its capacity, industry sources told S&P Global Platts last week.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Venezuela creditors eye oil assets in battle over unpaid debt

As Venezuela and its state-owned oil firm PDVSA lurch from crisis to crisis, defaulted creditors are jockeying for position to ensure they are among the first to receive cash when payday eventually comes. The OPEC country is essentially bankrupt and creditors are increasingly chasing its oil assets with their biggest target being Citgo, the Houston-based oil refiner that processes Venezuelan crude oil and is estimated to be worth roughly \$4 billion (bn).

Next in their sights is seizing Venezuelan oil cargoes at sea, as U.S. hedge fund Elliott Management did with an Argentine ship in 2012 after it won a U.S. court ruling to collect on unpaid debts.

Venezuela is reportedly transferring oil cargoes in safe harbors including Cuba to avoid such risks. The shift in creditor strategy is a show of force by the private sector against the regime of President Nicolás Maduro, which is overdue on \$5.7bn of debt payments.

Although Maduro survived an assassination attempt this month, is wrestling with an economy wracked by hyperinflation, and faces a series of government sanctions by the U.S., Europe, Canada and Latin America's biggest countries, he also appears to have sealed his political control over the country.

The latest win for creditors came last week, however, when Canadian mining company Crystallex won a key battle in its attempts to force Venezuela to pay \$1.4bn in compensation for expropriation of a mining project. A U.S. judge accepted Crystallex's



argument that PDVSA is an "alter ego" of the Venezuelan state and that therefore the Canadian miner has the right to seize PDVSA assets in the U.S. The ruling could serve as a precedent.

"This judgment?...? is unambiguously negative for Venezuela, given its loss of an asset of significant value," said Francisco Rodriguez, chief economist of Torino Capital, a boutique advisory.

In April, after it won a \$2bn arbitration award against PDVSA from the International Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. oil major seized the company's assets in the Caribbean. The seizures left PDVSA without access to facilities that process almost a quarter of Venezuela's oil exports.

To avoid the risk of other assets being taken, PDVSA asked its customers to load oil from its anchored vessels acting as floating storage units. Reuters has reported. Conoco's fight for reimbursement, though, looks straightforward compared with that of Crystallex, which involves taking on PDVSA, rival bondholders and the Russian oil group Rosneft.

(Source: Financial Times)

## New fuel rules push shipowners to go green with LNG

Tough new rules on marine fuel are forcing shipowners to explore liquefied natural gas as a cleaner alternative and ports such as Gibraltar are preparing to offer upgraded refueling facilities in the shipping industry's biggest shake-up in decades.

From 2020, International Maritime Organization rules will ban ships from using fuels with a sulfur content above 0.5 percent, compared with 3.5 percent now, unless they are equipped to clean up sulfur emissions. This will be enforced by fines levied by the IMO's member states.

Using LNG to power ships instead of heavy fuel oil or the lighter marine gasoil can reduce polluting emissions of nitrogen oxides and sulfur oxides by 90 to 95 percent, according to industry estimates.

The stakes are high. Analysts at Swiss bank UBS estimate that the green shipping market could be worth at least \$250 billion over the next five years.

To scoop up some of that market, the British territory of Gibraltar is in the process of launching an LNG-fuelled power station whose accompanying storage tanks will also be able to be used to refuel cargo ships via barges.

Gibraltar already supplies the most marine fuel of any port in the Mediterranean and aims to do the same with LNG, said Manuel Tirado, chief executive of the Gibraltar Port Authority.

"The GPA's aim is to be the number one LNG bunker port in the Med, however, this is something that will not happen overnight," he told Reuters.

The shipping industry is under pressure to cut its emissions of the main greenhouse gas which causes global warming - carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) - by at least 50 percent by mid-century from 2008 levels, after the IMO agreed on a target in April after years of debate.

Although still a fossil fuel, LNG emits 10 to 20 percent less CO<sub>2</sub> than even low-sulfur fuel oil.

A period of low oil prices slowed the take-up of LNG as a marine fuel. But over the past year, as the oil price has risen, appetite has grown in the cruise ship industry as well as in the container, cargo and tanker sectors.

There are currently 125 ships around the world using LNG, according to ship certification experts DNV GL, with between 400 to 600 expected to be delivered by 2020. That is a still small



fraction of a world fleet of more than 60,000 commercial ships.

Valuation company VesselsValue said 78 ships with dual-fuel engines capable of using LNG would be delivered in 2018, the largest annual number to date.

"Over the last year or so there is a growing consensus among shipowners that LNG is a reasonable next step. It is gaining traction," said Martin Wold, a senior consultant at DNV GL.

But the transition to LNG will take time, with low-sulfur oil-based fuels also used to replace heavy oil.

By 2050, DNV GL forecasts that only 47 percent of energy for shipping will come from oil-based fuels. Gas fuels will account for 32 percent, and the rest will be provided by carbon-neutral energy sources, such as biofuels and electricity.

The global shipping fleet now consumes about 4 million barrels per day of high-sulfur fuel oil. Thomson Reuters Research estimates show fuel accounts for about half of a ship's daily operating cost.

## ■ Constraints

One of the challenges in using LNG to power ships has been the investment needed to build the required refueling facilities. In addition, commercial vessels powered by LNG cost around \$5 million more than regular ships.

Retrofitting is also costly as existing ships require space to install much bigger fuel tanks to keep the super-cooled gas from evaporating.

For Gibraltar, the construction of the new LNG power plant by Royal Dutch Shell will help to create some of the required ship

refueling infrastructure.

"The LNG for the power plant will be used solely for the power plant. However, the same marine infrastructure that provides the LNG for the power plant will also be able to be utilized to supply LNG to vessels. The current focus is to deliver LNG by barge," said Tirado, the Gibraltar Port Authority chief.

Tirado said authorities in Gibraltar were working on a legal framework that would allow ships to be refueled with LNG in the near future.

A Shell spokeswoman said the supply of LNG to Gibraltar "opens up the possibility for other future LNG applications in Gibraltar, such as the use of LNG as a cleaner burning maritime fuel".

Malta is studying the provision of LNG refueling facilities at its ports and other places such as Barcelona are working on providing LNG bunkering. Zeebrugge and Rotterdam are already supplying LNG via barges.

Elsewhere, several LNG bunkering vessels, from which merchant ships can refuel, have been delivered to operate in locations such as the Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp region, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the coast of Florida.

"We are reaching a tipping point where shipowners are starting to commit to LNG-fired ships at scale," said Maarten Wetselaar, head of integrated gas and new energies at Shell.

## ■ Planning for the long-term

To meet the sulfur rules in 2020, shipping companies can use low-sulfur fuel, install a scrubber and continue to use heavy fuel oil, or switch to LNG.

Sulfur scrubbers can cost up to \$10 million per ship and will not help lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the longer term, according to analysts at UBS.

In the future, ships could be fueled by methanol, biofuels, fuel-cell systems or hydrogen, but these are not technologically advanced enough and very costly.

Since demand will inevitably shift to compliant fuels - low sulfur in the short-term, as well as LNG - the main losers will be refiners unless they adjust their production mix. Refuelers slow to switch away from offering heavy oil may also get caught out.

(Source: Reuters)

## Russian oil industry would weather U.S. 'bill from hell'

Stiff new U.S. sanctions against Russia would only have a limited impact on its oil industry because it has drastically reduced its reliance on Western funding and foreign partnerships and is lessening its dependence on imported technology.

Western sanctions imposed in 2014 over Russia's annexation of Crimea have already made it extremely hard for many state oil firms such as Rosneft to borrow abroad or use Western technology to develop shale, offshore and Arctic deposits.

While those measures have slowed down a number of challenging oil projects, they have done little to halt the Russian industry's growth with production near a record high of 11.2 million barrels per day in July - and set to climb further.

Since 2014, the Russian oil industry has effectively halted borrowing from Western institutions, instead relying on its own cash flow and lending from state-owned banks while developing technology to replace services once supplied by Western firms.

Analysts say this is partly why Russian oil stocks have been relatively unscathed since U.S. senators introduced legislation to impose new sanctions on Russia over its interference in U.S. elections and its activities in Syria and Ukraine.

The measures introduced on Aug. 2, dubbed by the senators as the "bill from hell", include potential curbs on the operations of state-owned Russian banks, restrictions on holding Russian sovereign debt as well as measures against Western involvement in Russian oil and gas projects.

While the rouble has fallen more than 10 percent and Russian banking stocks have slumped 20 percent since the legislation was introduced, shares in Russian oil firms have climbed 2 percent, leaving them 27 percent higher so far in 2018.

"The main driver of the Russian oil industry's profitability is the oil price denominated in rubles and it is currently posting new records as the rouble is getting weaker. Hence the sanction noise often even has a positive impact on Russian oil stocks," said Dmitry Marinchenko at Fitch Ratings.

## ■ Major departure

The prospects for the latest U.S. sanctions bill are not immediately clear. It would have to pass both the Senate and House of Representatives and then be signed into law by President Donald Trump.

To be sure, Washington could really hurt the Russian oil industry if it introduced Iran-like measures forbidding oil purchases from the country. But given Russia produces more than 11 percent of global crude, such a measure would lead to a major spike in oil prices and hit the United States itself hard as it is the world's largest oil consumer.

Russian gas exporting monopoly Gazprom, for example, has maintained its output since 2014 and actually increased exports to Europe to an all-time high in 2017, securing a 34 percent share of EU markets amid rising demand.

But of all Russian oil and gas companies, it is the only one to have borrowed significant sums from the West - about \$5 billion in 2017 and \$3 billion in 2018 so far - using Eurobonds and syndicated loans.

What's more, those amounts are only equivalent to a small proportion of Gazprom's annual capital spending of \$22 billion. The rest of the Russian oil industry invests a similar amount each year as well, mostly without Western funding.

That represents a major departure from the years prior to the sanctions when the lion's share of Russian oil industry's borrowing came from Western banks or export-backed facilities with trading houses and major oil companies.

In 2013, for example, a year before the first Western sanctions, Rosneft alone borrowed more than \$35 billion from Western institutions to buy smaller rival TNK-BP and to fund its capital spending.

## ■ Chinese money

There has been a similar shift in joint ventures between Russian and Western companies.

A decade ago, dozens of projects were planned but the number has shrunk to just a few ventures, which are important but not critical to help Russia maintain its output growth.

U.S. oil giant Exxon Mobil and Italy's Eni, for example, have dropped plans to help Russia develop offshore fields and U.S. company ConocoPhillips sold out from Russia's biggest private oil firm Lukoil.

The key remaining ventures involving Western companies are three projects between BP and Rosneft in East and West Siberia and a gas venture between Rosneft and Exxon Mobil on Sakhalin Island.

Also on the gas front, Royal Dutch Shell and France's Total have been considering new liquefied natural gas projects with Gazprom and Novatek as well as a new pipeline to Europe under the Baltic Sea.

But to put the projects in perspective, the combined cost of all of them is about \$50 billion - less than a 10th of the Russian oil industry's investment program for the next decade.

And if Western institutions are wary of lending to Russia, other countries such as China have been prepared to step in. Novatek and Total, for example, launched the \$27 billion Yamal LNG plant this year with Beijing's financial support.

## ■ Weakest link

The weakest link in the Russian oil industry in the face of sanctions has traditionally been high-end Western technology such as complex drilling, hydraulic fracturing or IT, said Denis Borisov, director of EY's oil and gas center in Moscow.

Russia's drilling and oil servicing market is worth about \$20 billion a year and the share of the market held by Western service companies has remained fairly steady over the last few years and at about a fifth.

"But the process of replacing foreign equipment with local production has gathered pace," said Borisov.

Rosneft, which produces 40 percent of Russian oil, has recently tested its own simulated hydraulic fracturing technology - the extraction technique that spurred the boom in U.S. shale oil production.

The technology first came to Russia mainly via major Western oil services firms such as Schlumberger and Halliburton.

Companies such as Schlumberger are still doing a lot of complex drilling work in the Caspian Sea and West Siberia for Lukoil, as well as working on the world's longest extended reach well for Exxon and Rosneft off the Sakhalin Island.

But Fitch's Marinchenko said the reliance of Russian oil firms on Western technology has declined since 2014 thanks to imports from China and local production of drilling equipment.

Since 2014, Rosneft's own drilling subsidiary has doubled its market share to 25 percent, meaning the company has become almost self-sufficient.

"It is clear that new wide-scale sanctions on technology will not become the start of an end for the Russian oil industry, especially if Europe doesn't join them," said Marinchenko. "But it will complicate the development of hard to extract or depleted deposits."

(Source: Reuters)



## Kabul school attack underscores threat to Afghanistan's future



By Syed Zafar Mehdi

➔ Among those killed in the heinous attack were 19-year-old siblings Ataullah and Farzana, 18-year-old Kawсар and 17-year-old Rahila. Their pictures were shared widely over social media. But, can anything bring them back? Can we find words to express the depth and enormity of this tragedy?

A few hours after the blast, freelance journalist Meesam Iltaf tweeted about his 'missing' 17-year-old cousin Rahila who was also at the education center. He had been to several hospitals but failed to find any trace of her. "Anyone who gets to know any girl named Rahila, please call," he tweeted. Later at the night, he tweeted again, to break the news of his cousin's death. "This is all left of her, a watch, with her blood spattered over it," he wrote, sharing a picture of his cousin's blood-stained wrist watch.

Many pictures were shared on social media channels, which could shake even the coldest hearts. Pictures of classmates shouldering the coffin of one of the victims, of a crestfallen brother grieving inconsolably in front of the lifeless body of his sister, of parents searching for the traces of their children at the blast site, of a father staring probingly at his daughter's body shrouded in a white cloth, of the teeming cemetery where coffins were lined up to be lowered into mass graves.

Many heart-rending stories emerged from the scene, which however were not 'headline material' for the Western media. The Western governments are directly complicit in these attacks, in this murky war, in the systematic extermination of the future generation of Afghans. As journalist and author Anand Gopal once told me, the blame for resurrecting the insurgency in Afghanistan ultimately rests with the U.S. The U.S.-led war in Afghanistan has entered its 17th year with absolutely no gains.

Just recently, there were reports that more than 150 ISIS fighters had surrendered to Afghan forces in northern Afghanistan's Jawzjan province after being cornered by the Taliban, which was followed by reports that they would be given amnesty. The truth has many layers in Afghanistan. A privy source later told me that the ISIS fighters were actually evacuated on the orders of the U.S. authorities, which shows that ISIS in Afghanistan and U.S. government have some secret liaison.

Although no group has so far claimed responsibility for this attack, it is believed to be the handiwork of ISIS. The group has openly declared war against Afghans in general and Afghan Shias in particular. There have been more than 15 attacks on Shia places of worship in Kabul alone in past two years.

The dangerous spiral of sectarian bloodletting in Afghanistan has assumed alarming proportions since the advent of ISIS in the war-ravaged country almost four years ago. Its hatred for Shias has a historical background, dating back to the assassination of Hazrat Ali (as) in the mosque of Kufa.

Afghanistan has a grim history of ethnic violence, especially when it comes to targeted killing of Hazara Shias – who account for up to 20 percent of Afghanistan's 30 million population. In the late 1900s, brutal Pashtun ruler Abdul Rahman Khan had ordered extermination of all Shias in central Afghanistan, which led to the gory massacre of thousands of Hazara Shias. For almost a century, Hazara Shias were incarcerated and sold as slaves to wealthy merchants. Their women and children were sexually abused. Many of them were forced to observe taqiyya (seclusion) and register as Tajiks or Uzbeks.

ISIS has reportedly claimed that they attack Hazara Shias because of their involvement in the Syria war. "Unless they (the Hazara Shias) stop going to Syria and stop being slaves of Iran, we will definitely continue such attacks," a top ISIS commander was quoted saying to Reuters sometime back. Hundreds of Hazara Shias from Afghanistan are fighting in Syria as part of the Liwa Fatemiyoon force. However, the more plausible reason behind the unrelenting attacks on Hazara Shias is the fact that their religious beliefs clash with the radical Islamism propounded by the ISIS ideologues.

As the security situation deteriorates, the Ashraf Ghani-led government in Kabul seems to have no answers. Last week, Taliban overran the strategic city of Ghazni and it took Afghan forces almost 5 days to regain control over it. The fighting has been raging in Faryab, Baghlan and other provinces. On Thursday morning, the training facility of Afghan intelligence agency in Kabul was attacked.

Journalist and parliamentary election candidate Bilal Sarwary, writing on Twitter, raised some important questions. "How many sleeper cells (are there) in the (Kabul) city? How many security and intelligence failures will we continue to see? Do we really have a military strategy?"

The questions are too many but the government seems to have no answers. Such sad state of affairs inspire no hope, either for Afghans in general or for Hazara Shias in particular.

By Frida Ghitis

What is Washington's policy toward Russia? During normal times, the question would elicit a relatively straightforward answer. But, to state the obvious, these are not normal times. When the State Department announced new U.S. sanctions against Russia earlier last week, in response to the nerve-agent poisoning of a former Russian double agent in the UK, you might have done a double-take. The Russians did. After all, isn't the Trump administration trying to improve relations with Russia?

Isn't it?

The sanctions surprised and angered the Kremlin. A Russian UN representative tweeted, "The theater of the absurd continues," maintaining Russian innocence in the case.

Russia was calling the accusations absurd, but what really deserves that label is U.S. foreign policy in the era of Trump; a tangle of contradictions, incoherence and mixed messages.

Under Trump, the United States has at least two separate foreign policies: The President's and everybody else's. That's no way to run any country, much less the world's only superpower.

Nowhere is that lack of consensus more apparent than on Russia. This week's sanctions were the result of a 1991 law that obligates the government to punish any country that uses chemical or biological weapons. Essentially, the administration had no choice but to put the law in motion.

Separately, the President seems nothing but eager to draw closer to Russian President Vladimir Putin and set aside the issues that divide the two countries. Trump likes to talk about how good it is to get along, but the problems are substantive, not social.

Dan Coats, the Director of National Intelligence, said the U.S. digital infrastructure "is literally under attack," pointing to Russia. But Trump continues to equivocate, casting doubt on whether Russia attacked our presidential election in 2016 and continues to pose a threat to our democracy. The U.S. and its allies have sanctioned Russia over its illegal



Trump and Russia Putin shake hands during a meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, on July 7, 2017.

## U.S. foreign policy in the era of Trump; a tangle of contradictions, incoherence and mixed messages.

annexation of Crimea and its intervention in Ukraine. But when Trump met with Putin in Helsinki last month, he failed to denounce these actions.

That's why when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo testified in Congress shortly thereafter, he had to open with reassurances that the U.S. "does not and will not recognize the Kremlin's purported annexation of Crimea."

Under normal circumstances, there would have been no question about an issue with bipartisan consensus. But, again, these are not normal circumstances.

Republican Sen. Bob Corker and other members of the committee blasted Pompeo over the chaotic conduct of foreign policy in the Trump administration.

The policies are a tangled mess, and Pompeo did his best to try to make sense of them without sounding disloyal to the President. But it's no easy feat. In fact, Trump's rambunctious style has spawned

a pattern: The President speaks, meets, declares, and then foreign policy figures rush to clean up, often finding excuses for Trump's statements.

Trump treats Russia with soft gloves, even if U.S. policy has been on average very firm. With most other countries, he spends at least part of the time making threats and spewing insults.

He threatened North Korea with "fire and fury," but after he met with Kim Jung Un, he sounded drunk with excitement after the Singapore lovefest. "Just landed," he tweeted, "a long trip, but everybody can now feel much safer than the day I took office. There is no longer a Nuclear Threat from North Korea. Meeting with Kim Jong Un was an interesting and very positive experience. North Korea has great potential for the future!"

It wasn't clear what he had accomplished, which became embarrassingly clear when Pompeo followed up with a visit to North Korea. If Trump was happy to accept Kim's

vague promises and declare victory, Pompeo, who has a more, shall we say, traditional approach to foreign policy, wanted concrete answers. North Korea was furious, accusing the U.S. of a "gangster-like" attitude.

You could say Trump is playing good guy and letting his staff play bad guy. Or maybe he plays bad guy and then switches to good guy. But the truth is that there is no method to Trumpism, just a convoluted policy that makes the whole world dizzy and America's message muddled.

After Trump cast doubt on the U.S. commitment to NATO's mutual defense during a NATO summit in Brussels, the Pentagon rushed a damage control team, reassuring members that Washington is still committed to its most important alliance.

On the same trip, just before heading to his meeting with Putin, a reporter asked Trump who his "biggest foe globally" is right now. You could hear a transatlantic gasp when Trump said, "I think the European Union is a foe." A flabbergasted EU Council President Donald Tusk tweeted "American and the EU are best friends. Whosoever says we are foes is spreading fake news."

After Trump's embarrassing multi-stop trip, the parallel foreign policy track went to work. A group of senators, Republicans and Democrats, met with diplomats from NATO and other European countries. They vowed that the U.S. still stands by its alliances, the bedrock of American security and prosperity for seven decades in the view of just about everyone who has been paying attention -- with the notable exception of Donald Trump and a small number of Republicans.

On the whole, the U.S. now has two foreign policies. Sometimes they coincide, sometimes they intersect. Often, the two clash and contradict one another. Then the president may change his mind, making it all even more confusing.

Russians were taken by surprise by the new sanctions that showed America working at cross-purposes with its president. It didn't seem normal. But then, these are not normal times.

(Source: CNN)

## New border crossing to create direct Iraq-Turkey link

Amberin Zaman

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi reiterated their commitment to creating a second border crossing linking their two countries today following wide-ranging talks in Ankara. Speaking at a news conference, both leaders underlined the importance of what Abadi called a "direct link" with Turkey. It would be established in addition to an existing border gate that has been run by the Kurdistan Regional Government since the fall of Saddam Hussain in 2003. "Concerning the border crossing between the two countries in Fish Kabur, we are working on it. It is important for us for it to be a direct crossing," Abadi said.

His words suggest that he views the Iraqi Kurdistan Region as separate from Iraq, even though he viscerally opposed the Iraqi Kurds' ill-fated referendum on independence that was held and overwhelmingly approved last fall.

Wedged between Turkey, Iraq and Syria, Fish Khabur is of strategic significance all around. It is where a pipeline carrying Iraqi Kurdish crude to export terminals in Turkey's southern Mediterranean port of Ceyhan is located.

Erdogan said, "The border crossing will benefit both Iraq and our country. I believe necessary steps will be taken in this regard." He added, "Commerce between Turkey and Iraq was \$11 billion in 2017. This is not enough."

Turkey has long entertained the idea of creating links to Mosul and onward that would bypass the Kurds, part of a strategy of diversifying access to a vital market for Turkish exports and hemming in Kurdish nationalist aspirations by creating a physical wedge between Iraq and Syria's Kurds.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi attend a news conference in Ankara, Turkey, Aug. 14, 2018.

Turkey, along with Iran, joined Abadi in opposing the Sept. 25 referendum on Kurdish independence.

Promoting trade ties with neighboring Iraq has gained added urgency as Turkey grapples with a ballooning currency crisis triggered by Erdogan's refusal to increase interest rates and amplified by U.S. sanctions imposed on Ankara over the continued detention of American pastor Andrew Brunson.

Turkish contractors riding on cheap credit have driven growth at home in line with Erdogan's economic vision. They now hope to cash in on the reconstruction of Mosul

and other cities destroyed in the conflict with the Islamic State (ISIS). Turkey committed \$5 billion in lines of credit for post-war reconstruction during a donor's conference held in Kuwait earlier this year.

Abadi expressed solidarity with Ankara, saying, "We are with Turkey in its monetary crisis. Through cooperation, we can overcome many of the challenges facing us."

Bilal Wahab, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said, "A new border crossing makes commercial and political sense for both sides, particularly in light of U.S. sanctions on Iran." Wahab told Al-Monitor, "Turkey can help make up the short fall in Iranian goods that would otherwise fill Iraqi needs. It's a win-win."

Turkey renewed pledges to provide Iraq with its full share of water from the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, a source of abiding friction between the two neighbors.

The leaders also talked about refurbishing a dual oil pipeline running from the Kirkuk oil fields to Ceyhan. Baghdad sealed the line after driving Kurdish peshmerga forces out of Kirkuk in October 2017.

Erdogan meanwhile renewed calls for Iraq to help prevent attacks against Turkey by Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels operating from mountain bases within Iraq's borders. Turkey maintains several thousand troops in Kurdish-controlled areas to hem in the PKK and the sides continue to clash in the remote mountain area where the Turkish, Iranian and Iraqi borders converge. Turkey also continues to deploy an unspecified number of special operations forces in Bashiqa near Mosul. Baghdad has repeatedly called for their withdrawal.

(Source: Al Monitor)

## A promise of a cleaner South Africa



South Africa's president, Cyril Ramaphosa, before he addressed Parliament in Cape Town in February.

the president promised on taking over from Zuma. The problem is that Mr. Abrahams was only one shoot in the systemic corruption that has spread through his party, the African National Congress, in the 24 years it has ruled largely unchallenged since the triumph over apartheid. As Norimitsu Onishi

and Selam Gebrekidan reported recently in The Times, some of the top leaders of the party and the government are there not by merit or achievement, but through graft and patronage.

So the question is whether Ramaphosa can really cleanse the ANC, in which he depends

for his power on the support of many powerful politicians. The political challenge was graphically illustrated by the recent deaths of two children in pit toilets, which remain in widespread use in a school infrastructure ravaged by pervasive graft in provincial education departments. One former provincial education minister, David Mabuza, has been accused of enriching himself and funding elaborate patronage by taking money from the education budget in his home province, yet today he is Ramaphosa's first deputy.

What is promising in Abrahams's ouster is the evidence that South African institutions remain capable of taking action against corruption. The police and their main corruption-fighting unit have new chiefs, as do several state-owned companies, and a high-level commission is investigating state capture. Zuma is on trial and the Guptas have fled the country.

Whether Ramaphosa and the ANC have the political will to clean up their ranks will become evident as the guilty start heading for prison and the state starts to recoup the pilfered billions. That may take time, but the tools are there.

(Source: The NYT)



# A recipe for disaster or a path to wards World Peace?

By Eisa Kameli  
International relations expert

**NEW YORK** — On May 8, 2018, President Trump officially announced his decision to exit the "Iran Deal" known as the JCPOA – Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – that was struck between Iran and P5+1 in 2015. The U.S. President's view of this deal, considered from his very initial comments as a presidential candidate, served as a great indicator of the new U.S. administration's broader change of course with regards to the conduct of diplomacy that would be sought under his leadership; a so-called direction that needs to be dealt with in a precise way.

Ever since he took office, Trump has continuously proven his commitment to getting results that are as closely aligned with the promises he made to the American voters as possible. In doing so, he has demonstrated a lack of reverence for any kind of international framework that he deems as standing in his way. The disregard for the WTO's regulations and standards, the unilateral and hasty negotiations with the North Korean Leadership, Kim Jong Un, and the non-compliance to the Iranian deal witnessed from the United States in the past two years serve as cases in point.

With regards to Iran, the U.S. administration has repeatedly stated that the president is deeply skeptical of the potential of the JCPOA to prevent its government from obtaining a nuclear weapon and gravely threatening its closest allies within the region and beyond. The President himself has never shied away from calling the deal "terrible" or "ridiculous." Their underlying theory seems to lie on the premise that no two nations can make a deal together on one issue and, meanwhile, resume fighting on other, possibly related, fundamental sources of rift.

While the Obama administration fervently believed in and was proud of the verification mechanisms that were set out within this agreement, this latest outlook of the new administration rests on the conviction that as long as the atmosphere filling the gap between the two parties is filled with tension, the level of verifications set out is essentially irrelevant and what matters at the end of the day is either side's commitment to getting the upper hand as the conflict goes on. Such argument, while rejects current model of peaceful settlement of related disputes, is unable to offer a serious and real alternative initiative.

## Implications on Iran

In accordance with the White House's goal-oriented and absolutist perspective of foreign policy described above, on August 6, 2018, the administration announced the

reimposition of the first part of the sanctions lifted under the nuclear agreement with Iran. Under the new sets of sanctions, the trade of U.S. dollar, Iran's Rial, gold, automotive parts and technology, aircraft, and industrial metals are prohibited from being conducted with Iran. At the same time, starting from a few weeks prior to this date, the president began sending multiple signals, through his press conference as well as his widely-followed Tweets, about his openness to engage in discussion with the Iranian officials.

Iran, on the other hand, considered these calls for meetings nothing more than a ruse by Trump to boost up his administration's legitimacy and gain followers around the world in his call for sanctions. With the distrust between the two nations being at its highest, the prospects for a new round of negotiations to begin between Iran and the U.S., as the White House has asked for are bleak, at least in the short-term. This new status quo, while seemingly successful in entangling Iran with internal problems so much as to discourage them from their overseas ambitions, will have consequences in the long run that will make peace in the Middle East even less attainable.

The US unilateral sanctions just started to kick in and countries as well as international companies around the world will most likely opt for leaving Iran's markets as opposed to having to leave that of America – which is what will happen if they do not abide by the sanctions. On August 7, 2018 Trump, in his tweet, followed the course that George W. Bush suggested a decade ago. Trump said "anyone doing business with Iran will not be doing business with the United States." All the while, the Iranian people will begin having an increasingly harder time gaining access to basic essential products such as food, medicine, and medical devices as indirect consequences of the financial restrictions imposed on those doing business with this country.

The Trump doctrine of exerting "maximum pressure" and maintaining hard rhetoric until the target country is willing to give in to his demands appears to overlook an important element within the Iranian culture. While it may seem that these increasing hardships will put pressure on the Iranian Government both from within and from the international community to re-initiate talks with the U.S., it is also quite likely that, in accordance with the ideology of resistance that a large portion of the country so enthusiastically cherishes, Iran pursues its path with added conviction. The inhumane, internationally recognized illegitimate and unjust nature of these sanctions can well contribute to the alienation of a whole new generation

of Iranians towards the West, particularly the United States.

The fact is that there is a serious question about the effectiveness and productivity of a policy to exert maximum pressure on Iranians because of the changing nature of reasons and causes of US arguments after withdrawal from the JCPOA. Now, the people of Iran rightly blame the US administration for its non-compliance and insistence of pursuing deep enmity and that leads them to be more cautious in dealing with immoral US standards that has recently been witnessed. Moreover, Iran now is in a better position international-

moting and facilitating the development of normal economic and trade contacts and cooperation with Iran" as an essential part of the JCPOA and calls upon all member states to support its implementation, including to ensure Iran's access in areas of trade, technology, finance and energy, and refrain from actions that undermine it.

In addition, Iran's upholding of its citizens' human rights for which the Trump administration seems to be concerned with will not improve under the new wave of sanctions and rising hostility. The new status is likely to prompt Iran to gradually shift from a more democratic

the international community. The Trump administration appears to be confident that this set of sanctions matched with the second set that is to be implemented in November which will be targeting Iran's oil industry and Central Bank will be sufficient to bring them to the table. However, given the inherent problems of the sanctions and the lack of international will and determination to support the U.S., the prospects of the administration reaching its objectives are very unclear.

It is now time to wait and see how each side will endeavor to tip the scales in their own favor as they try to prove

Iranian Government prepared itself for the upcoming sanctions? Do they possess enough resources within their country and with their allies to counter the effects of the sanctions? Are the Iranian people ready for another round of an economic marathon with the United States?

These are questions that will be answered in the upcoming months and years. The fact remains that unless both sides come up with new approaches to find a way to resolve the outstanding issues, the stagnant and, occasionally, downhill state of affairs between the two countries will remain as is. Accordingly, the Trump



ally than the Trump administration. The international community recognize that Iran has been honest with the IAEA and fully committed to the provisions of the JCPOA. In contrast, as Iran's Ambassador to the UN stated in an article published by the Guardian (August 8, 2018), the Trump administration's sanctions against Iran are a clear breach of UN Security Council resolution 2231 which underlines "pro-

government to a kind with a national economic emergency. This can potentially lead to the further undermining of Iranians' human rights.

Accordingly, the inherent contradictions that exist in President Trump's pursuit of negotiations through force is helping the Iranian Government in re-unifying the masses against the United States and obtaining more support from

their might and righteousness. With the European Union, China and Russia all the more committed to respecting the nuclear deal, can the United States gather enough forces to make the sanctions effective? Does the United States have any concrete plans to gain the trust of the Iranian people and convince them of the benefits that a new deal with the new administration will ensue? On the other hand, has the

administration, in its alleged pursuit of pragmatic solutions, needs to take lessons from previous U.S. administrations when it comes to Iran and initiate a revision of its preconditions and goals such that they are based on mutual respect and common interests, including going back to the JCPOA. Without such measures, the future of the Middle East will become even more obscure.

## The Journey of Independence

By Muhammad Khan



**ISLAMABAD** — Sequel to War of Indian Independence -1857, the Muslim population of India was alienated by Colonial British rulers and the Hindu majority. This deep sense of alienation, discrimination and humiliation compelled the Muslims to think for their separate identity and ultimately a homeland of their own. The Urdu-Hindi controversy-1867 was the first major event, which forced Muslims leaders like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan a great advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity to take a difference stance. Hindus of Banaras demanded replacement of Urdu with Hindi and its Persian script with that of Devnagri script. Despite his efforts for reconciliation with Hindu leadership, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had to say, "When even the language of a nation is not safe at the hands of other nations in a region, it would be unwise to continue living with them".

I the later years, Muslims felt estrangement and a continuous discrimination even at the platform of "Indian National Congress" established to take care of political rights of native Indians. Hindu

leaderships totally dominated this so-called liberal platform and used it for their political and socio-economic gains. Establishment of All India Muslims League-1906, the fourteen points of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah-1929 and Allahabad Address of Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal-1930, gave further impetus for the establishment of a separate Muslim identity and a separate homeland for the Muslim of India. Pakistan Resolution (Lahore resolution-1940) was decisive milestone, which paved the way for a Muslim homeland and in later years, Pakistan became the destination of Indian Muslims, living all over subcontinent. Seven years from Lahore Resolution, on August 14, 1947, Pakistan became a reality. This indeed was the consequence of hectic efforts of our forefathers and painful history of Muslim discrimination.

Today, after 71 years of independence, Pakistan is facing a number of challenges. These challenges being faced by the state and society of Pakistan are even more crucial, uncertain, hostile and dangerous then our forefathers faced during Pakistan movement. Today, the anti-Pakistan nexus are more in numbers and lethal in cause and effect. They have both covert and overt presence inside and outside Pakistan. These challenges are both internal and external having intimate connections and linkages with enemies of Pakistan. The elements of extremism, radicalization and terrorism are only their tangible forms. The old rivals of Pakistan

are now regrouping in a number of new forms and formats.

The strategies, these forces are adopting are very treacherous, aiming to destroy the very basis of the state and society of Pakistan. These forces want to defeat and destroy he social filament and the ideology of Pakistani nation. The social structure and ideological bondage of Pakistani society is being shattered through the promotion of ethnicity, sectarianism and radicalization. The past two decades have witness these tendencies in a more recurrent and



rambling way. These factors have damaged the traditional coherence and harmony, the Pakistani society enjoyed for centuries.

Whereas, the rival forces could solely and gradually proliferate into the roots of the peaceful Pakistani society to create a fissure and exploit those subsequently, the political leadership, the religious scholars and intellectual / academic classes were found wanting in playing their desired role of maintaining he harmony and coherence in the society.

They could not develop a counter narrative against the quite visible strategies of the anti-state forces. The Pakistani free media could neither conceive nor pursue a role it should have played for the promotion of national integration and social cohesiveness. Rather, at time, it acted as a tool for furthering those narratives, which ultimately harmed the national integration deliberately or otherwise.

Radicalization of the society by a selected class of the people under the cover of Islam is a bigger

and society of Pakistan.

Through a number of military operations, the armed forces of Pakistan have destroyed the organized basis of militants: however, there still exists the mind set and splinter groups, who can find their way to cause sporadic bomb blasts / suicide attacks. The security forces, especially Pak Army deserve a special appreciation for these achievements. Since Pak Army and other security forces have played their part, there is a need that, political forces, the religio-political groups, the religious scholars, the academia and Pakistani society must play their role in the consolidation of the gains, armed forces have attained through combating militancy and destroying their organized bases.

As a way forward, there is a need to develop the counter narratives to what the enemies of Pakistan have been betraying the innocent masses for the past two decades now. Whereas, a selected political, intellectual and social class of Pakistan should formulate these narratives, the media should play a role in the projection of these narratives for defeating the enemy's objective. Besides, let us strengthen the national integration and social cohesion among the Pakistani masses and transform the society to regain what we lost over all the years: the peace, harmony, stability and economic prosperity. The new government needs to do a lot to end the elements of uncertainty and chaos rampant in Pakistani society.

## Second 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: ۹۷/۵/۲۷



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4<sup>th</sup> floor, 175 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.  
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# Do you perceive smells that aren't there?

Do you smell things that aren't there? If so, you are not alone. A recently published study finds that so-called phantom odor perception is much more common than you might think.

Detecting odors that aren't there is more common than once believed.

Phantom odor perception (POP) describes the experience of smelling something — perhaps burning hair or an ashtray — that is not there.

This experience is well documented, but very little specific research has been carried out.

Scientists of the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Program at the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) recently conducted a study into POP, asking why it might occur in certain people but not others.

Kathleen Bainbridge, Ph.D., led the study. Its findings are now published in JAMA Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery.

Researcher Judith A. Cooper, Ph.D., the acting director of the NIDCD, explains why this topic is important.

"Problems with the sense of smell are often overlooked," she says, "despite their importance. They can have a big impact on appetite, food preferences, and the ability to smell danger signals such as fire, gas leaks, and spoiled food."

## ■ The statistics behind POP

The researchers took data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. They used data from more than 7,000 people over 40 years old, taken in 2011–2014.

Within the questionnaire was the question, "Do you sometimes smell an unpleasant, bad, or burning odor when nothing is there?"

Scientists believe that an improved understanding of olfactory receptors in the body could lead to a better understanding of disease.

They discovered that, overall, 6.5 percent of people over the age of 40 experienced POP, which equates to around 1 in 15 people. Sense of smell tends to decline with age,



**Overall, 6.5 percent of people over the age of 40 experienced Phantom odor perception (POP), which equates to around 1 in 15 people. Sense of smell tends to decline with age, but the opposite seemed to be the case for POP. Around 5 percent of over 60s experienced the phenomenon, but the figure was much higher in the 40–60 age range.**

but the opposite seemed to be the case for POP. Around 5 percent of over 60s experienced the phenomenon, but the figure was much higher in the 40–60 age range. The study also revealed that POP

affected women almost twice as often as it did men, and this sex difference was more pronounced in the 40–60 age group. When the scientists looked for potential

risk factors, they found that risk was increased for people with poor overall health or a lower socioeconomic status.

This latter risk factor, they hypothesized, could be because people with a lower socioeconomic status might be exposed to higher levels of environmental pollutants and toxins. They are also more likely to have other health conditions and medications that could produce POP.

## ■ Head injury, smoking, and alcohol

Those with dry mouth had three times the risk of those who did not. Head injuries increased risk, too; 1 in 10 people who had experienced a loss of consciousness due to a head injury reported POP. However, injury to the face, nose, or skull without a loss of consciousness did not affect people's risk.

Furthermore, individuals who smoked cigarettes regularly were more likely to report POP. Overall alcohol consumption was not related to POP, but those who drank alcohol on more than 3 days each week had a lower risk.

"The causes of phantom odor perception are not understood. The condition could be related to overactive odor-sensing cells in the nasal cavity or perhaps a malfunction in the part of the brain that understands odor signals."

She continues, "A good first step in understanding any medical condition is a clear description of the phenomenon. From there, other researchers may form ideas about where to look further for possible causes and ultimately for ways to prevent or treat the condition."

This is the first time that POP has been quantified in the United States population and adds to our understanding. The condition has proved difficult to quantify in the past because people do not necessarily mention it to their clinician. In this sample, for instance, only 11.1 percent of those experiencing POP had discussed it with a medical professional.

Hopefully, a greater awareness of the condition might help provide clearer answers in the near future.

(Source: Medical News Today)

## Eating kale and broccoli can help prevent colon cancer, study claims

Eating vegetables such as kale, cabbage and broccoli may help prevent the development of colon cancer later in life, a new study has claimed.

Research conducted by the Francis Crick Institute in London has found that certain chemicals produced in these vegetables can reduce inflammation of the gut and the colon, thus decreasing the likelihood of colon cancer.

The study, which was published in the medical journal Immunity, explored the health benefits of a diet rich in indole-3-carbinol (I3C).

I3C is produced in the body when vegetables from the Brassica genus are digested. Vegetables in the brassica genus plant family include broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage and kale.

The researchers carried out the study by studying genetically modified mice and feeding them a diet rich in I3C.

They also studied mouse gut organoids, which are "mini guts" created from stem cells.

They found that the presence of I3C was able to prevent colon inflammation and cancer by activating a protein called aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AHR).

The first effect that this had was to stop the gut from becoming inflamed, as the AHR was able to send signals to immune cells and epithelial cells in the lining of the gut.

This consequently meant that the mice were less likely to develop colon cancer. "We studied genetically modified mice that cannot produce or activate AHR in their guts, and found that they readily developed gut inflammation which progressed to colon cancer," explains Dr Amina Metidji, postdoctoral fellow at the Francis Crick Institute and first author of the study.

"However, when we fed them a diet enriched with I3C, they did not develop inflammation or cancer. Interestingly, when mice whose cancer was already developing were switched to the I3C-enriched diet, they ended up with significantly fewer tumours which were also more benign."

The results from the study led the team to the conclusion that consuming certain foods can play an important role in preventing certain types of cancer.

"Seeing the profound effect of diet on gut inflammation and colon cancer was very striking," says Dr Gitta Stockinger, group leader at the Francis Crick Institute and senior author.

"We often think of colon cancer as a disease promoted by a Western diet rich in fat and poor in vegetable content, and our results suggest a mechanism behind this observation."

Dr Stockinger continues, explaining that while environmental and genetic factors may still impact a person's probability of being diagnosed with cancer, eating healthy foods is a very effective form of prevention. "These findings are a cause for optimism; while we can't change the genetic factors that increase our risk of cancer, we can probably mitigate these risks by adopting an appropriate diet with plenty of vegetables," Dr Stockinger explains.

The researchers hope to carry out further experiments on organoids made from human guts and then during human trials in future.

(Source: The Independent)

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## Iranian students win second prize at China spacecraft contest

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian china-based students d e s k Vahid Rastinasab and Hamed Ahmadlu shared the second prize at the International Collegiate Spacecraft Innovation Design Contest 2018, which was held from August 10 to 14 at the Harbin Institute of Technology, Heilongjiang, China.



Hamed Ahmadlu (R) and Vahid Rastinasab pose for a photo holding their prize at the International Collegiate Spacecraft Innovation Design Contest 2018 in Heilongjiang, China.

Vahid Rastinasab is an MS undergraduate at the China's Beihang University and Ahmadlu is a PhD student at the Beijing Institute of Technology, the Iranian Space Agency website announced.

They jointly participated in the event as a team and won \$3,000 as the second prize.

Spacecraft technology innovation has become the core driving force that has led to the integrated development of science and technology in all areas, as well as the core competence of maintaining advantages in the field of the international aerospace industry.

International Collegiate Spacecraft Innovation Design Contest 2018 aims at enhancing the communications and cooperation among international collegiate students, stimulating the imaginative enthusiasm, developing innovation spirit and exercising the ability of comprehensive analysis and practice.

## SOCIALLY SAFE

## Raising digital citizens at home

Teach your children to become good digital citizens with these resources.

The internet is a wonderful place for learning and entertainment, but like the world around us, it can pose dangers if precautions are not taken. Allowing free access puts your child, your computer and your personal data at risk.

- Remain positively engaged: Pay attention to and know the online environments your children use. Surf the web with them. Appreciate your children's participation in their online communities and show interest in their friends. Try to react constructively when they encounter inappropriate material. Make it a teachable moment.



- Support their good choices: Expand your children's online experience and their autonomy when developmentally appropriate, as they demonstrate competence in safe and secure online behavior and good decision making.

- Keep a clean machine: Safety and security start with protecting all family computers with a security suite (anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall) that is set to update automatically. Keep your operating system, web browsers and other software current as well, and back up computer files on a regular basis.

- Know the protection features of the websites and software your children use: All major internet service providers (ISPs) have tools to help you manage young children's online experience (e.g., selecting approved websites, monitoring the amount of time they spend online or limiting the people who can contact them) and may have other security features, such as pop-up blockers.
- Teach critical thinking: Help your children identify safe, credible websites and other digital content, and be cautious about clicking on, downloading, posting and uploading content.
- Explain the implications: Help your children understand the public nature of the internet and its risks and benefits. Be sure they know that any digital info they share, such as emails, photos or videos, can easily be copied and pasted elsewhere and is almost impossible to take back. Things that could damage their reputation, friendships or future prospects should not be shared electronically.

- Help them be good digital citizens: Remind your children to be good "digital friends" by respecting personal information of friends and family and not sharing anything about others that is potentially embarrassing or hurtful.
- Just saying "no" rarely works: Teach your children how to interact safely with people they "meet" online. Though it's preferable they make no in-person contact with online-only acquaintances, young people may not always follow this rule.

- Empower your children to handle issues: Your children may deal with situations like bullying, unwanted contact or hurtful comments online. Work with them on strategies for when problems arise, such as talking to a trusted adult, not retaliating, calmly talking with the person, blocking the person or filing a complaint. Agree on steps to take if the strategy fails.
- Encourage your children to be "digital leaders:" Help ensure they master the safety and security techniques of all technology they use. Support their positive and safe engagement in online communities. Encourage them to help others accomplish their goals. Urge them to help if friends are making poor choices or being harmed.

(Source: staysafeonline.org)

# Tehrani citizens to enjoy riding IoT-based bikes

**1→** The startup will begin activity in coming weeks for Tehrani citizens, its public relations director Mohsen Arefi told the Tehran Times.

The Members can check out a bicycle from a network of automated stations, ride to their destination and leave the bicycle safely locked for someone else to use.

The bikes are ready for use from six months ago, however, the infrastructures are provided for the market, the head of board of directors of Pak Charkh Iranian Company Hossein Qasemi announced in a press conference on Thursday.

The bikes have two GPS devices, which facilities their monitoring, he explained.

They are also equipped with puncture resistant tires and disc brakes, he added.

The citizens between 16 to 75 year old can use the bikes and the riders are provided with insurance coverage, he explained.

A total of 29 parking lots are now considered for the bikes across Enqelab Avenue, Keshavarz Boulevard, Beheshti Street and Motahhari Avenue in which the bikes are available 24/7 for citizens, he added.

According to a report released by the docharkhehmag.ir, Tehrani citizens can install the bike sharing app in their smartphone, which show the location of a near bike, he said.

Then scan the QR Code on the bike



An Iranian startup set out to provide a system based on Internet of Things (IoT) for its bike sharing service in Tehran

## Tehrani citizens can install the bike sharing app on their smartphone, which show the location of a near bike

with the app and you receive a code on your phone and enter it on the bike's lock.

The startup provide riders real-time data from each bike ride including carbon

## Where roads can't reach, blockchain drones just might travel

A metal frame with four small and two large propellers – carrying a container the size of a refrigerator – rises into the air with a roar, hovering above an empty road amidst snowy fields.

The video was shot on the airfield near the Russian city of Kazan, which is located to the south-east of Moscow, and the machine is a SKYF drone, designed by a team of Russian aviation engineers.

According to its makers, the drone can carry up to 880 pounds, travel as far as 220 miles and work up to 8 hours. And everything that happens to these drones is going to be recorded on the project's own blockchain, SKYFchain.

The SKYF team is trying to crack into a rapidly growing ecosystem, with PwC valuing the emerging global market for drones at over \$127 billion in 2016. As of today, drones can only carry small objects, but the SKYF team aims to open a totally new market for heavy-duty cargo drones.

The idea is that they'll serve multiple purposes, such as delivering large amounts of cargo, fighting fires and spraying insecticides and fertilizers on agricultural lands.

SKYF is a decidedly Russian project. The drones are being produced domestically by OKB Aviareshenia Ltd., a subsidiary of British entity ARDN Technologies. Both entities were founded by the same team of engineers and tech entrepreneurs: Aleksander Timofeev and Ilya Rodin – managing partners of the FPI venture fund – engineers Dmitry Arsenteyev, Marat Sabirov and Nail Zinnurov, and others.

To financially support the project, the team is holding an initial coin offering (ICO). In February, Skydrones Services OU, a company registered in Estonia by Alexander Timofeev, registered the token sale with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission under the Form D (Rule 506(c)) exemption, declaring a goal to raise \$30 million.

Recently, this plan was adjusted – thus far, the project has managed to raise around \$6 million, and they plan to raise some \$500,000 more before the end of the ICO. Timofeev told CoinDesk that 45 percent of the funds will be spent on R&D.



### Trusted delivery

According to Ilya Rodin, SKYF's GR manager, the use of blockchain in this context is aimed at creating a trust layer between stakeholders, including public and private sector interests.

"We need a blockchain to create trust between the counterparts: the banks, leasing and insurance companies, drone manufacturers and users, government agencies, licensing bodies, self-regulating organizations, and so on," Rodin told CoinDesk.

The idea is that the data being stored will encompass various pieces of information about the drones. This includes information about what licenses the manufacturers possess, the drones' flight paths, their performance and data on the people operating them.

"Drones are a new thing, banks don't know how to evaluate them and calculate interest rates for them, how to monitor their use," added Olga Budnik, a PR director of ARDN. "So they would rather deny a loan or a leasing agreement than take a risk. And we give them a tool to follow the entire life of a drone."

The idea for the startup came about in 2014, when Dmitry Arsenteyev was trying to create a flying motorbike – but in the end, he wound up working on an industrial drone with Sabirov and Zinnurov. Soon after, they got investment and support from FPI back in 2014, Inc. magazine wrote.

## When does a startup need Agile?



New, energetic, startups are naturally agile, they don't need an Agile method. As they grow there may well come a time when an Agile method, specific Agile tools, are useful in helping the start-up keep its agility. Am I splitting hairs?

For a small startup, agile should be a natural advantage. On day one, when there are two people in a room making the startup it isn't a question of what process they are going to follow. At the very beginning, a startup lives or dies by two things: passion and a great idea. In the beginning, it should be pure energy.

In many ways, the ideas behind Agile are an effort to help companies maintain this natural agility as they grow. Big, established, companies who have lost any natural agility seem to resemble middle-aged men trying to recapture a lost youth.

So when does a startup need to get

Agile? - a more formal way of keeping fit, as it were.

Not all day-1 startups are pure passion, ideas, and energy. Some need to find their thing. They need an approach to finding their reason for being. Agile can provide that structure.

A startup can benefit from Agile (as in a method) as it grows: as it becomes a "scale-up" rather than a start-up. This might be when you grow from two to three, or from 10 to 13, or even 100 to 130, but, at some point, the sheer energy driven nature of a start-up needs to give way to more structure.

This probably coincides with success - the company has grown and survived long enough to grow. Someone, be they customers or investors, is paying the company money. It is no longer enough to rely on chance.

(Source: dzone.com)

## Days 1-30: The startup 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...

### Research the market

Rebel Kitchen founder Tamara Arbib says it's integral that you "do your homework, sense check your idea, research the market place and make sure you get impartial advice."

dioxide emissions reduced and calories burned versus driving.

The cost is economical in short distances and is not more expensive than bus riding in longer distances.

The application covers the flat areas of Tehran in the first phase and they would be out of use in poor weather condition.

### Why bike-sharing?

Smart applications and IoT may be great solution for urban commutes and air pollution in near future.

According to journals.plos.org, bike-sharing programs, with initiatives to increase bike use and improve accessibility of urban transit, have received increasing attention in growing number of cities across the world.

The latest generation of bike-sharing systems has employed smart card technology that produces station-based data or trip-level data. This facilitates the studies of the practical use of these systems. However, few studies have paid attention to the changes in users and system usage over the years, as well as the impact of system expansion on its usage.

Monitoring the changes of system usage over years enables the identification of system performance and can serve as an input for improving the location-allocation of stations. The objective of this study is to explore the impact of the expansion of a bicycle-sharing system on the usage of the system.

"Initially, the guys had a prototype of a self-piloting flying taxi," Alexander Timofeev explained. "We realized that the system was new and viable, but we convinced them to transform it into an unmanned cargo platform."

Timofeev believes that drone delivery will be in demand in the areas with bad road infrastructure. This is especially the case in places like northern Russia and the banks of large Siberian rivers, where bridges are far apart from one another and getting from one side to the other using road vehicles means miles of extra driving.

### Putting drones to work

Even though things are in the early stage, the startup is pushing ahead with its ambitious plans for its blockchain-connected fleet.

At the heart of the project is the token, which the team says will serve a key role in managing the fleet.

"From the start of SKYFchain the SKYF drone autopilot will require authorization in the SKYFchain to lift off," the project's white paper states.

ARDN has manufactured three drones so far, but the plan is that, by 2021, there will be more than 1100 SKYF drones operating worldwide. Looking farther, the aim is for other manufacturers of air-borne, sea-borne, and ground-borne cargo drones to join the SKYFchain network.

And within that time, the project's backers hope to see as many as 12.5 million transactions made on their purpose-built blockchain.

What's more, company has already secured partnerships with Vietnamese port ITC, a Chinese delivery company ZTO Express and a number of Russian entities, including agricultural, delivery and oil and gas companies, as well as the Department of Transportation of the Far East region of Khabarovsk, ARDN says.

The parties involved have signed preliminary agreements to test the SKYF drones for possible applications in their businesses.

(Source: coindesk.com)



# Particulate pollution’s impact varies greatly depending on where it originated

When it comes to aerosol pollution, as the old real estate adage says, location is everything.

Aerosols are tiny particles that are spewed into the atmosphere by human activities, including burning coal and wood. They have negative effects on air quality — damaging human health and agricultural productivity.

While greenhouse gases cause warming by trapping heat in the atmosphere, some aerosols can have a cooling effect on the climate — similar to how emissions from a major volcanic eruption can cause global temperatures to drop. This occurs because the aerosol particles cause more of the Sun’s light to be reflected away from the planet. Estimates indicate that aerosols have off-set about a third of greenhouse gas-driven warming since the 1950s.

However, aerosols have a much shorter lifespan in the atmosphere than the gases responsible for global warming. This means that their atmospheric distribution varies by region, especially in comparison to carbon dioxide.

■ **Aerosols affect the climate**

“Conversations between scientists and policymakers often ignore the role of emission location when evaluating how aerosols affect the climate,” explained Carnegie’s Geeta Persad.

Her new paper with Carnegie’s Ken Caldeira finds that the impact these fine particles have on the climate varies greatly depending on where they were released.



“Not all aerosol emissions are created equal,” Caldeira said. “Aerosols emitted in the middle of a monsoon might get rained out right away, while emissions over a desert might stay in the atmosphere for many days. So far, policy discussions have not come to grips with this fact.”

For example, their models show that

**“Conversations between scientists and policymakers often ignore the role of emission location when evaluating how aerosols affect the climate,” explains Carnegie’s Geeta Persad.**

aerosol emissions from Western Europe have 14 times the global cooling effect that aerosol emissions from India do. Yet, aerosol emissions from Europe, the United States, and China are declining, while aerosol emissions from India and Africa are increasing.

“This means that the degree to which aerosol particulates counteract the warming caused by greenhouse gases will likely decrease over time as new countries become major emitters,” Persad explained.

■ **Dramatic regional differences**

What’s more, they found that there are dramatic regional differences when it comes to how strongly a country is affected by its own emissions.

For example, aerosols from India cool their country of origin 20 times more than they cool the planet. In comparison, aerosols from Western Europe, the United States, and Indonesia cool their country of origin only about twice as much as they cool the planet — a significant difference in how these emissions are experienced.

In many cases, the strongest climate effects of aerosols are felt far from where the aerosols are emitted.

This work is part of a larger \$1.5 million National Science Foundation project with collaborators at UC San Diego and Stanford University that looks at the combined climate, health, and decision-making dimensions of greenhouse gases in comparison to shorter-lived pollutants like aerosols.

(Source: *phys.org*)

## “Herculean” research finally sequences wheat genome after 13 years of work

After a massive international effort involving over 200 scientists across 20 countries, the entire wheat genome has finally been sequenced. Described as a “Herculean challenge,” the wheat genome is known to be five times larger than its human counterpart and exponentially more complex. The landmark human achievement is hoped to lead to more efficient wheat breeding and production of crops.

Wheat is arguably one of the most important human food crops in the world today, contributing to around 20 percent of all the calories we collectively consume, and providing more protein to the world’s population than meat.

Understanding its genome is of great value in better guiding selective breeding of varieties that can enhance yields and help our food growers adapt to a rapidly changing climate.

■ **Complexity of wheat genome**

Despite initially compiling the raw genomic data almost a decade ago, the scale and complexity of the wheat genome has proved a challenge in accurately assembling that data into applicable chromosomes.

The final results outlines a sequence of 21 chromosomes, including more than 4 million molecular markers, and well over 100,000 specifically located genes.

“Genomic knowledge of other crops has driven progress in selecting and breeding important traits,” explains Cristobal Uauy, a geneticist from the John Innes Center working on the research. “Tackling the colossal wheat genome has been a Herculean challenge, but completing this work means we can identify genes controlling traits of interest more rapidly. This will facilitate and make more effective the breeding for traits like drought or disease resistance.

An example of an outcome from this impressive breakthrough has already come from research led by a team from Australia’s Murdoch University.

This work set out to utilize the wheat genome data by examining proteins with a known connection to coeliac disease and other wheat allergies, then mapping the specific location of those proteins on the wheat genome.

■ **The genetic variability**

“Understanding the genetic variability and environmental stability of wheat will help food producers to grow low allergen food that could be used as a safe and healthy alternative to complete wheat avoidance,” says Angéla Juhász, co-lead on the low-allergy wheat research.

Another piece of research accompanying the explicitly detailed genomic sequence



is a set of annotations designed to help target which genes directly affect specific traits. This work will help accelerate improvements in wheat crops resulting in a more effective breeding arsenal to help feed a growing population.

The “genome is really a tool that allows us to address the challenges around food security and environmental change,” says Ricardo Ramirez-Gonzalez, lead author on the accompanying annotated article. “We believe that we can boost wheat improvement in the next few years in the same way that rice and maize were refined after their sequences were completed.”

(Source: *New atlas*)

## Scientists find way to make mineral which can remove CO2 from atmosphere

Scientists have found a rapid way of producing magnesite, a mineral which stores carbon dioxide. If this can be developed to an industrial scale, it opens the door to removing CO2 from the atmosphere for long-term storage, thus countering the global warming effect of atmospheric CO2. This work is presented at the Goldschmidt conference in Boston.

Scientists are already working to slow global warming by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, but there are serious practical and economic limits on developing the technology. Now, for the first time, researchers have explained how magnesite forms at low temperature, and offered a route to dramatically accelerating its crystallization.

A ton of naturally-occurring magnesite can remove around half a ton of CO2 from the atmosphere, but the rate of formation is very slow.

“Our work shows two things. Firstly, we have explained how and how fast magnesite forms naturally. This is a process which takes hundreds to thousands of years in nature at Earth’s surface. The second thing we have done is to demonstrate



a pathway which speeds this process up dramatically”

The researchers were able to show that by using polystyrene microspheres as a catalyst, magnesite would form within 72 days. The microspheres themselves are unchanged by the production process, so they can ideally be reused.

■ **Extremely energy efficient**

“Using microspheres means that we were able to speed up magnesite formation by orders of magnitude. This process takes place at room temperature, meaning that magnesite production is extremely energy efficient”

“For now, we recognize that this is an

experimental process, and will need to be scaled up before we can be sure that magnesite can be used in carbon sequestration (taking CO2 from the atmosphere and permanently storing it as magnesite). This depends on several variables, including the price of carbon and the refinement of the sequestration technology, but we now know that the science makes it do-able”.

Commenting, Professor Peter Kelemen at Columbia University’s Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory (New York) said “It is really exciting that this group has worked out the mechanism of natural magnesite crystallization at low temperatures, as has been previously observed - but not explained - in weathering of ultramafic rocks. The potential for accelerating the process is also important, potentially offering a benign and relatively inexpensive route to carbon storage, and perhaps even direct CO2 removal from air.”

Ultramafic rocks are rich in magnesium, with low silica content. Commercially, magnesite (MgCO3, magnesium carbonate) is used in the production of magnesium oxide mainly for the steel industry. It is also used as an inexpensive gemstone.

(Source: *eureka!ert.org*)

## BMI Takes Giant Stride in Housing Market

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) put its plan into operation in the field of Special Housing Plan with the aim of booming housing market and breaking the monopoly in the field of offering loan in the relevant sector, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Moreover, forming a competitive market in the market of paying housing facilities to the applicants, several alternatives, ranging from financing methods of purchasing or constructing housing, will be provided available to the applicants, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

The Special Housing Plan of the bank was unveiled in Dec. 2017, so that bonds and securities of housing facilities of Bank Melli Iran was opened in three symbols at Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), the report added.

Special Housing Plan is a type of breaking monopoly in the field of these facilities, so that the special plan increases the power of offering facilities in the banking system.

In the special housing plan, applicants can receive a stock priority bond with depositing every 182 million rials in order to use the bank facilities.

With due observance to the said issue, each bond and

security is convertible into five million rials with 17.5 percent interest rate.

In this comprehensive plan, 10 percent annual interest will belong to the amount of money deposited by depositors at the bank, the report added.

The ceiling of facilities offered by the bank in the provincial centers and cities above 200,000 people for the couple stands at 800 and 600 million rials respectively.

Also, the ceiling amount of facilities within the framework of Ja’alah in these areas stands at 100 million rials, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank concluded.

## Under pressure, hydrogen offers a reflection of giant planet interiors

Lab-based mimicry allowed an international team of physicists to probe hydrogen under the conditions found in the interiors of giant planets -- where experts believe it gets squeezed until it becomes a liquid metal, capable of conducting electricity.

Lab-based mimicry allowed an international team of physicists including Carnegie’s Alexander Goncharov to probe hydrogen under the conditions found in the interiors of giant planets -- where experts believe it gets squeezed until it becomes a liquid metal, capable of conducting electricity. Their work is published in Science.

Hydrogen is the most-abundant element in the universe and the simplest -- comprised of only one proton and one electron in each atom. But that simplicity is deceptive, because there is still so much to learn about it, including its behavior under conditions not found on Earth.

For example, although hydrogen on the surface of giant planets, like our Solar System’s Jupiter and Saturn, is a gas, just like it is on our own planet, deep inside these giant planetary interiors, scientists believe it becomes a metallic liquid.

“This transformation has been a longstanding focus of attention in physics and planetary science,” said lead author Peter Celliers of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

The research team -- which also included scientists from the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission, University of Edinburgh, University of Rochester, University of California Berkeley, and George Washington University -- focused on this gas-to-metallic-liquid transition in molecular hydrogen’s heavier isotope deuterium.

They studied how deuterium’s ability to absorb or reflect light changed under up to nearly six million times normal atmospheric pressure (600 gigapascals) and at temperatures less than 1,700 degrees Celsius (about 3,140 degrees Fahrenheit). Reflectivity can indicate that a material is metallic.

(Source: *Science Daily*)

## Tropical storm Lane may threaten Hawaii, researchers say

Another tropical storm is traveling toward Hawaii and could affect the islands next week.

Tropical storm Lane is expected to strengthen rapidly over the next few days and turn into a hurricane by Friday, but it is still unclear whether the storm will hit the islands. Currently, the weather system is about 1,900 miles east-southeast of Hilo, Hawaii, moving generally westward. By the weekend, the Weather Channel reported that the storm could intensify to a category 3 hurricane.

The storm formed far out in the East Pacific early Wednesday and is forecast to turn into a storm with 120 mile per hour winds when it enters the Central Pacific. Parts of the Hawaiian Islands could experience heavy rain, high surf and flooding next week. This new weather system comes just after Hurricane Hector threatened to strike Hawaii, but instead passed south last week with minimal impact.

Lane is expected to strengthen over the next three days as it travels west, Derek Wroe, lead forecaster with the National Weather Service in Honolulu, told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

“Warm ocean water is the fuel for hurricanes,” Wroe said. “Expect intensification at least into the weekend. By midday Saturday, it should be approximately 1,000 miles southeast of the Big Island.”

Last week, hurricane Hector sustained winds of 115 miles per hour as it passed hundreds of miles south of the Hawaiian Islands.

While there was not a direct hit, the storm system was close enough to generate high surf to some shores. Surf heights near 20 feet were reported on the southeast side of the big island, according to the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

(Source: *Newsweek*)

## Team says how ants make collective decisions

Ants carrying food to their nests often run into obstacles. To find out how they determine the best way to proceed, researchers first used a mathematical model in which ants on the march confronted a barrier with a small opening in it. The model suggested two possible solutions: squeeze the morsel of food through the hole or go around the blockage. The path the “ants” took depended on the number of ants, which in turn hinged on the size of the cargo.

The team tested its model on wild ants in Israel by giving them large, ring-shaped cargos of different sizes smeared with cat food that the ants collectively carried. The researchers placed a clear, plastic wall containing a small hole facing the nest in front of the ants that were hauling the cargo.



The ants at the front of the pack, which were following a pheromone trail toward the opening, tended to pull the cargo, while the ants at the back tended to switch between pulling and lifting the load, helping reduce friction with the ground. The ants at the back based their behavior on the cues they received from fellow ants in the front.

The collective forces of the group decide how the food will be moved, the authors suggest. Smaller groups of ants receive weaker cues from their nestmates and spend more time vacillating near the hole, while larger groups more quickly make the collective decision to go around the barrier. In the latter case, the greater number of ants weighing in helps them find a solution faster.

Tomer Czaczkes, who studies ant behavior at the University of Regensburg in Germany and was not involved in the study, says the research provides “good suggestions for what the rules the ants might be following are.”

(Source: *the-scientist.com*)



Unprecedented SDSs hit southeast Iran 19 times

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Strong sand and dust storms (SDSs) with as fast as 100 kilometers per hour speed have stricken the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan for 19 times since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21), and official with the province's meteorological organization has said.



These storms are unprecedented in past 33 years, Mahmoud Diyanati said, adding that the long-term data indicate that this year (2018) is the second year the province is being hit with storms with wind speeds more than 100 kilometers per hour compared to the past 55 years.

Moreover, based on long-term averages 100 kilometers per hour winds normally hit the area twice the year, but this year they did struck the region 19 times, Diyanati explained.

In other words 100 kilometers per hour winds increased by 950 percent compared to long-term means, he said, stating that normally such powerful winds blow for 6 days.

For instance sand and dust storms reaching speeds up to 119 kilometers per hour hit the province on August 12 and 13 were unprecedented in past 7 years and were among the fastest winds of the past 55 years, he added.

Over the past few weeks sand and dust storms 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, southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

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 12-13, in five cities of Sistan including Zabul, Hirmand, Hamoun, Zahak and Nimroz forcing hundreds of people to refer to healthcare centers.

Over 150 hectares of Bistun protected areas burnt in fire

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Between 150 and 200 hectares of Bistun protected areas, in the western province of Kermanshah, have burnt in wildfire since Tuesday, Tasnim news agency reported on Thursday.



The wildfire which lasted for three days was finally extinguished at Thursday noon, chief of Kermanshah provincial department of environment Fereydoun Yavari has said.

Thankfully, the protected areas which caught fire are not forested but high amounts of spring precipitation have resulted in thick vegetation cover in the region, Yavari said, adding that last year (March 2017 to March 2018) some 131 hectares of the areas burnt in fire.

According to IRNA, Bistun protected areas and wildlife refuge are located in northern part of Kermanshah and they are stretching over 95,000 hectares of land area.

Forests also cover 528,900 hectares of land area constituting 21.5 percent of the province total land area and 4 percent of the total forested areas in the country.

48 percent of the total land area in Kermanshah are range-lands covering 1.2 million hectares of land area in the province.

LEARN ENGLISH  
Cancelled Flight

A: Good afternoon Sir, may I please see your passport and reservation?

B: Here you go.

A: I'm sorry sir, this flight has been **cancelled** due to some mechanical problems.

B: Cancelled! So what am I supposed to do now?

A: We apologize for any **inconveniences** that may be caused by this. If your flight is **urgent**, I can put you on a waiting list for another flight this evening, but it's on a first come first served basis, so there is no guarantee that you will be able to take that flight.

B: What's my other option?

A: If you can wait until tomorrow, we will put you up in a hotel for today and you can take **scheduled** flight for tomorrow morning.

B: That's fine. I'll do that then.

A: Thank you for your understanding sir. I will book your flight now.

■ **Key vocabulary**  
**reservation:** an arrangement to secure accommodations at a restaurant or hotel  
**cancel:** to decide that something will not happen  
**inconvenience:** he quality or state of being inconvenient  
**urgent:** important  
**scheduled:** planned at a specific time  
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**  
**route:** a customary or regular line of passage or travel  
**diversion:** the act of diverting or turning aside, as from a course or purpose  
**delay:** to put off to a later time  
**depart:** to go away, leave  
**refund:** to give back, especially money; return or repay  
(Source: irlanguage.com)

‘Medical waste segregation at source, disinfection is a must’

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Segregating medical waste at source and disinfecting medical waste is a must and the municipality had better come up with practical plans to decrease the costs of medical waste management, an official with the Ministry of Health's department of health and safety executive (HSE) has said.

Wastes generated at health care facilities, such as hospitals, physicians' offices, dental practices, blood banks, and veterinary hospitals/clinics, as well as medical research facilities and laboratories can be considered as medical waste. Generally, medical waste is healthcare waste that that may be contaminated by blood, body fluids or other potentially infectious materials and is often referred to as regulated medical waste.

"Unfortunately there are no autonomous truck services at the municipalities to transfer medical waste produced at health care facilities," ISNA news agency quoted Mohsen Farhadi as saying on Friday.

Moreover, even if [hazardous and non-hazardous] waste is segregated at source they will be mixed again while being transferred [to the landfills], so that physicians and nurses are not motivated enough to segregate the waste, Farhadi regretted.

"This is why we are requesting the municipality and waste management organization to propose a plan to transfer segregated waste which can reduce the expenses of waste management and is beneficial to the environment and public health," he added.

Farhadi went on to say that the municipality should allocate two groups of truck services to transfer disinfected and infectious waste separately and they can also charge the hospitals for infectious waste more.

Tehran Municipality should pave the way for medical waste disposal companies at private sector to provide such services to the hospitals, he added, highlighting that if hospitals fail to segregate waste at source waste management organization is free to report their violations to the Ministry of Health.

The ministry is also preparing the necessary guidelines, so that health inspectors can check hospitals to ensure waste segregation at source is being implemented, he noted.

Farhadi also added that each hospital, depending on the kind of medical waste they generate, will be treated differently and waste management organization can impose charges accordingly.

"One of the main problems we are facing are the clinic and surgical centers in Tehran [which also produce medical waste], there are 9,000 to 12,000 doctor's offices in Tehran



The municipality should allocate two groups of truck services to transfer disinfected and infectious waste separately and they can also charge the hospitals for infectious waste more.

waste management organization should also come up with plans [for medical waste management] at these offices as well," he suggested.

Iran's Medical Council, as a body tasked with managing the medical community should also do its part in motivating its members for waste segregation at source, Farhadi concluded.

Earlier in July head of the waste management working group affiliated to Department of Environment Kiyoumars Kalantari said that some 115 tons of medical waste is being generated on a daily basis in the province of Tehran. He also regretted that despite the efforts made by the Ministry of Health, except for a few of the hospitals, medical waste is not being regulated in other health-care providing centers.

According to the U.S. Environment Protection Agency, improper management of discarded needles and other sharps

can pose a health risk to the public and waste workers. For example, discarded needles may expose waste workers to potential needle stick injuries and potential infection when containers break open inside garbage trucks or needles are mistakenly sent to recycling facilities. Janitors and house-keepers also risk injury if loose sharps poke through plastic garbage bags. Used needles can transmit serious diseases, such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis.

Measures to ensure the safe and environmentally sound management of health care wastes can prevent adverse health and environmental impacts from such waste including the unintended release of chemical or biological hazards, including drug-resistant microorganisms, into the environment thus protecting the health of patients, health workers, and the general public.

‘There is a need to reform water policies’

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — There is a need to make changes to general water policies so that they are run in a more effective way, an environmental official has said.

"The Ministry of Energy has prepared a draft of the amended policies," ISNA quoted Mohammad Mojabi as saying on Friday.

"Sadly, we are yet to believe in water shortage in Iran, neither the government nor the executive bodies or even the public have accepted that we are facing water shortage," Mojabi lamented, adding, "that's why despite low precipitation levels urban management is still insisting on increasing green spaces."

While big tanker trucks still water the street [pavements] it would be definitely hard for people to believe in water scarcity, he highlighted.

That's why some people are still washing their yards or cars using drinking water, he regretted.

Mojabi went on to say that as the first step everyone should accept the fact that there are water problems in Iran so that as the second step we can implement reformed



policies to change the current conditions.

The water policies being implemented in Iran belong to the [Iranian calendar decade] (1370s (1990s) when we were not suffering any water shortages, he said, restating that those policies must be revised and one of the main issues in the newly proposed policies is the

issue of virtual water.

Virtual water trade (also known as trade in embedded or embodied water) refers to the hidden flow of water if food or other commodities are traded from one place to another. For instance, it takes 1,340 cubic meters of water (based on the world average) to produce one metric ton of wheat.

One of the issues which is overlooked in water policies is the water right allocation approaches, while fundamentally water distribution must be done by granting the environment a water right.

In July, Mojabi told ISNA that renewable water resources has drastically decreased to less than 100 billion cubic meters from 132 bcm over the past 50 years.

Groundwater resources are also in a bad condition, he lamented, adding that out of 609 aquifers in the country 309 are depleted and water withdrawal is not allowed anymore in these aquifers.

Depleted aquifers are also causing land subsidence in the plains in the country and unfortunately this has also resulted in more flood incidences, Mojabi added.

Countries with twice rainfall of UK still lack drinking water, charity warns

The UK has experienced the driest start to a summer since records began in 1961, but safe drinking water remains in plentiful supply.

Others around the world are not so fortunate. According to the charity WaterAid, millions of people are going thirsty this year despite high levels of local rainfall.

The organisation has warned that climate change is having a harmful impact by making water sources increasingly unreliable. Increased flooding in some parts of the world has contaminated previously drinkable supplies.

Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia get around double the amount of rain that falls in the UK on average each year, yet at least one-third of the population in those countries is without clean drinking water.

In Papua New Guinea, where rising seas and extreme weather have tainted groundwater sources, the problem has become severe.

The number of people without access to clean water close to home has increased to 4.8 million people – 63 per cent of the population.

"Not having clean water to drink is not, for most people, due to a lack of rain," says Jonathan Farr, senior policy analyst on water security and climate change.

"For the one in nine people around the world – 844 million – who do not have clean water close to home it is usually because there is not enough investment in systems to ensure rainwater is captured, stored, treated and piped effectively."

Some countries do still have significant groundwater reserves, but have struggled with a lack of investment in the infrastructure needed to deliver a reliable supply of clean water.



A woman washes up using a communal tap in her village in Papua New Guinea (Water Aid/ Tom Greenwood)

"In 2015, world leaders pledged to bring safe water and toilets to everyone, everywhere by 2030," said Mr Farr.

"In July, during a high-level meeting in New York, they renewed this promise and now it is time to act."

Earlier this year a WaterAid report revealed 60 per cent of the world is living in "water-stressed" areas.

The charity estimates that around 289,000 children under the age of five die from diarrhoeal diseases caused by water and sanitation problems.

(Source: The Independent)

Second 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  
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site)Bldg NO 104, Ahvaz, Iran  
Tel.fax No.: **+98-61 -34457437**

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



# Afghan president congratulates armed forces for Ghazni victory

**1→** “I am here to help all those who have suffered losses, I am committed to build the city and also do everything to protect Ghazni,” Ghani said after arriving in the city. “Our soldiers have fought bravely and we stand committed to bringing peace,” he said. The assault on Ghazni exposed the fragile grip Ghani’s Western-backed government has on security and its apparent inability to prevent large-scale attacks. It also came as Ghani’s government and its international partners had been pushing for a second cease-fire during next week’s Eid holiday. Thousands of Taliban insurgents entered Ghazni after destroying checkpoints, killing dozens of Afghan soldiers and police officers, cutting communications and the highway. Police retreated after the assailants captured government offices and police headquarters, a senior security official in Kabul said. The insurgents roamed freely around



Ghazni, destroyed shops, forced civilians to cook, and used some as human shields during the clashes. Afghan soldiers, backed by U.S. forces,

drove the Taliban fighters out of the once-bustling city, which lay in a shambles, after five days of fighting. Officials working in the presidential palace said the devastation and trauma inflicted on thousands of Ghazni residents required urgent domestic and international support. “The five-day war has come to an end but the complex process of rebuilding the city and protecting it from fresh attacks begins now,” said a senior official in Ghani’s office in Kabul. International aid organizations said medical supplies, food and water would be provided to thousands of residents and that ambulances were transporting the wounded to hospitals. “Several wounded civilians were forced to sit inside homes as they could not come to the hospital during the clashes, we are now treating them,” said Saiyed Ahmed, a doctor at the Ghazni provincial hospital. (Source: Reuters)

## Imran Khan confirmed as Pakistan prime minister

Former cricket star Imran Khan has been elected prime minister of Pakistan in a vote at the country’s National Assembly. His PTI party won the most seats in July’s elections - setting up Khan to become PM with the help of small parties, more than two decades after he first entered politics. He will be sworn in on Saturday. Khan, 65, will inherit a country with a mounting economic crisis and he has vowed to create a “new Pakistan”. The charismatic sports star, who captained Pakistan to a World Cup victory in 1992, has long shed his celebrity playboy image and now styles himself as a pious, populist, anti-poverty reformer. He ran on an anti-corruption platform that pledged to improve the lives of the country’s poor with an “Islamic welfare state”. In Friday’s vote, Khan was backed by 176 National Assembly members. His opponent, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif, received 96 votes. Speaking after the results were revealed, the prime minister-elect vowed to bring about the “change that this



nation was longing for”, according to local media. He promised “strict accountability” for those who had “looted this country”. “I did not climb on any dictator’s shoulders; I reached this place after struggling for 22 years.” Before the election Khan told the BBC that if he were to be elected, his initial focus would be on the economy. Pakistan’s currency, the rupee, has declined significantly

in the last year. Inflation is on the rise and the trade deficit is widening. Exports such as textiles have taken a hit from cheaper products by regional competitors, including China. Analysts say the new government may need to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the country’s second bailout since 2013, which could complicate efforts to boost welfare. After the 25 July election, Khan also vowed to hold talks with India to seek a resolution to the dispute over the Kashmir region, a key flashpoint between the nuclear-armed countries. He also called for “mutually beneficial” ties with the United States, despite being an outspoken critic of that country’s anti-terrorism measures in the region, such as drone strikes. US President Donald Trump recently cut aid to Pakistan, accusing it of providing a “safe haven” to terrorists active in neighboring Afghanistan. Opposition parties have claimed elements of last month’s elections were rigged, but they agreed to take their seats in the assembly. (Source: BBC)

## Brennan: Trump worked with Russia and now he’s desperate

Former CIA Director John Brennan said Thursday that U.S. President Donald Trump yanked his security clearance because his campaign colluded with the Russians to sway the 2016 election and is now desperate to end the special counsel’s investigation. In an opinion piece in The New York Times, Brennan cites reports and Trump’s own goading of Russia during the campaign to find Democrat Hillary Clinton’s missing emails. Trump himself drew a direct connection between the revocation of Brennan’s clearance and the Russia probe, telling The Wall Street Journal the investigation is a “sham,” and “these people led it” “So I think it’s something that had to be done,” Trump said. It was a swift departure from the official explanation given by the White House Wednesday, which cited “the risks” posed by what Trump labeled Brennan’s “erratic conduct and behavior.” The president said he was fulfilling his “constitutional responsibility to protect the nation’s classified information.” Brennan wrote that Trump’s claims of no collusion with Russia are “hogwash” and that the only question remaining is whether the collusion amounts to a “constituted criminally liable conspiracy.” “Trump clearly has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him, which is why he made the politically motivated

decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him,” he wrote. Brennan’s loss of a security clearance was an unprecedented act of retribution against a vocal critic, and the move politicizes the federal government’s security clearance process. Former CIA directors and other top national security officials are typically allowed to keep their clearances, at least for some period, so they can be in a position to advise their successors and to hold certain jobs. Trump said Wednesday he is reviewing the security clearances of several other former top intelligence and law enforcement officials, including former FBI Director James Comey and current senior Justice Department official Bruce Ohr. All are critics of the president or are people whom Trump appears to believe are against him. Democrats called it an “enemies list,” a reference to the Nixon White House, which kept a list of President Richard Nixon’s political opponents targeted with punitive measures. There was no reference to the Russia probe in a White House statement Wednesday that was read at a press briefing and then sent out to reporters. In the statement, Trump denounced Brennan’s criticism and accused Brennan of having “leveraged his status as a former high-ranking official with access to highly sensitive information to make a series

of unfounded and outrageous allegations, wild outbursts on the internet and television about this administration.” “Mr. Brennan’s lying and recent conduct characterized by increasingly frenzied commentary is wholly inconsistent with access to the nations’ most closely held secrets,” Trump said. In the Journal interview, Trump said he was prepared to yank Brennan’s clearance last week, but that it was too “hectic.” The president, who was on an extended working vacation at his New Jersey golf club last week, has been under fire over accusations of racism by former adviser Omarosa Manigault Newman and his bitter reaction to them. Trump’s statement, distributed to reporters, was dated July 26, 2018, suggesting it could have been held and then released when needed to change a damaging subject. Brennan has been deeply critical of Trump’s conduct, calling his performance at a news conference last month with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Finland “nothing short of treasonous.” Brennan said Wednesday that he had not heard from the CIA or the Office of the Director of National Intelligence that his security clearance was being revoked, but learned it when the White House announced it. Trump’s statement said the Brennan issue raises larger questions about the practice of allowing former officials to maintain their

security clearances, and said that those of other officials were under review. They include Comey, James Clapper, the former director of national intelligence; former CIA Director Michael Hayden; former National Security Adviser Susan Rice; and Andrew McCabe, who served as Trump’s deputy FBI director until he was fired in March. Also on the list: fired FBI agent Peter Strzok, who was removed from the Russia investigation over anti-Trump text messages; former FBI lawyer Lisa Page, with whom Strzok exchanged messages; and senior Justice Department official Bruce Ohr, whom Trump recently accused on Twitter of “helping disgraced Christopher Steele ‘find dirt on Trump.’” Ohr was friends with Steele, the former British intelligence officer commissioned by a U.S. political research firm to explore Trump’s alleged ties with the Russian government. He is the only current government employee on the list. “I don’t trust many of those people on that list,” Trump told the Journal. “I think that they’re very duplicitous. I think they’re not good people,” he added. At least two of the former officials, Comey and McCabe, do not currently have security clearances, and none of the eight receive intelligence briefings. (Source: AP)

## Yemeni civilians trapped as Saudi ramps up attacks on Hudaydah

Thousands of civilians are trapped in Yemen’s Hudaydah as Saudi Arabia and allies step up their attacks to capture the port city from the Houthi Ansarullah movement. Backed by air power from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, militia groups loyal to Yemen’s ousted former president, Abd Rbbuh Mansour Hadi, have been pushing to seize the Duraihami District, which lies adjacent to southern Hudaydah. The Saudi-led front mounted a new offensive in Duraihami on Tuesday, two days after laying a siege to the heavily-populated area. Local reports said the area is being constantly targeted by Saudi-led airstrikes, rocket attacks, artillery and an ongoing ground offensive. The Houthi fighters say the Saudi-led coalition has been indiscriminately targeting civilians. “The aggressor’s mercenaries are attacking the city randomly and they have destroyed houses and killed civilians inside them,” a Houthi fighter in Hudaydah told Middle East Eye news portal. “The airstrikes killed dozens of civilians in Duraihami and they are still targeting civilians, while Ansarallah [the Houthis] are fighting face-to-face on the ground,” he added. While authorities are trying to cope with a severe shortage of food and medicines due to the Saudi siege, the attacks have also crippled internet coverage across the region, making it almost impossible for residents to contact the outside world. “There are some people that have bled to death [in the street] and no one dared to help them because of the clashes. Some corpses have decayed in the streets,” one resident said when reached by MEE. Local health officials told MEE that airstrikes and rocket attacks on Duraihami had killed “dozens” of civilians but

the extent of casualties was unknown. ■ **Saudi’s long record of attacks on Yemeni civilians** Human Rights Watch says the Saudi-led coalition has conducted scores of “indiscriminate and disproportionate air strikes” hitting civilian objects that have killed thousands of civilians “in violation of the laws of war”, with munitions that the U.S., United Kingdom, and others still supply. In one of their most abhorrent attacks, Saudi warplanes targeted a school bus in Yemen’s northwestern province of Sa’ada last week, leaving 40 children and 11 adults dead. According to data from an independent monitoring group, the Yemen Data Project, this was just one of 55 instances of attacks on Yemeni civilian vehicles this year. The group also suggests that Saudis are targeting civilians on purpose as an extensive analysis of over 18,000 airstrikes from March 2015 to April 2016 shows that almost a third (31%) of the targets were non-military – civilians or civilian infrastructure. This is while only 36 percent of the attacks targeted military sites. The rest of the attacks were classified as having an unknown target. ■ **Trump under pressure to explain U.S. role in war** Following the deadly attack on Yemeni children, Democratic members of the U.S. Congress have written three separate letters to Trump, asking him to justify Washington’s continued support for Riyadh in the face of its many atrocities. The U.S., the UK and France have been the main providers of weapons and intelligence support to the Saudi Arabia and the UAE during the war.



It was reported in the days following the attack that an American bomb was used to hit the bus. The U.S. has refused to condemn the attack. The lawmakers have also urged U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Intelligence Director Daniel Coats to brief them on the war. After the attack, the Riyadh regime first defended the strike as “legitimate” but later said it would investigate “collateral damage.” Spain said this week that it was reconsidering its arms sales to Saudi Arabia after the attack. The country sold about \$500 million worth of weapons and munitions to Saudi last year, according to the London-based al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper. UN spokeswoman Alessandra Vellucci announced on Friday that UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths had extended an invitation to the warring sides for fresh peace talks in Geneva on September 6. (Source: Press TV)

## Hundreds of U.S. newspapers denounce Trump’s attacks on the press

Hundreds of U.S. newspapers have run editorials denouncing U.S. President Donald Trump’s attacks on media, in a coordinated effort to promote press freedom. More than 350 news outlets heeded the Boston Globe’s call to run the editorials on Thursday to promote “press freedom in light of President Trump’s frequent attacks on the media.” “Journalists are not the enemy,” headline of the Boston Globe’s editorial on Thursday. The New York Times’s editorial board wrote: “Criticizing the news media - for underplaying or overplaying stories, for getting something wrong - is entirely right ... But insisting that truths you don’t like are ‘fake news’ is dangerous to the lifeblood of democracy. And calling journalists the ‘enemy of the people’ is dangerous, period.” Since taking office last year, Trump has repeatedly criticized the press, often referring to certain outlets as “fake news”. He has also called the news media the “enemy of the American people” multiple times. On Thursday, Trump again lashed out at the media, tweeting: “THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country....BUT WE ARE WINNING!” He also accused the press of “pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people.” ■ **‘Using the Nazi game plan’** This year, Reporters Without Borders dropped the U.S. two spots to number 45 in its annual ranking of 180 countries on press freedom. The group said that while U.S. press freedom is enshrined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, it “has been under increasing attack over the past few years, and the first year of President Donald J Trump’s presidency has fostered further decline in journalists’ right to report.” According to the Boston Globe, Thursday’s participating newspapers are from big and small markets, including in states and counties where Trump won during the 2016 presidential election. Kentucky’s Morehead News, located in an area that voted for Trump in 2016, ran an editorial with the headline: “Trump using Nazi game plan in media bashing.” The article argued that Trump is using the same tactics as Nazi official Joseph Goebbels, who was often referred to as Nazi Germany’s chief propagandist. In the 1930s, Goebbels said: “If you repeat a lie often enough, people will believe it, and you will even come to believe it yourself.” Referring to the quote, the paper’s editorial board wrote: “We believe the Nazi tactic of ‘the big lie’ is alive and well at the White House because of President Donald Trump’s continuing ‘fake news’ claims since the 2015 presidential campaign.” ■ **‘Newspapers played into Trump’s hands’** Trump’s “enemy of the press” and “fake news” comments became a focal point this year after a gunman opened fire on the newsroom of a Maryland paper in June, killing five people and injuring at least two others. Four Capital Gazette journalists were among those killed. That paper chose not to join in Thursday coordinated calling, saying it was “more concerned” with the views of the community than those of the president. “It’s not that we disagree with concerns about the president’s language in speeches and on social media,” the Capital Gazette Editorial Board wrote. “We noted with regret the hurtful nature of his remarks last month calling most journalists dishonest even as we attended funerals for five friends and colleagues killed in the June 28 attack on our newsroom,” it added. “We’re just not coordinating with other news organizations because the president’s opinion, frankly, is not just that important to us.” Others, including Politico’s media critic, Jack Shafer, criticized the coordinated effort by the U.S. newspapers, saying the editorials are playing “right into Trump’s hand.” “This Globe-sponsored coordinated editorial response is sure to backfire,” Shafer wrote on Tuesday. “It will provide Trump with circumstantial evidence of the existence of a national press cabal that has been convened solely to oppose him.” Despite the criticism, Marjorie Pritchard, the Boston Globe’s managing editor of the editorial page and leader of Thursday’s effort, said on Twitter that she was “proud to stand with all these dedicated journalists from around the country.” Thursday’s editorials came as the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution, “reaffirming the vital and indispensable role the free press serves.” The resolution also affirmed that the “press is not the enemy of the people”. (Source: Al Jazeera)

## Crisis in the Republican Party of U.S.

**1→** “That’s not in my plans. But I do wonder, I do worry, that in the future we’ll be faced with President Trump running for reelection on one side, Drilling down hard on a diminishing base and on the other side you might have you know somebody like Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren on the far left of the Democratic Party. U.S. President Donald Trump may face competition to be the Republican Party’s nominee for the 2020 White House race if he decides to pursue a second term. I do believe if the president is running for re-election, if he continues on the path that he’s on, that’s going to leave a huge swath of voters looking for something else. If he’s the Republican nominee again, we’re likely to see an independent candidate in the November 2020 presidential election.” Senator Jeff Flake’s remarks are contemplative. This warning has been given to Trump while it’s usually considered normal in the United States for the first-term president of the country to be automatically elected as Republican or Democrat’s candidate for the next four years. In any case, recent statements by Jeff Flake suggest that deepening dissatisfaction with Trump do exist among the Republicans. These dissatisfactions would probably be intensified in 2018, during the competitions for the Congressional race. In any case, it looks like we will see new republican crises in the U.S. before the end of 2018. Crises that the leaders of the party will certainly not have the power to manage.



## Spanish league game to be staged in USA

A Spanish top-flight game will be played in the US, the first time a La Liga match has taken place overseas.

The plan is part of a 15-year partnership between La Liga and media company Relevent, which organises the International Champions Cup, to promote football in North America.

La Liga president Javier Tebas called it a “ground-breaking agreement”. The Premier League has previously discussed plans to play a ‘39th game’ outside England and Wales.

The idea drew criticism from fans and the media, and executive chairman Richard Scudamore, who proposed the idea in 2008, said it could not happen “until the conditions are right”.

Asked when the US-based match would take place and whether it would be a regular fixture, La Liga told BBC Sport it “can not confirm the teams, match, date or season”.

Tebas has previously said El Clasico, between Real Madrid and Barcelona, would “never be played outside of Spain”.

But a friendly between the two clubs was played in Miami in July 2017, as part of the International Champions Cup - the first time the fixture had been played outside Spain since 1991.

On Sunday, the Spanish Super Cup was played in Morocco, the first time it has been played outside Spain.

“This extraordinary joint venture is the next giant leap in growing soccer’s popularity in North America,” said Stephen Ross, chairman and owner of Relevent.

“This unique relationship will create new opportunities for millions of North American soccer fans to experience the most passionate, exciting, and highest level of soccer in the world.”

(Source: BBC)

## Williams learned before Konta loss that half-sister’s killer now free

Serena Williams says she discovered just minutes before her match against Johanna Konta last month that the man convicted of killing her half-sister had been released on parole.

Briton Konta inflicted the worst defeat of Williams’ career by winning 6-1 6-0 in the first round of the Silicon Valley Classic in San Jose. Williams’ elder half-sister Yetunde Price was shot dead in 2003 aged 31. “I couldn’t shake it out of my mind,” said the 23-time Grand Slam champion. Robert Maxfield was jailed for 15 years in April 2006 and Williams, 36, attended the sentencing.

She told Time magazine: “No matter what, my sister is not coming back for good behavior.”

Price was shot dead in Compton, Los Angeles. Her children were 11, nine and five at the time. “It’s unfair that she’ll never have an opportunity to hug me,” Williams said. “It was hard because all I think about is her kids - what they meant to me and how much I love them. “I would like to practice what I preach, and teach [daughter] Olympia that as well. I want to forgive. I have to get there. I’ll be there.”

(Source: Eurosport)

## Juventus veteran Marchisio bids farewell to club after 25 years



Juventus veteran midfielder Claudio Marchisio has ended his contract with the Serie A champions by mutual agreement after 25 years at the club, the Italian side said on Friday.

The 32-year-old, born and raised in Turin, made his professional debut in the second-tier Serie B in 2006 after Juventus were relegated following the Calciopoli corruption scandal.

Marchisio, capped 55 times by Italy, progressed through Juve’s youth ranks and only played for one other club, spending a year on loan at Empoli in the 2007-08 season.

“Having had the opportunity to accompany him on this path, to discover a hometown champion, day by day, was quite simply a privilege and an honour,” Juve said in a statement.

Marchisio made a total of 389 appearances in all competitions, scoring 37 goals, and won seven Serie A titles as well as four Italian cups with the club. “I love this shirt (Juventus) to the point that, after all, I am convinced that the good for the club comes first,” the player said on his Instagram account. Marchisio suffered a series of setbacks following a cruciate ligament injury in his left knee in 2016 which initially left him out of action for six months.

(Source: Reuters)

## Genoa clubs’ Serie A games postponed after city’s bridge disaster

Genoa and Sampdoria’s Serie A fixtures on Sunday have been postponed following Tuesday’s collapse of the Morandi bridge.

Thirty-nine people died and at least a further 15 were injured. Genoa were due to play at AC Milan, while the city’s other top-flight club Sampdoria were set to host Fiorentina.

Serie A president Gaetano Micciche said new dates will be announced in the coming days. Dozens of vehicles fell 45m (148ft), when a section of the bridge gave way during torrential rain on Tuesday. A 12-month state of emergency has been declared in the Liguria region and on Saturday there will be a national day of mourning to coincide with the funerals of victims.

(Source: Football Italia)

# Will Ronaldo be good for Italian football and can he restore Serie A to former glories?



Serie A can never be reduced to a one-man show and it simply cannot be all about Cristiano Ronaldo. Nevertheless, it is hard to understate the impact his arrival at Juventus has had on the league before a ball has even been kicked.

The 33-year-old five-time Ballon d’Or winner is not only one of the two best players of the last decade, he is also one of the most popular people on the planet. Ronaldo has 313m followers across all social media platforms and it feels like he has turned their attention to Serie A.

“Finally the world is talking about the Italian league again,” Fabio Capello marvelled in La Gazzetta dello Sport. “In the 80s and 90s we represented the top. Then we lost our way and weren’t capable of investing in infrastructure.

“With Ronaldo we can attempt to lift our head up. But it’s not enough on its own. We need to have the strength and intelligence to exploit the Ronaldo stimulus and give our game an impulse again.”

The consensus in the media viewed the £99.2m deal, which will earn Ronaldo £27.7m a year, as the most significant step yet in restoring Serie A to its former glory.

“The peak was in 2003 when we had two teams in the Champions League final,” recalled Claudio Ranieri, a former Juve manager, in La Stampa. “We’re not back to those days yet. But I feel like saying the days of skinny cows are over.”

Ronaldo is fattening them up. ■ **Does Ronaldo benefit the whole of Serie A?**

Debate has raged over the past month about whether the Portuguese benefits the league as a whole or just Juventus.

Financially speaking, the Old Lady’s opponents are bumping up ticket prices for her visit, which has led Juve’s ultras to hold a protest at the amount that away days will leave them out of pocket.

But can you blame the rest of Serie A? One of the best players of all time is coming to Ferrara, Frosinone and Sassuolo.

As the fixture list for the first fortnight of the new season was being printed, the owner of newly-promoted Frosinone, Maurizio Stirpe, held his breath. Unfortunately for his team, they must play their opening two home games behind closed doors as punishment for the club’s ball boys unsportingly throwing balls onto the pitch to stop a Palermo attack late in the play-off final.

The idea of missing out on the Ronaldo effect on the gate receipts was an understandable cause of anxiety when you consider that last season the highest attendance at 11 Serie A clubs coincided with when Juventus came

to town.

Chievo, for instance, who only sell out the Bentegodi for the Derby della Scala, pulled the shutters down at the ticket office weeks ago for Ronaldo’s first league game on Saturday. The 30,000 allocation might as well have been gold dust.

Still, it’s a shame for the league that the new TV rights package was agreed before Juventus president Andrea Agnelli dramatically boarded a helicopter for Greece to shake hands with Ronaldo on what Tuttosport are calling “Il Colpo del Secolo” - the deal of the century.

The rights are now probably worth 20 to 30% more, which means the Ronaldo tide will not lift all boats. The uplift in revenue is

forecast to take Juventus to the next level in the rich list, such are Ronaldo’s commercial powers of attraction. But what does it say about Serie A?

While Gazzetta think Agnelli and the Juventus board deserve the Nobel Prize for Economics, La Repubblica compared the Ronaldo transfer to the plot of Christopher Nolan’s Interstellar.

In light of Agnelli’s pro-European Super League stance, is this not the clearest sign yet that Juventus want to leave the crop plights and dust storms of Serie A behind for a new planet, where one day all of the continent’s elite teams will play against each other week in, week out?

(Source: BBC)

## Europa League’s most remarkable comeback? Zenit go from 0-4 to 8-5



Zenit St Petersburg produced the biggest Europa League comeback in 33 years as they overturned a 4-0 first-leg deficit in astonishing fashion to stun Dinamo Minsk.

The Russian side were hammered in the first leg in Belarus and, despite fighting back to lead the second leg 2-0, looked to be heading out when Leandro Paredes was sent off with 18 minutes remaining.

But Zenit, who reached the last 16 in 2017-18, responded superbly as Russian World Cup hero Artem Dzyuba scored twice to level the scores at 4-4 on aggregate and take the tie to extra time.

Incredibly, there was still plenty more drama to come, as Zenit’s hopes appeared to be dashed when Seidu Yahaya scored an away goal for Dinamo Minsk nine minutes into extra time, meaning they led 5-4 and Zenit’s 10 men needed to score twice to progress.

Argentine forward Sebastian Driussi gave them hope with 11 minutes of extra time remaining, before Dzyuba - scorer of three goals in Russia’s run to the World

Cup quarter-finals - completed his hat-trick to put Zenit 6-5 up and on course for an astonishing victory.

In a game packed full of drama, there was still time for the hosts to score twice more. Robert Mak made it 7-1 on the night from the penalty spot, an award which led to the game’s second red card, this time for Dinamo’s Maksim Shvetsov.

And with 123 minutes on the clock, Mak completed the scoring to make it 8-1 on the night and 8-5 on aggregate.

The last time a team overturned a four-goal deficit in this competition - previously the Uefa Cup - was in 1985, when Real Madrid came back from 5-1 down against Borussia Monchengladbach to level the scores in the second leg and advance from their last-16 tie on away goals.

Zenit will now face Molde, managed by former Manchester United striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, in the play-off round after the Norwegians beat Scottish side Hibernian 3-0 on aggregate.

(Source: BBC)

## Toni Kroos: Mesut Özil talked a lot of ‘nonsense’ when quitting German team



Mesut Özil’s retirement from the German national team last month was not handled well, Toni Kroos told the Thursday edition of German newspaper Bild.

Kroos sought to stress that he thought Özil to be a “good guy” and added that he “deserved a better departure” from international football. Özil quit the national team after the shock group stage exit, but also after a larger controversy surrounding his meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan before the World Cup. He published a lengthy statement in English asking whether some quarters of the national team — particularly DFB President Reinhard Grindel — had victimized him because of his Turkish heritage.

“The parts of his resignation statement that are good and well said are sadly overshadowed by the considerably higher proportion of nonsense,” Kroos said. “I think that he himself knows that there’s no racism within the German national team and the DFB. Quite the contrary: we repeatedly promote diversity and integration as a point of principle.

Mesut was always a good example of that, like many of our other players.”

Kroos said that Özil had deserved criticism after he and Ilkay Gündogan met with Turkey’s Erdogan, but that “nevertheless he was absolutely supported by the coaching staff and the team.” The Real Madrid midfielder acknowledged that Özil had faced some below-the-belt attacks at the time, “but then you have to put up with that as a player.”

However, Kroos also said that he did not believe that the scandal had contributed to Germany’s poor World Cup.

“From my point of view, it would be embarrassing for the team to hide behind this debate, which mainly took place in public [not among the squad], and to name this as the reason for our exit,” Kroos said.

Unlike Gündogan, Özil faced extra criticism for not publicly addressing his meeting with Erdogan, only doing so in July when announcing his retirement from international football.

(Source: DW)

## Super Cup defeat adds to Real Madrid’s post-Ronaldo narrative of negativity



coach, Julen Lopetegui, “but we couldn’t take advantage of that fact and they made good use of all the chances they had.” That may not have been strictly accurate but it was broadly true and that adds to the sense of concern; something has changed. In the past few years, particularly in the Champions League, Real Madrid have often prevailed despite not being better, at times almost inexplicably so.

Except there has always been an explanation: Cristiano Ronaldo. There may have been times when he left Madrid vulnerable by failing to fulfil his defensive functions. There may have been times when his demand everything should orbit around him cost Madrid fluidity, but he averaged 50 goals a season for nine years. Get the ball somewhere near

him in a dangerous position and the chances were he would score. That may be a method too haphazard to win many league titles — only two in those nine years — but in the knockout rounds of the Champions League it has proved devastatingly effective and is not easily replicated.

But there is a psychological dimension as well. Remove a star and a little darkness inevitably falls, particularly when there has been no compensatory signing of a galáctico. At most clubs the departure of a 33-year-old and the extra opportunities consequently afforded to young domestic talent such as Isco, Marco Asensio and Lucas Vázquez could be spun as a positive but Madrid are a club whose self-image is built on big signings and this season there have been none.

Perhaps that is a little unfair on Thibaut Courtois but in the modern world goalkeepers are rarely perceived as stars. The Belgian aside, the only arrivals have been the 18-year-old Brazilian Vinicius Júnior, completing a deal agreed last year, and the 22-year-old winger Álvaro Odriozola. Talk of Neymar, Kylian Mbappé and Eden Hazard has come to nothing. There is still time, of course, but for now there is a continuation of the downward drift that began with Ronaldo hinting at his departure in the bowels of the Olimpiyskiy in Kyiv minutes after the Champions League final and continued with the mistimed and misjudged announcement of the appointment of Lopetegui to succeed Zinedine Zidane on the eve of the World Cup.

(Source: Guardian)



# Iran down DPR Korea in Asian Games

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran took a huge step towards qualifying for the Asian Games Round of 16 with a 3-0 win over 2014 silver medalists DPR Korea.

Iran, who shared the spoils in a goalless draw with Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, defeated the Korean team 3-0 at the Wibawa Mukti Stadium in Cikarang, Indonesia.

DPR Korea were held to a 1-1 stalemate against Myanmar on Wednesday.

Amir Roustaei opened the scoring from Iran in the 27th minute.

Iran, four-time Asian Games champions, kept the momentum going in the second half as they looked to extend their advantage over the East Asians.

DPR Korea suffered a blow when they went down to 10 men after Song Kum-Song was shown his marching orders in the 52nd minute.

IR Iran used the one-man advantage and doubled their lead through Mehdi Ghaedi's strike in the 68th minute and despite DPR Korea's best efforts, the Central Asians made it 3-0 after Aref Aghasi converted a penalty in added time.

"First, I congratulate my team over victory against DPR Korea. We played well and didn't allow them to surprise us. But, we have not qualified for the next stage yet," Iran coach Zlatko Kranjcar said in the post-match news conference.

With top spot still up for grabs, Iran will face Myanmar in their final group match on Monday while DPR Korea will entertain Saudi Arabia.



## Iran move up five places in FIFA rankings



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team moved up five places in the latest FIFA Rankings released on Thursday.

Team Melli replaced Australia as Asia's top team in the rankings.

After a superb performance in the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia, where Iran edged past Morocco 1-0, held Portugal 1-1 and fell 1-0 to Spain, Team Melli climbed five rungs to 32nd to reclaim their position as the Continent's best ranked team.

Iran had relinquished the top spot to Australia just before the FIFA World Cup, the-afc wrote.

Australia dropped seven spots to 43rd, while Japan moved six spots up to 55th after reaching the Round of 16 in Russia 2018 to replace Korea Republic at third in Asia..

The Taeguk Warriors' ranking remained unchanged at 57, while Saudi Arabia dropped three spots to 70th to be positioned as the fourth and fifth highest ranked Asian teams.

## IPL: Esteghlal beaten by Pars Jonoubi



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal football team suffered their first defeat in new season of Iran Professional League (IPL) Thursday night. The Blues lost to Pars Jonoubi 1-0 in Bushehr's Jam Stadium.

Armin Sohrabian scored an own goal in the 12th minute.

"We had not any chance to score in the first half but in the second half we created several chances but our strikers lacked the cutting edge," Esteghlal German coach

Winfried Schaefer said in the post-match news conference.

"We have to learn from this defeat. We will analyze this match as soon as possible to know our weak points," he added.

"Esteghlal have signed several new players for the new season and we need more time," stated.

Elsewhere, Padideh defeated Sepidrood 2-0 in Rasht, Paykan were held to a 1-1 draw by Gostaresh Foolad and Foolad defeated Nassaji 2-1 in Ahvaz.

## Paulo Bento appointed as South Korea head coach

**SEOUL, South Korea (AP)** — South Korea has appointed ex-Portugal manager Paulo Bento as head coach of the national team.

The 49-year-old Bento is charged with leading the national team to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and replaces Shin Tae-yong, who was not offered a new contract in July after South Korea's group-stage exit at the World Cup in Russia.

Bento, who started out in coaching with Sporting Lisbon, led Portugal to the semifinals of Euro 2012 but was fired after a disappointing 2014 World Cup and a poor start to qualification for Euro 2016.

He became available in July when he was fired by Chinese Super League club Chongqing Lifan.

"After reviewing his plans, we believe Bento is a coach



who can develop South Korean football if we can support him for four years," Kim Pan-gon, the head of the Korea Football Association's Technical Committee, told a news conference Friday. "His results at Euro 2012 were very good and he is professional, charismatic, passionate and confident."

Bento was chosen over candidates on a shortlist that was reported to include Vahid Halilhodzic, who took Algeria to the second round of the 2014 World Cup, and Quique Sanchez Flores, a Spanish coach who has had stints at La Liga clubs Atletico Madrid and Valencia as well as Watford in the English Premier League.

Bento's first game in charge will be a home exhibition against Costa Rica on Sept. 7.

## Andranik Teymourian scores memorable goal against Buriram

Esteghlal midfielder Andranik Teymourian's long-range shot goal against Buriram United of Thailand was picked out as a great goal in the AFC Champions League quarter-finals.

With time ticking down to the return of AFC Champions League action, the-afc.com wended the clock back to previous editions to pick out a selection of great goals from

the quarter-finals.

Debut strikes, stunning volleys and smart chips, the AFC Champions League quarter-finals has produced some memorable goals throughout the years.

Following stints in England and Qatar, Andranik Teymourian returned to his boyhood club Esteghlal in 2013 and led them to that year's AFC Champions League semi-finals.

It was Teymourian's injury time strike against Buriram United in Thailand that confirmed the Iranians progress to the last four.

The midfielder received the ball just inside the opposition half, dribbled past his marker and fired a thunderous drive into the top corner to earn Esteghlal a 2-1 away win.

(Source: the-afc)



"I've had a couple of chats with the manager, more about when I'm coming and when I'll get started, but I'll have more chats with him after I settle into the club. But, for me, it's about coming here, doing the best

that I can and helping the club as much as possible."

Arzani will link up with his compatriot Tom Rogic, who has become a well-established and key member of the Celtic squad, recently signing a new deal that will see him remain at the club until at least the summer of 2023.

And the new Bhoys revealed that he had spoken to Rogic ahead of the move to Paradise.

"I gave Tom a call and had a chat with him about the club and everything was positive," Arzani said. "Basically he said to me that if it wasn't so good, he wouldn't have signed an extension to stay at Celtic Park. Apparently, playing in front of the Celtic fans is absolutely amazing and I'm really excited about that.

"All of Celtic's home games look absolutely amazing. The scenes at the game are unbelievable, and I love it when the crowd gets behind me. I'm an attacking player. I love to take players on and hopefully I can bring some of that to the team."

(Source: the-afc)

## Iran to play Germany at IWBF World Championships opener

Iran will start the 2018 Wheelchair Basketball World Championships with a match against hosts Germany on Saturday.

Iran have been drawn in Pool A alongside Canada, Morocco and Germany in the men's competition.



Team Melli are scheduled to play Morocco and Canada on August 19 and 20.

A total of 16 teams have been drawn in four Pools.

Pool B includes USA, South Korea, Poland and Great Britain.

Turkey, Brazil, Japan, and Italy are in Pool C and Pool D comprises Australia, Argentina, Spain and the Netherlands.

Hamburg will host the tournaments for both men and women on August 16-26. Sixteen men's and 12 women's wheelchair basketball teams will battle it out in Hamburg, Germany, between 16 and 25 August.

(Source: Paralympic)

## Qatar handball team defeat Iran in Asian Games

**TASNIM** — Qatar handball team defeated Iran in the 2018 Asian Games on Friday.

In the match held at the GOR Popki Cibubur Stadium in Jakarta, Indonesia, Qatar defeated Iran 35-20 in Pool A.

Iran, who had defeated Malaysia 55-11 in their first match, qualified for the next stage as the second team.

The 2018 Asian Games will officially kick off on August 18 and last till September 2.

A total of 387 athletes will represent Iran in 42 sports in the 2018 Asian Games.

## Morteza Pouraliganji's new dilemma: Vitesse or AZ

**PLDC** — Iranian international defender Morteza Pouraliganji is facing a dilemma over his future.

Pouraliganji was on the verge of joining Trabzonspor but didn't reach an agreement with the Turkish club over the financial issues.

Now, the-26-year-old defender, who has parted company with Qatar's Al Sadd, has been linked with Dutch football clubs Vitesse Arnhem and AZ Alkmaar.

Pouraliganji should choose his team before the transfer window closes.

Pouraliganji has 30 Iran caps and played every minute of their 2018 World Cup campaign, where they impressed against Morocco, Spain and Portugal.

Iran's Esteghlal Khuzestan winger Younes Delfi has also caught the eye of PSV Eindhoven.

## Iran's flag hoisted at Asian Games Village

**Press TV** — The Iranian flag has been hoisted at the Athletes Village of the 2018 Asian Games in the Indonesian capital city of Jakarta.

Senior Iranian sports officials Nasrollah Sajjadi and Asghar Rahimi together with dozens of Iranian sportsmen and sports-women attended the ceremony.



The Iran men's national under-23 football and handball teams are already in Indonesia since their competitions have started before the opening ceremony later this week.

On August 7, the National Olympic Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran (NOCIRI) named female sports shooter Elahe Ahmadi as Iran's flag-bearer during the opening ceremony of the 2018 Asian Games — officially known as the 18th Asian Games and also known as Jakarta Palembang 2018.

The NOCIRI had initially picked Iranian taekwondo practitioner Kimia Alizadeh Zenoosi as the athlete to carry the flag.

She, however, suffered an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury during a training session earlier this month and missed the Games.

The NOCIRI will reportedly dispatch a 378-strong sports delegation to the 2018 Asian Games.

Iranian sportsmen and sportswomen will vie for top honors in 42 sports.

The 2018 Asian Games will start on August 18 and will wrap up on September 2.

The Gelora Bung Karno Sports Complex will host the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games.



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## “The English Briefcase” director Ziaeddin Dorri dies at 65

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Director Ziaeddin Dorri who was mostly famous for his popular TV series “The English Briefcase” (also known as “The English Bag”) died on Friday at the age of 65.



Filmmaker Ziaeddin Dorri in an undated photo

Dorri died of infectious complications resulting from a liver transplant in the Abu Ali Sina Hospital in Shiraz, his son, Navid, told the Persian news agencies.

Dorri directed movies such “Deborah and I”, “Love Is Forbidden”, “Cinema Is Cinema”, “Thunderbolt” and “Whirlpool”, but he was mostly renowned for the TV series “The English Briefcase” starring Leila Hatami and Ali Mosfai aired by IRI in 2000.

The serial depicts how England influenced decisions in the Iranian parliament during the 1940s by bribing lawmakers.

He also made the TV series “The Pahlavi Hat”, which was aired by IRI in 2012. The series, which was also about political corruption during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, failed to win popular acclaim.

## WHAT’S IN ART GALLERIES

### Painting



■ Paintings by Morteza Nabipur are currently on display in an exhibition at Hepta Gallery.

The exhibition entitled “Memory Depictions” runs until August 29 at the gallery located at 3 Nikushahr Dead End, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ Homa Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Ghazal Marvi.

The exhibit runs until September 3 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ A group of artists is displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery.

The exhibition runs until August 22 at the gallery that can be found at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

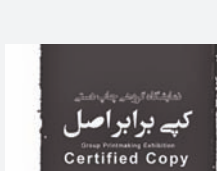
### Photo



■ Photojournalists Farshad Abbasi, Abolfazl Amanollah, Saeid Zareian, Amir-Hossein Khairkhan and Mohammad Karamali are showcasing their photos of the FIFA World Cup 2018 in an exhibition at Ariana Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until August 28 at the gallery located at 9 Fereshteh St., off East Maryam St., in the Elahieh neighborhood.

### Print



■ A collection of prints by Ahmad Vakili, Nahid Haqiqat, Mina Nuri, Homayun Salimi and several other artists is on display in an exhibition at Aria Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “Certified Copy” will run until September 7 at the gallery located at No. 10 Zarrin Alley, near Beheshti St., Vali-e Asr Ave.

### Multimedia



■ Artworks in various media by a group of artists such as Sima Amin-Musavi, Ghazal Rusta, Leila Akbarzadeh, Somayyeh Zahed and Behnaz Farahani are on display in an exhibition at Ehsan Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until August 22 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

# “Master actor” Ezzatollah Entezami dies at 94

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Ezzatollah Entezami, the veteran actor of stage and screen who was named “master actor” in his memoirs written by Hushang Golmakani, died at Tehran’s Bahonar Hospital on Friday. He was 94.

His son, Majid, confirmed the news in a call to IRNA on Friday morning.

He was one of Iran’s golden generation of actors such as Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, Ali Nasirian and Jamshid Mashyekh, who began his career in acting with traditional Iranian performances at theaters located on Tehran’s Lalezar Street, which was considered as Iran’s Broadway during 1950s and 1960s.

Entezami made his acting debut in “The Spring Variety” directed by Parviz Khatibi in 1949.

He rose to fame in 1969 by his portrayal of Mash Hassan in director Dariush Mehrjui’s acclaimed drama “The Cow”, which was among the forerunners of the Iranian New Wave cinema.

Appearance in over 50 movies and dozens of theatrical performance brought him numerous honors. He won four Crystal Simorghs awards at the Fajr International Film Festival, Iran’s most prestigious film event, for his roles in “Grand Cinema”, “The Day of the Angel”, “A House on Water” and “The Marsh”.

In September 2006, UNESCO honored Entezami for his lifetime achievements at its headquarters in Paris, where Golmakani delivered a speech.

In 2012, he handed over his house to the Tehran Municipality to convert it into a museum, which is now a favorite haunt of theater students, young thespians and journalists.

Entezami moved more to the center stage of the Iranian cultural arena in 1997 when film critic and writer Golmakani wrote his memoir, “Master Actor”.

Afterwards, he was referred to as the “master actor” and “the honor of Iranian cinema.”

His life story also turned into a subject of the documentary “... and the Blue Sky” by Ghazaleh Soltani in 2010. She also published Entezami’s biography in “I’m Ezzat, Born in Sangalaj” in 2014.

“What has been depicted in the film coincides perfectly with my real life,” Entezami



Actor Ezzatollah Entezami in an undated photo

said after watching the documentary during its premiere in Tehran in October 2010.

Iranian cineastes and cultural officials sent messages on social networks offering their condolences over Entezami’s death.

“Iranian art lost one of its best and most distinguished in morals and professional manner, and we have no replacement for him,” said director Mehdi Sabbaghzadeh, who worked with Entezami in “The Quiet Home” in 1991.

“He dedicated almost seven decades of his life to playing various roles on stage and

screen, creating memorable moments for Iranian people and became an eternal figure in the country,” Culture Minister Seyyed Abbas Salehi wrote in his letter of condolences.

In a statement published on Friday, Cinema Organization of Iran director Mohammad-Mehdi Heidarian called Entezami “a great popular artist” who shared all his happy moments with his people.

IRIB director Abdol-Ali Aliasgari wrote, “Ezzatollah Entezami created a lot of good memories for several generations and made many roles eternal in the minds of the people

of his homeland.”

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi were also among the officials who sent messages of condolences over the death Entezami.

Entezami is survived by his sons, Majid, Shahab and Ramin.

Colleagues and fans are scheduled to attend a meeting in the courtyard of Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on Sunday morning to bid farewell to Entezami who will be buried in Behesht Zahra Cemetery.

## Iranian, French groups to hold joint workshop in Marivan

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Noir Art Group from Iran and Pudding Théâtre from France will hold a workshop during a joint project in the northwestern Iranian city of Marivan.

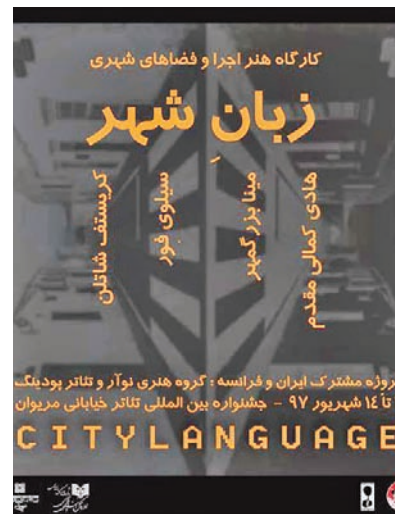
The project entitled “City Language” will begin on August 23 as part of programs for the Marivan International Street Theater Festival, Iran’s Center for Dramatic Arts has announced in a press release published on Friday.

The Iranian group led by Mina Bozorgmehr and Hadi Kamali-Moqaddam and Pudding Théâtre under the leadership of Christophe Châtelain and Sylvie Faivre will also hold a meeting with theater masters and participants after the workshop.

The participants are scheduled to give a public performance during the festival opening on September 1 and running until September 5.

Pudding Théâtre was established in 1999. Châtelain and Faivre have been creating large-scale collective productions for thousands of viewers, with the aim of giving meaning to places and creating a theater with a community focus that questions societal issues.

The Noir Art Group based in Tehran



A poster for “City Language”, a joint project by Iran and France

began its activities in 2006 by organizing site specific projects, urban performances, videos performances and making documentary films.

## Review of Chinese cinema conducted in Iranian cities

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — A program reviewing Chinese cinema was conducted in six Iranian cities over the past three days.

The program “The Chinese Cinema at a Glance” opened at the Film Museum of Iran in Tehran on Wednesday and continued by screening films from Chinese directors in the cities of Shiraz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Babol and Kerman, Iran’s Art and Experience Cinema announced on Friday.

“Aftershock” by Feng Xiaogang was screened during the opening ceremony of the program.

“Aftershock” depicts the aftermath of the 1976 Tangshan earthquake. The film was a major box office success and won the best feature film award and the award for best actor by Chen Daoming at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in 2010.

“Mountains May Depart”, a futuristic science fiction form a stunning triptych by Jia Zhangke, and “A Tale of Three Cities”, a war romance by Mabel Cheung were the other two Chinese



A poster for “The Chinese Cinema at a Glance”

films screened during the event.

The event was organized by Iran’s Art and Experience Cinema in collaboration with the Embassy of China in Tehran.

## Scarlett Johansson leaps to top of Forbes’ highest-paid actresses

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Scarlett Johansson’s role as Marvel superhero Black Widow catapulted her to the top of Forbes’ annual list of the world’s highest-paid actresses on Thursday, landing her ahead of Angelina Jolie.

Johansson, 33, took in \$40.5 million in pre-tax earnings from June 1, 2017, to June 1, 2018, quadrupling her income from the previous year, according to Forbes’ calculations.

She played Black Widow in this year’s hit movie “Avengers: Infinity War” and will return to the role in the 2019 installment from Walt Disney Co’s (DIS.N) Marvel Studios. Jolie, 43, earned \$28 million, largely thanks to a payment for the film “Maleficent 2”, scheduled for 2020.

Jennifer Aniston, 49, who still earns residual income from the 1990s sitcom “Friends”, came in third with \$19.5 million. She also received money from endorsements of products including Coca-Cola Co’s (KO.N) Smartwater brand and Johnson & Johnson’s (JNJ.N) Aveeno.

Jennifer Lawrence, 28, who starred in the underperforming films “Mother!” and “Red Sparrow”, was fourth on the Forbes

list with continued earnings from her role in the “X-Men” series and an endorsement contract with fashion brand Christian Dior (DIOR.PA). Her \$18 million income was \$6 million less than the prior year.

In fifth place, Reese Witherspoon, 42, took in \$16.5 million.

The rest of the top 10 were Mila Kunis, Cate Blanchett, Melissa McCarthy and Gal Gadot.

Last year’s highest-paid actress, Oscar-winning “La La Land” star Emma Stone, fell out of the top 10.

The 2018 Forbes list of highest-paid actors is scheduled to be released next week. Last year, Mark Wahlberg led the pack with \$68 million thanks to his pay days for movies “Daddy’s Home 2” and “Transformers: The Last Knight”.

Forbes said the lack of roles for women means “there are fewer opportunities for stars to earn big bucks.” Only two women topped the \$20 million mark, down from three in 2017 and four in 2016.

The magazine compiles its annual celebrity earnings lists from box office and Nielsen data, as well as from interviews with industry insiders.

## “Queen of Soul” Aretha Franklin, 76, dies at home in Detroit

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Aretha Franklin, the preacher’s daughter whose powerful voice made her the long-reigning “Queen of Soul” with such hit songs as “Respect” and “Chain of Fools”, died on Thursday at the age of 76, officials said.

Franklin, who won 18 Grammy Awards and had some 25 gold records, died at her home in Detroit surrounded by family and loved ones, her publicist said. She had been battling advanced pancreatic cancer.

Calling it one of the darkest moments of their lives, Franklin’s family said they were unable to find the appropriate words to express the pain in their hearts.

“We have lost the matriarch and rock of our family. The love she had for her children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins knew no bounds,” her family said in a statement.

Franklin’s father was a Baptist preacher in Detroit, and the gospel singing she heard in his church was her musical foundation. Her uniquely emotional and powerful voice would put her at the forefront of 1960s soul music along with Otis Redding, Sam Cooke and Wilson Pickett.

Franklin was active in the U.S. civil

rights movement and sang at the funeral of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr in 1968.

She also performed at the presidential inaugurations of Barack Obama and Bill Clinton. In 1987, she became the first woman voted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and Rolling Stone magazine in 2010 named her the No. 1 singer of the rock era.

After recording and touring as a young gospel singer, Franklin’s career took a secular turn in 1961 when she signed with Columbia Records. She had only modest success with Columbia, which had trouble classifying her style and tried to steer her toward pop.

She switched to Atlantic Records in the mid-1960s, where producer Jerry Wexler put her powerful voice in a setting that combined gospel, soul and rock, and made her a superstar by letting “the lady wail.” As Franklin put it in her autobiography, she “Aretha-ized” the music.

Singer John Legend called her the greatest vocalist he had ever known. “Salute to the Queen,” he wrote on Twitter.

Fellow singer Diana Ross tweeted: “I’m sitting in prayer for the wonderful golden spirit Aretha Franklin.”