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# No war on horizon



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## Brazil planning to open \$1.2b credit line to invest in Iran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) is planning to allocate a \$1.2-billion credit line to continue trade with Iran and also investment making in the country, Brazilian Ambassador to Tehran Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos announced.

He made the remarks in a meeting in Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries,

Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) building, which was attended by Kaveh Zargaran, the chairman of Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce, a number of Iranian officials from the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as some Iranian companies active in the market of Brazil, ICCIMA website reported on Sunday. **→4**

## Iran come sixth at Asiad, China sit top

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian contingent ended the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia with 62 medals, including 20 gold, 20 silver and 22 bronze medals.

Iran finished in sixth place in Indonesia, while the Persians had come fifth four years ago in the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, South Korea.

Freestyle wrestlers Hassan Yazdani

(86kg), Alireza Karimi (97kg) and Parviz Hadi (125kg) snatched three gold medals. Greco-Roman wrestlers Mohammadali Geraei and Hossein Nouri won two gold medals in the 77kg and 87kg respectively. Taekwondo practitioners Saied Rajabi and Mirhashem Hosseini claimed two gold medals in the 80kg and 63kg respectively. **→15**

## Saudi-UAE coalition admits Yemen school bus attack ‘unjustified’

The House of Saud regime has finally admitted “mistakes” in a recent airstrike which killed children on a school bus in Yemen, but still insisted that the vehicle was carrying Ansarullah (Houthi) movement fighters.

In a statement, the kingdom said on Saturday it “expresses regret over the mistakes, extends its sympathies, condolences and solidarity to the families

of the victims” of the August 9 attack in northwestern Sa’ada Province.

In a rare concession, the Saudi regime alliance’s investigative body, the Joint Incident Assessment Team (JIAT), said that those behind it should be held accountable.

“The Joint Team ... is of the opinion that the coalition forces should initiate legal action to try and penalize those responsible for the mistakes, **→13**



### EDITORIAL

**Mohammad Ghaderi**  
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## Reasons for U.S. fear of Idlib operation

Developments in Idlib are accelerating and Damascus and its allies are ready to attack the terrorists. The Syrian army has deployed its forces and equipment around Idlib during recent weeks.

Meanwhile, three Western countries, the U.S., France and Britain have threatened to launch a military strike against Syria, and plan to use a potential false flag chemical attack as a pretext to launch an offensive against Syria.

Meanwhile, some analysts believe that if Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham has been dissolved, that there is no need for military operations in Idlib. It has been argued that Turkey may be involved in convincing Tahrir al-Sham (called also Jabhat al-Nusra) to merge with other armed groups.

“We would probably dissolve Tahrir al-Sham because it faces the pressure of Russia and even Turkey. If the Russians and the Syrian government attack Idlib, the door to Hell will open in the region because of all the Syrian dissident terrorists gathered in Idlib and its suburbs,” said one of Syrian. But Hayat Tahrir al-Sham spokesperson Emad Eddin Mujahid, denied any intention to dissolve Tahrir al-Sham.

At joint news conference, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moualeem met his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on August 30, and said: “We will go all the way” in Idlib. Lavrov also warned the western powers against military action in Syria.

Abdel Bari Atwan, an analyst of the Arab world, wrote: “The sudden emergence of Staffan de Mistura, the UN Special Envoy for Syria, and his position regarding the complex crisis in Idlib suggests a repetition of the eastern Aleppo scenario, with the difference that there will be no other Idlib situation afterwards. Two years ago, at a news conference in Geneva, he made a similar offer to terrorist groups in Aleppo. He announced his readiness to go to Idlib to help provide safe passage out for civilians.

The danger, said de Mistura, is that al-Nusra terrorists number 10,000 or more fighters, and that they deserve to be destroyed. Two points can be drawn from the words of the UN Representative for the Syrian affairs: first, the description of the Tahrir al-Sham (Jabhat al-Nusra) group as a terrorist group, which can be considered a green light to break them up and exclude them from any settlement plans. **→7**

## Tehran to host OANA annual EBM on Monday

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — The 43rd Executive Board Meeting (EBM) of the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA) is scheduled to begin here on Monday.

The annual meeting of the association of leading Asia-Pacific news agencies will open in the Iranian capital on September 3 with managing directors and deputy heads of member news agencies in attendance.

The summit, to be hosted by the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), will bring together directors and senior managers of news agencies from Russia, Azerbaijan, China, Qatar, Turkey,

Oman, Mongolia, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Bulgaria as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran who will be represented by Mehr News Agency (MNA) and IRNA.

Majority of participating news agencies are among members of the Executive Board of OANA while some will take part at Tehran summit as observers and guests.

Backed by UNESCO, the Asia-Pacific News Agency was founded in 1961 with the aim of facilitating information exchange between countries of the region, and it now comprises 44 news

agencies from 35 Asian and Pacific countries.

The sixteenth general assembly of OANA was held in November 2016 in Baku where Azerbaijan was elected to the presidency of the organization. South Korea is scheduled to be the next president of OANA. OANA Executive Board presently includes AZERTAC (Azerbaijan), TASS (Russia), Xinhua (China), Yonhap (R. of Korea) as well as Anadolu Agency (Turkey).

Other executive board members are IRNA (Iran), BNA (Bahrain), Kyodo News (Japan), NNA (Lebanon), AAP (Australia), Bernama (Malaysia), VNA (Vietnam) as well as PTI (India).

## Why did the White House form the “Iran Action Group”?

**By Hanif Ghaffari**

**TEHRAN** — Exactly sixty-five years ago, a CIA-backed coup toppled Mohammad Mosaddegh, Iran’s prime minister. The goal of the coup was to strengthen the West’s ally Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the creation of a new Iran Action Group to coordinate U.S. policy toward the Islamic

Republic in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The formation of an action group against Iran by the U.S. Department of State can be analyzed and evaluated from different dimensions. In recent days, the news about the formation of an action group against Iran by the Trump government has attracted the attention of Western media. The

western sources deal with this news in such a way that one may come to think it’s an unprecedented action in the four last decades, and the U.S. government has never been involved in a direct opposition against Iran! But in spite of Trump and Pompeo’s efforts to make this measure seem unique, we have repeatedly been witnessing such fertile efforts by the United States over the past four decades. **→7**

## Difficult to take Macron’s remarks serious: geopolitical expert

**By Payman Yazdani**

**TEHRAN** — Referring to Europe financial and geopolitical dependence on Washington Anthony Cartalucci says it is difficult to take what Macron says about Europe military independence seriously.

Washington’s move to distance itself from the NATO military alliance and its withdrawal from international agreements has thrown light on the urgent need for Europe to take its defense

and security into its own hands. Couple of days ago, the French president, Emmanuel Macron, has warned that Europe can no longer depend on the U.S. for its military defense and called for an urgent new European security policy.

“Europe can no longer rely on the United States for its security,” Macron said in a foreign policy speech at what he called a “crisis moment” for European politics and global multilateralism.

“It is up to us to guarantee European security.”

Macron vowed to put forward new proposals in the coming months for the EU to boost defense cooperation, as well as talks with Russia on their security relationship, an issue of concern for countries on Europe’s eastern edge.

To shed more light on the issue, an interview was done with Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher Anthony Cartalucci. **→7**



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## Vocalist Shahram Nazeri performs in Tehran

Vocalist Shahram Nazeri performs a concert at the Royal Hall of Tehran’s Espinas Hotel on September 1, 2018.

He is scheduled to begin a tour of Canada in Ottawa on October 13.

Performances have also been arranged for Persian music aficionados in Montreal, Toronto and Calgary. The tour will come to an end with a concert in Vancouver on October 28.



### PERSPECTIVE

**M.A. Saki**  
Deputy editor-in-chief

## Can sanctions force Iran to capitalize on its talents?

The reintroduction of illegal and unilateral sanctions against Iran by the Trump administration is frightening away major companies from the Iranian market.

The Trump administration has threatened that any company that do business with Iran cannot do business in the United States. The U.S. also plans to introduce ban on Iranian oil exports in early November.

These moves, though painful, can provide an opportunity for Iran to rely more on domestic capacities.

Though Iran ranks first in the world in terms of combined oil and gas reserves, its main assets are its talented and educated class. Among its more than 80 million population, there are highly talented people who can help the country blossom scientifically and economically. The main point is how to direct these talents and provide the necessary ground for them to flourish.

Iranian students who perform greatly well at international scientific competitions naturally have the ability to change the face of Iran if they are given the opportunity.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has rightly said the United States is addicted to sanctions. However, it should be said that Iran has also become addicted to oil money. This addiction to oil money has given rise to corruption, made the society lazy, wasteful, and more regrettably led the national managerial system to pay little attention to brilliant minds who are the main engine of progress.

Sometimes natural resources such as oil, if not used properly, can even turn into threats. Let’s make an example. According to ISNA, Iranians consumed 2.84 billion liters of gasoline in the fourth calendar month of Tir (June 22-July 22). The figure shows that 91.7 million liters of gasoline were burnt every day. The figure stood at 84.5 million liters in the corresponding time last year.

Oil and gas have only brought economic welfare, and not progress, to countries such as Qatar and Kuwait with a very small population. The only small country that has managed to save oil money and at the same time make economic and scientific progress is Norway, a country in northern Europe. **→2**



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



### Zarif meets UN refugee chief

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Commissioner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi met on Sunday with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to discuss the status of refugees.

In the meeting held at the Foreign Ministry, the two sides discussed the latest status of Syrian and Afghan refugees as well as other areas of shared interests, Mehr reported.

Earlier on Sunday, the commissioner had met with Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli and the two exchanged views on the status of refugees.



### Majlis won't refer Rouhani case to Judiciary: MP

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The parliament has decided not to refer the issue of questions from President Hassan Rouhani to the Judiciary as the issue does not constitute a violation of law, the spokesman for the Majlis presiding board has said.

“Since the subject of the lawmakers’ questions to the president was not violation of the law, the presiding board decided not to refer the issue to the Judiciary,” Behrouz Nemati said, Mehr reported on Sunday.

Rouhani on Tuesday appeared before the Majlis to answer lawmakers’ questions, mostly regarding the current economic situation. In four out of five questions, Rouhani failed to convince the MPS.



### Baghdad rejects report that Tehran has moved missiles to Iraq

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iraq on Sunday officially denied a Reuters report that some Iraqi groups had received ballistic missiles from Iran, KUNA reported.

According to Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad Mahjoub, all Iraqi state institutions adhere to Provision 7 of the Iraqi constitution.

Reports about arming some Iraqi groups with ballistic missiles sent in from Iran are devoid of tangible evidence, the spokesman said.

Iran has also rejected the report, saying it is aimed to hurt Iran’s ties with neighbors.

“Such false and ridiculous news have no purpose other than affecting Iran’s foreign relations, especially with its neighbors,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Saturday.



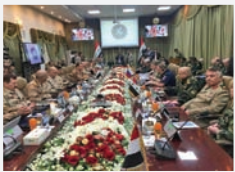
### Six detained over illegal migration

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Customs Administration said on Sunday that it had prevented two cases of illegal migration at customs checkpoint on the border with Turkey.

Customs officers, while investigating a truck, found five people who were hidden inside the cargo, Trend quoted the Customs Administration as saying.

The arrested people, who are citizens of a neighboring country, were trying to go to Turkey illegally inside the truck, which was carrying paper roll cargo.

In another operation the custom officers detained an Iranian citizen, who was trying to leave the country illegally inside a truck.



### Iraq hosts military officials from Iran, Russia and Syria

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Senior Iraqi military commanders hosted their Russian, Iranian, and Syrian counterparts in Baghdad on Saturday to discuss security cooperation and information-sharing in the Middle East, where Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group continues to carry out attacks.

The Iraqi Defense Ministry said it had received delegations led by their respective deputy chiefs of staff, to “strengthen cooperation and coordination in terms of security and intelligence between these countries,” Rudaw reported.

The four countries had created joint operations rooms to coordinate the fight against Daesh, now driven out of all urban centers in Iraq and largely confined to desert hold-outs in Syria.



### Israeli, American diplomats discuss Iran’s role in Syria

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The head of the Israeli Defense Ministry’s diplomatic-security wing, Zohar Palti, met U.S. Ambassador James Jeffrey on Saturday evening in Tel Aviv about Syria, with the emphasis on preventing Iran and Hezbollah from establishing themselves in the war-torn country, The Jerusalem Post reported.

During the meeting, Palti presented the policy of Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, emphasizing the close relationship between the United States and Israel and the great importance that the Israeli defense establishment attributes to the continuation of the American sanctions against Iran, according to a spokesperson from the Israeli Defense Ministry.

# EU’s inaction to save JCPOA will cause serious consequences, Kharrazi warns

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Kamal Kharrazi, chief of Iran’s Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, warned on Sunday that lack of efforts by Europe to save the 2015 nuclear deal will have “serious consequences”.

On May 8, Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and ordered sanctions against Iran. The first batch of sanctions took effect on August 6.

“Imposition of sanctions and pressure and Europe’s lack of immediate action to meet obligations under the JCPOA will have serious consequences,” Kharrazi said during a meeting with British Minister of State for the Middle East Alistair Burt in Tehran.

Kharrazi noted that there are many grounds for Iran and Britain to expand ties, however, he said cooperation requires “trust building”.

For his part, Burt said that the British position on the JCPOA is totally different



from that of the U.S.

“We are looking for a European mechanism for success of the JCPOA,”

Burt said.

Pointing to Iran’s regional status, he said that the UK seeks to boost cooperation with Iran.

## Ayatollah Khamenei: No war on horizon

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday that based on political calculations, there is no military war on horizon for Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the statement in a

meeting with officials of the Khatam ul-Anbiya Air Defense Base.

“Notwithstanding, the armed forces should stand vigilant and through capable and nimble management, enhance their human and equipment abilities day by

day,” the Leader stressed.

The Leader also called the air defense unit a “very sensitive” part of armed forces which is in “the front-line” of defending Iran against enemies and stressed the need for boosting air defense system.

## MPs convinced by Zarif’s answers

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — On Sunday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif convinced MPs who asked him certain questions concerning his participation at the funeral of former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and use of dual nationals in the nuclear talks.

Vocal MP Nader Ghazipour from Urmia criticized Zarif for attending Talabani’s funeral because of the presence of anti-revolution elements in the ceremony.

Zarif said his attendance was agreed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Quds Force, the Foreign Ministry and the Supreme National Security Council.

On the question by MP Javad Karimi Ghodoosi from Mashhad who asked about presence of four dual nationals in Iran’s team during the nuclear talks with the European Union and the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany).

Zarif said the presence of the dual nationals in expert team was authorized by the Intelligence Ministry.

The chief diplomat also said Iran recently used French and British lawyers in its complaint against the United States at the International Court of Justice.

Also on Tuesday, President Hassan Rouhani answered lawmakers’ questions, mostly regarding current economic situation. In four out of five questions, Rouhani failed to convince the MPS.

Lawmakers posed questions on his administration’s handling of economic



issues, including a high unemployment rate, slow economic growth and a devaluation of national currency rial as well as smuggling of goods and foreign currency.

The lawmakers were also critical of the continuation of banking sanctions against Tehran despite the 2015 nuclear deal -- under which those restrictions should no longer exit.

Responding to the lawmakers’ questions, Rouhani defended his administration’s performance in two rounds and also called for unity among all forces to tackle the existing shortcomings.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday, “Representatives of the Majlis asked questions from a president who has been elected with more than 23 million votes, and the president responds to the questions calmly and serenely and this means religious democracy.”

## U.S. ready to protect PG shipping, defying Iran’s warnings: report

The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) has reportedly claimed that it is fully prepared to maintain the flow of commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf despite Iran’s insistence that it will prevent all oil exports through the waterway’s Strait of Hormuz entry point if the U.S. attempts to follow through with its threat of halting Iranian exports.

A Saturday report published by Khaleej Times daily, based in the kingdom of the United Arab Emirates, cited a CENTCOM officer identified as Major Josh Jacques as saying that the U.S. partners with “many nations to provide and promote security and stability in the region,” without directly referring to the Persian Gulf region.

He further added, “Together, we stand ready to ensure the freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce wherever international law allows.”

However, according to the Geneva Convention, the “right of transit passage” in the Persian Gulf is only secured for ships from countries who were signatories to the convention - which does not include the United States. Iran, therefore, regards U.S. forces in the waterway as illegal since it is not a signatory to the UN convention.

The development came as Iran has firmly warned that it will close down the Hormuz Strait if the U.S. pushes



ahead with its threat to bring Iran’s oil exports “down to zero,” vowing to respond in kind to any violations of international laws governing the strategic waterway, through which 30 percent of global oil flows.

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri declared on Wednesday that the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) is fully prepared to defend the Hormuz Strait in face of potential violations by the U.S. and its client states in the region.

“The IRGC Navy’s preparedness and capabilities unsettle the aggressors before entering the Strait of Hormuz, and [this is why] they have adhered to international laws over the past year,” Baqeri said.

(Source: Press TV)

## Tehran says E3 guarantees fall short of saving JCPOA

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic says that the European parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have not offered guarantees strong enough to save the deal after the U.S. unilaterally walked out.

Bahram Qassemi, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, on Sunday stressed that the proposals given by Germany, France, and the UK are suspected shaky on the operational ground.

U.S. quit the JCPOA on May 8 and ordered restoration of sanctions against Iran. The first batch of sanctions took effect on August 6.

The European Union trio, aka E3, —which are signatory to the nuclear deal - are expected to present their package of proposals to Iran before the second round of U.S. sanctions takes effect in early November.

“If fact we expect Europe to fill in the vacuum created by America’s exit from the JCPOA,” Qassemi stated.

Iran has said that if its interests in the JCPOA are not met, it sees no reason to go on staying in it.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday that Iran will abandon the JCPOA if it does not safeguard the country’s interests.



“The JCPOA is a means and not the goal and naturally we will abandon it if we come to the conclusion that it is not possible to safeguard our national interests by this means,” he said during a meeting with President Hassan Rouhani and his cabinet members.

The Leader also criticized Europe’s inappropriate behavior

## Zarif, Le Drian talk over phone

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian discussed matters of mutual interest over the telephone on Saturday, according to

the Foreign Ministry spokesman.

“Yesterday’s phone contact between the Iranian and French foreign ministers was in continuation of frequent contacts between the Iranian and European officials. We use this opportunity and express our position

and views and the other side express its views about various issues. This is diplomacy,” Bahram Qassemi on Sunday said about the phone call.

He noted that France is an important partner of Iran and that Iran has good

relations with the European Union members.

“However good relations does not mean that the two countries have same views on all the issues. Two countries can have different views on certain issues, however, they can have good relations,” he explained.

## Can sanctions force Iran to capitalize on its talents?

**1 →** If oil was the source of wealth and happiness now Venezuela, which possesses the largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, must have been a prosperous country.

The experience has shown that oil revenues have either given rise to promotion of populist economic policies such as those seen in Venezuela and to a lesser extent in Iran or made a country like Saudi Arabia so intoxicated to drop bombs on the poor Yemeni people.

If Iran had allocated a tiny portion of tens of billions of dollars in fuel subsidy to scientific research now the

face of the country would have changed and the sanctions by the bully Trump could not easily affect it.

When a country like Sweden with about 10 million population has succeeded to make great technological advances, Iran, with a population eight times more than Sweden, should be able to make more scientific innovations.

It is not a bluff that Sorena Sattari, the vice president for scientific affairs, has said that “sanctions have always been taken as an opportunity by startup companies” so that they produce in the country any commodity which

is subject to sanctions.

Even if there was no sanctions and the world would not have to deal with an abnormal person like Trump who is defying the world order, it was absolutely necessary that Iran say farewell to oil money.

It must be taken as an unquestionable fact that oil is not the source of happiness. On the contrary it is the opposite. It is hoped that officials in Iran quit addiction to oil money and turn the sanctions into opportunity and give priority to talents.



# ‘UK helped Nusra terrorists smuggle chlorine to Idlib’

## Syria rejects reports Israel attacked airport near Damascus

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem has warned that terrorists operating in the north-western province of Idlib have managed to smuggle containers of chemical gas to use them in a false-flag operation against the Syrian government.

Speaking to Russia's RT news channel on Saturday, Muallem said British intelligence services had helped terrorists of the Nusra Front group to transfer gas canisters to areas in Idlib that are currently controlled by the so-called White Helmet troops.

He said the move was meant to stage a gas attack on civilians and then blame it on the Syrian government as soon as it begins its long-anticipated operation to retake Idlib from the terrorists.

For months, Syria has been planning a decisive operation to purge terrorists from Idlib, the last of its provinces that still remain under the control of militants.

The government has been accused of attacking civilians with chemicals in previous operations, including in Douma near Damascus and in Khan Sheikhun, in Idlib. Syrian authorities have denied any involvement in the two cases, saying the attacks had been carried out by militants to slow Syria's progress in the fight against terror.

Syria and its allies, including Russia, believe a similar scenario could be staged in Idlib.

Russian defense ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said last week that terrorists had smuggled eight canisters of chlorine gas into a village near Jisr al-Shughur, south-west



of Idlib city. The official said the transfer of the weapons into the province was in line with a plan to prompt Western intervention in Idlib operation.

During his Saturday interview with the RT, Muallem said plots like staging false-flag gas attacks would help the objectives of Western governments like the United States who maintain an "illegal" presence in Syria.

Muallem said there was clear evidence that the U.S. was continuing to support terrorist groups like Daesh and Nusra Front, adding that the U.S. would certainly use a chemical

weapons incident as a pretext to attack Syria.

The top Syrian diplomat said, however, that Syria was determined to retake Idlib whatever its costs. He said that the government had already opened a humanitarian corridor at Abu al-Duhour Airport to help evacuate civilians before the fighting starts in Idlib.

■ **Syria rejects reports Israel attacked airport near Damascus**

Meanwhile, Syria's state media have denied reports of an Israeli attack on a key military airport near the capital Damascus.

The official SANA news agency said

Sunday that an electrical problem caused explosions at a munitions dump in Mezzeh air base earlier in the day.

Earlier reports had suggested that Mezzeh had come under attack by missiles which the Syrian air defense system managed to intercept. Other sources said the air base was the target of an air strike.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based group opposing the government, said Israel was responsible for the attack, adding that it caused deaths and injuries.

However, a military source denied the reports, saying the explosions may have been caused by a short circuit.

"Mezzeh air base has not been exposed to any Israeli aggression," the source told SANA of the facility which is located to the southwest of Damascus and has previously been attacked by Israel.

There has been a hike in Israeli airstrikes against Syria since the collapse of the Daesh terror group last year, an event that significantly demoralized other Takfiri militant groups operating against Damascus.

Tel Aviv has also beefed up its military presence on the occupied side of Syria's Golan Heights, deploying more military equipment and forces to the region.

Anti-government sources claimed that Israel had launched missile attacks from the Golan Heights on Mezzeh. However, Syrian sources would not comment on reports of casualties as a result of explosions.

(Source: agencies)

## Donors to increase UNRWA support and funding despite U.S. cuts



United States' decision to cut funding for the United Nations Palestine refugee agency (UNRWA) is "an evident politicization of humanitarian aid", according to the organization's commissioner-general.

UNRWA, which says it provides services to more than five million Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories as well as Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, currently faces a budget deficit of \$270m for the remainder of the year after the U.S. government slashed its budget by \$300m.

In an open letter to the agency's staff, Pierre Krahenbul dismissed claims made by the U.S. State Department that it was an "irredeemably flawed operation" and prolonged the status of refugees.

"The responsibility for the protracted nature of the Palestine refugee-hood, the growing number of refugees and the growth in needs, lies squarely with the parties and in the international community's lack of will or utter inability to bring about a negotiated and peaceful resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine," wrote Krahenbul in the letter.

"The attempt to make UNRWA somehow responsible for perpetuating the crisis is disingenuous at best. At no time over the past eight months were we notified of the specific reasons for the dramatic cut."

Krahenbul went on to say that the decision taken by the U.S., which has been its most generous and consistent donor since 1974, will not have any bearing on UNRWA's responsibility towards Palestine refugees or affect the "energy and passion" it carries out.

UNRWA was formed in 1949 following the forced displacement of 700,000 Palestinians by Zionist paramilitaries in the run-up to the establishment of the state of Israel.

Over the past year, more than 50 countries have contributed to the agency.

In recent years, the European Union has been the second largest contributor. It pledged more than \$142m in 2017.

In a statement published on Saturday, the EU termed the U.S. decision "regrettable", one that will leave a "substantial gap" in the agency's funding.

"The EU is committed to secure the continuation and sustainability of the agency's work which is vital for stability and security in the region," the statement said.

"The EU and its member states, and many others in the international community, including many Arab states, have pledged their support to the continuity of the work that UNRWA is doing."

In the run-up to the UN General Assembly session later this month, EU foreign ministers, along with their international and regional partners, will discuss how to guarantee sustainable and effective aid to Palestinians, the statement added.

### ■ Countries rally to raise funds

Following the U.S. announcement, Germany announced it will increase funding for the UNRWA, its foreign minister said.

"The loss of this organization could unleash an uncontrollable chain reaction," Heiko Maas said on Saturday before adding that while Germany contributed \$94m to UNRWA this year, it was prepared to increase its financial aid.

Maas also urged the EU and member states to work towards "a sustainable finance basis for the organization".

His statement was echoed by Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister Simon Coveney, who called the U.S. decision "heartless and dangerous".

"Ireland is a long-standing supporter of UNRWA," said Coveney. "We will continue that assistance and discuss with our EU and other partners what more can be done to support its work."

### ■ UNRWA to cut jobs after U.S. axes \$300m in funding

On the same day, Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman al-Safadi said his country will rally donor support to ease UNRAW's financial crisis.

"Disruption of UNRWA services will have extremely dangerous humanitarian, political and security implications for refugees and for the whole region," Safadi told Reuters news agency.

Jordan hosts more than two million registered Palestinian refugees. Safadi warned that shutting down UNRWA would create "fertile grounds for further tensions".

Meanwhile, Israeli media reported on Sunday that funding by the Persian Gulf Arab states to the refugee agency would be condition-based on a revised definition and number of Palestinian refugees.

According to Israeli Channel 2, the U.S. will allow the Persian Gulf states to fund UNRWA this year to ensure continuation of the organization's immediate activities.

Funding for next year, however, will be subject to agreeing with the U.S. demand to count only 500,000 refugees out of the five million, the report said.

In March, Qatar announced to pledge \$50m, its largest sum to UNRWA to date, saying that the importance of the agency's sustainable funding, which provides food provisions, schooling, healthcare, and relief and social services, was crucial to the improvement of the lives of Palestinian refugees.

Hanan Ashrawi, an executive committee member of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), denounced the U.S. decision to end all funding to the agency as "a cruel and irresponsible move targeting the most vulnerable segment of Palestinian society".

"With such a decision, the U.S. is doing Israel's bidding and destroying the very foundations of peace and stability by taking all permanent status issues 'off the table', including the right of return for refugees and occupied Jerusalem," she said.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## John Kerry vents frustration over working with Netanyahu in new book

Former United States secretary of state John Kerry has revealed the Obama administration's frustrations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a new book slated for release this month.

According to excerpts released by a Washington newsletter, Kerry began losing trust in Netanyahu in 2014 during Israel's last war on Gaza, when he says Netanyahu began leaking to the press against the U.S. government.

An "element of personal trust had been lost" at that time, he writes. "We were in the middle of negotiating [a ceasefire] based on your input. Now I see it in the press? This is outrageous," Kerry recalled telling Netanyahu.

"The humanitarian ceasefire was your idea. And now you leak this document to make it sound like I am trying to advance Hamas's position?" he said.

The book, titled Every Day is Extra, catalogs Kerry's tenure at the State Department throughout Obama's second

term in office, including his efforts to negotiate a nuclear deal with Iran.

Kerry writes that Netanyahu gave him two reasons why he was skeptical about entering "peace" talks with the Palestinians.

"I'm willing to give this effort a try," he allegedly told Kerry, "but there are two things you should know."

"First, everyone in this region lies all the time," he said, and "second, the most I can do may be less than the least Abbas could ever accept."

Kerry's so-called peace efforts ended in failure in 2014. In the book, he tells about how Netanyahu would withhold concessions during "peace" talks.

"Bibi's attitude was 'I'm open to solving this problem if I can have all my needs met.' That included his political needs with his coalition," he writes.

As an instance, Kerry explains how Netanyahu would insist

on a permanent Israeli military presence in the occupied West Bank by rejecting a plan that would have required a gradual withdrawal of the Israeli troops.

"It was now clear to all of us that Bibi was not interested in actually addressing the security questions in a way that could allow for the eventual withdrawal" of the Israeli military, Kerry recalls.

Kerry also writes about how the Israeli premier was trying to adversely influence the course of the U.S. negotiations with Iran and others that led to the conclusion of a landmark nuclear deal.

He says Netanyahu acted against the White House's wishes by addressing Congress to vilify the deal on March 3, 2015.

Kerry writes that he was "disappointed in him... I thought we deserved better than a speech that hit below the belt."

(Source: agencies)

## 18 injured in German protests for and against migrants

Eighteen people were injured as the anti-migrant far-right and counter-protesters held opposing rallies in the German city of Chemnitz, which was hit by xenophobic demonstrations last week.

Chemnitz has been in the spotlight after violent protests erupted over the fatal stabbing of a German man, allegedly by a Syrian and an Iraqi last Sunday.

On Saturday, thousands of people answered a joint call by far-right party AfD and Islamophobic PEGIDA street movement to descend once again on the streets of the former communist city which was in the erstwhile East Germany.

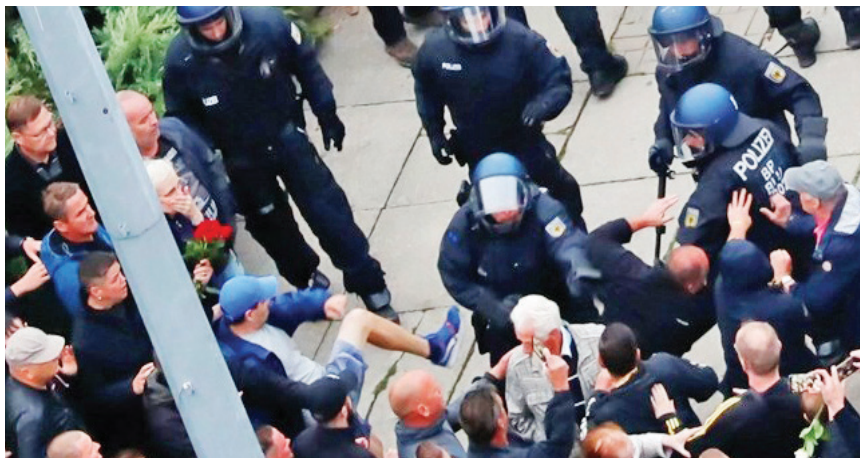
But an equally large contingent of counter protesters, including Green party and Social Democratic Party MPs, also converged to take a stand against racism.

According to police estimates, more than 11,000 demonstrators turned up for the separate protests.

Local police, backed up by officers from across Germany, were out in force to keep both sides from clashing.

But as the rallies cleared, scuffles took place among small groups.

SPD MP Soeren Bartol said on Twitter that his group from Marburg were "attacked by



Nazis" while they were heading for the bus. "All SPD flags destroyed and some were also physically attacked," he wrote, adding that police had arrived swiftly to halt the assault.

In all, 18 people were injured, including three police officers, said in a statement Sunday, doubling their earlier injury estimate.

Police are also examining at least 37 possible offences, including bodily harm, property damage and resistance against

law enforcement officers.

Away from Chemnitz city center, a 20-year-old Afghan man suffered light injuries after he was assaulted by four masked men. Police said they were investigating if the perpetrators counted among demonstrators.

Two smaller demonstrations are planned for Sunday. One is titled "Chemnitz residents sending a democratic signal against violence and xenophobia" while the second is organized

by the Protestant church.

Another major event is expected on Monday, when German punk band Die Toten Hosen leads a free concert against racism.

Foreign Minister Heiko Maas called on Germans to take a stand against xenophobia.

"We have to get up from our sofas and open our mouths," he told Bild am Sonntag, stressing that "all of us have to show the world that we democrats are the majority and the racists are the minority."

"The silent majority must get louder," he said.

The tensions in Chemnitz have underlined the divisions in Germany over Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision three years ago to keep Germany's borders open to asylum seekers, many fleeing war in Syria and Iraq.

Misgivings run particularly high in Saxony state, where Chemnitz is located, over the arrival of more than a million asylum seekers since 2015.

The far-right AfD party has won strong support in the region through its campaign against migrant arrivals, and surveys suggest that it is poised to become Saxony's second biggest party in next year's regional elections.

(Source: AFP)

## U.S. cuts \$300mn military aid to Pakistan

The U.S. military has declared it is canceling \$300 million in aid to Pakistan over what it calls Islamabad's failure to take decisive measures against militant forces, marking a further deterioration in ties.

"Due to a lack of Pakistani decisive actions in support of the South Asia Strategy the remaining \$300 (million) was reprogrammed," Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Kone Faulkner said Saturday, according to Reuters.

The suspension was part of a broader cut in the so-called Coalition Support Funds announced by U.S. President Donald Trump early this year, when he accused Islamabad of rewarding past American aid with "nothing but lies & deceit."

According to Faulkner, the U.S. Defense Department aimed to spend the \$300 million on "other urgent priorities" if approved by Congress. He further noted that another \$500 million in CSF was stripped by Congress from Pakistan earlier this year, to bring the total withheld to \$800 million.

U.S. officials, however, have held out the possibility that Pakistan could win back that support if it changed its behavior.



Defense Secretary James Mattis, in particular, had an opportunity to authorize \$300 million in CSF funds through this summer - if he observed concrete Pakistani measures to go after the militants, but he chose not to, Reuters said in its report. The disclosure came ahead of an anticipated visit by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the top Ameri-

can military officer, General Joseph Dunford, to Islamabad. Mattis stated on Tuesday that combating militants would be a "primary part of the discussion."

Washington has for years accused Islamabad of allowing militants and terrorist groups to operate relatively freely in Pakistan's porous border regions to carry out operations in neighboring Afghanistan, an allegation Pakistan denies.

Pakistan's new Prime Minister Imran Khan, who has previously suggested that he might order the shooting down of U.S. drones entering Pakistani airspace, has opposed the American open-ended presence in Afghanistan. In his victory speech, he said he wanted "mutually beneficial" relations with Washington.

Pakistan, the report said, has received more than \$33 billion in U.S. assistance since 2002, including more than \$14 billion in CSF, a Pentagon program to reimburse allies that have incurred costs in supporting counter-insurgency operations.

(Source: Daily Star)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	133676.1
IFX	1506.9

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	48,753 rials
GBP	54,428 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$69.80/b
Brent	\$77.64/b
OPEC Basket	\$75.72/b
Gold	\$1,2019\$/oz
Silver	\$14.59/oz
Platinum	\$793.05/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Development of South Pars phase 14 achieves 82% progress

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The project for implementing phase 14 of developing South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, has already achieved 82 percent progress, according to the operator of this phase. Hamidreza Masoudi also said that phase 14 enjoys the most Iranian technical and engineering capabilities among the similar projects, Public Relations Department of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of implementing development phases of South Pars, reported.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar, is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate. The field is divided into 24 standard phases.



Iran exports near 2.1m bpd of oil in August: report

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iran shipped near 2.1 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude and condensates in August, Bloomberg reported citing ship-tracking data. As reported, flows to Europe increased, reaching 355,000 barrels a day in August compared with 323,000 in July. The shipments of crude and condensate to the country's three main Asian destinations namely China, India and Japan, decreased in the mentioned month. In total, there are 1.1 million barrels headed to those nations, down from 1.8 million in July.

Brazil planning to open \$1.2b credit line to invest in Iran

**1 →** Brazil aims to transfer technology to Iran in a bid to establish long-term ties with the country, he further noted. Addressing the same meeting, Zargarán expressed hope for the expansion of trade ties between the two countries and said,



Brazilian Ambassador to Tehran Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos (L) and Chairman of Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce Kaveh Zargarán in a meeting at the place of ICCIMA in Tehran

“Given the high amount of trade between Iran and Brazil some proper strategies should be adopted to improve banking relation because of its high significance in developing bilateral trade.” He put Brazil's exports to Iran at \$2.55 billion in 2017 and said to preserve its market in Iran the Brazilian government should pay more attention to the private sector's demands.

London leads widening UK wealth gap since financial crisis

The breadth of wealth inequality in the UK was laid bare in new analysis published Saturday. While the divide is most pronounced in London, where richer households are now 24 times wealthier than poorer ones, other regions have experienced a similar trend since the global financial crisis, according to the Resolution Foundation. The value of household assets such as property, pensions, financial assets and possessions swelled to 12.8 trillion pounds (\$17 trillion) in 2014–2016 from pre-crisis levels of 10.1 trillion pounds, after adjusting inflation, the think tank said. The wealth of the richest grew 22 percent compared with 13 percent for the poorest. (Source: Bloomberg)

Majlis approves establishment of 12 SEZs, 8 FTZs

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian parliament (Majlis) on Sunday gave approval to a bill on the establishment of 12 new special economic zones and also eight new free trade zones, ISNA reported. The bill, which also includes revising the status of three existing FTZs, was passed with 141 votes in favor, 75 against and 7 abstentions.

The new FTZs will be established in the northeastern province of Golestan, the northwestern province of Ardebil, the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, the southern province of Hormozgan, and the southwestern province of Bushehr as well as in the western provinces of Ilam, Kordestan and Kermanshah. Some 1,400 industrial units are currently active in Iran's free trade zones, according

Iranian companies to take part in Rebuild Syria Expo in Damascus

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Director General of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran's Arabic-African Affairs Office Farzad Piltan announced that Iranian firms plan to participate in Rebuild Syria Exhibition which is going to be held on October 2-6, in Damascus, the portal of TPO reported on Sunday. The Iranian official voiced TPO's readiness for setting proper ground for participation of Iranian companies in Rebuild Syria project that includes reconstruction of economic and industrial infrastructure of the war-stricken country. “Iranian companies' presence in the exhibition is a chance for showing Iran's capabilities in various sectors such as industry as well as technical and engineering services,” Piltan said. Referring to the sharp rise in exports of Iran's exports to Syria during the recent years, the TPO official named chemicals, pharmaceutical supplements, besides constructional and industrial materials as Iran's main exported goods to that country. According to him, besides



reconstruction projects, the two countries have some joint production projects on agenda. TPO will hold a conference at its place on Wednesday to brief Iranian companies about reconstruction opportunities in Syria and trade with the country. Last week, following a meeting with his Syrian counterpart General Ali Abdullah Ayyoub, Iranian Minister of Defense Amir Hatami said that Iran can assist Syria in developing military equipment alongside efforts for the reconstruction process in the war-stricken country. “Iran's private sector has high enough capacities to help the Syrian people and government in the reconstruction process,” said Amir Hatami.

Italy rating outlook cut by Fitch on possible fiscal loosening

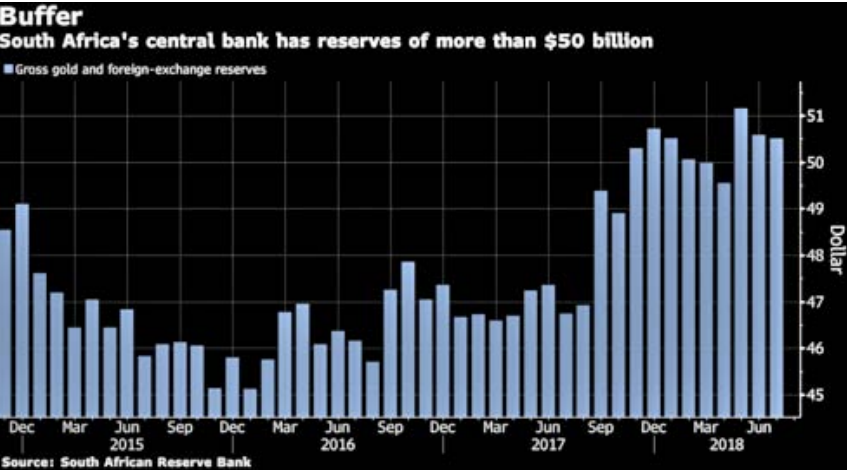
Italy's rating outlook was lowered by Fitch Ratings, which said the fiscal plans of the new government risk a degree of fiscal loosening. Fitch changed the nation's credit outlook to negative from stable. The rating company maintained its foreign long-term credit rating at BBB, a decision applauded by the Italian government and cited as proof of the credibility of its economic program. “The risk of a reversal of structural reforms negatively impacting Italy's credit fundamentals has increased somewhat, in our view,” Fitch said in a report Friday. “Fiscal and other policy risks are compounded by the relatively high degree of political uncertainty.” Concern about Italy's budget has been an investor focus this summer, with bond yields pushed higher in response to the new populist government's expensive electoral promises. Those include hefty tax cuts and some form of universal income for the poor that could have a negative impact on the country's debt and deficit. Fitch “correctly withheld judgment” by maintaining the foreign long-term rating. Finance Minister Giovanni Tria said during a trip to China, Ansa news agency reported. Government actions “in coming weeks” will convince agencies about Italy's credit-worthiness. “We have European commitments which will be re-



spected,” Tria said. These “essentially depend on relations with financial markets.” ■ **‘Better visibility’** The final make-up of the government program has yet to be decided. On Aug. 20, Moody's Investors Service extended a review of Italy's credit rating to get “better visibility” on the fiscal path and reform agenda. The government is expected to set new public-finance

A \$50b fight about who owns S. Africa's central bank

South Africa's Lesetja Kganyago has a fight on his hands to protect the central bank's \$50 billion of reserves. More than eight months after the ruling African National Congress decided that the South African Reserve Bank should be state-owned, like most other central banks, the governor said his main concern remains to protect the regulator's independence and mandate. But also at risk may be billions of dollars in reserves and a legal brawl that could last for years. While the 97 year-old Reserve Bank's shares are only worth about 20 million rand (\$1.4 million) based on the current share price, some shareholders have argued the bank's assets belong to them and they should be compensated for that when the government nationalizes the institution, according to Kganyago. Eight percent of its 770 owners are foreigners, so steps to nationalize could be challenged using bilateral investment treaties or end in international arbitration. “This is not a fight I want to be busy with,” Kganyago said in an interview in his 32nd floor office in the capital, Pretoria. “There is sufficient emerging-market turmoil that keeps me busy. I should not be wasting my time on this thing.” ■ **‘Paid to go’** The rand slumped to its weakest level against the dollar in two years last month as upheaval in Turkey spilled over into other emerging markets. Some of the investors do feel they are entitled to a share of the reserves, but they are wrong, said Jannie Rossouw, the head of economics and business sciences at the University of Witwatersrand. He is a former



secretary at the Reserve Bank and owns its shares. South Africa had \$50.5 billion in gross reserves at the end of July and holds about 170 billion rand of deposits on behalf of the state, according to central bank data. Some shareholders “want to be paid to go away,” Kganyago said. “‘Show me the money, show me the money!’ is what they are looking for.” South Africa's central bank is one of a handful, including Switzerland and Japan, still owned by private individuals. However, shareholders are limited to 10,000 shares each and have no say over monetary policy. They get to vote for seven of the central bank's 10 non-executive directors. “Why should we be paying people who are in any case at the moment very constrained,” Kganyago said. ■ **Trojan horse** Kganyago, the 52-year-old former head of



to Morteza Bank, the secretary of the high council for free zones. The official has said that some huge investments have been made in Iran's free zones

over the past five years. Iran has already eight free trade zones and 26 special economic zones, as published on the council's website.

Trade tensions could spark a ‘global economic crisis,’ says former trade minister

The escalating trade war between the U.S. and China could lead to a “global economic crisis,” according to George Yeo, a former Singapore foreign and trade minister. Yeo, currently chairman of Hong Kong-based Kerry Logistics Network, said his company has actually benefited in the short term from the tariff conflict between the world's two largest economies. Businesses are speeding up shipments and diverting trade and investment to avoid the impact of tariffs, providing a boon for his company's earnings. “But this is temporary,” he told CNBC on Friday. “It's not good for us in the near term if it leads to a global economic crisis, which may well happen,” Yeo said. “I mean we've just had Trump threatening to leave the WTO if it doesn't change in the U.S. favor,” he added. “So all this is causing a lot of anxiety all around.” U.S. President Donald Trump, in an interview published on Thursday by Bloomberg, threatened to withdraw the U.S. from the World Trade Organization, his latest verbal assault on the global trading system.

“If they don't shape up, I would withdraw from the WTO,” Trump said in the interview, criticizing the Geneva-based body's treatment of the U.S. Bloomberg also reported that Trump said to his aides that he supports going ahead with the imposition of proposed tariffs on an additional \$200 billion in Chinese goods. The White House declined to comment on the report. Yeo added that, while he doesn't see a worldwide crisis as a “probability,” he stressed that people in business are increasingly on edge about the global economy, citing Argentina's skyrocketing interest rates as an example of the nervousness. “These things can spread very quickly,” he said. He also said that uncertainty regarding the U.S.-China trade war is forcing businesses to make choices, such as where to put a new factory. “Do you put it in China or do you put it in Southeast Asia,” he said, adding that such considerations apply to both Chinese and non-Chinese multinationals. (Source: CNBC)

and economic-growth targets by Sept. 27 and submit a draft budget to the European Commission by Oct. 15. The Fitch decision to maintain the long-term rating unchanged was “fully justified” by the Italian economy, an official in the prime minister's office said. The government is confident that future decisions on Italy's credit-worthiness will be positive and “without reservations,” due to indications already given on plans to reduce the country's debt and promote growth. Italy's current targets, agreed with the EU, see the deficit falling from 1.6 percent of GDP in 2018 to 0.8 percent in 2019, with a balanced budget in 2020. Tria told Bloomberg News in July that his aim is not to worsen the structural-budget situation and possibly to improve it. Still, he's also said that slower-than-expected economic growth means the deficit is heading toward 1.2 percent in 2019. Italy's public debt, at 2.3 trillion euros (\$2.7 trillion), is already the highest in the euro area after Greece as a proportion of GDP. It's forecast to be 130.8 percent of economic output this year, and narrow to 128 percent in 2019. Tria has insisted that the government will keep working on the reduction of the debt ratio despite slower economic activity this year. (Source: Bloomberg)



# Why diesel prices are set to soar

The world is ticking down to a deadline that promises to have major ramifications in the global fuel markets. On January 1, 2020, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) will require the sulfur content in marine fuel to drop from a maximum of 3.5 percent down to 0.5 percent.

The rule is meant to curb pollution from ships. Combustion of high-sulfur fuels leads to the production of compounds like sulfur dioxide, which causes respiratory problems and produces acid rain.

This rule continues a trend of limiting the sulfur content in fuels (which originates from the sulfur contained in crude oil). Europe began tightening sulfur specifications in the 1990s, and the U.S. began to phase in ultra-low-sulfur diesel (ULSD) in 2006.

Prior to implementation of the ULSD standard in the U.S., gasoline often traded at a premium to diesel. But meeting the ULSD standards required refineries to invest billions of dollars into equipment to remove the sulfur. This drove up diesel prices in two ways.

First, the cost to produce diesel was simply higher due to additional capital and operating costs.

Second, this meant that refineries had to be more selective about purchasing high-sulfur (i.e., "sour") crude oils. This drove down the demand for sour crudes and drove up the demand for lower sulfur (i.e., "sweet") crudes, increasing the price differential between the two.



So refineries had to pay more for sweet crudes, or invest heavily into new equipment that could remove the sulfur from the sour crudes. The net result was that after 2006, the price differential between gasoline and diesel flipped.

According to data from the Energy Information Administration (EIA), in the decade prior to the implementation of ULSD, retail gasoline traded on average at a \$0.04/gallon premium to retail diesel. In 2005, the year before the phase-in of ULSD began, diesel traded at an average of \$0.09/gallon over the

price of gasoline. And in the decade following implementation, diesel averaged \$0.23/gallon over the price of gasoline.

The gasoline premium over diesel disappeared following the rollout of ultra-low-sulfur diesel.

It has been estimated that the new IMO rules will apply to 3.5 million barrels per day of high-sulfur fuel oil, although post combustion gas scrubbers may allow some vessels to continue using the high-sulfur fuel. Most marine vessels will have to switch to cleaner distillate fuels like low-sulfur diesel,

which will increase demand significantly.

As with the previous USLD switch, the new regulations will increase the cost to produce marine fuel, and it will again put upward pressure on the price of sweet crudes and downward pressure on sour crudes.

Refineries are certainly gearing up for the increase in diesel demand. But given the time, complexity, and expense of increasing capacity to meet the new demand, it is possible that there will be insufficient supplies when the new specifications come into effect.

EnSys Energy and Navigistics Consulting conducted a Marine Fuel Availability Study in which they conclude that there are significant risks leading up to the transition. Specifically, they note that installation of exhaust gas scrubbers has been lower than expected. They also project that there will be a "Scramble" period where refineries that aren't equipped to process sour crude will bid up the price of light sweet crude that can enable them to meet the lower sulfur specifications.

In any case, it seems certain that diesel prices are set to rise, and perhaps significantly. Low sulfur crudes like West Texas Intermediate (WTI) will likely see demand spike as well. Yet you can buy WTI today for February 2020 delivery for \$64.19/bbl, which is more than \$4/bbl cheaper than the current price.

History suggests that discount won't last.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Turkey hikes gas and power prices by as much as 14 percent as lira crisis deepens



Turkey raised natural gas prices on Saturday by as much as 14 percent, two sources said, while the energy regulator announced a similar increase in electricity costs as a deepening currency crisis stokes inflation.

The lira has fallen 42 percent against the dollar this year, hit by concerns about President Tayyip Erdogan's grip on monetary policy and a worsening rift with the United States over a detained American Christian pastor.

The sell-off has increased the cost of food and petrol and raised fears about the impact on the country's wider economy and banks. Economists are particularly worried about the central bank's inability to rein in inflation, which hit a 14-year high of nearly 16 percent in July.

State pipeline operator Botas raised natural gas prices by 14 percent for industrial use and 9 percent for residential use effective from Saturday, two sources told Reuters. Officials for Botas were not immediately available to comment.

Last month, Botas increased the price of natural gas for electricity production by 50 percent and by 9 percent for residential use. Turkey is dependent on imports for almost all of its energy needs. The lira crisis has driven up the cost, in local currency terms, of oil and gas.

Likewise, Turkey's energy regulator said it would raise electricity prices by 14 percent for industrial use and 9 percent for households from Saturday. It increased prices by the same amount last month.

Almost a third of Turkey's total 293 billion megawatt power production came from

natural gas power plants in 2017.

Retail prices in Istanbul, Turkey's biggest city, surged 2.23 percent month-on-month in August, for a year-on-year increase of 14.99 percent, the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce said on Saturday.

Official August inflation data is due on Monday, and economists expect another hefty reading.

"This will provide the first hard evidence of the impact of the lira's collapse this month on the wider economy," Jason Tuvey of Capital Economics said in a note to clients on Friday.

The latest hikes in electricity and gas prices will directly increase inflation by 35 basis points, according to Reuters calculations.

Erdogan, self-described "enemy of interest rates", wants to see lower borrowing costs to keep credit flowing, particularly to the construction sector. Investors, who see the economy heading for a hard landing, say decisive interest rate hikes are needed to put the brakes on inflation.

Erdogan, who has appointed his son-in-law Berat Albayrak as finance minister, casts the lira's slide as an economic attack on Turkey by Western governments, financiers and ratings agencies. He says high interest rates cause inflation — a stance at odds with orthodox economics.

"We see little chance that an ugly set of inflation figures will change the government's — and, crucially, President Erdogan's — stance on interest rates," Tuvey of Capital Economics said.

(Source: abs-cbn.com)

## EU ends trade controls on Chinese solar panels



The European Union will end restrictions on the sale of solar panels from China early next week in a move that EU producers said would lead to a flood of cheap imports.

The European Commission, which coordinates EU trade policy, said in a statement on Friday that the measures would expire at midnight on Monday Sept. 3, confirming a Reuters report on Aug. 24.

The EU first imposed anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures for Chinese solar panels, wafers and cells in 2013 and extended them by 18 months in March last year, signaling that they should then end.

Chinese manufacturers have been allowed to sell solar products in Europe free of duties if they do so at or above a progressively declining minimum price. If sold for less than that price, they are subject to duties of up to 64.9 percent.

The Commission said it was in the best interests of the EU as a whole for the measures to lapse, given the bloc's aim of increasing its supply of renewable energy. The measures had also decreased over time, allowing import prices to align with world market prices, it said.

China's commerce ministry welcomed the end of restrictions, describing the move as a "model for successfully resolving trade frictions through consultations."

The move "will restore EU-China trade of photovoltaics to a normal market condition, will provide a more stable and predictable business environment for cooperation between the two sides' industries, and will truly

realize mutual benefit for both sides," the ministry said in a statement on its website.

SolarPower Europe, which represents importers and installers, described the move as a "watershed moment" for Europe's solar industry and that it removes the biggest barrier to growth of the sector.

The European Union has faced a delicate balancing act between the interests of EU manufacturers and those such as importers and installers pressing for a reduction in the cost of solar power generation.

It has also been concerned about the response from Beijing, given that the two sides were on the verge of a trade war over the issue in 2013.

EU ProSun, the grouping of EU producers that launched the initial complaint in 2012 and wanted a further extension of measures, had said that European manufacturers would be devastated if the measures ended.

Beijing's decision to limit installations in China meant producers there had some 30 gigawatts of excess capacity to shift but with few markets to sell into after tariffs imposed by the United States and planned by India, the second and third-largest markets behind China. The total EU market is about 7 gigawatts.

Some companies were considering a legal challenge at the European Court of Justice. EU ProSun said, adding that years of falling prices had not resulted in growth of the European market.

(Source: Seeking Alpha)

## Iraq oil exports hit 2018 peak in August

Iraq's oil exports for August hit their highest monthly figure this year, the oil ministry said Saturday, with nearly 112 million barrels of crude bringing \$7.7 billion to the war-torn country's ailing economy.

"In August, exports of crude reached 111.6 million barrels and revenues were \$7.7 billion," on an average price of \$69.59 per barrel, it said in a statement.

In August last year Iraq earned \$4.6 billion from the sale of 99.7 million barrels of crude oil.

Iraq's sole source of foreign currency, oil revenues have pumped more than \$60 billion into state coffers since January.

Baghdad's economy has been hit hard by the war against the Islamic State jihadist group which had seized a third of Iraq's territory in 2014 before being ousted in a vast government offensive last year.

Iraq suffers from persistent corruption and many Iraqis complain that the country's oil wealth is unfairly distributed.

This summer saw weeks of demonstrations in the oil-rich but marginalized south, demanding an end to power shortages and graft.

Iraq has the second-highest output of any member of the OPEC oil producers cartel, at some 4.5 million barrels per day.

Major oil producers including OPEC members and Russia agreed in June to raise crude output.

(Source: abs-cbn.com)

## Russia halts oil-output boost after July jump amid record gains

Russia took a breather last month, holding crude production near a record high.

The nation pumped an average of 11.21 million barrels per day in August, according to data emailed Sunday by the Russian Energy Ministry's CDU-TEK unit. Volumes were little changed from July, when the country's output soared to just shy of its post-Soviet record reached in 2016.

Russia has been the main beneficiary from its agreement with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries made two months ago to ease production curbs. The country added nearly 250,000 barrels a day of output in June and July, while its biggest partner in the pact -- Saudi Arabia -- has kept supply below the level it was said to have indicated in June amid concerns over strength of the global demand.

Still, the Saudis pumped more than 10.42 million barrels a day last month, according to two OPEC delegates. That's an increase of nearly 140,000 barrels from the July output it has reported to OPEC. The cartel is due to disclose its August data on Sept. 12.

Russia plans to maintain production at around 11.2 million barrels a day through to the end of this year, a government official said last month.

The nation's crude exports rose 1.9 percent compared to July to 5.55 million barrels a day as Russia benefited from record-high oil prices in rubles.

Traders and analysts are scrutinizing Russian and OPEC production levels for clues on whether they will be able to fill a supply gap that's likely to be created once U.S. sanctions of Iran's oil exports hit in November. Venezuela's output has also dropped amid an economic crisis. On the other hand, an ongoing trade dispute between the America and China is creating concerns it will impact demand.

A committee of OPEC and its allies is scheduled to meet in Algeria on Sept. 23 to discuss the market situation.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Libya oil production hits highest level this year after Sharara oil field resumes pumping

OPEC oil production has risen this month to its highest level this year due to the recovery of Libyan oil production, Reuters reported on Friday.

OPEC clarified that Libya has recorded a major increase in supplies this month, despite the fluctuations of production due to the repeated turbulence in the Oil Crescent region.



The increase of production is attributed to the resumption of work at Sharara Oil field at its full capacity, in addition to other oil fields, which provided additional supplies of crude oil.

Last week S&P Global Platts reported that Libya's oil production has been rising slightly due to increased production at two small oilfields in the east.

As reported, Harouge Oil Operations, a joint venture of Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) and PetroCanada, has increased production at the Amal oilfield to 25,000 bpd in recent days, up from just 8,000 bpd pumped in July and August due to maintenance, the sources told Platts.

Germany's Wintershall, for its part, resumed production at the 50,000-bpd As-Sarah oil field at the end of August, with a gradual ramp-up of output.

"Production volumes are still depending on availability of external export pipelines and capacity of loading terminals," a spokesman for Wintershall told Platts.

Both the Amal and As-Sarah oilfields ship crude from the Ras Lanuf terminal, whose storage tanks were badly damaged during the attack on Libya's Oil Crescent in June that resulted in crippling the country's oil production and exports in June and July. The crude oil storage capacity at Ras Lanuf has been reduced following the attacks, and the lower storage capacity could constrain oil exports.

Two weeks ago, Libya's oil production hit 1 million bpd for the first time since early June when the attack on the oil terminals resulted in a port blockade and crippled Libya's oil production.

(Source: agencies)

## Russia challenges arbitrator's jurisdiction in Ukraine oil dispute

Russia is contesting the jurisdiction of the international Permanent Court of Arbitration in a dispute with Ukraine over oil rights in the Crimea region, the Hague-based court said on Friday.

Ukraine has claimed to the arbitrator that its rights to

resources in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov were violated when Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula in 2014 and built a bridge between Russia and Crimea over the Kerch Strait.

According to Russia, however, the court should have no say in the case, which started in September 2016, as the

dispute mainly concerns Ukraine's "claim to sovereignty over Crimea".

The court said it would hear Russia's objections and set deadlines for written submissions on whether it had jurisdiction to rule on the case.

(Source: Reuters)

## India's natural gas production will double in four years

India's natural gas production is expected to double to 72 billion cubic meter (bcm) in four years through 2022, the country's oil ministry recently told a Parliamentary panel. The government is currently working on a plan to shift the country towards a gas-based economy.

The nation produced 35 bcm of natural gas last financial year (2017-18). Of this, state-owned explorer Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) accounted for 24.2 bcm or 68 per cent, Oil India Ltd (OIL) produced 2.9 bcm and private firms and their joint ventures accounted for the rest 7.9 bcm.

By 2021-22, this mix is expected to undergo a significant change with private JVs accounting

for the largest chunk -- 40.3 bcm -- followed by ONGC's production at 27.8 bcm and OIL contributing 3.7 bcm of gas.

India's natural gas production will double in four years: Oil Ministry The ministry told the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas, the main reason for the shortfall witnessed in natural gas production during the 12th plan period (2012-17) was lower production from NELP deepwater block KG-DWN-98/3 operated by Reliance Industries (RIL) and the delay in production from ONGC-operated KG-DWN-98/2 coupled with the natural decline in ageing fields.

The ministry added it has taken multiple

policy initiatives to ramp up the country's oil and gas production including gas pricing reforms, policy framework for early monetization of Coal Bed Methane (CBM), Discovered Small Field (DSF) policy, Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) and the operationalization of Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP).

Asked how ONGC plans to increase production, the company told the panel: "One of the biggest projects which we have undertaken, as on date, is going on schedule. From that discovery alone, we expect to get close to 4 million tons of oil which was only a gas discovery and almost 13-14 million cubic meter

gas per day. This will take a while. This will come sometime around 2021-22."

RIL chief Mukesh Ambani, during the company's recent Annual General Meeting, announced the firm plans to start natural gas production with its partner BP from its KG-D6 block by 2020, expecting to reach a peak of 30-35 Million Cubic Meter Per Day (MMSCMD) production by 2022.

India's natural gas production grew for the first time in six years in last financial year ended March 2018, primarily due to natural gas production from onshore blocks offsetting continuous decline from offshore blocks.

(Source: Economic Times)



## How can Libya be stabilized?

By Guma El-Gamaty

Over the past week, fighting in the streets of the Libyan capital Tripoli killed 26, including 15 civilians. Clashes erupted between the Seventh Brigade from the town of Tarhouna and two Tripoli-based militias, the Tripoli Revolutionaries' Brigades and the Nawasi over the distribution of resources.

Although the situation in the capital had been somewhat stable over the past year, various militias are still vying for power. The causes of Libya's persistent insecurity and highly turbulent transition period since the revolution of February 2011 are many. Some are internal and caused by the weak institutions Muammar Gaddhafi's regime left behind, which has made it difficult for a fragmented society to reach reconciliation.

More importantly, however, instability has also been fuelled by external interference from regional and international players which have been supporting opposing sides in the Libyan conflict both politically and militarily.

Turnmoil in Libya has not only affected Libyans, but has also had a negative impact on neighbouring countries and the whole region, as well as Europe and the U.S. The ongoing conflict has resulted in a steady flow of migrants and refugees to Europe and the proliferation of terrorist groups using Libya as a base.

These external players now hold the responsibility to stabilise Libya and it is in their best interests to do so. In this regard, there are a number of issues that need to be urgently addressed.

### ■ Curbing foreign interference

A good start for stabilisation efforts on Libya would be to curtail the destructive external interference fuelling the conflict. Countries like the UAE and Egypt have been openly flouting international sanctions on arms, as confirmed by detailed reports from the United Nations Sanctions Committee's (UNSC) panel of experts on Libya.

Both countries have been supplying heavy arms to Libyan Commander Khalifa Haftar, who has taken over eastern Libya with his army. Cairo and Abu Dhabi have also provided him with military personnel and other military support including military air raids. Qatar and Turkey have been accused of providing political support for Haftar's opponents in western Libya.

European countries have been also involved in the conflict, particularly Italy and France, which have been clashing over who should dictate political developments in Libya. While the two, together, led the campaign against Gaddhafi in 2011, today they are playing a dangerous tug-of-war in Libya, which is further destabilising the country. Just a few months ago, France - supported by the UAE and Egypt - hosted a summit on Libya attempting to impose its own vision of how the conflict should be resolved. Paris is pushing for elections to be held before the end of this year.

Italy has opposed the French plan and has recently aligned with the U.S. behind a proposal to host another international conference on Libya in Rome, possibly in November. The rivalry between France and Italy is a good example of how a lack of international consensus is prolonging instability in Libya. It is essential that all the key players involved in Libya show commitment to a stabilisation plan, led and implemented by the UN.

### ■ Passing a constitution

Another major step towards stabilising Libya would be the promulgation of a new constitution, something the country has lacked since Gaddhafi came to power in 1969.

Opposing the French idea that new elections should be held quickly this year, many Libyans are demanding that a new constitution should be voted on first. A 60-member body elected in 2014 has already drafted one and it needs to be approved by a two-thirds majority of votes in a nationwide referendum.

It is the duty of the Libyan parliament, the House of Representatives (HOR) based in Tobruk, to pass a referendum law to guide the process. However, certain members of the HOR, already opposed to the draft constitution, have been obstructing the procedure. They keep pushing for the vote on a referendum law to be postponed, in the hope that it will eventually be dropped.

Libyan political actors and external players, such as France, need to understand that a new constitution will unite the overwhelming majority of Libyans and it will produce one source of political legitimacy, superseding and transcending all others. Agreeing first on a new constitution for Libya will provide a strong foundation for holding presidential and parliamentary elections.

### ■ Pursuing national reconciliation

Apart from a constitution, Libya also urgently needs an effective and functioning national reconciliation process which includes all political, military, regional and tribal players involved in the conflict.

The UN mission in Libya has already declared plans for a major national reconciliation conference; however, such a process needs to be forged locally and regionally first with a bottom-up approach, culminating possibly in a final national declaration event.

Divisions across political and economic institutions in Libya over the last four years - including the two parallel governments in Tripoli and the east competing for power - have been a major cause of instability and suffering for the general population.

Libya currently has a divided central bank which means there have been no centralised monetary and fiscal policies. This has caused high levels of inflation and a sharp decline in the value of the Libyan currency. The situation has been compounded by a lack of liquidity in the banks for the general public. Having one national authoritative government and uniting the army, security agencies and all the sovereign economic institutions is crucial for stabilising the country, and preparing it for a democratic electoral process.

### ■ Dissolving militias

Another major obstacle to stability and institution-building in Libya is the growing number and power of militias.

After the collapse of the Gaddhafi regime, the feeble structures of the national army and police force did not hold and militias quickly proliferated and consolidated their power. They seized control of crucial state institutions and assets, such as ministry buildings, airports, oil facilities, border posts, ports and military barracks.

Militiamen have been subjecting these institutions to extortion, demanding monetary payments and appointments in highly paid jobs. Their main concern has been personal enrichment rather than political power. Any plan to disarm and dissolve militias, therefore, must include a detailed plan of providing militiamen with alternative jobs and careers or conscripting them into official security organisations such as the police and the army.

Their leaders, however, should be held accountable for the crimes they have committed throughout Libya through a transparent judicial process. Recently, the UN issued a statement which was a step in the right direction. It warned that it will be "bringing sanctions against those interfering with or threatening the operations of any sovereign institution which works for the good of Libya and the Libyan people". An effective stabilisation plan incorporating the above steps and others, should be developed by Libyans and supported by all international actors involved. It is in the interest of all stakeholders in Libya for the country to be stabilised as soon as possible, and its unity and sovereignty preserved. *(Source: Al Jazeera)*

# Oman will bend, but not break, from Persian Gulf pressure

The Sultanate of Oman often gets tagged with the cliché of "sleepy" — in part because it has chosen to sit out nearly every major Middle Eastern war since gaining independence in 1971. Bolstered by its reputation for neutrality, it has become an effective diplomatic go-between for bigger powers, including the United States, Iran and Saudi Arabia, allowing it to become friendly to all and foe to none.

But that might be about to change: An assertive Saudi Arabia, under the direction of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and a resentful Abu Dhabi, led by ambitious Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, sense a chance to reel in Oman and force Muscat to adopt policies that align more closely with their own.

Benefiting from a high point in relations with Washington, both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi have a window of opportunity



to challenge Oman's neutrality. But to succeed, the Persian Gulf giants' strategy must be subtle — and there are various ways in which Muscat can resist.

### ■ Oman's balancing act

Situated on the southeastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, Oman has one of the longest histories of any Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) state. Thanks to its location on the trade routes between east and west, Oman has centuries of experience balancing great powers — whether Turkish, Portuguese, British, Persian or Saudi — against one another to preserve its unique identity and independence.

Its small size and relatively small resource base in comparison to its Saudi and Emirati neighbors have provided Muscat with a moderately sized economy.

That may limit Oman's ambitions, but it has also endowed it with just enough wealth to maintain its social contract.

Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the reigning monarch since 1970, took the throne just as the United Kingdom exited the Persian Gulf.

His early years saw him battle communist rebels in the Dhofar Rebellion of 1962-75, and he worked assiduously to unify, both physically and politically, Oman's restive interior provinces with its more cosmopolitan coast.

As a result of the sultan's experiences, Oman became risk-averse and focused on stability. Muscat, accordingly, has refrained from picking sides as often as possible — a stance that has enabled the sultanate to become a useful interlocutor among Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United States.

### ■ The costs of neutrality

The country's overall commitment to neutrality has, however, meant keeping its Arab neighbors at arm's length — to the particular chagrin of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Oman has consistently hampered Saudi-Emirati efforts to create a tighter PGCC and even killed a 2013 proposal to symbolically become part of a Persian Gulf Union. Muscat also refused to join its more powerful Persian Gulf neighbors in imposing a blockade on Doha last year, choosing instead to retain its links with Qatar and maintain its healthy trade and diplomatic relationship with Iran.

Saudi and Emirati officials have also accused Muscat of giving too much influence to Yemen's Houthis, even as Oman uses its contacts with the Houthis to facilitate negotiations between them and a Saudi-led coalition seeking to



reinstall the Red Sea state's ousted government. Oman and the United Arab Emirates are also competing for influence in Yemen's eastern al-Mahrah governorate, which was an exclusively Omani sphere of influence prior to the Emirati intervention in the current Yemeni civil war.

### ■ Bringing weight to bear on Oman

Riyadh and Abu Dhabi desire a Muscat that is more pliable to their regional interests on a variety of issues. For the two regional powers, Oman should display more willingness to halt trade with Iran, exert pressure on Qatar,

## Riyadh and Abu Dhabi have their own reasons to bring Oman's policies into line with their own, but they will not be able to replicate their hardline Qatar blockade strategy without losing the support of Washington.

and participate in their efforts to bring the other Persian Gulf states to heel. To do so, the pair have a variety of means at their disposal, including the ability to rattle Muscat's relationship with the United States. Thanks to their increased influence in the current White House, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi could try to convince Washington that Muscat is the weak link in the United States. They could also raise questions about Oman's loyalty to U.S. regional goals while simultaneously intimating to Muscat that Washington could take sanctions against Omani businesses, individuals or officials who fail to cooperate with the anti-Iran strategy.

But should the America angle fall flat — as it largely has with Qatar — Saudi Arabia and the UAE have other options. Abu Dhabi could pressure Omani citizens and businesses, both within the United Arab Emirates itself, Oman's largest trading partner, and along its border.

This light harassment could include a slower distribution of visas, longer waits at the border and intrusive inspections of Omani businesses in the United Arab Emirates.

Omanis working for the Emirati government could also find themselves suddenly unemployed, as the Emiratis have previously used summary layoffs as a means of expressing political displeasure with particular governments.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also have other tools at their disposal. In addition to establishing an

investment fund for the sultanate, the Saudis have invested \$210 million in Oman's flagship port project at Duqm, while the Emiratis have invested in Omani ports at Sohar and Salalah. To alter Oman's behavior, the two Persian Gulf powers could pare back investment or delay cash transfers. Conversely, the two could also add more investment funds as a ploy to bring Muscat into line.

Finally, there could be attempts to influence the succession process of the sultan himself. With Sultan Qaboos reportedly in poor health amid a lack of clarity about the transfer of power (rumors suggest that two sealed envelopes, one in Muscat and one in Salalah, hold the names of the successor), Riyadh and Abu Dhabi could utilize their intelligence services and connections with the royal court to influence the succession process. With a shortlist of successors already



publicly known, the two could signal who is acceptable and who is not, thereby enabling them to implicitly threaten rewards and punishments for the royal family. Members of the family could ignore such machinations, but in doing so, they would risk appointing a leader who would become the target of Oman's two biggest neighbors.

### ■ The Sultanate's options

In the face of increasing pressure, Oman is likely to alter its position on any number of issues. It could fight smuggling operations supporting the Houthi movement in Yemen — or at least make a public show of doing so.

Alternatively, Muscat could take steps to reduce Iranian trade through its ports, even if it does not wholly eliminate such commerce (and especially if Emirati or Saudi trade or investments compensate for whatever losses Omani businesses endure if trade with Iran is severed).

Furthermore, it could also manage the succession process to ensure the next sultan — whenever he takes power — meets with Riyadh and Abu Dhabi's approval.

Oman, however, might not be as vulnerable as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates hope. Unlike Qatar, it has no Al Jazeera, which has irked regional governments, and cannot be accused of playing host to the Muslim Brotherhood — specific leverage that Riyadh and Abu Dhabi have lorded over Doha as they try to get the U.S. on their side. What's more, Sultan Qaboos enjoys personal connections with key leaders in the West.

And in terms of investment, the country has proved adroit at earning foreign direct investment from other countries, including India and China, meaning that Riyadh and Abu Dhabi could drive Muscat into the arms of others if they overplay their hand.

Moreover, the United States is likely to see value in Oman's overall neutrality, meaning Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are unlikely to succeed if their actions appear to replicate their Qatari blockade against Oman.

As Oman's larger Persian Gulf neighbors bring their weight to bear on the sultanate in an effort to stamp out its independent streak, Muscat will likely give what ground is necessary to ward off their encroachment. But even in making concessions to its larger Persian Gulf neighbors, Oman will be sure to protect its overall sovereignty through yet another geopolitical balancing act.

*(Source: stratfor.com)*

## Why are U.S. bombs killing civilians in Yemen?



## It should have been more like horror — and shame over American complicity in what a new United Nations report views as criminal carnage.

It was a 500-pound, laser-guided bomb sold to Saudi Arabia in an approved arms deal — similar to the bomb that devastated a funeral hall in October 2016, in which 155 people were killed. After that, then-President Barack Obama banned the sale of precision-guided military technology to Saudi Arabia. The ban was overturned by the Trump administration

in March 2017.

A report published last week by Human Rights Watch focused on the "woefully inadequate" investigations conducted by the coalition's own mechanism; they often amount to cover-ups of what are likely war crimes. "Many of the apparent laws-of-war violations committed by coalition forces show evidence

of war crimes — serious violations committed by individuals with criminal intent," Human Rights Watch stated. Yet far from holding anyone accountable, King Salman of Saudi Arabia in July issued a sweeping pardon of all military personnel involved in the Yemen operation.

The report also disparaged claims by the United States, which provides operational, logistical and intelligence support to the coalition, that the coalition has "improved" targeting practices. In fact, the report said, the United States, Britain and France, all of which sell weapons to Saudi Arabia, risk complicity in unlawful attacks.

It was the bluntest critique of several that have been voiced by senior American officials. But words are not enough. It's time for the United States and its Western allies to stop selling arms or giving any military assistance to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners.

The horror in Yemen has gone way past any discussion of who's right and who's wrong, and it has become clear that only a negotiated peace agreement can bring the killings to an end. Saudi Arabia and its allies seem to have little compunction about slaughtering children as long as more bombs can be bought, so it's up to the enablers to call a halt.

President Trump, alas, is not likely to lean on Saudi Arabia, but military officers have begun to speak out and Congress has begun to act. A defense policy bill includes a bipartisan provision to require certification by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the coalition is taking steps to prevent civilian deaths. The next move should be to cut off military aid to Saudi Arabia until it is prepared to talk about ending the assault on Yemen. *(Source: The NYT)*



# EU not wait for Trump to start building its common security: former diplomat

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Marc Finaud, France Former spokesman of Foreign Ministry says that “EU did not wait for Trump to start building its common security and defence policy, including by including in the Lisbon Treaty an assistance clause even stronger than the one in the NATO Treaty.”

Former Senior Resident Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) adds “If the United States confirms Trump’s policy of distancing itself from Europe, for instance by withdrawing more forces from Europe, there could be a rebalance of power in favour of Europe.”

Senior member of Geneva Centre for Security Policy also says that “history has shown that Russia is necessarily linked to the security of Europe.”

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ How do you evaluate “speeches of Macron, President of French about that Europe should no longer rely on America in terms of security”?

A: In a sense, it is a return to the traditional position of France under De Gaulle, who did not trust the United States for ensuring the security of Europe and developed France’s autonomous nuclear deterrent. This analysis, also shared to some extent by Germany, is the result of Trump’s isolationist and unilateralist policy.

■ With the arrival of the Trump to the



White House and his criticism of the European countries regarding NATO’s share, Europe had begun its efforts to form a joint European army. According to Macron’s speeches, it seam formation of a joint European army take more seriousness. What is your opinion?

A: In fact, the EU did not wait for Trump to start building its common security and defence policy, including by including in the Lisbon Treaty an assistance clause even stronger than the one in the NATO Treaty. But the decision to move towards a common defence and even a common army would still require unanimity. It was opposed by

the United Kingdom, but even after Brexit, some EU countries will still remain against it because they still trust NATO more than the EU.

■ Is Europe essentially capable of being independent of America in terms of security? If so, what will be the future of NATO?

A: Even if there are non-NATO members within the EU, there was never any plan to replace NATO with the EU. The EU has developed civilian and military crisis management tools that have been useful, for instance in Africa or in the fight against piracy, but always in cooperation with and as a complement to

NATO capacities. Only if the United States decides to withdraw from NATO, which does not appear likely in the near future, will the EU reconsider its relationship with NATO.

■ Some analysts have interpreted Macron’s speeches as a new Western order. Will the West enter a new era of order and independence from the United States?

A: If the United States confirms Trump’s policy of distancing itself from Europe, for instance by withdrawing more forces from Europe, there could be a rebalance of power in favour of Europe. But in military terms, Europe (where defence budgets are around 1-2% of GDP) will never compete with the United States (with a defence budget of 4% of GDP). Europe will mostly remain a soft power.

■ Macron also said that Russia should also be involved in European security issues. How do you assess this position?

A: It is true that, since the end of the Cold War, many opportunities have been missed to bring Russia closer to Western values and shared interests. Now, after Russia tried to recover its global power and influence, often through the use of force (in Georgia and Ukraine and also in Syria), it is more difficult to do it without giving the impression of rewarding bad behavior. But history has shown that Russia is necessarily linked to the security of Europe. So the solution can only be achieved through negotiations, compromise, balance of interests and forces, and not by sanctions or isolation.

## Difficult to take Macron’s remarks serious: geopolitical expert

1 → Here is the full text of the interview with him:

■ How do you assess recent remarks of the French President about the necessity of EU security independence from the U.S.?

A: The notion of EU military independence from the U.S. certainly sounds appealing, most especially to the public whom this rhetoric is most likely meant for. However, European military dependence stems from financial and geopolitical dependence on Washington and Wall Street and is thus very unlikely to be seriously pursued until this fundamental dependency is first addressed.

Because of the unpopularity of U.S. President Trump among certain constituencies both in the U.S. and in Europe, we’ll probably see a lot of empty rhetoric promising to decouple from Washington - just like promises are made to end wars by U.S. and European politicians that go unfulfilled. It’s always tempting to invest hope in such appealing messages, but it is recommended that patience and skepticism be employed instead.

■ After Trump took office in U.S. he intensified pressure on Europeans to burden more share of NATO costs. Since then the Europeans have made efforts to form a European Army. It seems after the recent remarks of President Macron the formation of the European Army will become more serious. What do you think of this?

A: It’s difficult to take anything President Macron says seriously. He says this while the French military continues foreign military operations across Africa and the Middle East - including in Syria and Iraq - paying into U.S. foreign policy objectives. The same can be said about the rest of Europe. While the notion of Europe decoupling from America’s destructive foreign policies sounds appealing, it will take tangible actions on Europe as part to convince the



public that such a fundamental change is actually possible. We can’t expect for it to happen overnight, but incremental steps being taken to pivot Europe away from Washington’s foreign policy objectives would be promising start. I just don’t see those steps taking place yet.

■ Is Europe basically able to be militarily independent from the U.S.? If yes, what will be the fate of NATO?

A: Europe is more than capable of defending itself without the U.S., without NATO, and even without a united European army. France, for example, possesses nuclear weapons which would deter military incursions into its territory by any aggressor real or imagined. The real question is, can Europe pursue foreign wars of military aggression without the U.S., and the answer to that question is no.

The European people would be better off with the former arrangement, but the politicians of Europe and the corporate-financier interests they represent prefer the latter. I suspect until global economics shift toward a more multipolar arrangement, and ties between the EU and the rest of Eurasia strengthen, this dependence on the U.S. both militarily and in terms of determining foreign policy will persist.

■ Some analysts have interpreted Macron’s remarks as a New Western Order. Will the West enter a new era with a new order independent from the U.S.?

A: It is entirely possible that Europe can free its economy and foreign policy from U.S. control, but not through any sort of “New Western Order,” but rather by aligning itself within a global multipolar order in which it finds a proportional and constructive role to play alongside nations like Russia, China, Iran, India, and ASEAN states, rather than attempt to create a New Western Order predicated on presiding over the world, simply minus America.

■ President Macron has emphasized on the necessity of Europe security partnership with Russia. How do you assess this?

A: Actions always speak louder than words. While France signals this seemingly conciliatory stance, its military forces are still aiding and abetting U.S. efforts to undermine Russia’s security operations in Syria. Of course, there is no graceful way to transition from where France, or Europe as a whole stands today to a tomorrow where Europe plays a more constructive and responsible role in global geopolitics free of Washington’s influence, but I would warn observers to exercise maximum skepticism regarding French or European partnerships and proposed future policies until tangible changes occur first in their existing policies.

## Anti-Iran sanctions to further isolate U.S.: American prof.

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — An American political analyst based in California highlighted the Donald Trump administration’s wrong policy towards Iran and said the unilateral embargoes against the Islamic Republic “will only lead to the further isolation of the U.S.”

“Already, China and Russia have expressed their intention to deal directly with Iran in order to circumvent any U.S. oil embargo,” Dennis Etler, a professor of Anthropology at Cabrillo College in Aptos, California, said in an interview with Tasnim.

“The EU is also trying to develop the means to avoid secondary U.S. sanctions,” the analyst said, adding, “Trump’s unilateralism will only lead to the further isolation of the U.S. and the emergence of a bloc of sovereign nations that will no longer be held hostage to the threat of U.S. economic warfare.”

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ As you know, the U.S. government’s hostility toward Iran has recently entered a new stage. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has formed a dedicated group to coordinate and run the country’s policy towards Iran following President Donald Trump’s unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran. Pompeo announced the creation of an Iran Action Group (IAG) at a news conference, naming Brian Hook, the Department of State’s director of policy planning, as its head. What do you think about the group and its objectives and do you think that it would be able to reach its goals?

A: The Trump foreign policy is a retreat from the neo-liberalism of the Obama administration which sought to enmesh Iran in a series of commitments meant to limit its sovereignty and further US objectives in the Middle East. In exchange for



a number of concessions codified in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the U.S. and other signatories agreed to lift sanctions and re-integrate Iran into the global economy. The Trump White House is dominated by right-wing Zionists and Christian Evangelicals whose ambition has been to scuttle the JCPOA. Rather than try to co-opt Iran, they are committed to coerce it into abandoning its freedom of action as a sovereign state and become a willing vassal of the U.S. If that doesn’t succeed, Washington plans to turn the screws until the conditions are laid for an attempt at internal subversion and regime change, leading to the installing of a U.S. friendly government.

The Iranian people have stood firm for 40 years against the machinations of U.S. Imperialism. It is inconceivable that they will abandon their freedom and independence in the face of renewed U.S. pressure and sanctions.

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

A: The U.S. use of secondary sanctions

is based on the primacy of the petro-dollar in international exchange and the role that U.S. financial institutions play in the global economy. The more attempts made by the U.S. to bully and threaten countries to do its bidding, the more resistance it will meet. Already, China and Russia have expressed their intention to deal directly with Iran in order to circumvent any U.S. oil embargo. The EU is also trying to develop the means to avoid secondary U.S. sanctions. Trump’s unilateralism will only lead to the further isolation of the U.S. and the emergence of a bloc of sovereign nations that will no longer be held hostage to the threat of U.S. economic warfare.

■ Trump’s threat is part of his walking away from the Iran nuclear deal. He also plans to fully reinstate anti-Tehran sanctions from November 4. In the meantime, the EU has vowed to counter Trump’s renewed sanctions on Iran, including by means of a new law to shield European companies from punitive measures. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas recently said Europe should set up payment systems independent of the U.S. if it wants to save the JCPOA. What do you think about the EU’s role in reducing Washington’s pressures against Tehran and saving the deal?

A: Trump’s hubris and unilateralism has alienated nearly everyone towards the U.S., friend and foe alike. The liability of relying on the U.S. financial system has become crystal clear. Hence, Trump’s withdrawal from the JCPOA has catalyzed a reaction against U.S. global economic hegemony. It is in the interests of all sovereign states who value their freedom and independence to develop a new payment system that circumvents the U.S.

## Why did the White House Form the “Iran Action Group”?

1 → In this regard, we need to take a close look at the nature of Trump’s recent action and make a primary analysis. In general, the Iran Action Group is a special group at the U.S. Department of State to deal with Iran in different aspects. In this group, many experts cooperate in intellectual, political, economic and military fields. U.S. Department of State officials have announced that they have used all possible capacities for dealing with Iran under such a working group. Some sources report the presence of hundreds of people in the group.

Apparently, Mike Pompeo, the U.S. Secretary of State has formed a special group to coordinate and run U.S. policy toward Iran as the Trump administration moves ahead with efforts to put extended pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran after withdrawing from the JCPOA. It’s also said that the group will be headed by Brian Hook, who is currently the State Department’s director of policy planning. The formation of this group on the 65th anniversary of the 1953 Iranian coup is very meaningful, indicating continued efforts by the United States to confront the Iranian nation and regime. Some of the stated goals of this group are:

- Using advisers and experts on Iran’s issues to advance Trump’s opposition policies

- Coordination between U.S. government agencies in confronting with Iran

- To work with the international community to change Iran’s behavior (especially in the region)

- Maximum economic pressure on Iran

- Sanctions for governments that do not follow the anti-Iranian sanctions of the Trump government

The direct opposition of the U.S. Department of State and even the Treasury Department to the Islamic Republic of Iran has a 40-year history. Since the presidency of Jimmy Carter (at the time of the Iranian Islamic Revolution), we have witnessed the secret formation of such working groups and think tanks against Iran. Many of these groups are defined under the structure of the U.S. Department of State, and others, in the form of independent groups (but affiliated with American security agencies), have been working against our country.

The fact is that “Iran Action Group” aims at overthrowing the Iranian regime and creating a gap between the rulers and people in our country. Although this is denied by those like Pompeo and Brian Hooke, the practical approach of the Trump government and, in general, all American government, has been based on this. Announcing the group’s creation, Pompeo said: “The Iran Action Group will be responsible directing, reviewing, and coordinating all aspects of the State Department’s Iran-related activity.”

Pompeo continued; “We are committed to a whole of government effort to change the Iranian regime’s behavior and the Iran Action Group will ensure that the Department of State will remain closely synchronized with our interagency partners. The IAG will also lead the way in growing efforts with nations which share our understanding of the Iranian threat.”

Meanwhile, the existence of paradoxes and inconsistencies in the American authorities’ behavior towards Iran is remarkable. The U.S. Secretary of State is trying to portray the image of a “full-fledged opposition” to Iran. This is while U.S. President Donald Trump speaks of having talks with the Iranian officials without pre-conditions. This paradox reveals the U.S. desperation and confusion against the “powerful Iran” more than anything.

On the other hand, as it was mentioned at the beginning of this article, such groups and committees have been repeatedly formed during the last 40 years. In this time, the U.S. parties have made every effort to topple the Islamic Republic of Iran and oppose the Iranian nation. It should not be forgotten that in this equation, there is no difference between Jimmy Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Obama or Trump. Therefore, Pompeo’s remarks are a clear indication of the actual opposition between the United States and Iran. The announcement of the formation of the “Iran Action Group” is not a new story for those who follow the U.S. anti-Iranian activities. This is a cross-sectional tactic and, of course, a cliché that will not bring Washington to its goals.

Another important point that should accordingly be taken into consideration is the “smart observation” of the United States policies by the Islamic Republic of Iran. If we take this approach, as we did in the past 40 years, we can make sure that Trump’s failure costs will be above those of his predecessors! It should not be forgotten that the more severe the U.S. “action” against Iran, the stronger the “reaction” of Iran towards the United States. This is a rule that many American strategists have understood and have warned the White House about. As Barbara Slavin, the director of the Future of Iran Initiative said: “It’s just an example of the tone-deaf Iran policy of this (Trump) administration.”

## Reasons for U.S. fear of Idlib operation

1 → Second is the position of de Mistura about chemical weapons. He sees the use of chemical weapons as a dangerous ploy to justify a U.S., UK and French attack as insane.

On June 23, 2014 all of Syria’s chemical weapons had been destroyed. However, the official announcement by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the extensive cooperation of the Damascus government with the organization has not prevented continued western allegations. The U.S. has deployed its navy in the Mediterranean to attack Syria with Tomahawk missiles while Russia has also deployed its warships in front of the U.S. warships.

The terrorists have said that there will be no dialogue with the Russians and the Syrian government to give up Idlib and its suburbs.

The U.S. is worried that the Syrian army will eliminate all the weapons that it and its regional allies can use to exert pressure on Damascus, especially since the battle of Idlib is the last stage of the liberation of Syria’s entire geography. With the liberation of Idlib, the Syrian government will return to pre-crisis conditions, and those who launched the war over Syria for seven years will be defeated and Damascus will be victorious.

Russian analyst Andrei Ontikov spoke with Sputnik about Russia’s reaction to a possible strike and said: “Russia has equipped the Syrian army with advanced missiles. In addition, Russian experts are among the Syrians. In particular, most of the U.S. missiles were destroyed in the previous attacks.”

The former commander of the Baltic Fleet Adm. Vladimir Valuev has announced in speaking with Sputnik: “Russian forces in the Mediterranean aim to counter a possible missile strike against Syrian government forces. The massive presence of the Russian Navy is a necessary step in preventing an attack on Syria.”

It is certain in any event that the battle for the liberation of Idlib by the Syrian army and its allies will begin soon.



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# How the brain creates the subjective experience of time

Everyone has felt, at one point or another, that time does indeed “fly” when we’re having fun. Why does it feel different depending on what we do with it? New research examines the neurological mechanisms that form the subjective experience of time.

Space and time are closely related — not just in physics, but also in the brain.

This intimate connection becomes clearer when we take a look at how our brains form episodic memories.

Episodic memories are autobiographical memories — that is, memories about specific events that happened to someone at a specific point in time (and space).

Semantic memories refer to general information and facts that our brains are capable of storing.

Episodic memories have a pronounced “where” and “when” component, and neuroscientific research shows that the brain area that processes spatial information is close to the one responsible for the experience of time.

Specifically, a new study reveals the network of brain cells that encode the subjective experience of time, and these neurons are located in a brain area adjacent to the one in which other neurons encode space.

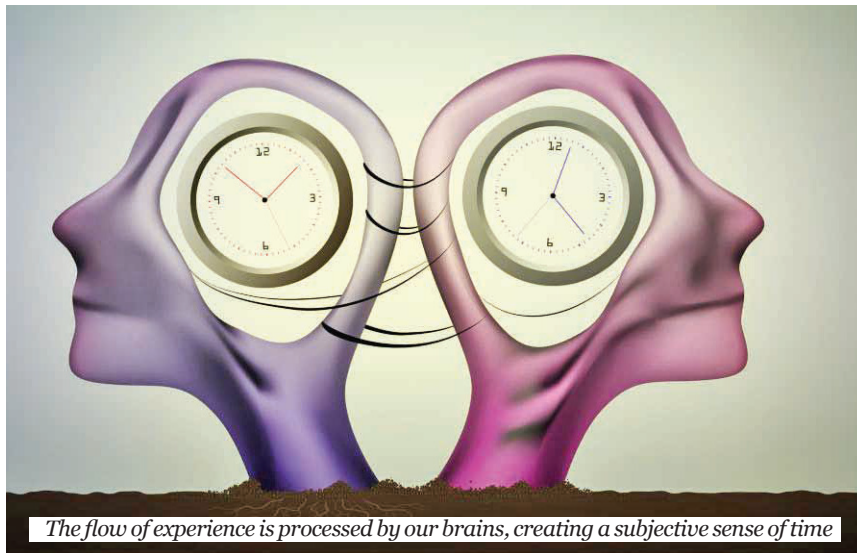
The new study was conducted by researchers at the Kavli Institute for Systems Neuroscience in Trondheim, Norway. Albert Tsao is the lead author of the paper, which is now published in the journal Nature.

Over a decade ago, two of the researchers who worked on the recent study — May-Britt Moser and Edvard Moser — discovered a network of neurons called grid cells that were responsible for encoding space.

This area is called the medial entorhinal cortex. In the new study, Tsao and colleagues hoped that they would find a similar network of brain cells that encodes time.

So, they set out to investigate the neurons in a brain area that is adjacent to the medial entorhinal cortex (in which grid cells were discovered). This area is called the lateral entorhinal cortex (LEC).

Initially, the researchers were looking for a pattern but struggled to find one. “The signal changed all the time,” says study co-author



Edvard Moser, a professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, also in Trondheim, Norway.

So, the researchers hypothesized that perhaps the signal did not just change over time, but that it changed with time.

“Time [...] is always unique and changing,” says Prof. Moser. “If this network was indeed coding for time, the signal would have to change with time in order to record experiences as unique memories.”

So, the researchers set out to examine the activity of hundreds of LEC neurons in the brains of rodents.

Experience affects LEC time-coding signals. To do so, Tsao and colleagues recorded the neural activity of rats for hours, during which time the rodents were subjected to a range of experiences.

In one experiment, the rats ran around in a box whose walls changed color. This was repeated 12 times so that the animals could define “multiple temporal contexts” throughout the experiment.

The team examined the neuronal activity in the LEC, distinguishing between the brain activity that recorded changes in wall color from that which recorded the progression of time.

“[Neuronal] activity in the LEC clearly defined a unique temporal context for every epoch of experience on the timescale of minutes,” write the authors.

The experiment’s results “point to the LEC as a possible source of temporal context information necessary for episodic memory formation in the hippocampus,” add the researchers.

In another experiment, the rats were free to roam through open spaces, choosing which actions to take and which spaces to explore in the pursuit of bits of chocolate. This scenario was repeated four times.

Study co-author Jørgen Sugar summarizes the findings, saying, “The uniqueness of the [neuronal] time signal during this experiment suggests that the rat had a very good record of time and temporal sequence of events throughout the 2 hours the experiment lasted.”

“We were able to use the signal from the time-coding network to track exactly when in the experiment various events had occurred,” Jørgen Sugar said.

Finally, a third experiment obligated the rodents to follow a more structured path, with more limited options and fewer experiences. In this scenario, the rats had to turn either

left or right in a maze, all the while searching for chocolate.

“With this activity, we saw the time-coding signal change character from unique sequences in time to a repetitive and partly overlapping pattern,” Tsao explains.

“On the other hand,” he continues, “the time signal became more precise and predictable during the repetitive task.”

“The data suggest that the rat had a refined understanding of temporality during each lap, but a poor understanding of time from lap to lap and from the start to end throughout the experiment.”

How LEC neurons encode experience

According to the study authors, “When animals’ experiences were constrained by behavioral tasks to become similar across repeated trials, the encoding of temporal flow across trials was reduced, whereas the encoding of time relative to the start of trials was improved.”

As Tsao and his colleagues conclude, “The findings suggest that populations of [LEC] neurons represent time inherently through the encoding of experience.”

In other words, say the researchers, the LEC “neural clock” works by organizing experience into a precise sequence of distinct events.

“Our study reveals how the brain makes sense of time as an event is experienced [...] The network does not explicitly encode time. What we measure is rather a subjective time derived from the ongoing flow of experience,” Albert Tsao said.

According to the scientists, the findings suggest that by changing the activities and the experience, one can alter the time signal given by LEC neurons. This, in turn, changes how we perceive time.

Finally, the results suggest that episodic memories form by integrating spatial information from the medial entorhinal cortex with information from the LEC in the hippocampus.

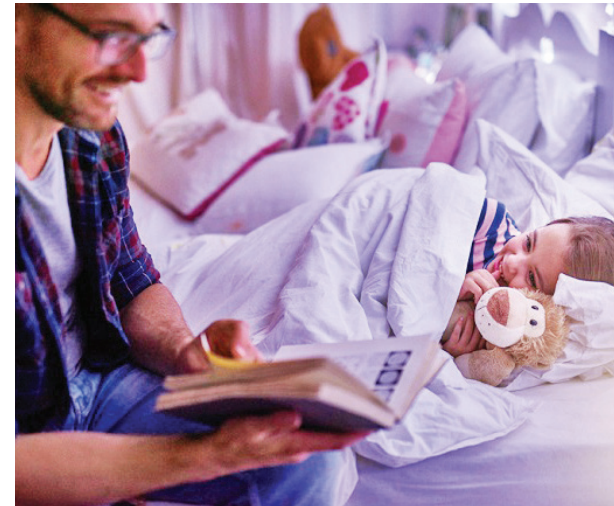
This allows “the hippocampus to store a unified representation of what, where, and when.”

(Source: Medical News Today)

## Only 30% of parents read stories to their children every day, poll claims

Only three in 10 parents read stories to their children every day, a new poll has found.

The survey of 1,000 parents found just 15 per cent read aloud to their children every day, despite 97 per cent seeing the importance of reading and 58 per cent saying reading is a special time for bonding.



Six in 10 agreed that reading to their child helps them learn to read, but busy work schedules and juggling the needs of multiple children proved to be big barriers.

National Literacy Trust research found that one in eight disadvantaged children in the UK don’t own a single book, with more than one in 10 parents saying they want more access to free books.

“This research was very enlightening and we weren’t surprised to learn that every parent values time spent reading with their children, but busy working lives, other family commitments and a lack of access to books can impact their ability to do this as regularly as they would like,” said Marie Emery, Head of Marketing at McDonald’s, which commissioned the survey to mark its fifth Happy Readers campaign.

Damian Hinds, Education Secretary said: “I am delighted to see that McDonald’s is working in partnership with the National Literacy Trust to provide free books to young children to improve their literacy skills. We know how important the early years are for a child’s development and schemes like this encourage parents and carers to read to their children which will help them with those vital early language and literacy skills”.

(Source: The Independent)

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## ‘New generation of Iranian innovative entrepreneurs to make debut’

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A new generation of innovative entrepreneurs in Iran with below 30 years of age on average will be introduced to the market, vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari said, IRNA reported on Saturday.

This issue will undoubtedly reform the traditional methods of business, he added.

He made the remarks during his recent trip to the northwestern city of Tabriz, East Azarbaijan province.



The economic development is defined with innovation these days, he added.

The appropriate atmosphere for the talented students in order to promote entrepreneurship, he said.

He named the University of Tabriz, the Sahand University of Technology and the Tabriz University of Medical Sciences as great places for development of knowledge-based companies.

They can provide a great entrepreneurship ecosystem for talented students in their own city, he explained.

East Azarbaijan province should be considered as a great science and technology park, in which facilities are provided for startups, he said.

The knowledge economy is different from oil economy in which, crude oil trade is an honor. Hence no economy has developed in this way worldwide, he lamented.

The professional human resource is the great property of knowledge economy, h explained.

He urged the private sector to invest on knowledge-based economy and scientific center.

During his sojourn, Sattari visited the cell center project at the Tabriz University of Medical Sciences

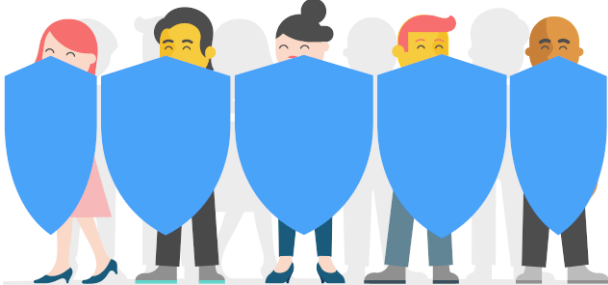
At the center, the knowledge-based companies will offer clinical services in the fields of regenerative medicine and stem cell.

The center also encompass expertise incubators and accelerators.

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Your photos. Your emails. Your contacts. Even your bookmarks. You are in control of the content stored in your Google Account. That is why we created Download Your Data — so you can make a copy, back it up, or even move it to another service.  
(Source: [privacy.google.com](#))

# \$26.5b spent on online shopping in calendar year: report

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — People in Iran spent 1,110 trillion rials (about \$26.5 billion) on online shopping during the previous Iranian calendar year 1396 (ended on March 20, 2018), the E-Commerce Development Center of Iran said in a recently published report.

A total of 1,600 billion rials (about \$38 billion) in online transactions last year, equaling 11 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), digiato website announced.

The center announced that about 46 percent of e-commerce transactions and 77 percent of e-commerce clients were in the capital city, Tehran.

The report also indicated that 72 percent of e-commerce businesses are run with less than five persons and only six percent of them are companies with more than 30 staff.

Some 43 percent individuals who are active in the field of e-commerce are 30 to 40 years old and 36 percent of them are 20 to 30 years old. Meanwhile, only nine percent of e-commerce managers are women.

According to the statista.com, for private consumers around the globe the most well-known form of e-commerce falls into the business to consumer (B2C) category, which includes online retail or online shopping.

In 2017, an estimated 1.66 billion people worldwide purchased goods online. During the same year, global e-retail sales amounted to 2.3 trillion dollars and projections show a growth of up to 4.48 trillion dollars by 2021. In Asia Pacific, e-retail sales accounted for 12.1 percent of retail sales in 2016 but only for 1.8 percent of retail sales in the Middle East and Africa.



## Iran, South Korea join hands to develop startup business

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran and South Korea to expand cooperation in the field of startup business in the future, IRIB reported on Saturday.

The head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) Sadeq

Najafi and the deputy minister for the South Korea's Ministry of SMEs and Startups Choi Su-gyu signed an agreement in Seoul on Friday.

According to the agreement, the two sides will share knowledge in the field of startup business with each other.

Najafi also had a meeting with officials of the Korea Small & Medium Business Corporation (SBC).

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral cooperation to establish online links between Iranian and Korean companies.

In December 2017, representatives from private sectors of Iran and South Korea signed 22 memorandums of understanding (MOUs) during the 4th Iran-South Korea Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Technology Matching Conference in Tehran.

## Effect of technology on family time: positive or negative?

The advancements in technology have made a strong impact on almost all areas of our society. It is making a serious difference in the way kids and parents perceive the world and each other.

Have you ever thought about the impact of technology on family time?

Even when one can highlight how the reach of technology is breaking barriers between parents and kids, the other side of technology is almost creating a family divide. Most of the technologies we use today have changed from the perspective of just a 'want' to a 'necessity' in one's life.

The technology has moved forward from simple computer gaming, SMS, chatting or emails to assignment completion tools and video calling. Parenting in digital age has now become more challenging than ever before.

Here let us have a look at how technology has affected our families both positively and negatively.

First we can go through the positive impacts of technology:  
Coordinate change of plans: In the early days, there was no point of informing the family members if the day's plan got changed. One has to go directly and inform them if they can't make for the function, movie or dinner out. Now technology is offering a good assistance to coordinate the change of plans with just a message or call. Kids can let their parents know if they are staying late at school for some extra class without getting them worried.

Reach family in trouble: The location tracking facility is now of great help to reach the family in case of any trouble. If kids come across some mishap during their way, the location tracking facility helps parents to reach them as soon as possible. This is also giving kids a lot of confidence to travel around and do things independently without the fear of being alone. Technology is helping kids to grow up as independent persons without depending on parents for each and everything.

Interaction with family groups: The new messaging apps have options to set up family groups where one can interact with all members of their family despite where they are. Even the distant family is now more connected with social media



groups rather than just interacting only at some events or birthday or marriage functions.

Home security systems: The safety within home with modern security systems has added more peace within families. The emergency alarms as well as the quick response options help to bring the police or the correspondent authority to be at the place at the time of a robbery or a fire. Having a feeling that the people and home belongings are safe gives you a more peaceful sleep.

Parents engaging apps in school: Most of the parents will be busy with their work schedules and find it difficult to make a visit to the school. The parents engaging apps have come to the rescue as they can virtually be present in school during all the activities of their child in campus. They can maintain a good relationship with teachers through communication apps and school portals and learn more about how their child progresses in schools.

Virtual presence with video call: Some parents are too protective about their children and won't allow them to stay out of their reach. However, with video call options, a person can virtually be present near you when talking. Even if it demands to stay abroad or in some distant places during your career, one can still be in close touch with the family through daily video conversations.

Now it is high time to know about the negative results of today's technology which happens just because of the way we use them. Here are a few of them:

Too much screen time: The situation prevailing currently in almost every household- If there are four members, each of them will have a personal screen with which they spend most of the time. When parents and children come back after office and school at the end of the day, it is important to interact with each other. It helps maintain a personal bond and fosters empathy for the apprehensions of the other.

Lack of quality time: It is important to share some quality time with your family. Today's reality is that even when parents pretend to play with children or share some family moments, the emails or chatting is taking half of their attention. It is important to switch of your devices for at least an hour or two and spend some quality time together. The habit of bringing work home is one of the main reasons for many failing relationships as this compromises time for intimacy.

Poor face-to-face interaction: Today the mode of communication has drastically changed from direct face to face communication to merely chatting. This seriously affects children as they will have poor face to face interaction skills when they grow up As they spend most of the time with screens, people will have only limited experience of proper interaction with humans which can lead to a shrink in the level of confidence. This can severely affect the professional performance of a child who is brought up in such mechanical environment.

Limited outdoor activities: The detrimental lifestyle with lack of proper exercise and unhealthy eating habits is the prime reason for most of the problems. Technology has a real impact on the way people have changed the healthy habits. As people are busy with their gadgets, they have no time for outdoor activities. The sedentary life style is seriously causing health issues for people of all ages. Kitchen and cooking is a rare sight for junk food is just a call away. Children now prefer computer games to outdoor games which add the problem of unhealthy eating.  
(Source: [edsys.in](#))

## Why so many startups are being acqui-hired?



One of the most interesting trends in startup land is the rise of the "acqui-hire," which is when a big company buys a smaller company just to get its employees.

For instance, Facebook acquired New York-startups Hot Potato and Drop.io just for the companies' founders. It pretty much killed the product they developed. Or, more recently, Google bought Milk, the app development company from Kevin Rose. It killed all of Milk's projects and put the team to work on Google+.

Why are Google and Facebook buying the companies instead of just poaching the employees? UNC law professors John Coyle and Gregg Polsky explored the acqui-hire trend and published a paper on it.

It saves face for the entrepreneur to say, "I sold my company to Google." The professors found that the majority of acqui-hired companies couldn't have raised another round of funding. Taking a "buy out" offer sounds a lot better than having the company go out of business.

Acqui-hiring is good for big companies because it keeps VCs happy. If Google had the choice between poaching a startups employees, and robbing a VC of the ability to say it had an exit, or just doing the acqui-hire, the acqui-hire is better in the long run. It might end up costing a little more, but it keeps VCs happy, and down the road the VCs might be able to help out Google.

(Source: [businessinsider.com](#))

## Days 31-80: 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...

### ■ Get a logo

You'll need to create a logo that properly represents your business and there a number of logo design options available to new business owners. For a full guide on commissioning a logo, or for tips on creating a DIY business logo, click here.

### ■ Build a website

Whether you plan to sell your product or service online or offline, in today's world it's more important than ever that you have a digital presence – starting with a website. There are a number of affordable website builders that you can use or, depending on your budget, you could hire a developer to create a bespoke site.  
(Source: [startups.co.uk](#))



# Warming climate may cause insect pests to eat more crops: study

Researchers find that insect pests might grow in population and metabolism as temperatures continue to rise. This means there might be more crop-eating pests with the need to eat more precious crops.

Apart from the droughts and dry spells, extreme weather, and rising temperatures that affect the world's crops, climate change apparently has another negative impact on crops.

Researchers from various universities worked together to see how the warming climate would affect crop-eating pests and found that the warming temperatures may increase the number and hunger of said pests.

## ■ Increase in crop losses

The team looked into how insects that eat wheat, rice, and maize would respond to different climate scenarios and found that warming temperatures led to an increase in crop losses because of the insects. Specifically, researchers noted a 10 to 25 percent increase in losses for every degree of warming, especially in the more temperate regions.

Evidently, this is because the rising temperatures will cause the pest population and metabolism to increase dramatically, causing more of them to eat more of the precious crops. By 2100, when the world is predicted to be 2 degrees warmer than it is today, wheat crops might shrink by 46 percent, rice by 19 percent, and maize by 31 percent.

Apparently, although the population and



metabolism increase are expected, the pests can only take the heat up to a certain point. For instance, insect populations will grow faster in temperate regions that are growing warmer and more optimal for insect popu-

lation growth, but in tropical regions where it is already hot, warmer temperatures will actually be too hot for the insects, so the growth will actually be slower. Because of this, temperate and productive regions such

as the United States, China, and France were projected to be the hardest hit.

## ■ Metabolism boost

Among the three main crops, wheat is projected to suffer most from the insect population and metabolism boost because it is commonly grown in cooler climates, whereas rice is projected to suffer the least because it is typically grown in tropical region where the population increase is expected to be slower.

Maize, wheat, and rice are staple crops all around the world and together account for 42 percent direct calories consumed by people worldwide. A 2 degree increase may result in the annual loss of 213 million tons of crops, adding to the already-dire food supply conditions in many parts of the world.

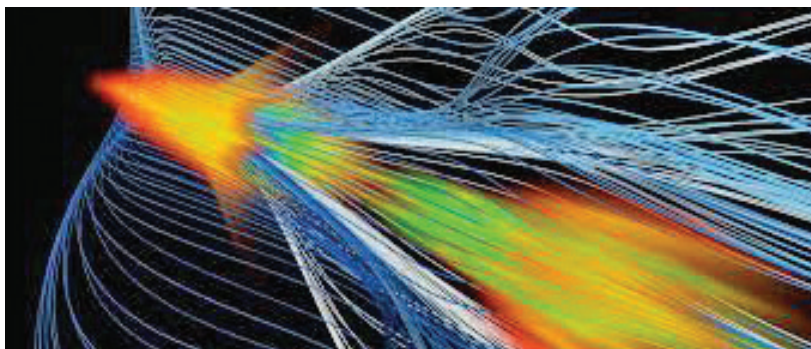
As a result, farmers might have to find new ways to adapt to climate change such as shifting their planting dates and crop rotations and trying various pest control methods. This, however, is easier said than done particularly in poorer countries.

"I hope our results demonstrate the importance of collecting more data on how pests will impact crop losses in a warming world — because collectively, our choice now is not whether or not we will allow warming to occur, but how much warming we're willing to tolerate," said co-lead and corresponding author Curtis Deutsch of the University of Washington.

(Source: Tech Times)

**The team looks into how insects that eat wheat, rice, and maize would respond to different climate scenarios and found that warming temperatures led to an increase in crop losses because of the insects.**

## For the first time, scientists have accelerated electrons in a plasma wave



For the first time, scientists have figured out how to accelerate electrons using protons passing through plasma.

That's a big deal, because it could lead to much smaller and cheaper particle accelerators than the ones we currently rely on.

Right now, if you want to install a Large Hadron Collider (LHC) particle accelerator in your back garden, you need a concrete tunnel about 27 kilometers (nearly 17 miles) long and US\$5 billion in spare change.

But this new experiment uses something known as plasma wakefield acceleration — and it takes up just 10 meters or 33 feet of space.

The team behind the Advanced Proton Driven Plasma Wakefield Acceleration Experiment (AWAKE) at CERN in Geneva has been working for five years to get a result like this, and while it's still early stages, this could end up driving a huge improvement in the way we examine the fundamental physics of the world.

The "results shown here are a significant step towards the development of future high-energy particle accelerators," say the researchers.

What happens in existing particle accelerators, like the LHC, is that oscillating electric fields work inside contained vacuums called cavities, creating two opposing charged zones that excite particle beams up to high-energy levels.

These particles can then be smashed together and studied in detail to examine particles at the subatomic level. A long series of cavities are required though, hence the 27-kilometre (17-mile) stretch that makes up the Large Hadron Collider.

In the new technique, a beam of protons fired through super-hot plasma acts a bit like a boat kicking up waves — these bubbles of intense electrical fields that get created are what's called the wakefield.

## ■ Electrical fields

If a beam of electrons is then sent through the same container, and timed to synchronize with the electrical fields perfectly, the electrons can ride these waves like surfers, achieving high speeds in a short distance.

"I think we can soon achieve the highest-energy electron beam around," one of the team, physicist Matthew Wing from University College London in the UK and spokesperson for AWAKE, told Gizmodo.

Wakefields are not a new idea and have been the subject of research since the 1970s, but this is the first experiment to successfully use protons for the initial "drive beam", rather than the lasers or electrons that are usually used.

For all this to work, drive protons need to be obtained from the Super Proton Synchrotron (SPS) at CERN — a 7-kilometre (4.3-mile) tube which also supplies the LHC with protons. With that in mind, we're not quite at the stage where we can fit a particle accelerator into a cupboard — but the signs are good.

In this case, over the space of 10 metres (33 feet), electrons were accelerated to 2 GeV (giga-electron volts). That's much less than existing electron accelerators, which can produce 6 GeV and way beyond that — the current record is 13 TeV, or 13,000 GeV, which is held by the Large Hadron Collider. (Source: sciencealert.com)

## Is there water on Jupiter? Great Red Spot may hold the answer



Jupiter's iconic storm, the Great Red Spot, may have just clued scientists in on an enthralling secret: the giant planet might have water.

Jupiter is a special world. It's the largest planet in our Solar System, and likely was the first body to funnel the sun's leftover elements to form, according to NASA. So, it's no surprise, then, that researchers once thought Jupiter had an identical composition to the sun.

But subsequent studies of the planet over the last few decades have revealed a Jupiter that is more complex. The hints of water in Jupiter's Great Red Spot come from a recent study by Gordon Bjoraker, an astrophysicist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.

The "moons that orbit Jupiter are mostly water ice, so the whole neighborhood has plenty of water," Bjoraker said in a NASA statement on August 29. "Why wouldn't the planet — which is this huge gravity well, where everything falls into it — be water rich, too?"

Bjoraker and colleagues collected radiation data on Jupiter using two special telescopes on the Mauna Kea summit in Hawaii — an instrument at NASA Infrared Telescope Facility, and the "most sensitive infrared telescope on Earth" at the Keck Observatory, according to the space agency.

## ■ Juno orbits Jupiter

To supplement those observations, the team used data from NASA's Juno spacecraft, which can probe deeper into Jupiter's clouds than any mission before. Juno orbits Jupiter once every 53 days.

This enhanced-color image of Jupiter's Great Red Spot was created by citizen scientist Gerald Eichstädt using data from the JunoCam imager on NASA's Juno spacecraft. The image is adjusted and strongly enhanced to draw viewers' eyes to the iconic storm and the turbulence around it.

This enhanced-color image of Jupiter's Great Red Spot was created by citizen scientist Gerald Eichstädt using data from the JunoCam imager on NASA's Juno spacecraft. The image is adjusted and strongly enhanced to draw viewers' eyes to the iconic storm and the turbulence around it.

With ground-based instruments on Earth, the team watched thermal radiation leak from the depths of the Great Red Spot. They found that above the clouds in this turbulent region's abyss, chemical signatures of water existed. Models, both theoretical and computer-generated, support their findings of "abundant" water on Jupiter.

The researchers found that the deepest cloud layer with water signatures inside the Great Red Spot is at 5 bars, or five times the atmospheric pressure on Earth, where the temperatures reach water's freezing point.

This depth, in addition to the levels of carbon monoxide researchers detected on Jupiter, appears to confirm that Jupiter is rich in oxygen, and, since its abundance of hydrogen is already well-known, it has the ingredients for water.

The Great Red Spot is the dark patch in the middle of this infrared image of Jupiter. It is dark due to the thick clouds that block thermal radiation.

(Source: space.com)

## Comet 21P to make closest approach to Earth in 70 years

On September 10, the Comet 21P/Giacobini-Zinner will make its closest approach to the Sun and Earth in 72 years as it journeys into the inner Solar System.

Currently travelling through space at speeds of more than 51,000 miles per hour, the object will be around 36 million miles away at its closest point to our planet. This may seem like a huge distance but in space terms it is relatively paltry and near enough that it will be visible from Earth.

The best viewing time for stargazers will probably be between midnight and dawn on the 10th when the comet will be moving through the constellations Auriga and Taurus in the northern sky, according to Northolt Branch Observatories.

It likely won't be visible with the naked eye so you will need a decent pair of binoculars or a telescope. Head to areas with clear skies and minimal light pollution to have the best chance of spotting 21P.

The comet is also visible now and will continue to be in the days leading up to this date — although it will look less bright — as it moves from the constellation Perseus into Auriga. In fact, the night of September 3 may be a good time to view the comet as it will appear just over one degree away from the bright star Capella in Auriga, making it easier to spot, according to Comet Watch.

On this night, the online observatory Slooh will be broadcasting a livestream for those interested in catching a glimpse of the comet from the comfort of their own home.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Bodily sensations give rise to conscious feelings, team says

Humans constantly experience an ever-changing stream of subjective feelings that is only interrupted during sleep and deep unconsciousness. Finnish researches show how the subjective feelings map into five major categories: positive emotions, negative emotions, cognitive functions, somatic states, and illnesses. All these feelings were imbued with strong bodily sensations.

These results show that conscious feelings stem from bodily feedback. Although consciousness emerges due to brain function and we experience our consciousness to be "housed" in the brain, bodily feedback contributes significantly to a wide variety of subjective feelings, tells Associate Professor Lauri Nummenmaa from Turku PET Center.

According to the researchers, emotions vividly color all our feelings as pleasant or unpleasant. It is possible that during evolution, consciousness has originally emerged to inform the organisms and others around about tissue damage and well-being. This development may have paved for the emergence of language, thinking and reasoning.

Subjective well-being is an important determinant of our prosperity, and pain and negative emotions are intimately linked with multiple somatic and psychological illnesses. Our findings help to understand how illnesses and bodily states in general influence our subjective well-being. Importantly, they also demonstrate the strong embodiment of cognitive and emotional states, says Nummenmaa.

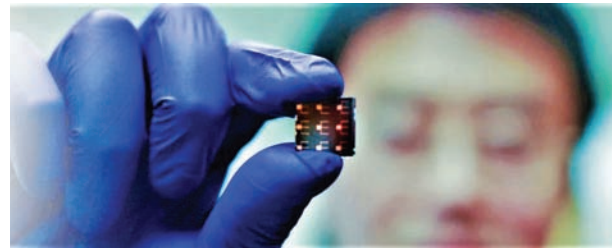
The study was conducted in the form of an online questionnaire in which more than 1,000 people participated. The participants first evaluated a total of 100 feeling states in terms of how much they are experienced in the body and mind, and how emotional and controllable they are. Next, they also evaluated how similar the feelings are with respect to each other, and whereabouts in the body they are felt.

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

## Dual-layer solar cell sets record for efficiently generating power

Materials scientists have developed a highly efficient thin-film solar cell that generates more energy than typical solar panels, thanks to its double-layer design.

Materials scientists from the UCLA Samueli School of Engineering have developed a highly efficient thin-film solar cell that generates more energy from sunlight than typical solar panels, thanks to its double-layer design.



The device is made by spraying a thin layer of perovskite -- an inexpensive compound of lead and iodine that has been shown to be very efficient at capturing energy from sunlight -- onto a commercially available solar cell. The solar cell that forms the bottom layer of the device is made of a compound of copper, indium, gallium and selenide, or CIGS.

The team's new cell converts 22.4 percent of the incoming energy from the sun, a record in power conversion efficiency for a perovskite-CIGS tandem solar cell. The performance was confirmed in independent tests at the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory. (The previous record, set in 2015 by a group at IBM's Thomas J. Watson Research Center, was 10.9 percent.)

The research, which was published in Science, was led by Yang Yang, UCLA's Carol and Lawrence E. Tannas Jr. Professor of Materials Science.

"With our tandem solar cell design, we're drawing energy from two distinct parts of the solar spectrum over the same device area," Yang said. "This increases the amount of energy generated from sunlight compared to the CIGS layer alone."

The cell's CIGS base layer, which is about 2 microns (or two-thousandths of a millimeter) thick, absorbs sunlight and generates energy at a rate of 18.7 percent efficiency on its own, but adding the 1 micron-thick perovskite layer improves its efficiency -- much like how adding a turbocharger to a car engine can improve its performance.

(Source: Science Daily)

## Device harvests energy from low-frequency vibrations, new study finds

A wearable energy-harvesting device could generate energy from the swing of an arm while walking or jogging, according to a team of researchers from Penn State's Materials Research Institute and the University of Utah. The device, about the size of a wristwatch, produces enough power to run a personal health monitoring system.

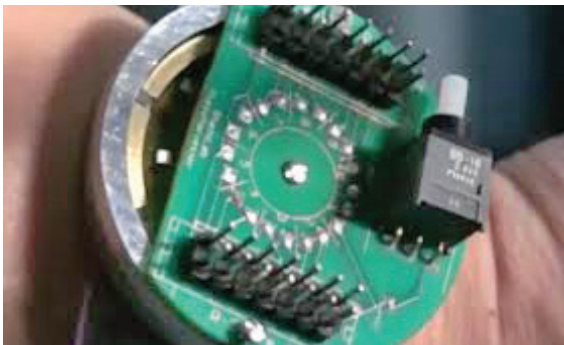
The "devices we make using our optimized materials run somewhere between 5 and 50 times better than anything else that's been reported," said Susan Trolier-McKinstry, the Steward S. Flaschen Professor of Materials Science and Engineering and Electrical Engineering, Penn State.

Energy-harvesting devices are in high demand to power the millions of devices that make up the internet of things. By providing continuous power to a rechargeable battery or supercapacitor, energy harvesters can reduce the labor cost of changing out batteries when they fail and keep dead batteries out of landfills.

## ■ Producing electric currents

Certain crystals can produce an electric current when compressed or they can change shape when an electric charge is applied. This piezoelectric effect is used in ultrasound and sonar devices, as well as energy harvesting.

In this work, Trolier-McKinstry and her former doctoral student, Hong Goo Yeo, used a well-known piezoelectric material, PZT, and coated it on both sides of a flexible metal foil to a



thickness four or five times greater than in previous devices.

Greater volume of the active material equates to generation of more power. By orienting the film's crystal structure to optimize polarization, the performance — known as the figure of merit — of energy harvesting was increased.

The compressive stresses that are created in the film as it is grown on the flexible metal foils also means that the PZT films can sustain high strains without cracking, making for more robust devices.

"There were some good materials science challenges," Trolier-McKinstry said about this work, reported in an online early

view edition of Advanced Functional Materials ahead of print publication. The "first was how to get the film thickness high on a flexible metal foil. Then we needed to get the proper crystal orientation in order to get the strongest piezoelectric effect."

## ■ Eccentric brass rotor

Collaborators at the University of Utah and in Penn State's Department of Mechanical Engineering designed a novel wristwatch-like device that incorporates the PZT/metal foil materials. The device uses a freely rotating, eccentric brass rotor with a magnet embedded, and multiple PZT beams with a magnet on each beam.

When the magnet on the rotor approaches one of the beams, the magnets repel each other and deflect the beam, plucking the beam in a process that is referred to as frequency up-conversion. The slow frequency of a rotating wrist is converted into a higher frequency oscillation. The design of this device is more efficient than a standard electromagnetic harvester — like those used in self-powered watches — according to Trolier-McKinstry.

In future work, the team believes they can double the power output using the cold sintering process, a low-temperature synthesis technology developed at Penn State. In addition, the researchers are working on adding a magnetic component to the current mechanical harvester to scavenge energy over a larger portion of the day when there is no physical activity.

(Source: phys.org)



## New wildlife rehabilitation center launched in Iran

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The first wildlife rehabilitation center providing care and treatment for animals has been launched in Alborz province, northern part of the country, Fardin Hakimi, the chief of provincial department of environment announced on Sunday.



The center has been set up by the private sector in Savojbolagh county, he said, adding that over 1 trillion rials (nearly \$227,000) has been spent in this regard, ISNA reported.

Currently, some 50 wildlife species, including birds and wild goats are being taken care of in the center, Hakimi stated.

He highlighted that the center plays a significant role in attracting tourists and improving the rural economy of Savojbolagh.

The wildlife rehabilitation center offers care and treatment to the injured or ill animals of the region, while being a suitable place for researches to study wildlife species, he explained.

It also can be an animal exhibit for the students interested in plant and animal issues, he concluded.

## Summer’s deadly wildfires cause pollution worldwide

Widespread wildfires have taken lives and destroyed habitats as well as causing air pollution

Wildfires are spanning the northern hemisphere. Local impacts have been severe; notably the loss of habitat and life, including the tragic deaths in Greece. Smoke has caused air pollution problems in nearby cities, exposing millions of people. Moorland fires affected air pollution in Manchester. Cities on the west coast of the US and Canada, including Seattle and Vancouver, issued



A wildfire 6km wide swept across the moors near Stalybridge, Greater Manchester in late June, sending smoke across large distances. Photograph: Anthony Devlin/Getty Images

pollution alerts as forest fire smoke turned day into night. During a national league soccer game in Oregon players had breaks every 15 minutes and oxygen was provided for them. But the smoke spreads further. Smoke from Siberian forest fires crossed the Arctic to reach North America in July. Weather models and satellite pictures showed that smoke from North American forest fires crossed the Atlantic in the high atmosphere and reached Europe in mid-August, causing purple skies in southern Ireland.

A study in 2011 estimated that between 260,000 and 600,000 early deaths were attributable to air pollution from landscape fires each year. The annual toll normally varies with the La Niña/El Niño cycle that causes yearly variations in global weather. The effects of this year’s fires have yet to be estimated.

(Source: The Guardian)

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Understanding The Stock Market

A: Sorry to bother you, sir, but I have some bad news.

B: What is it?

A: Well, the stock market just took a huge **plunge** and we’ve lost a lot of money!

B: What do you mean? What happened?

A: There are many factors that **weigh in**, but NASDAQ is down 200 points, the DOW JONES **indicator** also suffered! Our portfolio is worth half of what it was worth points week ago.

B: How is this possible? You are supposed to be talking to our stockbrokers and making sure that our securities and investments are safe and making a **profitable** return!

A: I know sir! We didn’t expect a bull market to become a bear market all of a sudden. On the other hand, you still have some high **yield** trash bonds and government bonds that will give us enough liquidity to cut us losses and reinvest in emerging markets. We could potentially make this tragedy work for us and make us **think outside the box**.

B: Do what you have to do! One other thing, don’t tell the rest of the stockholders about this. If they find out, it’s the end of this company!

#### ■ Key vocabulary

**plunge:** a steep and rapid fall

**weigh in:** to contribute, especially in a discussion

**profitable:** affording profit

**yield:** the amount of something that is produced

**think outside the box:** take another look at something

#### ■ Supplementary vocabulary

**fortune 500:** an annual list compiled and published by Fortune magazine that ranks the top 500 U.S. closely held and public corporations as ranked by their gross revenue

**equities:** common and preferred stocks, which represent a share in the ownership of a company

**Face value:** the cash denomination of the individual debt instrument initial public offering: a company’s first issue of shares to the general public

# Great concerns as bulldozers tearing down forest for building roads

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Long stretches of roads being under construction in Savadkuh forest, northern province of Mazandaran, has raised great concerns due to causing severe environmental impacts and posing serious threat to the life of region’s rare biodiversity, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Savadkuh forest, sprawled on the jungle-clad lower ridges of Alborz mountain range in northern Iran, is surrounded by numerous countless and ancient trees, including yew, alder, maple and tulip, and the presence of shrubs and animal rare species such as wild goat, ram and even leopards also added to the attractiveness of the forest.

“Over a thousand trees have been cut so far, as deforestation bulldozers clearing trees to construct roads in the heart of the forest,” the report added.

While some parts of the lands are the protected areas and under supervision of the Department of Environment (DOE), the rest of the lands are controlled by the Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Organization (FRWO), so, this parallel management led to the construction of a road stretching six kilometers, the report added.

Moreover, it has not been clear yet whether or not a construction permit has been issued.

The devastation of the natural areas of Savadkuh forest, as well as any protected area, results in many irreparable damages including road surface erosion and sediment yield, slope failures and mass movement, direct loss of habitat (by the conversion of the original land cover into an artificial surface) and indirect loss of habitat (by the fragmentation of an ecosystem into smaller and more isolated patches).

#### ■ Not environmentally assessed

The chief of provincial department of environment Ebrahim Fallahi said that as long as the Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Organization is the responsible body for the lands which are under construction of roads,



the Savadkuh DOE cannot directly issue a complaint in this regard.

However, the FRWO should have called on us prior to the construction of the road, since all construction projects are subjected to environmental impact assessment according to the Article 38 of the Sixth National Development Plan (2016-2021), he added.

#### ■ DOE must take action

Masoud Mansour head of the FRWO has noted that the provincial nomad’s affairs organization has started to construct a 4-kilometer forest road for nomads to pass through without asking for a license, and as soon as we found out, a delegation has been

dispatched to halt the process.

After some researches, we decided to propose a 4-kilometer route with less environmental impacts if a road to be constructed on it, he said, adding that the provincial DOE must enter the issue if there are certain animal and plant species which might be in danger.

#### ■ Road, not highway

Mohsen Mousavi Takami, deputy director of Mazandaran forest, rangeland and watershed organization, said that although, the organization has issued license to construct a 4-kilometer road in Savadkuh forest, the nomad’s affairs organization not only violated the rules by expanding the length of road

from 4 km to 6 km, but plowed into other lands of the forest to build other roads at the mountain peaks using bulldozers.

He went on to say that six farmers lived in the area for nearly 100 days a year who requested to construct a forest road, so, we issued a permit to construct a forest road for the farmers and nomads can travel during the time they stay in the forest, not a highway.

Currently, the construction process has come to a halt, and the FRWO will follow up on the issue through judicial system, and violators would be fined and punished severely, he concluded.

## Bees are becoming ‘addicted’ to the pesticides blamed for wiping them out, study finds

Bumblebees appetite for harmful chemicals ‘ticks certain symptoms of addictive behavior’, the more they eat pesticides, the more they seem to want. This could be a problem considering these chemicals have been linked with the global decline of these vital pollinators.

A new study has added to a body of evidence suggesting that bees not only enjoy consuming certain pesticides, they experience something comparable to addiction when they do.

British researchers gave bumblebees in ten colonies a choice of two different food sources – one that was just straight sugar solution and one containing neonicotinoid pesticides – over the course of ten days.

Neonicotinoids are a highly controversial group of chemicals that have recently been the target of a near-total EU ban, but are nevertheless still the most widely used pesticides in the world.

Once fed with food containing these pesticides, the bees kept coming back for more, in behaviour that looked remarkably like a human developing some kind of substance addiction.

“Given a choice, naive bees appear to avoid neonicotinoid-treated food. However, as individual bees increasingly experience the treated food they develop a preference for it,” said Dr Richard Gill, who led the study at Imperial College London.

This is particularly intriguing given neonicotinoids’ close chemical relationship to a very familiar addictive substance.

“Interestingly, neonicotinoids target nerve receptors in insects that are similar to receptors targeted by nicotine in mammals,” said Dr. Gill.

“Our findings that bumblebees acquire a taste for neonicotinoids ticks certain symptoms of addictive behaviour, which is intriguing given the addictive properties of nicotine on humans, although more research is needed to determine this in bees.”

Over time the bees visited the pesticide-laced food more and the other food less, and had no trouble finding the one they wanted even when the sources were moved around.



The tests they carried out were intended to give the insects a choice about where they wanted to feed, just as they would have in the wild.

“We now need to conduct further studies to try and understand the mechanism behind why they acquire this preference,” said lead author Dr Andres Arce.

The work, published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B, builds on previous research that appeared to show bees preferring food with pesticides in it over uncontaminated sources.

Campaigners welcomed the new findings as more evidence to support the hard-fought ban implemented in April.

“This study further backs the tougher ban on three neonicotinoid pesticides agreed earlier this year. Recent research also found that sulfoxaflor – touted as a replacement for neonics – may harm bees,” said Friends of the Earth campaigner Sandra Bell.

A paper published in mid-August revealed that sulfoxaflor, a chemical that has already been approved for use in several EU nations, has disruptive effects on bumblebee colonies.

“The solution is clear. Instead of replacing one harmful chemical with another the government must use its post Brexit farming policy to help farmers protect their crops without harming bees and other wildlife,” said Ms Bell.

However, Dr Gill offered a more nuanced approach that did not involve an outright ban on neonicotinoids, despite their harmful effects.

“Whilst neonicotinoids are controversial, if the effects of replacements on non-target insects are not understood, then I believe it is sensible that we take advantage of current knowledge and further studies to provide guidance for using neonicotinoids more responsibly, rather than necessarily an outright ban,” he said.

(Source: The Independent)

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

◀ ▶ ↻

## 323 Iranian children compete in abacus, mental arithmetic contest

The 6th national abacus and mental arithmetic contest for children was held in Tehran on Thursday, Mehr reported.

Some 173 girls and 150 boys from 23 provinces of the country participated in the event, while more than half of them solved the mathematics not using abacuses.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “-morph, -morphic, -morphous”

■ **Meaning:** shape or form

■ **For example:** It was determined to be an ice **polymorph** that has not yet been observed.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Kick in

■ **Meaning:** to start or to begin to have an effect

■ **For example:** The storm is expected to kick in shortly after sunrise.

### IDIOM

#### Caught in the crossfire

■ **Explanation:** to suffer the effects of an argument or dispute between two people or groups

■ **For example:** When the two taxi drivers started to argue, their passengers were caught in the crossfire.



# Pompeo talks to Abadi, Allawi amid public anger over U.S. meddling in Iraq’s affairs

The United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has spoken to Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and Vice President Ayad Allawi amid public frustration with Washington’s interference in Baghdad’s affairs.

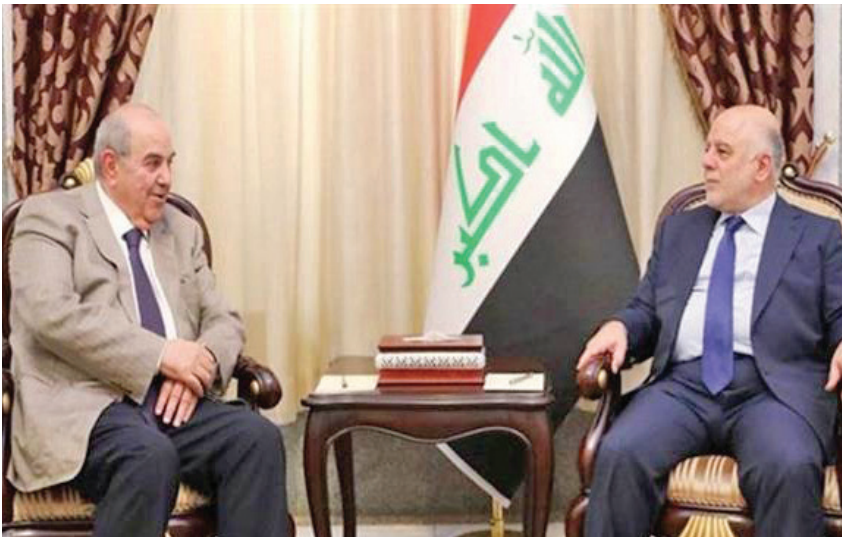
Iraq’s political parties are locked in talks to form a government following the May parliamentary elections which propelled anti-American blocs to victory much to Washington’s chagrin.

In a phone conversation with Abadi on Saturday, Pompeo “emphasized the importance of safeguarding Iraq’s sovereignty during this critical time,” according to the U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert.

The top American diplomat also spoke with Allawi, a pro-Saudi regime figure, expressing Washington’s hope that the new Iraqi government “includes all communities and serves all of the Iraqi people.”

Pompeo also spoke with Brett McGurk, Washington’s envoy to the U.S.-led coalition, and took to Twitter to say, “Doing a great job. Forming a strong Iraqi government on national basis is essential to the enduring defeat of #ISIS (Daesh).”

The remarks came one day after hundreds of Iraqis held a protest in the capital, Baghdad, to vent their anger at the U.S. meddling in their country’s domestic affairs.



Earlier this week, Abadi sacked Falih Alfayyadh, his national security adviser and head of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU/Hashd al-Sha’abi).

The decision has largely been attributed to the country’s ongoing efforts to form a new government following elections in May.

Predominantly Shia blocs won most seats at the Iraqi parliament, but they have so far

failed to reach a consensus over the formation of the next government.

The U.S., backed by Britain, invaded Iraq in 2003 under the pretext that the former regime of Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. No such weapons, however, were ever found in the country. The invasion plunged Iraq into chaos and led to the rise of terrorist groups.

The U.S. and a coalition of its allies further launched a military campaign against purported Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group targets in Iraq in 2014, but their operations in many instances have led to civilian deaths.

On Friday, NBC News reported that the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump is planning to send hundreds of ISIL captives to Iraqi prisons and the notorious U.S. military prison, Guantanamo, in Cuba.

Citing U.S. officials and European diplomats, the report said the terrorists “would be drawn from a group of about 600 currently held by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)” in Syria’s militant-held areas.

Many ISIL elements were formerly held in U.S. prisons where they formed the foundation of their brutal group before going on a campaign of terror and destruction across the region after their release.

In July, the U.S. began the construction of its largest consulate building in the city of Erbil. The new U.S. consulate, which will be built on a 200,000 square meter piece of land, will cost \$600 million.

Back in 2009, the U.S. inaugurated the largest and most expensive embassy in the world in Baghdad, suggesting that Washington was set for a long haul in the country.

(Source: Press TV)

## U.S. general assumes NATO command in Afghanistan

U.S. Army Gen. Austin Scott Miller assumed command of the 41-nation NATO mission in Afghanistan in a handover ceremony Sunday.

Miller took over from Gen. John Nicholson, who held the post for more than two years, at a ceremony at NATO headquarters in Kabul attended by senior Afghan officials and foreign ambassadors.

The handover comes as Afghan forces are struggling to contain a resurgent Taliban and an increasingly powerful Daesh (ISIS) affiliate. The Taliban control several districts across Afghanistan, and both groups have launched a relentless wave of attacks in recent months.

“The world recognizes Afghanistan cannot be a safe haven for terrorism, the world recognizes that we cannot

fail. I know this has been a long fight, and it has been generations for us, for the Afghan people,” said Miller, who most recently led the Joint Special Operations Command.

Nicholson called on the Taliban to accept the government’s offer of a cease-fire and renewed peace negotiations, saying “you don’t need to keep killing your fellow Afghans.”

The nearly 17-year-old NATO mission began with the U.S.-led invasion that toppled the Taliban after the Sept. 11 attacks. The U.S. and NATO formally ended their combat mission in 2014 but still routinely come to the aid of Afghan forces.

Afghanistan’s national security adviser, Hamdullah Mohib, acknowledged the setbacks, saying “we have a bloody nose, but we are not defeated.”

(Source: AP)



## Saudi regime, UAE want Oman to abandon neutrality: assessment

A new assessment says the House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) want Oman to abandon its neutral posture in Persian Gulf disputes and be more pliable to their regional interests.

According to the analysis released on Sunday by Stratfor, an American geopolitical intelligence platform and publisher, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, which are leading a war on Yemen and a blockade on Qatar, are seeking to bring Oman’s policies into line with their own.

Oman has refrained from picking sides in regional conflicts, but its policy might be about to change under pressure from the Saudi regime and the UAE, the report said.

“An assertive Saudi Arabia, under the direction of Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman (MBS), and a resentful Abu Dhabi, led by ambitious Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, sense a chance to reel in Oman and force Muscat to adopt policies that align more closely with their own,” it said.

“Benefiting from a high point in relations with Washington, both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi have a window of opportunity to challenge Oman’s neutrality,” it added.

Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, the analysis said, have a variety of means at their disposal to alter Oman’s behavior, among them rattling Muscat’s ties with the United States, pressuring Omani citizens and businesses and attempting to influence the succession process of ruler Sultan Qaboos.

“Thanks to their increased influence in the current White House, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi

could try to convince Washington that Muscat is the weak link in the United States’ anti-Iran regional strategy because the country allows Houthi (Ansarullah movement) arms to traverse its soil and Iran to circumvent sanctions and blockades,” the report said.

“Oman, however, might not be as vulnerable as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates hope. Unlike Qatar, it has no Al Jazeera, which has irked regional governments, and cannot be accused of playing host to the Muslim Brotherhood.”

Last June, the House of Saud regime, Egypt, Bahrain, and the UAE imposed a land, naval and air blockade on import-dependent Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism, an allegation strongly denied by Doha.

The Saudi regime-led bloc presented

Qatar with a list of demands and gave it an ultimatum to comply with them or face consequences.

Doha, however, refused to meet the demands and stressed that it would not abandon its independent foreign policy.

Back in June, Oman warned the UAE against continued “theft” of its intellectual property and national heritage, saying, “Neighbors should realize that the Omani nation has run out of patience.”

In an interview with local al-Wisal radio station, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Craft Industries of Oman Isam bin Ali al Rawas said that Sultan Qaboos was in possession of damning documents against the UAE.

(Source: Press TV)

## Agents tried to flip Russian oligarchs, the fallout spread to Trump

The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Justice Department sought to turn Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, who had close ties to the Kremlin, into an informant between 2014 and 2016, a report says.

The two U.S. agencies offered Deripaska assistance in getting visas for the United States in exchange for information on Russian organized crime and, later, on possible Russian aid to the U.S. President Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign. The New York Times reported, citing current and former officials and associates of Deripaska.

The move aimed to measure the possibility of flipping several of Russia’s wealthiest men, most of whom have close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Justice Department official Bruce Ohr, who has

been frequently attacked by Trump on Twitter recently, and former British spy Christopher Steele are believed to have played a role in the effort to recruit Russian oligarchs.

In one encounter, FBI agents showed up unannounced and uninvited at a home Deripaska has in New York and questioned him about whether Paul Manafort, a former business partner of his who later became chairman of Trump’s campaign, had worked as a liaison between Russia and the Trump campaign.

During the interrogation, Deripaska described the theories about Manafort’s role on the campaign as “preposterous,” dismissing any potential connections between the Kremlin and the Trump campaign.

The anonymous officials told the Times they were afraid that disclosing the attempt could undercut national security, however, they also said they did not want the secret nature of the program to let Trump and his Republican allies “cherry-pick facts and present them, sheered of context, to undermine special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation” into the alleged Russian interference.

Trump and the key members of his team have been under investigation for allegedly “colluding” with Moscow during the 2016 campaign.

Russia has time and again denied the allegations on interfering in other countries’ democratic process, dismissing them as part of a “Russophobia” campaign run by the West.

(Source: agencies)

## Thirty Nigerian soldiers ‘killed’ in Boko Haram army base raid

At least 30 Nigerian soldiers have been killed in a gun battle with Boko Haram fighters who overran a military base in the country’s northeast, according to military sources.

Scores of fighters in trucks stormed the base at Zari village in Borno state late on Thursday and briefly captured it after intense fighting, two sources told AFP news agency on Saturday.

“They came in large numbers in trucks and carrying heavy weapons and engaged soldiers in a battle that lasted for an hour,” a military officer said.

“They overwhelmed the troops who were forced to temporarily withdraw before reinforcements arrived,” said the officer who

asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak.

Boko Haram took weapons and military equipment before they were pushed out of the base by troops with aerial support, said a second military source who gave a similar death toll.

“The terrorists also suffered heavy casualty from the bombardment,” one of the military officers said.

Boko Haram are thought to have attacked the base from the nearby Garunda village, where 17 troops were killed and 14 wounded in an attack on another military base last month, the sources said.

In a statement late on Friday, the Nigeri-

an military confirmed soldiers fought Boko Haram “insurgents ... on rampage to loot the community and extort money from villagers”.

“Troops ... have successfully routed Boko Haram insurgents in an encounter that ensued yesterday evening at Zari village,” the military said in the statement.

It did not speak of military casualties and the raid on the base but maintained “several Boko Haram fighters and weapons” were destroyed in the fight.

The Nigerian army has on several occasions disputed reports on losses to Boko Haram and has in some cases played them down.

Boko Haram has waged an armed campaign in northeast Nigeria for years. The fighting

has left more than 20,000 people dead and displaced over two million since 2009.

In recent months, the armed group has intensified attacks on military targets in recent months.

The assaults appear to undermine repeated claims by the Nigerian military that Boko Haram had been defeated.

On July 14, Boko Haram fighters overran a military base in Jilli village, in neighboring Yobe state when dozens of troops were said to be killed, wounded or missing.

Soldiers and civilians have also been targeted in separate attacks in neighboring Chad and Niger.

(Source: AFP)

## Yemen ex-govt., Houthis will not have face-to-face peace talks in Geneva: officials

Yemen’s warring parties, including the Houthi Ansarullah movement and the so-called government of former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, will not meet “face-to-face” at the upcoming peace negotiations brokered by the United Nations in the Swiss city of Geneva, Hadi’s officials say.

According to Hadi’s foreign minister Khaled al-Yamani on Sunday, the talks, that will likely focus on a prisoner exchange deal, “will not be face-to-face and depend on how

well the UN envoy manages the two sides.”

“Our expectations are limited to the possibility of progress in the question of prisoners and detainees,” he said, adding, “I think this is the chance to succeed in securing the release of prisoners, and I believe the other party is also willing and ready.” The world body has already invited the two sides to the Swiss city for negotiations, which open on Thursday. Last month, the UN special envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, said

that the consultations were due to begin in Geneva on September 6 on a framework for peace talks and confidence-building measures. The UN, Griffiths said at the time, was primarily trying to reach an agreement between the Saudi-backed side and Yemen’s ruling Houthis “on the issues essential to ending the war and on a national unity government in which everyone participates.”

(Source: Press TV)

## Saudi-UAE coalition admits Yemen school bus attack ‘unjustified’

➡ which caused collateral damage in the area,” Mansour Ahmed al-Mansour, a legal adviser to JIAT, told reporters in the Saudi capital, Riyadh.

The Saudi regime air raid hit the school bus as it drove through a market in the town of Dhahyan, killing a total of 51 people, among them 40 children, and injuring 79 others, mostly kids.

In the statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the Saudi regime vowed to “revise and enhance its rules of engagement according to operational lessons learned, in a manner that guarantees non-recurrence of such incidents.”

Saudi regime military spokesman Mansour al-Mansour said a probe into the incident had found errors prior to the strike, which “caused collateral damage,” but repeated that the bus had been “transporting Houthi leaders.”

The incident sparked a wave of international outrage and led the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to demand a “credible and transparent” investigation.

Munitions experts told CNN that the bomb used by the Saudi regime in the attack was an American-made 227-kilogram laser-guided MK 82 bomb.

Last week, UN human rights experts raised the alarm at the high rate of civilian casualties in Saudi Arabia strikes on Yemen, saying the air raids “may amount to war crimes.”

“Coalition airstrikes have caused most direct civilian casualties. The airstrikes have hit residential areas, markets, funerals, weddings, detention facilities, civilian boats and even medical facilities,” the Group of International and Regional Eminent Experts on Yemen said in a 41-page report.

■ **HRW condemns Saudi regime war crime, U.S. complicity**

On Sunday, Human Rights Watch (HRW) denounced the Sa’ada attack as an apparent war crime and blasted the countries that export arms to Saudi Arabia.

The attack “on a bus full of young boys adds to its already gruesome track record of killing civilians at weddings, funerals, hospitals, and schools in Yemen,” said Bill Van Esvelde, senior children’s rights researcher at HRW.

“Countries with knowledge of this record that are supplying more bombs to the Saudis will be complicit in future deadly attacks on civilians,” he added.

He also called on the U.S. and its allies to immediately stop arms sales to the Saudi regime, saying they should “support strengthening the independent UN inquiry into violations in Yemen or risk being complicit in future atrocities.”

“Any U.S. official who thinks the way to prevent Saudi Arabia from killing more Yemeni children is to sell it more bombs should watch the videos of the bus attack in Dhahyan,” he added.

■ **Universal condemnation**

The probe came after the air attack sparked widespread international condemnation and calls for an independent investigation from United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF’s regional director in the Middle East and North Africa, tweeted at the time: “NO EXCUSES ANYMORE!”

“Does the world really need more innocent children’s lives to stop the cruel war on children in Yemen?” he said.

Following the attack, individual members of the Congress in the United States also called on their country’s army to clarify its role in the war and investigate whether support for the air raids could render US military personnel “liable under the war crimes act”.

The US has been the biggest supplier of military equipment to Riyadh, with more than \$90bn of sales recorded between 2010 and 2015.

(Source: agencies)

## Rockets rain on Libya’s Tripoli as fresh fighting erupts

Renewed fighting has erupted in Tripoli, leaving at least three people wounded after a barrage of rockets hit several parts of the capital, including a popular hotel.

The violence came as Britain, France, Italy and the United States warned on Saturday that an escalation would hamper the political process in Libya and plans to hold elections by December.

Witnesses told AFP news agency three people were wounded when a rocket hit the fourth floor of the Al-Waddan Hotel, which overlooks the bay of Tripoli and is located 100 meters away from the Italian embassy.

Another rocket landed on the home of a civilian family in the area of Ben Ashour. The house is about 200m from the prime minister’s office.

The latest bout of fighting came a day after at least 15 rockets landed on Tripoli and its surroundings, forcing the suspension of flights in the capital’s only operational airport.

The fighting between the rival armed groups broke out earlier this week. Street battles on Monday and Tuesday pitted the Seventh Brigade, or Kaniyat, from Tarhouna, a town 65km southeast of Tripoli, against the Tripoli Revolutionaries’ Brigades (TRB) and the Nawasi, two of the capital’s largest factions.

The Kaniyat and other groups from outside Tripoli have noticed the success of rivals inside the city with growing unease. Reports about the wealth, power and extravagant lifestyles of some Tripoli rebel commanders have fuelled resentment.

A fragile truce took effect on Thursday, but by late afternoon the hostilities had resumed.

Libyan officials say the fighting has so far killed nearly 40 people, including 18 civilians. According to Human Rights Watch, the death toll includes at least four children.

In joint statement released by the French foreign ministry, Britain, France, Italy and the U.S. condemned the violence, calling the “attempts to weaken the legitimate Libyan authorities” and obstruct the ongoing political process “unacceptable”.

“We are calling on the armed groups to immediately stop all military action and warn those who seek to undermine stability, in Tripoli or elsewhere in Libya, that they will be made accountable for it,” the statement added.

The interior Ministry of Libya’s United Nations-backed administration, the Government of National Accord (GNA), has also denounced the renewed violence.

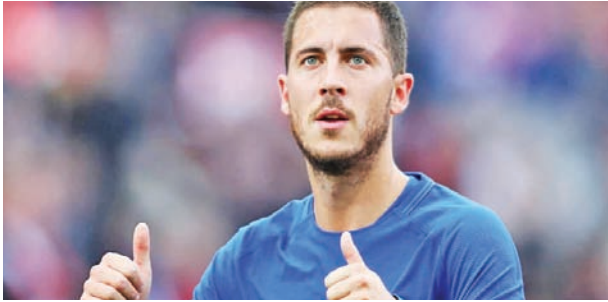
The GNA has blamed unnamed factions for “undermining the ceasefire ... by blindly launching rockets and shells on Tripoli and its suburbs”.

Bringing armed groups to heel is seen as crucial to resolving the conflict that has divided Libya since a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)-backed uprising removed long-time ruler Muammar Ghaddafi in 2011.

(Source: agencies)



## Hazard slams Chelsea style under Conte, Mourinho



Chelsea forward Eden Hazard has taken a swipe at the football played under Antonio Conte and Jose Mourinho, insisting he is enjoying the style of Maurizio Sarri.

Hazard scored in a 2-0 win over Bournemouth on Saturday and had nothing but praise for the attacking tactics of Sarri after the game.

“I like to have the ball. Not in my own half, but in the last 30 metres,” Hazard told Chelsea TV. “I like this type of game, it’s completely different from Antonio Conte or [Jose] Mourinho before. Like I say, we have more of the ball so for me it’s not bad.”

Chelsea did not spend as much in the transfer window as some previous seasons this summer, but Sarri brought Jorginho with him from Napoli and signed Mateo Kovacic from Real Madrid on loan. That has made a big impact according to Hazard.

“I think the big difference is we bring in two players, Jorginho and Kovacic, and they are completely different,” he added.

“Of course, they want to keep the ball, we just try to keep the ball more often, and then when we have the chance to score we just need to score. But when we have more of the ball we can have more danger.

“At the moment we are okay, we are winning games, I think we are playing good football, so I enjoy. I want to keep this momentum. The bad thing is now we go to the national team, we want to just keep playing with Chelsea and win games!”

(Source: ESPN)

## Son Heung-min to avoid military duty after South Korea win Asian Games



Tottenham forward Son Heung-min will avoid military service for South Korea after helping his country beat Japan 2-1 in the Asian Games football final.

A gold medal at the event, along with an Olympic podium finish, is the only automatic way for a South Korean footballer to be excused a call-up.

The game against Japan went into extra-time before Lee Seung-woo and Hwang Hee-chan put South Korea 2-0 up.

Ueda Ayase pulled one back but South Korea held on for a fifth title. Korean captain Son, substituted in the dying seconds to buy precious time, burst into tears at the final whistle after sprinting from the bench to embrace goalkeeper Jo Hyeon-woo.

The 26-year-old has not carried out the two-year mandatory military service expected of his countrymen and faced being called up if South Korea failed to win the final.

But victory gave the whole South Korea squad an exemption and ensured an end to the uncertainty surrounding a player Tottenham bought for about £22m, and who signed a new five-year contract in July.

South Korea beat neighbors North Korea to take gold in 2014 but Son was not in the squad as Bayer Leverkusen, his club at the time, had exercised their right to refuse his release.

(Source: BBC)

## Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson: I won’t make the same mistake again

Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson says he will learn from his mistake after gifting Leicester City a goal in Saturday’s 2-1 win.

With Liverpool 2-0 up and apparently heading for an easy win in the Premier League game, the Brazilian refused to take the easy option of just clearing his lines when put under pressure by a poor Virgil van Dijk backpass after the break.

Instead Alisson tried to beat Kelechi Iheanacho with a step over but was robbed of the ball by the striker who centred for Algerian Rachid Ghezzal to find an empty net and spark a Leicester fightback.

“It was a ‘reading the play’ mistake by me,” Alisson told ESPN Brasil after the game. “I didn’t receive that good of a pass, we talked about that in the locker room, I spoke to Virgil, it wasn’t that good of a pass.

“I also had all the conditions to kick the ball away and tried to keep playing, keep the possession. Everyone analyses the games. Obviously, I won’t be stupid to make the same mistake. We have to learn from our mistakes. But it’s part of my game, I won’t be arrogant of saying that I will keep doing this. We have to learn from our mistakes.

“If it’s necessary, the dribble has to be the last resource. Unfortunately, today it caused that goal.

“I think that it was a foul, but we can’t support ourselves on that. In this kind of play, here in the Premier League, not every collision is a foul. In my opinion it was, but it’s part of the game, we can’t give room for that to happen on the pitch.”

(Source: Soccernet)

# Lopetegui’s style is working In Real Madrid

After three LaLiga Santander fixtures, Julen Lopetegui can be satisfied arriving at the international break with nine points from nine, scoring ten goals and only conceding two.

Karim Benzema has been resuscitated and on matchday three he almost equalled his return of five league goals for all of 2017/18.

Against Leganes, the team set a new record for the number of passes in one game and once again dominated possession, leaving no doubts about the style or way of playing.

With the squad now defined and a calm coach, Lopetegui can take advantage of the international break to work closely with those who remain on his ideas.

This Real Madrid know how they are playing with a clear system which has not changed since the first day in Tallinn, with a 4-3-3 with Gareth Bale, Karim Benzema and Marco Asensio in attack.

It is an untouchable trident for Lopetegui, who kept Luka Modric on the bench until he was match ready, who dropped Isco to the bench, who sent Marcelo a warning and who has not been afraid to take tough decisions, though he has never doubted in his attacking trio.

That said, they have not given him any reason to do so. With 10 goals, both Bale and Benzema have been scoring prolifically after years in the shadow of others.

The mobility in attack is key to Lopetegui’s style and Bale drifts wide whilst Benzema links up well with the midfield whilst being lethal with his shooting.

The Frenchman no longer spends the whole game looking for Cristiano Ronaldo, rather he focuses on the goal.

Asensio too continues to improve as he works his way towards his undoubted potential.

The Estadio Santiago Bernabeu is now the home of possession and passing, Lopetegui sees it clearly and the facts back that up.

His team are ready to challenge Barcelona as the kings of the ball, despite the difficulty of adapting a new style after just three games.

Long balls are banned and play matures gradually and builds up, with the ball going wide, but if there’s no clear option, it returns to the central midfielder.



Under Zinedine Zidane, there were times when the midfield became saturated, but Lopetegui has avoided that to date.

It’s no easy task to impress the Bernabeu with a style of play so early on in a new era, but it seems that the form Spain coach has managed it.

With more possession, there are fewer chances for the opposition to threaten and it is noticeable, given that Zidane often highlighted the defensive fragility of the team and how easily rivals created chances.

Under Lopetegui, the squad is performing well, protecting the goal and they have conceded just twice in three games against Getafe, Girona and Leganes, one of them a penalty.

In all three ties, possession has been dominated and Keylor Navas and Thibaut Courtois have had little to do.

The intensity and concentration was another key aspect of Zidane’s play, though in many cases it was concerningly absent against lower opposition, and the team fought until the last second of injury time.

Now, the team presses higher, by several metres, and the defensive line is positioned higher, with ball recoveries coming earlier.

Lopetegui now faces the challenge of rotating his squad to keep players fresh in order to maintain that intensity.

(Source: Marca)

## ‘I don’t want beautiful football... I want my teams to win’: Pep Guardiola



If there is one word that people at Manchester City use more than any other to describe manager Pep Guardiola, it is ‘intense’. After that comes ‘detailed’ and both are intended as compliments.

‘I love my job,’ says Guardiola, fiddling with a plastic bottle cap on his desk. ‘I am a Latin guy. I express my feelings, so people know exactly how I feel just by looking at my face. It’s easy to understand me. I love my job, I put all of myself into it and I try to do my best. I don’t want to lose.’

Contrary to popular opinion, Guardiola says there is no aesthetic motivation behind the beautiful football for which his teams are famous.

‘No, no, I want to win,’ he says. ‘That phrase, “beautiful football”, I don’t use that. Never. So, I want to win but from my experience the best way, and the way I believe brings us closest to winning, is the way we play.

‘We want to express ourselves and sometimes when it happens it is attractive for the people that are watching, but to play in that way you need talented players. Without that, it’s not possible to achieve what we achieved. So, we need quality, but what I want is to win.’

It is hard to believe that there is no artistic strand to how Guardiola thinks about the game and he points to the defensive records of his teams as evidence that he doesn’t prize attacking flair over other aspects of the game.

‘No, no, no,’ he says. ‘I’m not romantic or aesthetic. In the period since 2008 or 2009, always our teams were the best defensive team in the league. Just one season we were not. And for that you have to work a lot defensively. But when you talk about beautiful football, you are not talking about this kind of thing.’

Rather than beauty, Guardiola says his philosophy is inspired by what originally sparked his players’ love for the game: the ball. ‘The way we want to play with the ball,’ he explains, ‘is because I believe that all of the players decided once in their life, when they were kids playing football, that they enjoyed playing with the ball.’

Although Guardiola’s players spent a lot of time with the ball in his first year at City [2016-17], they fell short of expectations, with a third-place finish the pinnacle of the team’s achievements.

‘It was the first time I did not win one title in a season,’ he says, ‘and the expectation was so high. We didn’t accomplish our goals and always you reflect. Are we going in the right direction, or do you have to change something? I felt the club, the people here, the staff, all the people who surround me, said, “It’s OK. It’s going to be well”.

‘I didn’t feel anything was wrong. We understood it was part of the process. Sometimes you [snaps fingers] get it quicker, sometimes you need more time.’

(Source: Daily Mail)

## Another blank for Ronaldo, another win for Juve



Cristiano Ronaldo was left waiting for his first Juventus goal after drawing another blank as the titleholders won 2-1 at Parma in Serie A on Saturday to maintain their 100 percent record.

An early Mario Mandzukic goal and a second-half strike from Blaise Matuidi gave Juve their third win in as many league games this season, although Ronaldo was left without a goal in his first 270 minutes with the Turin side. Ivorian forward Gervinho scored in between for Parma, his first goal since joining them in the close season.

Earlier on Saturday, Inter Milan midfielder Radja Nainggolan scored on his injury-delayed debut to set them on the way to their first win of the season as they beat Bologna 3-0 away. “(Ronaldo) has to deal with different difficulties in Serie A but he had a good game overall,” said Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri. “The international break will make him sharper. “He’s the world’s best player, he wants to score at all costs but he needs to remain calm and the goals will come in a burst.” Juventus got the perfect start when Mandzukic’s header from a Juan Cuadrado cross hit Simone Iacoponi and rebounded kindly to the Croatian forward who turned the ball into the empty net. Ronaldo sent a header looping over the bar with his first goal attempt but Parma, who have been to the fourth tier and back since beating Juve 1-0 in their last meeting in 2015, forced their way back into the game.

Leo Stulac thumped a free kick against

the crossbar before Gervinho levelled in the 33rd minute, turning the ball in with his knee after Roberto Inglese flicked on Massimo Gobbi’s cross. Juventus took control after halftime and French World Cup winner Matuidi struck the winner from Mandzukic’s flick just before the hour. Ronaldo kept trying but it was a frustrating night for the World Player of the Year as Parma cut off the supply lines and prevented him getting in any of his dipping long-range shots. The forward’s best chance came when a loose ball landed at his feet but Ronaldo shot wide and was also left frustrated when Parma goalkeeper Luigi Sepe managed to intercept a cross and took the ball off his head. Parma were relegated from Serie A in 2015 and declared bankrupt, then re-entered the league in the fourth tier and won three successive promotions. Inter had taken one point from their opening two games and struggled again for more than one hour against a dogged but uninspiring Bologna before heavily-tattooed Belgian Nainggolan, who missed their first two games injured, came to the rescue. Inter’s key close-season signing, who signalled a warning by firing a volley over the bar before halftime, collected a pass from Matteo Politano inside the area.

Antonio Candreva, with his first Serie A goal since April last year, and Croatia World Cup forward Ivan Perisic added two more goals in the last 10 minutes as Inter cantered home, finally beginning to look like title contenders.

(Source: Mirror)

## Djokovic hits the Gasquet to speed into last 16

Novak Djokovic enjoyed his first routine victory at this year’s U.S. Open at the third attempt on Saturday as the two-time champion eased into the fourth round with a 6-2 6-3 6-3 win over flamboyant Frenchman Richard Gasquet.

The sixth-seeded Serb needed four sets to despatch his first two opponents, struggling especially in the opening round against Hungarian Marton Fucsovics in searing daytime temperatures at the start of the week.

However, the Wimbledon champion started brightly under the floodlights at Arthur Ashe Stadium against the 26th seed and never looked back, sealing a comfortable triumph in two hours and 11 minutes.

“It was my best match of the week so far, without a doubt,” Djokovic told reporters. “One of the best performances I had in the hard court season after Wimbledon.

“I thought I was playing on a very high level from the first point. Very, very pleased with the performance.”

Djokovic won 75 percent of his first serves, struck 32



winners and saved each of the five break points he faced as the 32-year-old Gasquet’s game collapsed under the weight

of his 47 unforced errors. The win marked the 13th time Djokovic had beaten Gasquet in 14 meetings, with the Serb winning his last 11 matches against the Frenchman.

Victory keeps the 13-times Grand Slam champion on track for a potential quarter-final showdown against second seed Roger Federer, who saw off Nick Kyrgios in straight sets earlier in the day.

Next up for the Serb, however, is a last-16 clash with unseeded Portuguese Joao Sousa.

“He’s a fighter, he’s a grinder,” Djokovic said. “He will not hand you the victory, you’ve got to earn it... I’m really glad I didn’t spend too much time on the court tonight. I’m going to get some rest and move on to the next one.”

“Look, I know that I’m clear favourite in the match. At the same time I will try to maintain the level of focus and performance and level of tennis that I’ve had today. If it’s like that, then I have a good chance to win.”

(Source: Reuters)





# Iran come sixth at Asiad, China sit top



**1 ->** Erfan Ahangarian bagged a gold medal in wushu after defeating Wang Xuetao from China 2-1 in the final match of the Men's Sanda -60kg.

Another wushu practitioner Mohsen Mohammadsheifi claimed his third successive gold medal in the Asian Games after beating his Chinese rival Shi Zhanwei 2-0. Climber Reza Alipour gained a gold in the competition ahead of China's Zhong Qixin.

Women's and men's kabaddi teams won two historic gold medals in the Games.

Weightlifter Sohrab Moradi won gold in the men's 94kg class. Super heavyweight weightlifter Behdad Salimi claimed his third successive gold medals in the +105kg in the Asian Games and announce his retirement after the event.

Karate practitioner Sajad Ganjzadeh and Bahman Asgari claimed two gold medals in the men's +84kg and -75kg respectively.

Hossein Keyhani claimed a gold medal in 3000m steeplechase.

Ehsan Hadadi seized a gold medal in the men's discus throw.

Elyas Aliakbari claimed a gold medal in kurash. Iran national volleyball team clinched the title after beating South Korea in the final match.

Asian giants China extended their lead at the top of the medal table. The Chinese sportspersons had 289 overall, with 132 gold, 92 silver and 65 bronze.

Japan won 204 (74-56-74) and South Korea had 176 (49-57-70). Indonesia (31-24-43) and Uzbekistan (21-24-25) came fourth and fifth respectively.

The 18th Asian Games staged 465 events out of 40 sports, among which 330 events from 32 sports will feature in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The Games, attracting more than 10,000 athletes, finished on Sept.2.

## Iran volleyball players avoid military service

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian volleyball players will avoid military service after winning a gold medal in the 2018 Asian Games.

On Saturday, the Iranian volleyball team eased past

South Korea 3-0 (25-17, 25-22, 25-21) at GBK Volleyball Indoor for their second straight gold medal in the Games.

The country will grant the players the exemption after winning the title.

Military service, which can last up to 24 months, is compulsory for Iranian males aged between 18 and 40, however exemptions are made for athletes who win the Asian Games or an Olympic medal

## Supreme leader lauds Asian Games medal winners

**TASNIM** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei commended the Iranian athletes who won medals at the 2018 Asian Games for bringing joy to the country.

In a message on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei praised the Iranian athletes for their performance in the 2018 Asian Games, held in Indonesia's Jakarta and Palembang from August 18 to September 2.

The following is the text of the Leader's message: "In the Name of God.

Dear medal winners of the athletic squad: I congratulate all of you and thank you all.

You delighted the Iranian nation and brought glory to our honorable flag.

Seyyed Ali Khamenei September 2, 2018"

Iran came sixth in the medal standings of the 2018 Asian Games with 62 medals, including 20 gold, 20 silver and 22 bronze.

Asian Games is the world's second-biggest multi-sport event after the summer Olympics.

## Jahangiri appreciates efforts of Iranian athletes in Asiad

**MNA** — Iranian First Vice-President Es'hagh Jahangiri appreciated the efforts of all Iranian athletes who had participated in the event and congratulated their great performance in 2018 Asian Games to all Iranians.

In a Sunday message, Jahangiri wrote, "unparalleled performance of Iran in 2018 Indonesia Asian Games, especially shining of women athletes, and collecting 20 gold medals in different sports ... brought Iranians happiness and provoked their national pride."

He touched upon gaining the trophy in fields of volleyball, women's and men's kabaddi, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, breaking world record and snatching gold in weightlifting, and gaining other gold medals in fields of athletics, Taekwondo, climbing and karate.

Jahangiri congratulated these results to all athletes, their families, coaches and Iranian people, wishing for more success and achievements in the future sports events.

## All Asian Games venues always full house



Coordinating Human Development and Culture Minister Puan Maharani said all venues of the 2018 Asian Games competitions were always full, reflecting the public's high interest in the international sporting event.

"All [the venues] were always full house. Initially, we thought that certain competitions won't be popular and only a small number of people will come. But apparently, all the venues were full with spectators wanting to support Indonesian teams," said Puan after attending the meeting between the Indonesian athletes and coaches with President Joko Widodo at the State Palace on Sunday.

During the meeting, the President symbolically presented the bonuses, with the amounts ranging from Rp

20 million to Rp 1.5 billion.

The meeting was also attended by First Lady Iriana, Vice President Jusuf Kalla and his wife Mufidah Kalla, Youth and Sports Minister Imam Nahravi, and chef de mission of the Indonesian Asian Games contingent Syafruddin.

Syafruddin said Indonesia surpassed its target in the Games by ranking 4th with 98 medals, consisting of 31 gold medals, 24 silver medals, and 43 bronze medals. "Previously, the target was to be in the top 10 with 16 gold medals," said Syafruddin, who is also the administrative and bureaucratic reform minister.

(Source: Asiangames2018.id)

## Govt sets aside Rp210b for Asiad bonuses

The government has allocated Rp 210 billion (US\$14.256 million) for cash bonuses distributed among medal-winning athletes, coaches and assistant coaches participating in the 2018 Asian Games (Asiad).

"What's interesting is that the bonuses will not just be given to the medalists, but also non-medalists. The athletes who did not win a medal will each get a bonus of Rp 20 million," Youth and Sports Minister Imam Nahravi said at the State Palace on Sunday.

Imam made the statement after attending a gathering of athletes and coaches who participated in the Asian Games, along with President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo.

During the gathering, the President presented symbolic bonuses to the medal winners. The cash prizes have already been transferred to their bank accounts. "Rp 210 billion covered all the bonuses,



including for non-medalists. But that's only for the 2018 Asian Games. That doesn't include the Asian Para Games, which hasn't been held yet," said Imam.

He added that the bonuses had been transferred on Sunday, directly to the

bank accounts of each athlete, coach and assistant coach.

Each gold medalists received Rp1.5 billion, which is non-tax deductible, while gold-winning duos got Rp 1 billion each and athletes from a gold-medal team got

Rp 750 million each.

Silver medalists received Rp 500 million, while pairs got Rp 400 million and silver-meal teams got Rp 300 million per athlete.

Bronze medalists got Rp 250 million, while pairs received Rp 200 million each and teams got Rp 150 million per member.

Coaches got Rp 450 million for training gold medalist, Rp 150 for training silver medalists and Rp 75 million for bronze medalists.

Assistant coaches received Rp 300 million for helping to train gold medalists, Rp 100 million for training silver medalists and Rp 50 million for bronze medal winners.

In addition to cash bonuses, they will also receive a civil servant status, which includes a monthly salary from the government, as well as a house.

(Source: Asiangames2018.id)

## President praises Iranian athletes' performance in Asian Games

**TASNIM** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani lauded the country's athletes for their brilliant performance in the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia and winning the highest ever number of medals for Iran in the sports event.

In a message on Saturday night, the Iranian president appreciated efforts made by the athletes, their coaches and the teams' crew in the 2018 Asian Games, held in Indonesia's Jakarta and Palembang.

He also congratulated the athletes for their mighty and brilliant performance in the competition that resulted in the best ever result achieved by Iran in the Asian games.

"I would also like to acknowledge Iranian female athletes' proud presence in these games, who observed Islamic and national values and won the most medals

to break the record of the previous games, hoisting the Iranian flag to portray the confidence and power of our country's women in different fields of competition," Rouhani added.

Iran came sixth in the medal standings of the 2018 Asian Games with 62 medals, including 20 gold, 20 silver and 22 bronze.

In another message, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani also praised the athletes taking part in the 2018 Asian Games, saying the brave Iranian men and women did a great job in the games, which was an opportunity for unity of the nations and stronger friendship.

Asian Games is the world's second-biggest multi-sport event after the summer Olympics.



## Retired Azmoun invited to Iran national football team

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Sardar Azmoun, who announced his retirement after the 2018 World Cup, has been invited to Iran national football team.

The Rubin Kazan striker, who completed 90 minutes in each of Iran's three World Cup games, quit international football after the prestigious tournament, citing the abuse he has received and the effect it has had on his family.

Carlos Queiroz has called up 29 players to Team Melli in the international break, however there is no place in the team for Persepolis captain Jalal Hosseini.

● **Squad:**

■ **Goalkeepers:**

Alireza Beiranvand, Rashid Mazaheri, Amir Abedzadeh, Hossein Hosseini

■ **Defenders:**

Ramin Rezaeian, Mohammadreza Khanzadeh, Rouzbeh Cheshmi, Majid Hosseini, Morteza Pouraliganji, Pejman Montazeri, Milad Mohammadi, Sadegh Moharrami, Vouria Ghafouri, Armin Sohrabian

■ **Midfielders:**

Saeid Ezatolahi, Omid Ebrahimi, Ashkan Dejagah, Saman Ghoddos, Mehdi Torabi, Masoud Shojaei, Vahid Amiri, Ali Karimi, Ehsan Haji Safi

■ **Strikers:**

Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Ali Gholizadeh, Mehdi Taremi, Sardar Azmoun, Karim Ansarifard, Kaveh Rezaei

## Ehsan Haji Safi joins Tractor Sazi

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran's third captain Ehsan Haji Safi joined Tractor Sazi football team from Olympiacos on Sunday.

Haji Safi joined the reigning Greek champions on a 3.5-year deal from Panionios in January.

Tractor Sazi paid Haji Safi's 500,000 euros release clause to sign the 28-year winger.

Haji Safi represented Iran in the 2018 World Cup, where Team Melli's defensive display was mightily impressive against Morocco, Spain and Portugal.

Haji Safi is Iran national football team's third captain who joins Tractor Sazi. Masoud Shojaei and Ashkan Dejagah have already signed a contract with the Tabriz-based football team.

Tractor Sazi sit sixth under guidance of Welshman John Toshack with nine points from six matches.

## Iran unchanged in beach soccer ranking

The Iranian national beach soccer team stayed unchanged in the beach soccer world ranking.

USA jumped an impressive eight places to 25th to claim the August Movers of the Month title.

Team Melli still are the best Asian team in the ranking with 2413 points. Japan and the UAE are 9th (1233) and 10th (1076) respectively in the world ranking.

Brazil, who won the 2017 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup, stayed atop of the ranking with 3613 points.

Portugal are second in the rankings with 2634 points. Russia and Italy sit fourth and fifth with 2129 and 1886 points respectively.

(Source: Beachsoccer)

## Alireza Faghani to officiate Japan v Chile

**TASNIM** — Iranian international referee Alireza Faghani will officiate the friendly match between Japan and Chile.

The match has been scheduled for September 7 at the Sapporo Stadium in Sapporo, Japan. Faghani officiated the third-place match between Belgium and England in the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

In his impressive career, the 40-year-old has officiated finals of the 2014 AFC Champions League, 2015 AFC Asian Cup, 2015 FIFA Club World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Football Tournament.

## Paralympic praises Iran Wheelchair Basketball Team's performance

Iran made a historic push at the World Wheelchair Basketball Championship in Hamburg, Germany.

Not many would have predicted the Iranian men to come as far as they did. The 2017 Asia-Oceania Championship silver medalist went undefeated in group play that included host Germany, Canada and Morocco; and reached the bronze medal game against zonal rivals Australia.

Although they lost, Iran's finish was the highest finish at a Worlds from an Asian men's team.

Omid Hadiazhar and Morteza Ebrahimi were two towering terrors who made that run possible.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

## Winning Asian Cup is our beautiful goal: Carlos Queiroz

**PLDC** — Iran national football team head coach Carlos Queiroz said to win the AFC Asian Cup will be a beautiful goal for Team Melli.

The Portuguese traveled to Tehran, capital of Iran on Friday to extend his contract with Iran football Federation.

"I will meet the football officials and I hope to receive an assurance of full support from them. To win the AFC Asian Cup is a beautiful goal in our minds," Queiroz told reporters in the Imam Khomeini Airport. "Iran has yet to win the title since 1976 and we are united to win the title for the fourth time," he added.

"To be here in Iran is a great honor for me. I cannot say here is my first home or second home. I believe the home is where the heart is. It doesn't matter for me the first and second because it's a good feeling being in Iran," Queiroz concluded.



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## Taiwan Asia-Pacific Film Festival honors Iranian films

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – The Iranian films “Appendix” and “The Villa Tenants” have won three awards at the 58th Asia-Pacific Film Festival in Taipei, Taiwan.

According to the reports published by Taiwanese news websites on Saturday, director Hossein Namazi received the special jury prize for his drama “Appendix”, which also won its star Amir-Ali Danai the best actor award.



Director Hossein Namazi poses at the premiere of his movie “Appendix” at Mellat Cineplex in Tehran in December 2017.

In addition, Sorayya Qasemi won the award for best supporting actress for her role in “The Villa Tenants” (“Villa Life”) by Monir Qeidi.

“Appendix” is about Zari, who goes to the hospital with her husband due to severe abdominal pain. Using her friend’s health card because hers has expired, Zari undergoes an appendectomy but the staff at the hospital becomes suspicious of her identity, miring the couple in a struggle with the health care system.

“The Villa Tenants” focuses on wives of Iranian commanders during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The Australian drama “Lion” by Garth Davis took home the festival’s best film award.

The best actress award went to Teresa Mo of Hong Kong for her role in “Tomorrow Is Another Day”.

## Paintings reflect films Tahmineh Milani never made

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Tahmineh Milani, the director of acclaimed movies “Ceasefire” and “Two Women”, has showcased the stories she failed to turn into films in her painting collection titled “The Films I Never Made”.



Filmmaker Tahmineh Milani (Photo by Ghazaleh Baquerlu)

The collection includes 26 paintings created over the past four years, Milani said in press release on Sunday.

The paintings are scheduled to be put on display at E1 Gallery in Tehran during an exhibition, which will open on Friday.

“Each painting has a story,” Milani said and added, “Since I’m a storytelling filmmaker, I used different methods and techniques to depict the story of each painting.”

However, she noted, “My paintings represent no specific technique or method, they go their own ways, but they come from a single soul, my soul, why not?”

## New album spotlights ‘Muscle Shoals sound’

**MUSCLE SHOALS, Ala. (AP)** — A new album will throw a spotlight on the famed “Muscle Shoals sound” that made a north Alabama town one of the nation’s premier recording venues.

Performers including Aerosmith’s Steven Tyler and country singers Alison Krauss, Alan Jackson, Vince Gill and Willie Nelson have tracks on the upcoming “Muscle Shoals: Small Town, Big Sound.”

A statement from the German music company BMG said the album is being released Sept. 28 in collaboration with The Muscle Shoals Music Group and Dreamlined Entertainment.

Muscle Shoals became a recording hotbed after producer Rick Hall began FAME Recording Studios in 1959. Some of the biggest stars in music, including Aretha Franklin, the Rolling Stones and Lynyrd Skynyrd, recorded in the town.

Hall died in January, and the album is being released partly in tribute to his work. It also marks the 60th anniversary of the “Muscle Shoals sound.”

Many artists featured on the new album recorded tracks at FAME Studios that recreate hits first recorded in Muscle Shoals. That includes Tyler’s version of the Stones’ hit “Brown Sugar,” which is featured in a promotional video about the album.

Rick Hall’s son, Rodney Hall, curated music and served as executive producer for the album with Dreamlined Entertainment founder Keith Stegall.

# “No Date” scoops awards at Iran Cinema Celebration

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – After repeated victories at various international events, the Jalilvand brothers’ drama “No Date, No Signature” enjoyed a big success at home during the 20th Iran Cinema Celebration on Saturday by winning awards in five categories including best film and best director.

“Each award has its own special value, but it’s more impressive when the members of your family say that they have liked your film,” producer Ali Jalilvand said after accepting the award for best film at the celebration held at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall.

The film is about Dr. Nariman, a forensic pathologist who has a car accident with a motorcyclist and injures his 8-year-old son. He offers to take the child to a clinic nearby, but the father refuses his help and money. The next morning, in the hospital where he works, Dr. Nariman finds out that the little boy has been brought for an autopsy after a suspicious death.

Jalilvand pointed to some remarks by writer Seyyed Mehdi Shojaei, in which he warned about a society with ideals in Iran and asked his fellow cineastes to depict the issue in their movies, and said “I feel that our cinema has fulfilled its duty, but officials do not see that the cinema warned about various issues earlier,” he added.

Vahid Jalilvand who is also the co-writer of the screenplay for “No Date, No Signature” received the awards for best director and best screenwriter. Ali Zarnegar collaborated with him in writing the screenplay.

The film also brought Zakieh Behbahani and Navid Mohammadzadeh the awards for best supporting actress and best supporting actor respectively.

Hamed Behdad was selected as best actor for his role in “Blockage” by director Mohsen Qarai. In his acceptance speech, Behdad criticized the government over arresting a number of Iranian environmental activists.

“Iran is the dearest and most important thing we have,” he noted and asked the government, “Why do you punish the environmental activists? This land is the only thing we have; show mercy,” he said

“Those people who do not allow us to try for building our country are traitors,”



This combination photo shows the Jalilvand brothers Vahid (L) and Ali (R) after accepting the awards for best director and best film for their drama “No Date, No Signature” during the 20th Iran Cinema Celebration at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on September 1, 2018. (Fars/Armin Karami)

he noted.

The award for best actress went to Ghazal Shakerdoost for her role in director Maziar Miri’s “Sara and Ayda”.

“Pedovore” by Mohammad Kart was picked as best short film while “Run, Run Rustam” by Hassan Molayemi was named best animated film.

The award for best documentary director was presented to Orod Atapur for “Persepolis-Chicago”, which is Iran’s Achaemenid tablets loaned to the Oriental Institute of

the University of Chicago in 1937 for study.

The award for best documentary went to “Finding Farideh” co-directed by Azadeh Musavi and Kurosh Atai. The film is about Farideh, an Iranian woman who was adopted by a Dutch family during her childhood in a Tehran orphanage. In this film, she wants Iranians to help her find her real parents.

Masud Salami won the award for best director of cinematography for his collaboration in director Fereidun Jeyrani’s drama “Asphyxia” while Ahmad Moradpur received

the best editor award for his collaboration in “Sara and Ayda”.

The Iranian House of Cinema organizes the celebration every year to commemorate Iran’s National Day of Cinema, which is September 12 this year. However, the celebration was held earlier due to the mourning season of Muharram in the country.

Earlier in July, the organizers also announced that the celebration would be held without any party afterwards due to the current economic climate in the country.

## Filmmaker Feryal Behzad receives lifetime award at Isfahan festival



**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Filmmaker Feryal Behzad was honored on Saturday with a lifetime achievement award during the 31st International Film Festival for Children and Youth underway in the central Iranian city of Isfahan.

The honoring ceremony for Behzad, the director of acclaimed films such as “Kakoli”, “The Valley of Butterflies” and “The Invisible Man”, was held at Felestin Cinema, the organizers announced.

“My main reason behind my interest in children’s cinema is that I am the mother of two children,” she said after receiving her award.

“I have always liked to make something to entertain them. I made ‘Kakoli’ when

I had one child and the story took place in the old days of Isfahan,” she added.

“I do like fantasy films. One thing children can do is to make films about their dreams. Everything in real life is actually rooted in these dreams of mankind,” she concluded.

In his short speech, filmmaker Vahid Nikkhah-Azad called Behzad a pioneer in making films for children and announced her plan again to make a new film in Isfahan after many years have passed.

He expressed his hope to see Behzad with her new movie attending the festival next year.

The 31st International Film Festival for Children and Youth will be running until September 5.

## Documentary on maestro Loris Tjeknavorian released



Maestro Loris Tjeknavorian attends the premiere of “October 13, 1937” at the Film Museum of Iran September 11, 2018.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – “October 13, 1937”, a documentary on Iranian-Armenian maestro Loris Tjeknavorian, has been released by Hashure, an Iranian video streaming website for documentary films.

The website premiered “October 13, 1937” directed by Baktash Abtin at the Film Museum of Iran on Saturday.

“When I was told they were going to make a film about me I was afraid, since we are all making changes every day,” Tjeknavorian said in a brief speech made after the premiere of the documentary.

“I never thought about the replies to the questions in this film and gave the

responses immediately. I am still a child and I never want to leave this childhood of mine because that world would have no pleasure for me,” he noted.

He said that “October 13, 1937” is about a mad person and added, “I have always said that the mad people make the world and the wise ruin it.”

Director Abtin also said that the documentary tries to portray the maestro as he is, kind and sincere.

“I really enjoyed working with him since he is a musician who has no difference with his inner side,” Abtin said.

The documentary will be available online until September 14.

## Coen brothers return to True Grit country with six tales of the Old West

**VENICE, Italy (Reuters)** — Coen brothers fans get six movies for the price of one in “The Ballad of Buster Scruggs”, an anthology of Western stories starring, among others, James Franco, Liam Neeson, Tyne Daly and Tom Waits.

The movie, by the team that pulled off an acclaimed remake of the John Wayne Western “True Grit” in 2010, had its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival this week where it is one of three Netflix movies competing for the Golden Lion.

“In the States it’s getting a theatrical release,” Ethan Coen told Reuters in an interview when asked how he felt about the movie going onto the streaming service.

“We’re movie people and it’s important to us that people who want to see it on a big screen are able to do so,” said Ethan, who wrote and directed “Buster Scruggs” with brother Joel – a successful creative partnership that goes back 35 years.

“Different companies have different business models and different ways that they exploit the product, but the more there are, the more different ways, it’s just that much



Directors Ethan Coen and Joel Coen pose before screening of the film “The Ballad of Buster Scruggs” competing in the Venezia 75 section of the 75th Venice International Film Festival in Venice, Italy, August 31, 2018. (Reuters/Tony Gentile)

healthier for the business,” said Joel.

Critics gave a cautious thumbs up to the film.

“If you were going to be cynical about it, you might say

“The Ballad of Buster Scruggs” is still a Netflix series — it’s just one that the Coens are forcing you to binge-watch,” said Variety’s Owen Gleiberman.

“The movie runs 135 minutes, and since the episodes are uneven in quality (though the best of them seize and hold you), you may feel, at moments, that it’s too much of a just-okay thing.”

Tim Blake Nelson, who plays the sharpshooting singing cowboy Buster Scruggs, dismissed such criticism.

“First of all, it was always only ever a film, so anybody who’s writing that it should have been kept as a TV show, that’s an erroneous starting point,” he told Reuters.

“This was always only a movie and it was misconstrued because of the word ‘Netflix’ as something that was episodic and was going to appear on television.”

The Guardian’s Peter Bradshaw called “Buster Scruggs” “a hilarious, beautifully made, very enjoyable and rather disturbing anthology ... vignettes that switch with stunning force from picturesque sentimentality to grisly violence.”

The Venice Film Festival runs to Sept 8.