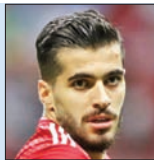




**Zarif on Trump plan to chair UN council meeting: #chutzpah** **2**



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# Terrorists transferring chemical weapons to Idlib



See page 2

## Iran needs more help to support Afghan refugees – UNHCR chief

Iran continues to set a global example through its progressive and inclusive refugee policies, but the country needs more support hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the world, said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi during a three-day visit.

Iran is home to almost one million registered refugees, the vast majority from Afghanistan. The High Commis-

sioner recognized Iran's generous policies, which are oriented towards the inclusion of refugees in national services and the economy, including through access to the national health insurance scheme, permission to work in a range of occupations and documentation. In a ground-breaking move, since 2015, all Afghan children, regardless of status, have also had access to primary and secondary education. ➔13

## China sticking to nuclear pact and implementing it: envoy

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Chinese ambassador to Tehran on Wednesday said that his country adheres to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and continues to implement it.

The U.S. withdrawal from the deal has posed challenges to Tehran-Beijing ties but China will remain loyal to the international deal, said Pang Sen, entekhab.ir reported. Ambassador Pang said China disagrees

with imposing unilateral sanctions on a country that would be enforced by the so-called "long-arm jurisdiction", which implies on the ability of local courts to exercise jurisdiction over foreign defendants.

He made the remarks in an address to the second conference of Iran-China cooperation within the framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt held in Tehran. ➔2

## Russia: Airstrikes hit terrorists not populated areas in Idlib

By staff & agencies

The Russian Defense Ministry says its fighter jets have bombed the positions of foreign-sponsored Takfiri terrorists in Syria's militant-held northwestern province of Idlib, as Syrian government troops and allied fighters are preparing for a ground operation to liberate

the territory.

The ministry, in a statement released on Wednesday, announced that the aerial attack had only pounded members of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (al-Nusra Front/ Jabhat al-Nusra) Takfiri terrorist group, dismissing allegations that it had struck populated areas. ➔13

## 'Iran is critical to India's energy strategy and broader geopolitical interests'

By: Syed Zafar Mehdi

**TEHRAN** — The unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal and renewal of economic sanctions has forced many countries to cut oil imports from Iran under the U.S. pressure. While some countries like China, Russia and Turkey have refused to buckle under the U.S. pressure, some countries like India are yet to take the final decision.

The speculation over whether India will continue to buy crude oil from Iran or cut the imports continues. The issue is likely to figure prominently in the first Indo-U.S. 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi on Thursday.

Brahma Chellaney is a geostrategist, scholar, author, and commentator. As a specialist on

international strategic issues, he has held appointments at Harvard University, Brookings Institution, Johns Hopkins University, and Australian National University.

In an interview with Tehran Times, Mr. Chellaney said Iran is critical to India's energy strategy and New Delhi is looking for a waiver from the U.S. sanctions on Iran so as to insulate its energy and political cooperation with Tehran. He says India has not buckled under the U.S. pressure but is pursuing a cautious approach to uphold its interests.

Following are the excerpts:

■ Following the unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal, many countries have felt the pressure to cut oil imports from

Iran, including Iran's close ally India. There has been a lot of speculation over whether India will continue importing oil from Iran or not. Can you tell us what's happening in New Delhi?

A. For India, Iran is an important partner. Iran is critical to India's energy strategy. And it is also critical to India's broader geopolitical interests extending from Central Asia and Afghanistan to the Middle East. India cannot turn its back on Iran.

■ India's Petroleum Minister recently said the Indian government will take a 'considered and considerate' view based on 'national interest' on the issue of U.S. sanctions against Iranian oil and find a way to secure its energy needs. What do you think is in India's national interest? ➔6

## Trump's trade war with China poses greatest threat to global economic growth

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — As the trade war between the U.S. and China intensifies, the vice chairman of the world's largest money manager believes U.S. President Donald Trump's trade policies pose the greatest threat to global economic growth.

"I would say the policies that are embraced by the U.S. administration around trade represent the biggest risk today to the global economy," BlackRock's Philipp Hildebrand was quoted saying by CNBC.

His comments came as trade pundits and investors monitor the prospect of an escalating trade war between the world's two biggest economies.

Trump said earlier this week that he is prepared to impose tariffs on an additional \$200 billion worth of imports from China as soon as a

public comment period ends on Thursday. The two countries have already slapped tariffs on each other to the tune of \$50 billion of goods.

Since the talks between the two sides have failed to produce a breakthrough, the next round of \$200 billion U.S. tariffs on Chinese imports could come anytime soon and would mark a major escalation in the trade war. But it remains to be seen when and how Trump implements it.

China is likely to retaliate promptly with duties on nearly everything it imports from the U.S. It has already threatened to impose tariffs on \$60 billion worth of U.S. goods as a tit-for-tat measure.

It is also reportedly reducing its orders of U.S. crude oil, and is likely to move towards other oil markets, most notably in the Middle East. If that

happens, countries in the Middle East could be biggest beneficiaries of the growing US-China feud.

A recent World Bank study estimated that at the current level of tariff retaliation, the U.S. and China will each suffer a drop in annual exports of about \$40 billion. If the war escalates to include all trade and services between the two countries, Chinese exports to the U.S. would fall by \$190 billion and U.S. exports to China by \$166 billion.

Hu Xijin, chief editor of Chinese daily Beijing Times, said China is an economic and a nuclear power and it isn't an easy task to provoke it from any direction. "China is not Mexico and will not agree with a laundry list of demands from the U.S. in this trade war," he wrote on Twitter, saying China will "hit back to the end" if U.S. persists with its trade war. ➔6



### ARTICLE

**Ebrahim Fallahi**  
Tehran Times journalist

## Petrochemical industry, a pillar for Iran's resilient economy

Inaugurating three major petrochemical projects in Assaluyeh petrochemical zone in southwestern Iran was the headline of almost all Iranian energy related and economic news agencies across the country on Monday.

These petchem projects were officially inaugurated by President Hassan Rouhani which signifies their importance for Iran's economy in the new era of sanctions and economic pressure imposed by the U.S.

Since, as stated by President Rouhani in the inauguration ceremony, petrochemical industry is one of the most important pillars of the country's resilient economy and "one of the main suppliers of foreign currency especially euro for the country".

According to Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, Iran's export of petrochemical products is anticipated to reach \$14 billion in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

"The country is currently producing 62 million tons of petrochemical products annually and with the new projects going on stream the number will jump to 65.5 million tons further cementing the Islamic country's stance as a major petrochemical supplier to the world markets" Zanganeh said at the opening ceremony in Bushehr Province.

### ■ At the top of the world

The third phase of developing Pardis Petrochemical Company was one of the inaugurated projects which was implemented at the cost of €502 million secured from the income of the first and second phases of the company.

This phase will make Pardis the largest producer of urea and ammonia in the Middle East and world with an annual production capacity of 5.265 million.

Iran is currently exporting urea to Turkey, India, China, Europe and many countries in Latin America. The country exported over 4 million tons of urea in 2017.

### ■ Increasing methanol production

Marjan Petrochemical Complex, a producer of methanol, with the annual capacity of 1.65 million tons was another project which officially started operating on Monday. Construction of this complex was started some six years ago and \$914 million has been invested for this project. ➔4



### ARTICLE

**Syed Zafar Mehdi**  
Journalist  
from New Delhi

## Life, death and legacy of U.S. ally turned foe Haqqani

The death of Jalaluddin Haqqani, the patriarch of the dreaded militant group Haqqani Network, has generated a palpable buzz and made international headlines. The announcement was made by the Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid on Tuesday, hailing him as a "religious scholar and exemplary warrior", even though Afghan officials insist that he had been dead for at least four years.

What does Haqqani's death mean to the Taliban insurgency and the war in Afghanistan? If he was already dead, then why did the group disclose the news now? The debate is getting intense in media and intelligentsia circles.

Haqqani, 71, who founded the Haqqani network in 1970s, relinquished operational leadership of the group some years ago to his son Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is now the deputy leader of the Afghan Taliban. Many seasoned observers believe his death, following a prolonged illness, will not have any major impact on the group's operations since he mattered very little towards the end of his life.

Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Mohammad Radmanish said the announcement of his death was not expected to mean any major change for the Haqqani Network, since his son has been spearheading the group's operations since many years. "Operationally, his death will not have an impact on the group," he stressed, adding that the senior Haqqani's role in recent years was more ideological.

Rahmatullah Nabil, the former chief of Afghan intelligence agency, agrees with that assumption. He said his death will not have any effect on the "devious activities" of the group, adding that the ISI, Pakistan's intelligence agency, has already "trained his successors to be more ruthless than him", most notably Siraj Haqqani, Ibrahim Haqqani, Khalil Haqqani, Hamza Haqqani, Yahya Haqqani and others, suggesting that the Haqqani Network was backed by Pakistan's intelligence agency.

Nabil said the news about his death is directly linked to the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to Pakistan, and thus the U.S. State Department and Pakistan were "playing as usual". ➔6



© ISNA / Masoud Moghlagheh

## Plain of thousands suns

The photo depicts Kalpoush plain filled with sunflowers in Mayami, north central province of Semnan, which is a tourist attraction in the region.

Every year with the beginning of the Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (August 23 to September 22) the plain will be ornamented with thousands of golden sunflowers.

The last month of summer is the best time to take a trip to the region to enjoy the scenic plains covered with bright yellow flowers.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Judiciary chief: No red lines in dealing with economy disruptors

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Judiciary Chief Ayatollah d e s k Sadeq Amoli Larijani said on Wednesday that there are no red lines in dealing with economy disruptors, promising that those opportunists who are misusing the current economic situation will face severe punishment, ISNA reported.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an Assembly of Experts meeting in Tehran, Amoli Larijani said those who create chaos in the foreign currency, gold coin and automobile markets will face severe consequences.

The Judiciary chief further said prosecutors have called for maximum punishment for economy disruptors, adding that those harming the country's economy should expect capital punishment or other severe penalties.



Foreign currency's secondary market not disorganized: Larijani

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani d e s k said on Wednesday that the foreign currency's secondary market is not disorganized and is under control, Tasnim reported.

"High volumes of transactions take place in this market but media outlets focus on external market which accounts for a low amount of transactions," Larijani told reporters.

He said parts of economic problems are due to foreign pressure, which combined with domestic issues, have led to chronic problems for the economy.

Larijani added that efforts are needed by the three branches of the government to improve the situation.



Interior minister visits Iraq

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Interior Minister Abdolreza d e s k Rahmani Fazli visited Baghdad on Wednesday for border talks with his Iraqi counterpart Qasim al-Araji.

Rahmani Fazli was welcomed by al-Araji and Iranian Ambassador Iraj Masjedi at Baghdad airport, IRNA reported.

The two ministers were scheduled to sign a memorandum of understanding on Arbreen rituals.

Also on Wednesday, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani departed for Russia to take part in a high-level inter-parliamentary commission meeting.

Larijani is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with his Russian counterpart in a meeting attended by parliamentarians from both countries.



Tehran, Baghdad discussing rial-based visas for Iranian pilgrims

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Tehran is in the last stage d e s k of talks with Baghdad to replace dollar with Iran's national currency, rial, when issuing visas for Iranian pilgrims who plan to visit Iraq during the Arbreen rituals, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday.

"The negotiating sides of both countries are holding talks and consultations in this regard and the negotiations are in final phases," Qassemi said, Fars reported.



Lebanon's Civil Aviation denies report of Iran arms smuggling

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Directorate General d e s k of Lebanon's Civil Aviation on Tuesday denied a report by Fox News claiming that an Iranian civil aviation company had been smuggling weapons into Lebanon through Beirut airport.

"The Directorate General of the Civil Aviation absolutely denies such claims, and asks media means for accuracy before publishing any news on the airport," the statement read, according to the NNA.

The Fox News report alleged that Tehran is "trying to come up with new ways and routes to smuggle weapons from Iran to its allies in the Middle East, testing and defying the West's abilities to track them down."



Envoy calls on regional states to resolve water crisis

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Ambassador in d e s k Baghdad Iraj Masjedi on Tuesday proposed formation of a four-member committee among Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria to resolve the water crisis in the region, IRNA reported.

Asked about the Iraqi premier's claims that Iran had blocked the flow of Karoun River towards Arvand River (Shatt al-Arab), Masjedi said the entire region including Iran and Iraq have been suffering from water shortage due to poor rainfalls in recent years.

The issue of water shortage is not related to Iraq alone because Zayandeh Roud River which has been the symbol of beauty in the city of Isfahan has dried up.

# Zarif on Trump plan to chair UN council meeting: #chutzpah

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister d e s k Mohammad Javad Zarif has reacted strongly to Washington's announcement that President Donald Trump is going to chair the upcoming UN Security Council and use the opportunity against Iran.

"There's only one UNSC resolution on Iran. .@realDonaldTrump is violating it & bullying others to do same. Now he plans to abuse presidency of SC to divert a session—item devoted to Palestine for 70 yrs—to blame Iran for horrors U.S. & clients have unleashed across M.E. #chutzpah," Zarif tweeted on Wednesday.

A few hours earlier, U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley had said Trump would chair a UN Security Council meeting on Iran this month during the annual gathering of world leaders in New York.

The United States, which holds the council presidency for September, has unsuccessfully pushed the Security Council to call out Iran. Haley has regularly attacked Iran, accusing it of meddling in the wars in Syria and Yemen.

Diplomats said Iran could request to speak at the 26 September meeting, the high-level week of the UN General Assembly. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is expected to address the assembly on September 25. The Iranian UN mission did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Haley said the United States would not object to Rouhani speaking. Rouhani is scheduled to travel to New York in late September.

Russia's deputy UN ambassador, Dmitry Polyanskiy,



said the Iran meeting should focus on the implementation of a 2015 resolution on Iran.

"We very much hope that there will be views voiced in connection with the U.S. withdrawal" from a 2015 international nuclear deal, Polyanskiy told the council.

Trump in May withdrew from the accord between Iran and six world powers aimed at stalling Tehran's nuclear capabilities in return for lifting some sanctions. He ordered the reimposition of U.S. sanctions suspended under the deal.

## Tehran says terrorists transferring chemical weapons to Idlib

‘EU has until November 4 to save Iran deal’

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran's Deputy Foreign d e s k Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Tuesday that there is evidence that terrorists in Syria have been transferring chemical weapons to Idlib.

The remarks by Araqchi comes as the Syrian army is set to recapture Idlib from al-Nusra and al-Qaeda terrorists.

Terrorists in certain cases have used chemical weapons against the civilians whenever the government forces tried to capture their hideouts.

In certain cases whenever the Syrian government has launched attacks to drive out terrorists from their hideouts in cities they have used chemical weapons against the civilians in order to demonize the Damascus government.

"There are evidences that chemical weapons and substances are in the hands of terrorists. Right now intelligence is arriving saying that chemical substances have been moved to Idlib by the terrorists. There is a high possibility for the scenario to be repeated," he said on Tuesday evening in a televised interview.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif visited Damascus ahead of the summit between Iranian, Russian and Turkish presidents in Tehran on Friday.

The summit is taking place as the Syrian army along with a support by resistance forces are preparing to liberate Idlib, the last stronghold of terrorists in Syria.

"On Monday Mr. Zarif went to Syria and there he reviewed the latest Syrian developments with the president and (other) officials of Syria. They reviewed the latest on-ground situation. And we come with specified plans and ideas that, God willing, will enable us to conclude the fight on terrorism, leading to the political process, and the reconstruction process, and finally the return of the refugees to normal life," Araqchi explained.

"We are in close cooperation with the government of Russia. Intimate talks and negotiations are going on between us and the government of Russia regarding Syria. And the same exists with Turkey. And I think that we are moving on the right path. The fact on the ground tells us that our path in Astana so far has been the right path and that it will cause the reinstitution of the rule of the Syrian government and army on its entirety of territory, God willing. And we are hopeful that over the coming months we will get to the point where the reconstruction of Syria begins."

■ 'If Europe minds it reputation it should pay its costs'

Regarding the situation over the Iran nuclear deal, he said, "What we tell Europeans is this: If your reputation is important to you, if your security is important to you, you should create some situation and support your companies

and satisfy them to work with Iran. And what Europeans have so far failed to do is to operationalize their support for their companies; to create ways for their companies to work with Iran while staying exempt from U.S. sanctions."

"If you [Europeans] think that the JCPOA is a matter of security to Europe, a matter of reputation, a matter of politics, a matter of non-proliferation, if it is the things you say it is, you should pay for it. It is impossible that you ensure security and your companies are not sanctioned. You should come to the stage, pay the price, (and) support your companies. If the U.S. sanctions them you should take on the penalties, and create grounds for your company, for your bank to come work with Iran in tranquility."

"So far, despite the U.S. exit from the JCPOA, it is in our interest to stay in the JCPOA, else it is a piece of cake to quit the JCPOA, to tear or set it on fire. This was an agreement that was made, and the losing side was the U.S."

However, Araqchi mentioned, Iran has given European parties to the nuclear deal until November 4 - the start of U.S. sanctions against its vital oil industry - to come up with ways to offset the impact.

Iran has "clearly announced" to European nations that if its "main interests" in the nuclear agreement are not served, "staying in the deal will not benefit us anymore," he noted.

## Basij says has plans for industrial problems

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Basij d e s k Chief Gholamhossein Gheybparvar said on Wednesday that Basij has plans to help solve problems in the areas of industry and agriculture.

Basij has announced its readiness to solve problems, because the country's current situation is serious, he said during a conference at the University of Tehran.

Pointing to the current economic war against the country, he said, "Certain people say that the country's problems can be solved politically. Such words smell negotiation! Negotiating with who? The one whose hands are stained with betrayal?"

On July 31, U.S. President Donald Trump offered to meet Iran's leaders with "no preconditions" and "any time they want".

"I'd meet with anybody. I believe in meetings," Trump told reporters at the White House.

In remarks on August 13, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said there will be no war be-



tween Iran and the U.S. and nor will be any negotiation between the two countries.

The Leader noted that as Imam Khomeini "banned talks with the U.S. I also ban it". He added that negotiation with the current U.S. administration is impossible. "Even if we were to negotiate with the U.S., we would never hold talks with the current U.S. administration."

Assembly of Experts Chairman Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said on Tuesday that Trump is eager to meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly which will be held from September 18-25.

## Plot by hegemonic system could cause long-term insecurity in Mideast: defense chief

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Irani- d e s k an Defense Minister Amir Hatami has said that the plot by hegemonic system could cause long-term insecurity in the Middle East, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

"The hegemon's plot in Syria could cause insecurity in the region for a long time," Hatami said during a meeting with commander of Russian forces in Syria.

Hatami visited Syria in late August. When there, he visited the northern city of Aleppo.

The minister went on to say that Tehran attaches great value to actions taken in fighting terrorists in Syria.

He also noted that cooperation between Iran and Russia in countering terrorism in Syria should be used as a model to establish peace and stability in the region.

So far Iran, Russia, Turkey, Syria and the opposition have held several rounds of talks on the Syria conflict in Astana, Kazakhstan. The talks have produced



tangible progresses.

"The Astana talks are successful experiences at the political level to settle the crisis [in Syria] and we highlight the importance of continuing this process," the defense chief remarked.

The presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey will hold talks on Syria in Tehran on Friday. The summit meeting is in line with the continuation of the Astana talks aimed at bringing an end to the conflict in Syria.

The summit in Tehran is taking place at a time that Syria is preparing to purge Idlib from terrorists.

## China sticking to nuclear pact and implementing it: envoy

1 → The two countries have friendly relations and will maintain their routine business cooperation and this should not be criticized in any way, he added.

The envoy also attached great importance to the Tehran-Beijing cooperation, saying, "China is willing

to deepen its relations with Iran."

"We can be sure that with [practicing] patience, we will certainly be able to overcome the ups and downs on the path of Tehran-Beijing relations."

China is a party to the nuclear deal that Iran signed

with great powers in July 2015. In May, Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and reimposed primary sanctions on Iran and secondary sanctions on the countries that do business with Tehran.

## Russian, German diplomats discuss nuclear deal

By staff and agency  
Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov and Antje Leendertse, director of the political directorate-general of Germany's Federal Foreign Office, discussed the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"Both sides stressed the importance of keeping the JCPOA in place. A number of other aspects of arms control and non-proliferation were touched upon," TASS quoted the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the nuclear agreement in May and ordered restoration of sanctions

against Iran. The first batch of sanctions took effect on August 6.

The European Union trio -- Germany, France and Britain 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.

The November sanctions target Iran's central bank and oil exports.

The package must facilitate banking transactions and oil trade. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said last week that Iran will abandon the nuclear deal if it does not safeguard the country's interests.

## Nuclear deal is 'not dead', says French FM

By staff and agency  
French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian has said that the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is "not dead".

"This agreement is not dead," Le Drian said in an interview with French radio station RTL, Sputnik reported on Wednesday.

Le Drain added President Emmanuel Macron would speak later in the day to his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani.

He has further said that Macron's talks with Rouhani would be followed

by negotiations next week, which would be attended by representatives of Tehran, as well as Paris, London and Berlin.

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

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

Europe is expected to present its practical package to preserve the JCPOA before the second round of U.S. sanctions start in November.



# Woodward book reveals ‘crazytown’ White House

## ‘Trump Staff Thinks Trump is an Idiot’

Long-time Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward’s book on Donald Trump’s first 18 months in office includes some incendiary comments attributed to the president and key former and current White House staffers. Trump and other officials have denied some accounts.

Here are some of the most explosive passages:

- White House chief of staff John Kelly on working for Trump: “He’s an idiot. It’s pointless to try to convince him of anything. He’s gone off the rails. We’re in crazytown.”
- Mr Trump on attorney general Jeff Sessions: “This guy is mentally retarded. He’s this dumb southerner. How in the world was I ever persuaded to pick him for my attorney general? He couldn’t even be a one-person country lawyer down in Alabama. What business does he have being attorney general?”
- The president after making a speech condemning white supremacists over violence in Charlottesville: “That was the biggest f\*\*\*\*\* mistake I’ve made. You never make those concessions. You never apologise. I



**White House chief of staff John Kelly on working for Trump: “He’s an idiot. It’s pointless to try to convince him of anything. He’s gone off the rails. We’re in crazytown.”**

## Kashmir: Nine-year-old ‘gang-raped, eyes gouged out’

A nine year-old child has been gang-raped and murdered in Indian-administered Kashmir’s Baramullah district, bringing back memory of the brutal gang-rape of an eight-year old in Jammu region of the state.

Police in Kashmir said on Wednesday that the child had gone missing on September 23 and was murdered the same day.

Five people have been arrested in connection with the case, including the step-mother and the step-brother.

The girl was lured to a secluded spot in a forest by her step-mother and was raped in turn by her 14 years old step-brother, his friends and accomplices, the police said.

Later, the step-mother strangled her and the step-brother swung an axe at her head. One of the men gouged out her eyes and burnt parts of her body with acid to destroy evidence, the police added.

“There is conclusive evidence for murder, there is destruction of evidence in regards to rape. But we have got vital clues to prove the rape charges in the court,” Mir Intiyaz Hussain, Police chief in Baramullah district who is supervising the investigation, told Al Jazeera.

“We have identified the culprits. Our job will be complete when the culprits are convicted in a court of law,” he added.

Police say they found the decomposed body in a forest

near her home in Uri on September 2, almost 10 days after she went missing. The father of the child had two wives and the first wife harbored acrimonious feelings towards the second wife and her daughter which spurred her to murder the child, police said. The police said they are building a “watertight case” so the perpetrators are punished this time.

The case is the second such incident in the restive Kashmir region after the brutal gang-rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Kathua earlier this year, which caused widespread revulsion across India.

The girl in Kathua was held captive in a temple and sexually assaulted for a week before being strangled and battered to death with a stone in January.

Violence against women in the South Asian country is widespread and has deep roots.

In recent years, the country has witnessed renewed public outrage over the number of violent sexual assaults against women, especially children.

In July this year, doctors confirmed sexual abuse at a girls shelter in the state of Bihar, with children reporting being beaten, drugged, raped and scalded with hot water.

A child is sexually abused every 15 minutes in India, according to NGO Child Rights.

Crimes against minors have risen more than 500 percent

over the past decade, the right group said, after analyzing government data.

In 2016, police in India received 38,947 reports of rape compared with almost 35,000 in 2015, according to data collected by the National Crime Records Bureau.

India has enacted strident anti-rape laws in response to nationwide outrage in the wake of a series of child rape cases.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has now been amended to introduce the death penalty for the rape of children below age 12.

But campaigners say laws, on their own, do not act as deterrent. “The brutal assault on this child tells us the law is not working. When you have death penalty for rape, they not just rape but they murder and they destroy evidence like they tried with this girl by using acid,” Meenakshi Ganguly, founder and advisor at “HAQ Centre for Child Rights” in New Delhi, told Al Jazeera.

“This case should be a lesson to the government. They rushed to bring the death penalty but the number of rapes have not gone down. What we are dealing with is what is happening behind closed doors, inside families. Our studies show in more than 70 percent of child abuse cases, the rapists are known to the family,” she added.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Top Muslim organization censures Riyadh’s bid to execute dissident cleric

An international organization of Muslim scholars headquartered in Qatar has condemned the House of Saud regime for its attempts to execute a senior Muslim preacher as a brutal crackdown led by the Saudi regime Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) against intellectuals and political dissidents widens in the conservative oil-rich kingdom.

“What is going on in Saudi Arabia is strange beyond belief” as the regime is arresting and trying Muslim scholars, the pan-Arab al-Araby al-Jadeed media outlet quoted Secretary General of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS), Ali al-Qaradaghi.

He added, “We are no longer surprised by any charges against Sheikh Salman Awdah,” stressing that the IUMS censures the ongoing crackdown on Saudi clerics.

The Arabic-language Saudi newspaper Okaz reported on Tuesday that Saudi public

prosecutors have leveled 37 counts against Awdah, and even demanded his execution.

Awdah is the assistant secretary general of the IUMS, which the Riyadh regime has listed as a terrorist organization.

The Saudi regime authorities detained the prominent Muslim scholar on September 7 last year, and have held him in solitary confinement without charge or trial ever since. Officials have imposed travel bans on members of his family as well.

A family member told Human Rights Watch that the distinguished cleric was being held over his refusal to comply with an order by the Saudi regime authorities to tweet a specific text to support the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar.

Awdah, instead, posted a tweet, saying, “May God harmonize between their hearts for the good of their people,” - an apparent call for reconciliation between the Persian

Gulf littoral states, the United States-based rights group said in a statement.

Awdah has been prevented from communicating with the outside world since October.

The House of Saud regime, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt all cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar on June 5 last year, after officially accusing it of “sponsoring terrorism.”

The administration of the Saudi regime-backed and former Yemeni president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, Libya, the Maldives, Djibouti, Senegal and the Comoros later joined the camp in ending diplomatic ties with Doha. Jordan downgraded its diplomatic relations as well.

Qatar’s Foreign Ministry later announced that the decision to cut diplomatic ties was unjustified and based on false claims and assumptions.

Amnesty International has voiced

concern about the situation of detained female Saudi activist Loujain al-Hathloul amid rising speculations that the kingdom may start to execute its jailed women rights campaigners.

The House of Saud regime has lately stepped up politically-motivated arrests, prosecution and conviction of peaceful dissident writers and human rights campaigners.

The Saudi regime officials have also intensified security measures in the Shia-populated and oil-rich Eastern Province.

Over the past years, Riyadh has also redefined its anti-terrorism laws to target activism.

In January 2016, Saudi regime authorities executed Shia cleric, Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, who was an outspoken critic of the policies of the Riyadh regime. Nimr had been arrested in Qatif in 2012.

(Source: Press TV)

## Britain charges two Russians over Skripal Novichok nerve agent attack

British prosecutors have charged two Russian men for a nerve agent attack on a former double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the city of Salisbury earlier this year.

A European arrest warrant was issued on Wednesday for the Russian nationals, identified as Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, the prosecutors said, charging the two of conspiracy to murder, attempted murder and use of the nerve agent Novichok.

“We will not be applying to Russia for the extradition of these men as the Russian constitution does not permit extradition of its own nationals,” Sue Hemming, director of legal services at the Crown Prosecution Service, said.

Russia reiterated concerns that there has been a lack of evidence to implicate the Russian nationals.

“The names published by the media, like their photographs, mean nothing to us,” Maria Zakharova, the Russian foreign ministry’s spokeswoman, told the TASS news agency. “The Russian side has numerous questions for London.”

Zakharova demanded that British authorities work with Russia on the case: “Once again we call on the British side to move away from public accusations and informational manipulations, towards practical collaboration of law enforcement agencies.”

The poisoning of the Skripals earlier in March triggered a major diplomatic crisis between Britain and Russia, with the British government alleging that Moscow was responsible for their attempted murder.

Police had earlier said that the men, both about 40, flew from Moscow to London on Russian passports two days before the Skripals were poisoned on March 4.

Britain has blamed Russia for poisoning the Skripals and identified the poison as Novichok, a deadly group of nerve agents developed by the Soviet military in the 1970s and 1980s. Moscow has repeatedly denied any involvement in the attack.

Both father and daughter were hospitalized for days before being discharged.

(Source: agencies)

## Qatar lifts exit permit system for migrant workers



Qatar’s amendment to the residency law to allow most migrant workers to leave the country without an exit visa has been welcomed as a “huge step” by the International Organization for Labor (ILO).

Qatar’s emir signed the new law on Tuesday, amending certain provisions to the existing law that required all migrant workers getting permission from their employers before leaving Qatar, said Minister of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs Issa al-Nuaimi in a statement.

With this new law, migrant workers covered by the Labor Code would be able to leave Qatar without having to obtain such a permit, the statement added.

“The adoption of this law is another step in our continued drive to provide decent work for all migrant workers in Qatar and to ensure their protection,” al-Nuaimi added.

The amendment is a significant step as part of reforms that Qatar is carrying out, according to Head of the ILO Project Office in Qatar Houtan Homayounpour.

“This is a huge step taken by the Qatar government. It’s a big deal,” Homayounpour told Al Jazeera on Wednesday. “The workers are now free to leave anytime while respecting the contractual agreements.

“This will not cover all the workers, including domestic workers and those working in the military. Qatar already has a law on domestic workers and we’re working closely on getting a ministerial decree to grant them the same rights.”

Employers in Qatar can still submit names of workers for whom a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) would be required before granting them permission to leave the country, according to the statement, which added that it needed justifications based on the nature of the work.

Qatar is one of the wealthiest countries in the world but its treatment of foreign workers from countries such as India, Nepal and Bangladesh has come under scrutiny as it spends billions of dollars on building new infrastructure in the run-up to hosting the 2022 football World Cup.

A work-sponsorship system, known as Kefala, required all foreign workers to obtain their employer’s consent to travel abroad or switch jobs, a measure that rights groups said leaves workers prone to exploitation and forced labor.

But with the government doing away with the need for an exit visa for most workers, Homayounpour said that “the power imbalance between workers and employers was starting to be addressed”.

“This now eliminates 50 percent of the problem. It was the workers’ fundamental right to leave when they wished to. If they find themselves in a problematic situation or a family emergency, or simply want to go on a vacation, they can leave,” he said.

“And with regards to spreading the word, the government and ourselves, are undertaking many activities in order to raise the awareness of workers and employers on this important change to the law.”

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has warned against missile strikes during an upcoming military campaign by the Syrian army to liberate Idlib Province, the last major militant stronghold in the country.

Erdogan told reporters on Wednesday that a possible large-scale military action in Idlib would lead to a new wave of refugees toward Turkey.

“The situation in Idlib is crucial for Turkey. A ruthless process has been going on there. ... God forbid, if this area is hailed by missiles there would be a serious massacre,” Erdogan was quoted as saying by Turkey’s Hurriyet Daily News.

With the help of Iran, Russia and Lebanon’s Hezbollah resistance movement, the Syrian army is preparing for the Idlib operation, a strategically-important region which shares a border with Turkey and is also close to the coastal Latakia Province.

Idlib also hosts Turkish-backed militants fighting against the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Erdogan stressed that a positive outcome is expected from the upcoming Syria summit in Iran. “We will carry this issue to a positive point with the Tehran summit, which is a continuation of Astana,” he said.

The presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey, the countries acting as the guarantors of the ceasefire in Syria, will meet in Tehran on Friday for a third summit seeking an end to the crisis gripping the country.

■ **Manbij roadmap not going forward**  
Additionally, the Turkish president touched on the situation in Syria’s northern city of Manbij, complaining that a recently-agreed roadmap between Ankara and Washington on the city, which is controlled by the United States-backed Kurdish militants, is not proceeding as agreed.



“We are not at an ideal point (about Manbij). Unfortunately the agreement made is not going forward in the same direction as the initial discussions,” he said.

Back in June, Turkey and the U.S. agreed on joint patrols in Manbij to clear the area of Washington-backed Kurdish militants, which Turkey views as terrorists linked to the homegrown Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê?) militant group.

In a relevant development on Tuesday, Syria’s Reconciliation Minister Ali Haidar emphasized that the country’s Kurdish-held northeast will not be given special treatment and will be dealt with in the same way as other parts of the war-torn state.

“We cannot give any Syrian province something which differentiates it from other provinces or ethnicities, or (allow it) any situation which strikes at the idea that Syria is one country and one society,” he said in an interview with Russia’s Arabic-language Sputnik news agency.

With the Syrian government focused on crushing for-

eign-backed militants and Takfiri terrorists, Kurdish militants carved out a de facto autonomous region in the country’s north and northeast which was later occupied by the U.S. troops, raising fears that they might be aiming to partition the country.

The developments have raised serious concerns in Ankara and turned into a source of tensions between Turkey and the U.S., its NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) ally.

Damascus now controls more than two-thirds of Syria and is determined to reassert its authority over Kurdish-controlled regions.

“The solution to the problem now is for the Kurdish groups dealing with America to turn their backs on this and turn to the Syrian state,” Haidar added.

■ **Turkey follows rule of law on pastor case**  
Furthermore, the Turkish president referred to the case of detained American pastor Andrew Brunson and said that Ankara cannot fulfill “unlawful requests” by the U.S. regarding the issue.

A detained U.S. evangelical pastor in Turkey has again appealed to a Turkish court to release him from house arrest and lift his travel ban.

Erdogan noted that Turkey followed the rule of law and that Washington would not be able to make progress in the case by using threats.

The two sides are entangled in a dispute over Ankara’s imprisonment of the evangelical Christian pastor. He has been accused of having links with the outlawed PKK and the Gulen movement, which Turkey blames for the 2016 failed military coup.

The U.S. has called for Brunson’s release and taken a series of punitive measures against Turkey over the pastor’s detainment.

(Source: agencies)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	137714.2
IFX	1579.93

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	48,707 rials
GBP	54,190 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: isna.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$69.07/b
Brent	\$77.48/b
OPEC Basket	\$75.77/b
Gold	\$1,194.30/oz
Silver	\$14.17/oz
Platinum	\$776.55/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



**‘Govt. ready to brief MPs about new economic strategies’**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — “Government has prepared five new packages and 12 programs to tackle the current economic conditions and is ready to brief the parliament members about them,” government spokesman Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht announced addressing the parliament on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

Some 300 trillion rials (about \$7.1 billion) of budget has been allocated for implementation of these strategies, according to Nobakht who is also the head of the Budget and Planning Organization.

“Some 175 trillion rials (about \$4.1 billion) of the said amount is granted to supply 25 different types of basic goods, medicine and agricultural inputs,” he said.

According to the latest announcement of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) the bank has paid €5.5 billion for supplying basic goods since the beginning of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2018).



**TPO to dispatch trade delegation to Oman in early Oct.**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran plans to dispatch a trade delegation to Omani capital Muscat from October 7 to 11, TPO website published.

The Iranian delegates active in the fields of maritime logistic services and port industries will be sent to Oman to visit Supply Chain & Logistics Expo 2018 which will be held from October 8 to 10 at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre showcasing logistics services, shipping, maritime services and investment opportunities.



**Iran to set up pavilion in Energy Expo Minsk 2018**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran will set up a pavilion in an energy exhibition which will be held in Minsk, the capital city of Belarus, from October 9 to 12, 2018.

The Iranian companies to participate in Energy Expo Minsk 2018 are active in the fields of oil, gas, petrochemicals, electricity, renewable energy, power plant and dam building, and environment protection, Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran published on its website.

EU, U.S. trade chiefs to mend ties after Trump tariff detente

U.S. and EU trade chiefs will hold a first meeting in Brussels on Monday to pursue closer transatlantic ties after U.S. President Donald Trump agreed to drop his threat of tariffs on EU cars.

European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom will host United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer at the first political level meeting of a new working group, the Commission said on Wednesday.

The group, set up after a detente in July, is charged with finding ways to cut tariffs, boost U.S. liquefied natural gas exports and to reform the World Trade Organization. Trade advisers and officials held a first meeting last month.

Trump agreed with Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in July to refrain from imposing tariffs on EU cars while the two sides launched discussions to remove tariffs on non-auto industrial products.

But Malmstrom said last week that the easing of trade tensions between the two partners had not put to rest “profound disagreements” on trade policy.

She also said the European Union would be willing to reduce its car tariffs to zero if the United States did the same.

Trump rejected the idea as “not good enough”, adding that EU consumers simply tended to buy European rather than American cars. *(Source: Reuters)*

Iran, Denmark initiate IP rights co-op

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

The Iranian Intellectual Property Center and the Danish Patent and Trademark Office inaugurated their three-year close cooperation within the area of intellectual property (IP) rights on Tuesday in a bid to make a closer tie between Iran and Denmark on protection of IP in Iran, to ease attract foreign investments into the Asian country and also improve commercial conditions for foreign as well as Iranian companies in Iran.

The ceremony, held at the residence of the Ambassador of Denmark Danny Annan, was attended his excellency, Counselor of Danish Embassy Terkel Hallberg Borg, Director General at Danish Patent and Trademark Office Sune Stampe Sorensen, and Director General at Intellectual Property Center of Iran Mohammad Hassan Kiani.

The project funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark is planned for Danish exporters to embark on patents and trademarks to Iran to share their expertise and experiences with the Iranian counterparts.

**21 Danish delegations to arrive in Iran by Mar. 2019**

In a news conference held prior to the inauguration ceremony of the contract, which was signed in 2016, Ambassador Annan and his councilor made some remarks.

“The Danish Patent and Trademark Office has more than 10 years of experience working internationally, sharing experiences, and with the several Danish companies interested in investing in Iran we feel it is a very good match to share our experiences and make the infrastructure for protecting IP rights in Iran,” Borg said.

“Over the last year we have several delegations coming here from Denmark, sharing their experiences and conducting workshops with their Iranian partners now we have increased intensity and before Nowruz (March 21, 2019) we have 21 delegations coming to Iran to share their experiences within many different fields of IP,” he added.

Addressing the news conference, Ambassador Annan, expressed his content about the initiated project saying that “in recent years we have seen flourishing cooperation between Iran and Denmark. We have a very good political dialogue, we have had Iranian ministers visiting Denmark, we have had Danish ministers visiting Iran and we expect more visits in the near future.”

“We have also seen an increase in government to government cooperation and the recent example in patent and trade mark cooperation is one of those examples,” he said, “but not only at official level but also at university and academic level we see good cooperation. We have Danish archeologists excavating in Iran, we have people coming



Director General at Intellectual Property Center of Iran Mohammad Hassan Kiani (1st R), Ambassador of Denmark Danny Annan (2nd R) and Director General at Danish Patent and Trademark Office Sune Stampe Sorensen (1st L) attending the inauguration ceremony of Iran-Denmark cooperation on IP rights

to the Caspian forest to learn more about the Caspian trees and we have other kinds of cooperation between Denmark and Iran.”

“We have also seen an increase exchange in people travelling from Denmark to Iran and vice versa for tourist and business purposes,” he added.

“But I think the most impressive development has been in our bilateral trade,” he said. “It is of course, challenged by the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions on Iran but we have in recent years seen quite substantial growth in or bilateral trade.”

“This is of course, not a Danish point of view but a European point of view: we want to be able to continue business with Iran,” Annan underlined, “We want to be able to develop trade and investment.”

The initiated IP project, as the Ambassador said will be very important in the long term for investment opportunities in Iran. “I am quite sure that it will be a successful project and in the long term it will be able to attract many Danish companies willing to invest in Iran,” he said.

Answering the Tehran Times question about the volume of bilateral trade between Denmark and Iran, Annan put the Danish exports to Iran at €300 million in 2017, with the country’s imports from Iran substantially lower since Denmark is self-sufficient in gas and oil.

“But we can take a wider scope and look at Iran’s exports to EU, which has had a tremendous growth, and that is only one of the reasons that we believe it is important to safeguard the JCPOA. The deal is to the benefit of EU and Iran” he added.

The exports of Denmark to Iran majorly include pharmaceuticals but the exports were

much more diversified in 2016 and 2017 i.e. post sanctions era, he further explained. “Danish pharmaceutical companies are focused on Iranian market and for those companies protection of patents is of absolute importance,” he told the Tehran Times.

Iran’s exports to Denmark include some traditional Iranian products such as handicrafts and carpets besides saffron and pistachio, according to the ambassador. In addition, textiles and petrochemicals stand among the imported goods from Iran to Denmark.

Announcing that a number of pharmaceutical and foodstuff companies have invested in Iran, he did not inform about the value of the made investments. “It is no secret that it was necessary for some Danish companies to leave the Iranian market but a lot of them are staying here and are happy with their positive experience of the Iranian market,” he said.

“There is a big focus in Denmark and the EU to see what we can about creating a right frame work for our companies to continue to be in Iran,” he added.

Answering our question about the Danish government resolution for the existing banking and money transfer problems that make bilateral commercial ties difficult, Annan said “I think it is when it comes to establishing the right framework for continuing the JCPOA. There are two primary concerns. One of them is continuation of Iranian oil exports and the other big issue is the banking relations. I know E3, the EU and its member states are doing everything to find a solution.”

“I think we have also been surprised by the difficulty of finding solutions,” he regretted. “But that is not stopping us from trying to do everything we can to ensure that banking relations can exist between Iran and the EU

to make sure that SMEs can do business and hopefully also bigger companies primarily within the pharmaceutical and foodstuff sector.”

**IP rights protection improves commercial infrastructure in Iran**

Making remarks during the inauguration ceremony of the three-year IP contract, the ambassador expressed satisfaction that during the recent weeks there have been a lot of positive developments and celebration in the Danish-Iranian relations. “Today, we are celebrating another step in the positive cooperation between Iran and Denmark. Today, is the official launch of the strategic cooperation on IP between the two sides ... which will contribute to the improvement of commercial infrastructure in Iran. Our hope and aim is of course for Iran create a better framework for attracting investment in long term prospective and in that regard, protection of patent and trademark is absolutely essential.”

“The Danish government is financing 18 similar projects around the world but it is the first in Iran and globally it is the first on IP,” he said.

Sorensen, the other speaker of the event, in his remarks spoke of the Danish Patent and Trademark Office’s 10-year experience of being involved in international projects and of its negotiations with its counterpart organization in Iran on expansion of mutual cooperation.

“Over the next three years the Danish office will work with the staff of IP center, enforcement agencies such as the Iranian police, customs, judges and prosecutors as well as advisors and agents that are using IP system in Iran,” he announced. “Our cooperation will focus on a number of different aspects of IP in Iran with four priorities.”

It seeks to reinforce the human and administrative capacity of government agencies that deal with IP rights, create a closer network and interaction between IP actors in Iran, align IP legislation and guidelines to existing best practices and norms, and increase awareness about IP rights to users and consumers, according to him.

Kiani, for his part, referred to the 94-year-old IP regulations in Iran and the country’ focus on development of IP specifically during the last two decades.

“The IP contract signed between Iran and Denmark stands among the most influential and practical ones between the two counties. As of December 13, 2016, when the contract was signed in Tehran on a sidelines of a seminar, till he present date, 15 important types of cooperation such as conducting IP studies, various training workshops about patents and trademarks, and etc. have been done,” the Iranian official said.

Petrochemical industry, a pillar for Iran’s resilient economy

**1 →** Iran is planning to have the world’s largest methanol production capacity in the upcoming years. With 11 other methanol complexes underway, the country’s methanol capacity is due to increase to 19.1 million tons.

Kaveh Petrochemical complex with a capacity of 2.3 million tons and Bushehr Petrochemical Complex with 1.65 million tons capacity of methanol production are among the country’s top methanol producers.

**Supplying power for the region’s petchem plants**

The first phase of Damavand Petrochemical Company’s power plant with the capacity of 1,900 MW and at the cost of \$366 million was the third project inaugurated by the president.

This phase of the power plant is going to supply electricity and steam to 24 petrochemical complexes located in Phase 2 of the Assaluyeh petrochemical zone.



The power plant includes two main boilers and an auxiliary thermal recovery boiler and has the capacity to produce 780 tons of steam per hour, providing the required steam for Petrochemical Complexes of Mehr, Morvarid,

Kavian and Marjan.

**Signing deals for flare gas recovery**

On the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony, National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) also signed two separate contracts with Persian Gulf Holding and Marun Petrochemical Company on recovery and utilization of flare gas from Iran’s South Pars gas fields.

The contracts which cover the upgrading and modernization of the South Pars flare gas recovery utilities, include 32 projects estimated to cost a total of \$1.2 billion. Aiming to prevent the daily burning of around 22 million cubic meters of gas (760 million cubic feet), these projects are scheduled to be implemented in the next 2.5 years.

The port city of Assaluyeh is home to a number of petrochemical complexes which receive gas and gas condensate feedstock from the giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

Egypt can handle the emerging markets downturn ‘up to a limit’

Amid a brewing storm for emerging markets, Egypt’s finance minister believes his country’s economy can weather what has thrown many others into crisis — as long as the underlying causes don’t get any worse.

Speaking to CNBC’s Hadley Gamble in Cairo, the recently-appointed Mohamed Maaait discussed what the current market turmoil meant for the Middle Eastern country of 90 million.

“It is worrying; however, we are able until now to absorb these negative effects... Egypt’s economy has sources to address this. However, I have to be very honest — up to a limit,” Maaait said. “So hopefully what is happening will be corrected and will move into a stable position, because yes we are absorbing all these shocks — oil prices, emerging market problems, increasing interest rates — but if they continue like that, it will be a problem for us.”

Investors have been stepping away from emerging markets on the back of rising global interest rates and a strengthening dollar, which have made the record-high stock of dollar-denominated emerging market debt significantly more painful to pay off. Several major emerging economies, including Turkey, Argentina and Indonesia, are seeing their currencies hit record lows, while even India and China are seeing asset values slip amid growing trade war fears. The MSCI emerging markets index

is down nearly 9 percent year-to-date.

**Egypt’s long road to recovery**

Maaait’s comments come as Egypt enters a period of solid recovery more than seven years after its 2011 revolution and a series of terrorist attacks sent the economy spiraling. But the austerity measures behind some of this growth have led to sharply increased living costs for ordinary Egyptians and deepening social discontent.

Egypt reported its highest economic growth in a decade in July, at 5.3 percent for the 2017-2018 fiscal year compared to 4.2 percent the previous year. The government aims to hit 7 percent growth by 2022, an aspiration bolstered by the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) forecast of 6 percent growth in the near-term — the highest in North Africa — and a reduction in inflation and unemployment of 7 percent by 2022.

The country’s lofty macro figures stem from a number of IMF-imposed structural reforms implemented by the Egyptian government since late 2016, alongside a \$12 billion loan from the international lender. Egypt floated its currency, began reducing subsidies and raising taxes, and enacted a series of investment reforms — including lowering taxes and facilitating bureaucratic processes for international companies — boosting foreign

investor confidence.

The private sector has already reaped benefits, with Egypt’s benchmark EGX 30 index up 38.5 percent since December 2016.

**SkYROCKETING living costs**

But what’s been less touted is the cost of these austerity measures. Not long after President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s election in 2014 and the subsequent IMF loan — unlocked after Egypt unpegged its currency, the pound, triggering its 50 percent crash against the dollar — basic costs for Egyptians skyrocketed.

Gas prices have tripled in the past three years and electricity costs have more than quadrupled. Once heavily subsidized by the state, the price of basic staples such as bread, sugar and cooking oil have more than doubled.

And poverty is on the rise — it’s currently at nearly 28 percent, up from 25 percent in 2010, and in rural areas is as high as 60 percent, according to the World Bank. Forty percent of Egyptians live on less than \$2 a day. Wages have not kept up with the rise in living costs, and the Bank cites high inflation and the erosion of real incomes as having “taken a toll on social and economic conditions.”

The finance minister held that these reforms, though exacting, are necessary.

“Our country is going through a very, very difficult situation. We had to make this painful

reform, which affected it negatively,” Maaait said. “However, the outcome of this reform... started to give positive signs.”

Indeed, ratings agency Moody’s recently upgraded Egypt from stable to positive, ranked as ‘B3,’ its best since 2011. Unemployment has also come down, and inflation eased to 13.5 percent in July, a major improvement from a record 34.2 percent just one year prior.

Still, most Egyptians appear to be waiting to feel the benefits of these improvements on their day-to-day lives. Crime, corruption and pollution, as well as inadequate social services provision, continue to plague the country’s surging population.

**Debt crisis on the horizon?**

Beneath the rosy growth numbers, some economists see a debt crisis in the making.

Egypt’s government debt stood at 36.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in June, up 11.6 percent year-on-year and higher than Turkey’s figure of 23 percent of GDP. Rising global interest rates and a stronger dollar have pushed up financing costs for Egypt and other emerging markets, just as the country is set to issue a raft of new euro and dollar bonds, worth around \$30 million, between 2018 and 2021.

Nonetheless, Maaait expressed confidence that the debt load would be reduced.

*(Source: CNBC)*



# Oil drops toward \$77 as U.S. storm threat eases

Oil extended losses on Wednesday, falling toward \$77 a barrel, as a tropical storm hitting the U.S. Gulf coast weakened, offsetting support from forecasts of lower U.S. inventories and sanctions against Iran.

Crude had jumped the previous day as oil companies shut dozens of offshore platforms in anticipation of damage from tropical storm Gordon. But by Wednesday the storm was weakening, reducing its threat to oil producers.

"Tropical storm Gordon made an uneventful landfall after dashing expectations that it would strengthen to a hurricane," said Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM.

"Instead, it weakened considerably and deviated away from oil-producing areas, which, as a result, has taken the wind out of bulls' sails."

Brent crude, the global benchmark, fell \$1.02 to \$77.15 a barrel by 0949 GMT. On Tuesday prices had climbed to \$79.72, their highest since May.

U.S. crude was down \$1.05 at \$68.82. "Storm in a teacup," said analysts at JBC



Energy, referring to Gordon's limited impact on oil pricing.

Oil could gain support if weekly reports on U.S. inventories show a drop in crude inventories, as expected. Analysts estimate, on average, that stocks fell by about 1.9 million barrels last week.

The American Petroleum Institute, an industry group, releases its supply report at 2030 GMT on Wednesday, a day later than usual because of the Labor Day holiday on Monday. Official government figures are due on Thursday.

Brent has traded between \$70 and \$80 since April; a range that Saudi Arabia and other producers in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries would like to see maintained for now, OPEC and industry sources have said.

U.S. sanctions targeting Iran's oil sector from November are already reducing exports from OPEC's third-largest producer and counteracting the impact of an agreement by OPEC and its allies to pump more oil.

(Source: Reuters)

## Renewable energy dominating global M&A sector in 2018: EY

The value of global power and utility merger and acquisitions reached an all-time high of \$180 billion in the first half of this year — and renewables accounted for almost half of all deals done in the second quarter.

Figures in a new report from global consultancy EY found that the 46 percent of renewables deals comprised 63 contracts totaling \$12.9 billion. Most notable was the European Union's landmark agreement to achieve 32 percent renewable energy consumption by 2030, and three renewables deals in the U.S. totaling \$3.8 billion.

EY also highlighted that utilities increasingly invested in new technologies during Q2. In Europe, \$5.5 billion was spent on energy services and new technology deals, while Japan's Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) launched a subsidiary to form joint ventures around the development of disruptive technologies.

Miles Huq, EY Global Power & Utilities Transactions Leader, said: "The first half of 2018 reflects a complex deal environment characterized by a changing generation mix and a growing appetite for renewables investment, which will continue to drive the deal agenda into the second half of the year."

"Around the world, we are also seeing utilities companies increasingly exploring new technologies, including battery storage, electric vehicle infrastructure and digital grid technologies. It's sector convergence on the rise, we are also seeing more non-conventional competitors emerge as the power and utilities landscape continues to undergo transformation."

A further highlight in the second quarter according to EY was the emergence of developing markets as an investment destination for traditional M&A. Thailand and India accounted for \$5.3 billion and \$3.2 billion of deals, respectively, while transactions by both domestic and foreign investors in Estonia totaled \$600 million.

China led global outbound investment in Q2 with \$31.2 billion of cross-border



energy deals, in line with the country's One Belt, One Road state initiative. Some \$27.4 billion was attributed to the announced takeover bid of Portugal's EDP by China Three Gorges.

In Europe, EY said that business remained strong in Q2, reaching \$45.7 billion and representing 55 percent of total power and utility global deal value.

Deal value in the Asia-Pacific region saw an increase of 78 percent quarter-on-quarter during Q2 to \$10.3bn — again with renewables driving much of the activity, with 25 clean energy deals worth a total of \$3.8bn.

While deal value in the Americas declined by 8 percent quarter-on-quarter to \$26.9 billion, EY noted that seven 'megadeals' totaling \$21.8 billion gave the region a boost. The U.S. represented 75 percent of Americas deal value at \$20.2 billion.

(Source: power-eng.com)

## Transocean strikes \$2.7b deal for deepwater rival Ocean Rig

Drilling rig operator Transocean has struck a cash-and-stock deal valued at \$2.7 billion including debt to acquire deepwater rival Ocean Rig in the latest sign that recovery in oil prices is fuelling a new round of merger and acquisition activity in the sector.

Transocean — the industry's largest deepwater and harsh environment operator — will expand its fleet to 57 through the deal, with the addition of Ocean Rig's fleet of ultra-deepwater drillships and semi-submersible rigs.

The move comes as oil prices have recovered to nearly \$80 a barrel, close to their highest level in four years, encouraging companies to engage in more deal making.

The deal is also a sign that the oil drilling and services industry expects it will soon be able to raise the prices it charges, having seen margins hammered in the downturn since 2014 as exploration and production companies scaled back.

Jeremy Thigpen, Transocean's president and chief executive, said the deal would allow the company to capitalize on what it sees as "an imminent recovery in the ultra-deepwater market".

"The combination of constructive and stable oil prices over the past several quarters, streamlined offshore project costs, and undeniable reserve replacement challenges has driven a material increase in offshore contracting activity," he added.

Colin Davies, an analyst at Bernstein, said consolidation in the industry was not unexpected with Transocean a vocal proponent of the need for size and scale. "In their view, their strength is to lead that consolidation as the largest player in the industry," he said.

Davies said the move was an indication that the offshore industry — particularly in deepwater — was beginning to show "tentative positive signs", noting that contract activity was rising.

However, he cautioned that full recovery had not yet arrived.

"In our view we're still a fair way from



industry recovery," he said. "The real ramp up in rig rates, the much larger increase in offshore drilling" was unlikely to be seen before 2020, he added.

Transocean will own 79 percent of Ocean Rig on completion, with the company's current shareholders retaining 21 percent.

The transaction — which includes Ocean Rig's net debt — has an implied value of \$32.28 per Ocean Rig share, based on its August 31 closing price, representing a 20 percent premium to its 10-day volume weighted average price, the companies said. Ocean Rig's net debt was \$397m at the end of March, according to its quarterly results.

Royal Dutch Shell said last month that deepwater drilling was making a comeback after the 2014 oil crash as falling costs and higher crude prices was making it competitive again, despite the industry's focus on onshore U.S. shale.

Transocean plans to fund the cash portion of the transaction through a combination of its cash reserves and fully committed financing provided by Citi. The company did not reveal the size of the financing facility provided by Citi.

The merger is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2019, the companies said.

Ocean Rig's share price, which has collapsed by more than 99 percent since 2014, jumped 14 percent after the deal was announced on Tuesday.

(Source: Financial Times)

## Big Oil's LNG obsession

Since the early days of the oil and gas industry, a group of Western companies has dominated the industry. These companies have been named 'Big Oil' due to the size of their global footprint. Despite their technological superiority and significant access to capital, these organizations are now facing difficulties in maintaining market share and profitability. Changing requirements concerning fuel types as well as an increasing focus on environmental impacts have transformed the global energy market. Inevitably, these companies have been forced to change their strategy to remain relevant to customers.

Big Oil is refocusing its business model to accommodate a world where the share of natural gas in the energy mix is growing by the day. LNG has been the main driver of growth in the natural gas sector as it has provided flexibility to customers and global price competition. While some companies, such as Royal Dutch Shell, have been increasing their activities in the LNG business for years, others like Exxon are only just starting to catch up. The change in focus comes at the cost of the raison d'être of these organizations: oil.

In the past decades, the growing importance of oil in the economies of resource-rich nations led to the establishment of National Oil Companies, or NOCs, that could challenge Big Oil. Forty years ago, Big Oil had access to 85 percent of global reserves. Today, that amount has decreased to 14 percent. Less access also leads to a lower replacement ratio. NOCs such as Saudi Aramco have been able to replace the expertise of international firms in many areas of the world concerning conventional production.

The success of Big Oil in the past was based on three factors: extended experience, greater investor muscle, and advanced technology. Nowadays, most NOCs are able to receive the same financial support from international lenders while enjoying government support which makes bankruptcy less likely. Furthermore, drilling technology for



conventional fields has become less high-tech and more widespread these days, available to even the most basic NOC.

Despite the fact that demand for oil is still growing, increasing by 1.6 percent or 1.5 million barrels per day in 2017, the share of oil in the global energy mix is decreasing. Natural gas is the only fossil fuel that will see a growth of its share of the global energy mix in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the most logical next step for Big Oil is natural gas.

Environmentalism is another important development that has fuelled demand for natural gas. Due to the intermittent nature of renewable energy technology, an alternative source is required to generate power when nature does not cooperate. The high energy density of natural gas, abundance globally, and low level of emission of hazardous gasses have led to increased demand.

Royal Dutch Shell has invested significantly in LNG with its takeover of British Gas in 2016. The acquisition of BG for more than \$50 billion provided the Dutch company with a head start during a period when prices were low. Shell's capacity in the LNG industry is nearly double

compared to its nearest competitor. The company's value currently is \$53 billion less than Exxon's, the largest oil and gas company in the world. Before the deal, the difference was more than \$150 billion.

Furthermore, Big Oil's participation in LNG projects around the globe is highly sought after due to the complex nature of the required technology. Liquefaction and regasification of natural gas is a capital and knowledge-intensive process which not many companies possess. Big Oil's ability to attract talent from across the industry, achieve innovative solutions to reduce costs and achieve goals, puts these companies in a unique position. The inability of NOCs to replace and mimic the required technology further strengthens Big Oil's position.

Besides complex technology, LNG projects tend to be costly endeavors requiring high upfront costs. Construction of gasification facilities can take years during which debt is piling. The recent development of Arctic LNG in Russia is an example of a technologically difficult and expensive project. The \$27 billion Yamal peninsula projects was almost abandoned due to Western sanctions, but Chinese financial support and Total's expertise saved the project.

The change in focus can also be seen in the ratio of oil and gas in the business of Big Oil. BP is undergoing a major gas expansion. By 2020 the firm intends to produce 60 percent gas and 40 percent oil, the opposite of its current production mix. Shell maintains a fleet of 90 LNG carriers, which is around 20 percent of the global LNG shipping fleet. Exxon is increasing its investments in natural gas and Chevron operates several large LNG facilities around the globe.

The transformation of companies is inevitable as demand for energy changes. Companies that were quick to respond are reaping the benefits, with Shell being a prime example. Others are now following suit in an industry that is sure to have a bright future.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## China's slowing demand for oil is a serious concern for the Middle East

The risk of declining Chinese demand for oil is worrying Middle East officials more than Iran's supply curbs as a result of U.S. sanctions.

Bahrain and Oman's oil and gas ministers both told CNBC Monday that China's demand for oil could decline on the back of its trade dispute with the U.S. that has seen tariffs imposed on a wide range of Chinese imports.

"I think there is a risk on the demand side," Bahrain's Oil Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa told CNBC's Hadley Gamble in Muscat, Oman. "Is demand going to continue as strongly as it did?"

"Obviously the trade issue is going to impact demand in a negative fashion if it continues and persists. You've got the strong dollar, which is another factor."

Oil prices have stabilized over the last two years largely thanks to a deal between OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers, including Bahrain and Oman, to curb oil output. The deal has worked with prices now between \$70 and \$80 a barrel.

However, the deal has come under fire from President Donald Trump, who said in July that higher oil prices are hitting consumers too hard. OPEC and Russia, the world's largest producers, promised to boost supply a few days afterwards.

Nonetheless, Trump's decision-making is affecting oil market stability too. His decision to re-impose sanctions on major OPEC oil producer Iran (with the restrictions due to kick in in November) could push prices even higher as Iran's contribution to global oil supply is restricted.

But Trump's attack on cheap Chinese imports, and his decision to impose trade tariffs on a wide range of Chinese goods entering the U.S., could damage China's economic growth and in turn lower its demand for oil.

Oman's oil minister, also speaking to CNBC, said not enough attention was being paid to how trade tensions could damage China's demand for oil.

"There is a danger that the demand will be impacted as well. People often focus on the supply side — what happens if Iran stops supplying — but what happens if China reduces its consumption? So we are looking at both sides of this discussion," Mohammed bin Hamad Al Rumayy told CNBC's Hadley Gamble Monday.

"I see that as a possibility as well. If there is a serious trade disagreement between the U.S. and China, the Chinese consumption of energy will be impacted negatively, from our point of view and the ability to produce and export will be impacted," he said at the World Heavy Oil Congress.

"And I think, and many people agree with me, that the demand will be impacted — so that's not good for us."

China surpassed the U.S. to become the world's largest crude oil importer in 2017, importing 8.4 million barrels per day (b/d), compared with 7.9 million b/d for the U.S., according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

In 2017, 56 percent of China's crude oil imports came from countries within OPEC, a decline from a peak of 67 percent in 2012 but still making it a significant market for OPEC and its Middle East members.

In fact, Russia surpassed Saudi Arabia as China's largest source of foreign crude oil in 2016, exporting 1.2 million b/d to China in 2017 compared with Saudi Arabia's 1.0 million b/d.

(Source: CNBC)

## Baker Hughes wins major Saudi offshore oil field expansion deal

Saudi Aramco has awarded Baker Hughes a major services contract to boost crude oil production from Saudi Arabia's offshore Marjan oil field.

Baker Hughes will start drilling work this month to help increase production capacity from the 500,000 b/d field, Aramco said in a statement Tuesday.

The services include drilling, along with coiled tubing and drilling fluid engineering services for the field, the statement said. Marjan, which lies off Saudi Arabia's eastern coast in the Persian Gulf, is the first of three major offshore expansions in a wider plan to raise offshore production at the 800,000 b/d Zuluf and 200,000 b/d Berri fields.

Adding another 1 million b/d by 2023 of capacity from the three fields will help offset reduced output from older fields. Although it holds the world's largest proven reserves, estimated to be above 260 billion barrels, many of Saudi Arabia's most productive fields have been operating for decades.

"The Marjan oil field is one of the major upstream developments this year that will contribute to the kingdom's oil production strengths, helping maintain capacity and meet domestic and global demand," according to Mohammed al-Qahtani, Aramco's senior vice president of upstream.

Saudi Arabia maintains around 1.7 million b/d of spare production capacity based on its 10.63 million b/d output in July, according to the latest S&P Global Platts survey of OPEC producers.

(Source: Platts)

## Storm menacing gulf coast pushes oil, gas in opposite directions

As Tropical Storm Gordon barrels toward the U.S. Gulf Coast, oil and natural gas futures are moving in opposite directions.

Natural gas futures fell 9.3 cents to close at \$2.823 per million British thermal units, the biggest daily drop since early February. Crude futures, meanwhile, rose 0.1 percent from Friday after earlier climbing as much as 2.3 percent.

The divergence is likely because gas traders see the greatest impact to prices coming from weakened power demand, as wind and rain keep temperatures lower than normal. Oil traders, on the other hand, see the risk to supply trumping data showing rising output from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Hurricane warnings have gone up along the Gulf Coast from eastern Louisiana to the Florida-Alabama line. Gordon was about 130 miles (209 kilometers) south-southeast of Biloxi, Mississippi, according to a National Hurricane Center advisory at 2 p.m. in Miami.

As of 11:30 a.m. in Houston, 9.2 percent of total offshore oil production in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico was shut in, with 9.1 percent of overall gas output halted, according to the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. Staff had been evacuated from 54 production platforms and one rig.

(Source: Bloomberg)



## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Dr. Arif Alvi  
elected new  
President of  
Pakistan**

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — Less than a fortnight after d e s k Imran Khan took over as the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, senior Pakistan Tehreek Insaaf (PTI) leader Dr. Arif Alvi was elected as the country's new President on Tuesday.

Dr. Alvi, the candidate of PTI, was contesting against joint opposition candidate Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) candidate Aitzaz Ahsan.

A statement issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) said Dr. received 353 electoral votes, while his rivals Fazlur Rehman received 185 and Aitzaz Ahsan received 124.

Speaking to media persons in Islamabad, the 13th President of Pakistan said he was thankful to Almighty Allah for emerging triumphant in the election process. He also thanked PTI chairman and PM Imran Khan for reposing confidence in him.

Dr. Alvi vowed to work in capacity as President. "I am not just a president of Tehreek-e-Insaaf, rather of all political parties and the nation," he stressed. He is expected to take oath of office on September 9.

PTI won the general election in Pakistan last month but failed to gain the clear majority. After cobbling together an alliance with smaller parties, a new government was formed a few weeks ago with cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan as premier.

**Time to end  
Afghan war,  
says U.S.  
commander**

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — Bearing testimony to America's d e s k failures in Afghanistan, the outgoing commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan Gen. John W. Nicholson urged all sides to bring an end to the protracted war. "It is time for this war in Afghanistan to end," Nicholson was quoted saying by New York Times in his emotional farewell address. Nicholson served as the commander of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan for more than two years, during which the Taliban insurgency peaked and civilian casualties touched record high. The deteriorating security situation in the war-ravaged country has forced the Afghan government and its international partners to revise their strategies. The outgoing U.S. commander reportedly had serious differences with the U.S. President Donald Trump. NYT reported that Nicholson did not meet a single time with Trump in the 20 months since the latter became the president.

General Scott Miller, the former commander of the U.S. military's Joint Special Operations Command, took over from Nicholson this week.

More than 17 years after invading the country, the U.S.-led international coalition has failed in counter-terrorism efforts. Today, the security situation remains volatile and terror attacks have become more frequent, creating a sense of fear among people.

**Number of  
militants in  
Kashmir crosses  
300**

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — For the first time in over a d e s k decade, the number of militants in volatile Kashmir valley has crossed 300, triggering alarm among security and intelligence agencies, according to a report in The Tribune.

For many years, the number of militants in Kashmir stood around 200, except in 2013 when only 78 militants were active in the strife-torn valley, the lowest figure since the militancy erupted in Kashmir in early 1990s, the report said.

In 2017, 126 youth picked up arms in Kashmir - which was the highest number since 2010 and this year over 130 have been inducted into militancy, the report added.

All 10 districts of Kashmir have the presence of militants. In 2017, security forces had launched Operation All Out against militants and killed over 200 of them and this year over 130 militants have been killed so far.

The report put together by the J&K Police last month reveals that 327 militants are active of which 211 are locals and 116 are foreigners. Two militant groups Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba continue to be dominant. While the Lashkar has the highest cadre with nearly 141 militants, Hizb has over 128 listed militants.

**India to  
construct 100  
airports at \$60  
billion**

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — India plans to construct d e s k 100 airports at an estimated cost of \$60 billion in the next 10 to 15 years, the country's civil aviation minister Suresh Prabhu announced on Tuesday.

India's aviation sector is one of the fastest-growing aviation sectors in the world and has recorded 50 months of double-digit traffic growth, said a media report.

"We have plans for 100 new airports to be built in India in the next 10 to 15 years with investments of almost \$60 billion," the minister said, adding that these airports are to be constructed through public private partnership (PPP). The government plans to put it in public domain for anyone interested in building infrastructures or airports.

According to global airlines' group International Air Transport Association (IATA), India is expected to overtake Germany, Japan, Spain and the UK within the next 10 years to become the world's third largest air passenger market.

IATA has projected that by 2037, there would be almost 520 million passengers flying to, from and within India each year. "In 2010, 79 million people traveled to/from or within India. By 2017 that doubled to 158 million. That number is expected to treble to 520 million by 2037," it noted.

# Trump's trade war with China poses greatest threat to global economic growth

**1 →** However, regardless of the U.S. pressure, China will maintain its own pace and work with other countries to protect the multilateral trade system, China's President Xi Jinping said earlier this week during his meeting with UN secretary general Antonio Guterres.

"We are willing to use practical actions to drive all parties to jointly adhere to trade liberalization and facilitation and build an open world economy," Xi said, according to a statement issued by China's foreign ministry.

Meanwhile, according to a study report by OECD, Asia in general and China in particular is on the upswing. "One consequence of the rising importance of emerging markets in the world economy, notably China and India, but also Indonesia, is that the center of gravity of world economic activity continues to move from North America toward Asia," the paper notes.



## 'Iran is critical to India's energy strategy and broader geopolitical interests'

**1 →** A. India is the second largest buyer of Iranian crude oil after China. The U.S., however, is seeking to influence the energy-import policy of India, which currently imports more than three-fourths of its crude oil requirements. According to the International Energy Agency, India is set to emerge as the fastest-growing crude consumer in the world by 2040.

Washington is seeking to sell more oil and gas to India and is also encouraging it to switch imports from Iran to Saudi Arabia and other U.S. allies. For India, however, next-door Iran has long been a major oil supplier and will remain so.

■ India's continued oil imports from Iran in the wake of U.S. sanctions kicking in from November is likely to figure prominently in the first Indo-U.S. two-plus-two dialogue in New Delhi on Thursday. What should we expect from these talks?

A. India is looking for a waiver from the U.S. sanctions on Iran so as to insulate its energy and political cooperation with Tehran. The new U.S. sanctions on Iran will figure prominently in the two-plus-two dialogue because those sanctions directly impinge on India's interests.

■ Since the beginning of this fiscal year, the oil purchase from Tehran has surged due to heavy discounts, free shipping and extended credit period for oil sales offered by Iran. Don't you think cutting oil imports will cost the country savings on shipping and the longest credit repayment period offered by any of its suppliers?

A. Thanks to the Trump administration's reckless actions, including withdrawal from the multilateral Iran nuclear deal and imposition of new sanctions against Iran, India's energy-import bill is increasing. The Trump administration is imposing serious economic



costs on India through its misguided policies.

■ India had initially said they do not recognize unilateral sanctions imposed by Washington, and only recognize UN sanctions. Why did then New Delhi buckle under the U.S. pressure?

A. I don't think India has buckled under U.S. pressure. India is pursuing a cautious approach to uphold its interests. It wants the Trump administration to grant it a waiver from the Iran-related sanctions.

■ India's former vice president Hamid Ansari believes Iran is an important country for India, and not just as an oil supplier. "We have to keep in mind two things. We get a good amount of energy supply from Iran. But Iran is not only an energy supplier," he said. Do you agree?

A. Yes.

■ Under Donald Trump, U.S. has antagonized many European countries with hard-nosed policies, announced sanctions against Russia, Turkey, Iran and declaring trade war with China. What's wrong with the U.S. president's worldview?

A. By slapping a nation with punitive sanctions, the U.S. seeks to block trade and financial activities with that country even by other states. Such extraterritorial sanctions — which it euphemistically labels "secondary" sanctions — run counter to international law. Yet the U.S. uses its unmatched power to turn national actions into global measures.

As the world's reserve currency that greases the wheels of the global financial system, the U.S. dollar arms America with tremendous leverage, making U.S. sanctions the most powerful in the world. Most international

transactions, from banking to oil, are conducted in U.S. dollars.

Today, however, the U.S. faces a major test to effectively enforce its new extraterritorial sanctions relating to Iran, which is a Trump obsession, and Russia, which still evokes bipartisan hostility in Washington although Russia's economy has shrunk to one-tenth the size of China's and its military spending to one-fifth of China's. Trump's sanctions aimed at throttling the Iranian economy have prompted calls for defiance even in Europe.

■ Speculation is rife that India will convey to the U.S. that it is going ahead with the ambitious Rs. 40,000 crore deal with Russia to procure a consignment of S-400 Triumf air defense missile systems. Do you think it will raise eyebrows in Washington?

A. Russia is a tried and tested friend of India. Although the U.S. has now become the largest seller of arms to India, Russia remains important to India's interests. India has made it clear to the U.S. that it will go ahead with the S-400 purchase and other defense deals with Russia.

■ The new government in Pakistan has extended an olive branch to India. Do you expect the relations between the two countries to improve? How important is it for regional peace?

A. The latest election has changed little in Pakistan, a country still struggling to be at peace with itself. The Pakistani military will remain the puppet master calling the shots from behind the scenes, with the new Prime Minister, Imran Khan, as its newest puppet. The military didn't just stack the electoral odds in Khan's favor; it did practically everything, including rigging, to put him in power.

## Life, death and legacy of U.S. ally turned foe Haqqani



**Haqqani, a former U.S. ally, was once hailed as a "freedom fighter" by U.S. President Ronald Reagan and praised by the late U.S. Congressman Charlie Wilson as "goodness personified". He was among the 'mujahideen' Americans backed in 1980s to fight Soviet forces in Afghanistan.**

the darling of the U.S., Pakistan and Arab states including Saudi Arabia and Egypt. A former CIA chief was quoted by AP saying that he personally delivered suitcases full of money to Haqqani, whom he described as "one of the good ones."

During the war against Soviets in Afghanistan, Haqqani and Bin Laden became close confidants, as both had signed up to fight for the CIA. The head of Al-Qaeda Ayman al-Zawahiri was also one of the fighters, now

being sheltered and funded by the Haqqani Network in Pakistan's tribal region.

During the 1980s Soviet war, Haqqani developed close connections with Pakistan's formidable intelligence agency ISI. The connection, according to many strategic affairs experts, has grown stronger over the years. After the communist government in Kabul was overthrown by the U.S.-backed 'mujahideen', Haqqani served as justice minister in 'mujahideen government',

albeit briefly.

Then a group emerged by the name of Taliban, comprising fighters who had fought for the U.S. against Soviet forces. The group took power in Afghanistan in 1996, and according to a declassified cable from the U.S. Embassy, Haqqani was welcomed into the group for his unmatched military prowess. When the Taliban regime was toppled in 2001 by the U.S.-led coalition, Haqqani shifted base to Pakistan's tribal areas and reorganized his group for a new mission — war against old friends.

Since then, Haqqani Network, an integral part of the Afghan Taliban, has been doggedly fighting against the U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan. After the death of Taliban founder Mullah Omar, Haqqani, who was a key member of the Taliban's Quetta Shura, had played an instrumental role in keeping the group's flock together. He was considered an ideological godfather by many Taliban commanders.

In 2012, the U.S. government declared the group a terrorist organization, because the equation had changed and now the group was not serving America's interests.

For some years now, he had been bedridden, and his son Sirajuddin Haqqani, who was appointed deputy head of the Afghan Taliban last year, has been actively running the day-to-day operations of the group. According to Afghan officials, Haqqani Network has been responsible for most of the complex terror attacks in Afghanistan, especially in major cities.

Considering that the senior Haqqani had stepped aside some years ago and was not anymore involved in Haqqani Network's day-to-day operations, his death is less likely to have any impact on the group's activities. With or without senior Haqqani, the murky war is likely to continue.



# Why is Trump worried about McCain's death?

By Hanif Ghaffari

**TEHRAN** — President of the United States, Donald Trump, is worried about the death of Arizona Senator John McCain. This concern has intensified in recent days and has been affected by various factors. Accordingly, there are some points that need to be addressed and analyzed:

Firstly, John McCain was the symbol of protest among traditional Republicans against Donald Trump. McCain, as an important senator in the Republican Party, was opposed to the presence of Trump at the top of the political and executive equations of the United States from the very beginning. The animus between McCain and Trump stems, in part, from a controversial statement that Trump made during in 2015.

"He's not a war hero," "He was captured ... Does being captured make you a hero? I don't know. I'm not sure," Trump said about McCain, who was a Vietnam veteran and a prisoner of war. McCain has been able to form the Republican opposition to Trump inside the party. This he did through influencing people like Lindsay Graham, Jeff Flake and some other Republican senators.

McCain himself asked former Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush to give eulogies at his funeral. President Donald Trump, however, was not even invited.



Two unnamed White House officials said that before the senator's death, McCain's family asked Trump not to attend the funeral. Throughout Trump's presidency, McCain was an outspoken critic of current U.S. leader's actions. He was one of three Republican senators to vote against Trump's plan to repeal Obama care.

McCain's negative vote has led to Trump's failure in achieving his goal. Trump's anger over the Arizona Senator remains strong even after his death! The president of the United States refused to issue a formal statement on the McCain's death, and instead he tweeted a message in this regard.

Secondly, Donald Trump is worried about the impact of John McCain's death on the mid-term elections and the subsequent atmosphere in the United States. The current president of the United States is well aware that he will have two years of continuous challenge ahead at the White House in case the Republicans are defeated in the Congress elections.

He knows well that he may even be involved in an official impeachment that in turn, would lead to dismissal of power. Under such circumstances, McCain's death could play a significant role in the formation of the "Republican opposition to Trump" in American society. And ultimately, it provides the ground for Democrats to win Senate elections (which is more important than the House of Representatives).

The third point is that Trump is extremely worried about the formation of a coalition of "Democrats" and "dissatisfied Republicans". McCain had been associated with the Democrats over his opposition to some government bills during his time at the Senate. This issue could be intensified in the future, if the Democrats succeed to win the Senate Majority.

It should not be forgotten that the Republicans' possible defeat in the mid-term elections will result in new divisions among them which would definitely affect the presidential elections in 2020. Under such circumstances, some traditional Republicans will have to make distinctions between themselves and Trump, just to prevent their failure in the upcoming elections, and even accompany the Democrats against the current president of the United States. That's a hard hit for Trump and his companions in the White House.

Ultimately, the president of the United States is worried about the consequences of McCain's death. He worries that the death of the American Republican senator will create a new wave of "political-social" dissatisfaction. Many American media are also contributing to this worry. Most of America's news sources have praised McCain's character and named him as a hero trying to institutionalize his opposition to Trump as a "political" policy in American society. Therefore, the U.S. president's concerns over McCain's death are not unreasonable.

## 'U.S. knows it cannot afford direct confrontation with Iran'



**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — The "hawks" in the Donald Trump administration are fully aware that their country "cannot afford" any direct military confrontation with the Islamic Republic, an American political commentator said.

"...They (American hawks) know also, the U.S. cannot afford a direct confrontation with Iran," John Steppeling, who is based in Norway, told the Tasnim News Agency in an interview.

"So I don't see anything happening right away," he said, adding, "And Trump has a lot of other problems at the moment."

Steppeling is a well-known author, playwright and an original founding member of the Padua Hills Playwrights Festival, a two-time NEA recipient, Rockefeller Fellow in theater, and PEN-West winner for playwriting. He is also a regular political commentator for a number of media outlets around the world.

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. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has formed a dedicated group to coordinate and run the country's policy towards Iran following U.S. President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran. Pompeo announced the creation of the 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: It's amazing when you think about it, that the entire narrative since the last election in the U.S. has been about Russian interference in the political process. The whole story is fictitious but that hasn't stopped it becoming the main storyline for almost all mainstream media.

And yet here you have an illegal group that has as its stated goal the overthrow of a sovereign nation. The contradiction is breathtaking, really. But Pompeo is a rabid Islamophobe and a Christian extremist. Still, this was going behind the scenes anyway, now it is out in the open at least.

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

A: This is an interesting question. How much will the NATO nations of Europe push back against the Trump decree? I don't know. Clearly, Germany, in particular, is very unhappy. But Europe basically functions as a series of vassal states to the U.S. They will do what they are told in the end. I think more likely is

## 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.

that this whole embargo is just too much trouble for the Trump administration. There is an interesting question looming in just how much of the Pentagon and CIA focus is on how Iran, how much on China, and how much on Russia. Each is a different problem from the perspective of the U.S. I think Trump, personally, fears China the most. They have the economic upper hand. But the real crime for any official U.S. enemy is independence. Look at China, Iran, Russia, Venezuela, the DPRK, Syria, and Cuba. Each rejects U.S. imperialist aims. Each rejects Western capital and all those international financial organizations. That's the only crime any of them have committed.

■ Trump's threat is part of his walking away from the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). 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: Yes well, this is again a question about how much spine Europe will show. And maybe I'm being cynical suggesting they won't show any, for after all a lot of money is going to be potentially lost. But this issue of payments raises the question of the power of the Dollar vs the Yuan or any other. And here China is, again, very powerful.

The U.S. wants to have some form of proxy conflict -- that's Bolton's style. And you can bet he wants a false flag regards Syria to justify more direct military action there. At the same time, the real fear is about China and its financial power. And I think Washington senses this shift toward Russia and China and Iran globally.

The promise of a future, let alone a better future, lies in that direction and away from the U.S. There is no question the U.S. is nervous if not desperate and the danger is that hawks like Pompeo and Mattis and Bolton are in positions of great influence and each is most happy when bombs are falling somewhere. And yet, they know also, the U.S. cannot afford a direct confrontation with Iran. So I don't see anything happening right away. And Trump has a lot of other problems at the moment. I think we will learn soon if Trump really has any say at all in foreign policy.

# Shaath: Israeli army trained Saudi forces, deployed Gaza scenario in Yemeni cities

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Political analyst Saeb Shaath says the Saudis turned to the Israeli military for help and the Zionists trained them with "their Nazi tactics" and deployed the Gaza scenario in major areas of Yemen.

Dr. Shaath, in an exclusive interview with FNA, said that the Saudi forces, trained by the Israelis, deployed the Gaza scenario on Yemeni cities by imposing land, naval and air blockade aimed at collectively punishing the civilian population to steer their anger against the resistance forces, as the cause for their sufferings. And the scenario once failed in Gaza is now failing in Yemen.

Commenting on the British arms sale to Saudi Arabia, the analyst said that the British government considers the Saudi war on Yemen as an opportunity to make money and the poor Arab country a place to test its weapons.

Dr. Saeb Shaath is an author, a Middle East political expert and a former Palestinian diplomat. He is currently the chairman of Palestine Aid organization and the co-founder of Irish Map (Medical Aid for Palestine), said to be having an excellent impact on improving the Palestinian health facilities in Gaza.

FNA has conducted an interview with Dr. Shaath about the ongoing Saudi aggression on Yemen and possible motives behind the war imposed on the impoverished Arab country by Saudi Arabia and its western allies.

Below you will find the full text of the interview.

■ What do you think about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen caused by the Saudi war and the blockade on the country?

A: Since the Saudi coalition and its mercenaries do not have the expertise of conducting an urban warfare or asymmetric warfare; they resorted to extensive usage of air power, with intense attacks, targeting civilian infrastructure, hospitals, schools and residential areas. The air campaign designed to inflict the maximum destruction and to starve the entire people of Yemen into submission

The only fit description to the brutal war of aggression on Yemen is 'genocide'. Today there are 20 million people in Yemen facing imminent starvation; due to the 3 and a half years long blockade and the military offensive by the USA, western backed Saudi-Emirati coalition on the port city of Hodeida; the entry point for 85-90 percent of all food and medical supplies into Yemen.

■ What are the Saudis' objectives in their war on Yemen?

A: The Saudi regime and its American masters are adamant in defeating the free independent and sovereign Yemen.

For many reasons: 1. To bring Yemen back to the Saudi's



sphere of domination. 2. To loot its many resources. 3. To impose de-develop on the country. 4. To annex Hadramawt to Al Saud's kingdom, that's because of its geopolitical importance which can reduce the strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz, to the west and Saudis.

Moreover, the Al Saud and its western masters, do not want the people of Arabia specifically of the Eastern provinces, to deploy the Yamani's tactics, to become sovereign over their country and its wealth, that scenario represents an immense blow to the western imperialists design for global domination. Losing the Saudi milking cow, which is essential with its strategic geopolitical importance, to the current American empire's regional and global destabilizing strategy, it provided its effectiveness against the former Soviet Union, Naser's Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Iran.

■ It seems that the Saudis expected an easy-to-win combat when they first stepped into the war. What do you see as the reasons for Riyadh's continued failure in Yemen?

A: The Saudi war of aggression on Yemen has failed to achieve its major goal, or to take control of major cities. The Saudis resorted to the Israeli military Generals and their Nazi tactics, as mercenaries, they trained the Saudi forces and deployed the Gaza scenario on major areas of Yemen, imposing land, naval and air blockade, engendering starvation, to achieve a slow genocide, while subjecting the Yeminis to collective punishment, aiming at steering people's anger against the Houthis and the Yemeni army, as the instigators of their hardship, they failed to defeat the Gazans and are failing in Yemen.

■ Why do the U.S. and the UK continue to supply Saudi

Arabia with arms despite international criticism with regard to civilian casualties?

A: Yemen is significant to the western imperialists' desire for global domination. The British empire used to manage the logistics of its colonies from Australia to India from Eden in Yemen. It's important for the British to help the Americans and Saudis in keeping Yemen impoverished and in turmoil that cannot exist without international handouts. For the British government and its military industry it's a money-making war and a free ride to test its weapons in Yemen.

■ Why have the international organizations, particularly the UN, remained passive in the face of the ongoing Saudi atrocities?

A: The Chinese and Russian position on the UN Security Council regarding Yemen is not even keeping up with the two great powers' own national security interests. Since independent, free and Sovereign Yemen is going to influence the geopolitical dynamics not just for Arabia but it will have a global geopolitical influence, mainly in reducing and limiting the American dominant influence on Arabian sea and the Red Sea, which will be advantageous to all sovereign nations.

■ The airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition have mostly killed Yemeni civilians, including thousands of women and children. What do you think is the reason for the airstrikes targeting civilians?

A: Western backed Saudi war of aggression and the 3 and a half years long blockade on Yemen and the recent criminal military offensive on the city of Hodeida with a population of 600,000 are all designed to starve the entire population of Yemen. The western powers assisted the Saudi coalition in manufacturing the worst humanitarian catastrophe the world ever witnessed. The UN humanitarian organizations and aid agencies are warning of the genocidal consequences from the assault on the only food and medicine entry point left in Yemen. UN agencies stated that '20 million people in Yemen are facing imminent starvation'.

From the early days of Saudi war of agnation on Yemen we have witnessed the coalition's airstrikes targeting civil infrastructure and civilians including thousands of women and children displace the people internally and push them to flee Yemen, and mount enormous pressure on the Yemeni army and the Houthis' revolutionary committee, while driving a wedge between them and the people, as if they are the cause of the people's misery and suffering. The end game is to push the Yemeni army and the Houthis to surrender in return for the Saudi coalition halting its criminal assault on the civilians, to impose a total defeat on Yemen.

# U.S., Israeli military aggression in Syria doomed to failure

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — The U.S. and Israeli regimes are yet to understand the weakness and limits of their military force and aggression in Syria.

Israeli military leaders are telling the press that they intend to escalate their strikes against Syria, particularly against so-called Iranian-linked targets, in the days to come, and that they intend to do so even if they violate deals with Russia in some cases.

As always, there is no justification behind such illegal specific strikes, and the apartheid regime's leaders rarely admit to specific strikes, let alone why they are carried out. In general, however, Israel attacks Syrian military targets, and especially any they have claimed have secret Iranian links in the past, with little or no success at all. Israel also does so with full military-diplomatic support from Washington.

For instance, together with the United States, Israel continues to use military force and aggression in Syria, but they have failed to stop the Syrian Army and its allies from launching the new campaign to liberate the terror-held province of Idlib. In this respect, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif say the Israeli-American pressure on Tehran

and Damascus will fail to deter them from fighting terrorism.

In a meeting in Damascus on Monday, September 3, Zarif and Assad said Western governments would not be able to deter Iran and Syria from defending their principles, the interests of the two nations, and the security and stability of the entire region. The two sides emphasized that the U.S. policy of threat and pressure shows its failure to achieve its goals in the Middle East. They also said the Syrian people and government forces will definitely achieve a final victory in the battle against terrorism in Idlib.

Some might assume this would be more than enough to convince Israeli officials that their force and aggression will get them nowhere in Syria. Far from it. They are now signaling that they are prepared to attack Iraq over Iran's alleged missile sites, with Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman saying Israel is "not limiting ourselves just to Syrian territory" with its attacks!

Iraq has offered no statement on the new allegations, but has already insisted they are not hosting any Iranian missiles. Still, that seems not to be enough for Israel and the U.S. to at least not to attack Iraq.

In any event, Israel has been attacking sites

inside Syria regularly over the past several years, again generally on claims of an Iranian presence. This should come as surprise to no one, seeing that both the United States and Israel have no faith in International Law and International Humanitarian Law.

Quite the opposite, the U.S. has left the UN Human Rights Council over its criticism of Israel and is in defunding of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the aid agency for Palestinian refugees. The US fully defunded UNRWA on Friday. The Israeli-driven policy of US defunding came almost immediately after a call from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to do so.

If the humiliating experience of military campaigns in Vietnam, Iraq, Syria and Southern Lebanon is any indication, the American-Israeli force might start wars posing as a dominant military power, but what it earns is, at most, some short lived victories in a number of battles and not an ultimate victory in the war. In all these wars, the U.S. and Israeli armies have failed to end their military quest with a crushing victory and retreated after being humiliated, losing the wars ultimately. Their militarism has been by far the commonest cause of the humanitarian crises and the breakdown of many nations in



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# What are the health risks of hookah smoking?

A hookah is a water pipe that allows a person to smoke tobacco, often combining it with sweet flavors, such as apple, chocolate, coconut, licorice, or watermelon.

People have used hookahs for centuries in ancient Persia and India. Today, people often smoke a hookah as a group, at home or in cafes or lounges

Other names for a hookah include water pipe, narghile, or shisha, the latter being a word that can also refer to the flavored tobacco.

Some people have misconceptions that hookah smoking is not harmful to their health or not as dangerous as other smoking types. In this article, we look at the health risks associated with hookah smoking.

## Health risks of hookah smoking

A hookah has several universal components, including a water bowl, metal body, a head with holes in the bottom, and a flexible hose with a mouthpiece.

The device works by burning charcoal that will then burn a tobacco mixture, as well as heat up the water. The smoke the charcoal generates helps move the tobacco through the water and hose and up to the mouthpiece

Using a hookah exposes a person to tobacco smoke, which contains harmful components, such as carbon monoxide. The water in the hookah does not filter out these components.

Even if a person does not smoke directly from the hookah, they can still inhale secondhand smoke if they are nearby.

## Some of the potential health effects of hookah smoke include:

Complications of lung function, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and bronchitis.

Increased risk of heart conditions, such as heart disease and heart attack.

Increased risk of cancer, especially lung, throat, and mouth cancer.

Premature skin aging, since smoking tobacco can decrease the amount of oxygen that reaches the skin.

Increased risk of infectious diseases, such as mononucleosis and oral herpes.

People may also increase their risk of respiratory infections if they share the hookah



**While some people believe hookah smoking is a safer and more social alternative to smoking tobacco, it does not offer health benefits and poses several significant health risks.**

mouthpiece with others.

## Hookah vs. cigarettes

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), smoking tobacco through a hookah has «many of the same health risks as cigarette smoking.»

For example, the tobacco smoke still delivers nicotine, a highly addictive substance. Hookah smoke also requires charcoal to be burnt, which interacts with tobacco, creating fumes that can be just as toxic as cigarette smoke.

People who use a hookah may be exposed to the toxins in the smoke longer than if they smoked cigarettes.

According to the CDC, a person puffs on a cigarette an average of 20 times, but they may take 200 puffs during an hour-long

hookah session.

Also, smoking a hookah delivers more than 2.5 times the amount the nicotine as cigarette smoke, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, quoting research lead by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. This volume of nicotine has the potential to be highly addictive.

## Electric heat hookahs

Manufacturers have released newer versions of hookahs that use electric heat instead of charcoal. The makers call these e-charcoal heat sources and often market them as a safer alternative to traditional charcoal hookahs.

The CDC say that experts have very little knowledge about the health risks of electronic tobacco products at this stage.

However, the University of Cincinnati report early research that a team of its chemists is doing to look at the components of smoke generated by e-charcoal. The researchers say they have found that e-charcoal smoke kills 80 percent of sample lung cells 24 hours after exposure.

This risk is more significant than the higher-toxin charcoal the team tested, which kills 25 percent of lung cells. The lower-toxin charcoal was found to kill 10 percent of sample lung cells.

As a result, the researchers conclude that e-charcoal hookah options could potentially be more dangerous than their charcoal counterparts.

More published scientific research is now needed to confirm these early results.

## Hookah myths

Some hookah bars sell non-tobacco products, which they may advertise as having no harmful effects. This is a myth, as the smoke still contains carbon monoxide, a harmful compound, and other toxins.

Other myths about hookah smoking include:

Hookah smoking is not addictive. Hookah smoke contains nicotine, a highly addictive compound.

The water in hookah smoke filters harmful ingredients. The water in hookah smoke does not filter out any harmful chemicals.

Cigarettes «burn» the lungs because they use heat, and hookah smoke is cooler, so it does not burn. Smoke from a hookah can still damage the heart and lungs, even after cooling down.

## Takeaway

While some people believe hookah smoking is a safer and more social alternative to smoking tobacco, it does not offer health benefits and poses several significant health risks.

Hookah smoking also puts other people at risk of inhaling secondhand smoke. So, to reduce the risks of damaging the lungs and other organs, it is best for people to avoid smoking tobacco products, including by using a hookah.

(Source: Medical News Today)

## How to check your heart age: Ways to determine the likelihood of a stroke or heart attack

Public Health England (PHE) is urging adults over the age of 30 to check their heart age via an online test that will enable them to see how at risk they are of having a heart attack or stroke.

The call for taking the test comes after PHE revealed that four-fifths (78 per cent) of adults in England had a heart age higher than their real age.

Doctors have subsequently warned that those with a heart age higher than their real age are at risk of “an early grave or ending up very disabled later in life”.

Professor Jamie Waterall, national lead for cardiovascular disease at PHE, said: “Millions are at risk of cardiovascular disease but don’t know it, putting themselves at real risk of suffering ill-health or dying younger.

“Knowing your heart age is a simple way of finding out whether you’re at risk of a heart attack or stroke.

“By making important lifestyle changes you can reduce your risk before it’s too late.”

So, how easy is it to find out your heart age? It turns out, there are a variety of ways:

## 1. Take PHE's 'Heart Age Test'

The Heart Age Test is an online tool created by the NHS, PHE, UCL and the British Heart Foundation.

It consists of 16 questions, asking for your age, height, weight, gender, ethnicity and post code among other factors. It also takes into consideration lifestyle risk factors such as smoking, blood pressure and cholesterol.

You must be over the age of 30 to take the test and must not have a history of cardiovascular disease.

If your heart age is higher than your real age, the tool will give you advice on how to lower it. It will also give you a percentage which reveals your chance of having a heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years.

Thus far, the test has been completed more than 1.9 million times.

## 2. Get tested by Cardiac Risk in the Young

Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) offers a free heart screening programme to aimed at those aged 14 to 35.

Formed in 1995, CRY is a charity which supports young people diagnosed with potentially life-threatening cardiac conditions by developing screening programmes and funding medical research.

The organisation is funded by families whose members have been affected by deaths due to cardiac-related diseases; the screenings are available across the UK and can be booked online.

Usually taking no longer than 15 minutes, each screening will comprise of a medical history questionnaire and an ECG (electrocardiogram).

Afterwards, the doctor will sit down with the patient to talk patients through the results.

If anything has been picked up, the patient will be fast-tracked to other doctors for treatment.

According to data collected by CRY, 1 in 300 people screened will have life-threatening cardiac conditions.

(Source: The Independent)

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120 sq.m,6th fl., \$1700

vanak

shariati

pasdaran

shahrak gharb

saadatabad

4000-3000-5000-4000-1000  
sq.m,full,reasonable price

FOR:

**EMBASSY/COMPANY**

Jordan,

4-storey building,1000 sq.m,  
all facilities,\$10000

Zaferaniyeh

Triplex villa,800 sq.m,built  
up,1000 sq.m land,12  
rooms,\$8500

Niavaran

Triplex villa,2000 sq.m  
land,600 sq.m built up ,spj,all  
facilities,\$15000

Darous

Duplex villa,600 sq.m built  
up,1000 sq.m land ,all  
facilities,\$8000

Other areas:

Farmaniyeh

Aghdasiyeh

Shahrak Gharb

Shariati-Pasdaran

Valiasre

Tajrish

Jordan

Vanak

Arjantin

Zafar...

nice cases ready to move in.



## Agreement inked in favor of travel startups



**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s tourism body has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the labor ministry on Monday in a bid to strengthen support for tourism startups.

The MOU was inked by the deputy director of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, Mohammad Moheb-Khodaei, and the deputy labor minister, Isa Mansouri, CHTN reported.

Addressing the signing ceremony, Moheb-Khodaei voiced hope that the MOU would be a means to draw plans and models for tourism development and to unlock untapped potential in the sector.

The next step is to devise a detailed plan of action in order to put into practice new ideas in the [tourism] field and to boost cooperation with other ministries and organizations, he added.

Mansouri, for his part, attached great importance to the tourism businesses, saying “Tourism is one if the important subsets of the service [industry] so we have special attention to this area.”

Iran has launched extensive plans to bolster its tourism market. Under a 2025 Vision Plan, the country is expecting to increase the number of international arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million.

## Private sector to revive, operate historical houses in Shiraz



**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A total of 28 houses in the city of Shiraz, including 11 historical ones, are to be ceded to the private sector with the aim of receiving better conservation through repurposing them into thriving eco-lodges or other profitable niches.

All the houses are owned by the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places (known by its Persian acronym Saabta), Mehr reported.

“The houses are set to be utilized as boutique hotels, handicrafts and souvenir marketplaces, traditional houses as well as recreational, cultural and sports centers,” said Mosayeb Amiri, Fars province’s tourism chief.

To date, tens of historical monuments have been handed over to the private investor across the country to make the best use of them under contracts for restoration, maintenance and operation. It also caters to local economy, and job creation as well.

Iran is home to abundant historical structures such as mansions, caravanserais, bathhouses and madrasas to name a few.



### ROUND THE GLOBE

#### Tower of London

The Tower of London is an internationally famous monument and one of England’s most iconic structures. William the Conqueror built the White Tower in 1066 as a demonstration of Norman power, siting it strategically on the River Thames to act as both fortress and gateway to the capital.

It is the most complete example of an 11th century fortress palace remaining in Europe. A rare survival of a continuously developing ensemble of royal buildings, from the 11th to 16th centuries, the Tower of London has become one of the symbols of royalty.

It also fostered the development of several of England’s major State institutions, incorporating such fundamental roles as the nation’s defense, its record-keeping and its coinage. It has been the setting for key historical events in European



history, including the execution of three English queens.

As the setting for key historical events in European history: The Tower has been the setting for some of the most momentous events in European and British History. Its role as a stage upon which history has been enacted is one of the key elements which has contributed towards the Tower’s status as an iconic structure.

(Source: UNESCO)

# U.S. returns exquisite Achaemenid relief to Iran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — On Tuesday, an exquisite Achaemenid-era relief, which is estimated to be worth \$1.2-million, was handed back to Iran under a rule laid down by a U.S. court back in June.

The bas-relief is an eight-inch-square piece of carved limestone that was part of a long line of soldiers depicted on a balustrade at the central building on the Persepolis site. It dates to the Achaemenid dynasty — or the First Persian Empire — and experts said it was made sometime between 510 and 330 BC, when Persepolis was sacked by Alexander the Great.

The object, valued at \$1.2 million, was reported stolen from Iran in 1936 and stolen later in 2011 from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, to which it had been donated decades earlier. It was confiscated in October from the Park Avenue Armory in New York, where it was being offered for sale at an art fair.

The artifact was handed to Gholamali Khoshroo, Iran’s ambassador to the UN, following some 80 years of being



A 1933 photograph of an excavation of the ruins of Persepolis in Iran. The bas-relief of a soldier from these ruins, which was seized at a Manhattan art fair last year, was ordered to be returned to Iran on July 23, 2018.



## Morocco’s ancient historic Tangier city revived

Inhabitants of the northern Moroccan city of Tangier’s amazing creativity has birth an exciting scenery of aesthetics that has given the ancient city a dynamic face-lift.

The city built on the slops of a chalky limestone hill, enclosed by 16th century rampant now glows with Murals, colorful facades, flowery streets that are repainted in green and purple.

Houses now display different colors and flower pots are placed at the doors and windows.

“Tangier had a special system that opened its doors to many cultures, ethnicity and religions around the world, and in the old

Medina there are synagogues, Catholic churches, zaouias and mosques”, said owner of a cultural cafe in the Tangier Medina and art lover, Younes Cheik Ali.

Beyond the ecstatic, the imperial of the huge red bus that borders the historic facades, tourists discover the old Tangier, while a crowd of holidaymakers rush on the new ledge.

“It’s superb ...”, said Michal Linsi Tang, a 19-year-old Chinese student, aboard the tourist bus that has been traveling since the end of July to the beloved city of so many painters and writers, at the forefront of Africa.

“It’s very cool, I can enjoy all the views of the city here on the bus floor, it’s great”,

tourist Mike Owen noted.

As sign of tourism development, a multinational transport company Alsa, manages urban buses. The company has just launched two tours for double-decker buses and has seen an increase in the number of tourists.

Farid Othman Bentría Ramos is a writer and resident in Tangier.

“Tangier has a heterogeneous history, very cosmopolitan and you have to touch all that, even the mythology: that’s why we divided the course into two routes. Tangier was between two capes, the Cape of Malabata and the cape Spartel, and you have to go to both”, Ramos said.

## Five tips to give kids some culture and a vacation at the same time

Traveling with the whole family is a great way to open your children’s eyes to a world beyond their front door — but that doesn’t mean you can’t have fun, too. Here’s how.

“Of course you want your children to have fun on your family vacation, but why not give them a flavor of the local culture while they’re doing so?,” said Niamh O’Connell, vice president of guest experience at Rosewood Hotel Group. “When kids have some understanding of the destination they’re in, their trip becomes more memorable and enriching,” she said. “It goes beyond the usual fun in the sun escape.”

Ms. O’Connell is the brain behind Rosewood’s new Explorers program for children, which focuses on giving young guests a cultural experience during their stay, and has advice on how to do the same for your kids when you travel, too.

### ■ Seek out local arts and crafts

While markets are full of trinkets to buy and bring home, crafting these items with your kids will help teach them about the local culture and customs of your destination. “Arts and crafts inspire creativity and also build empathy for cultural differences,” Ms. O’Connell said.

If you’re in Thailand, for example, try making and flying traditional chula or pakpao kites. Other activities include creating clay sculptures modeled on the local wildlife, or making potpourri from local leaves and flowers. Both activities will help kids get familiar with indigenous animals and plants. Check with your hotel concierge or travel agent, or search TripAdvisor for local arts fairs, craft events for kids, or local artisans that open their shops to visitors eager to learn about the culture, not just shop for souvenirs.

### ■ Take a cooking class and visit a market

Taking a cooking class where your kids learn how to make typical local dishes is a fantastic way for them to learn more about the heritage and culture of the region you’re visiting. Many hotels and resorts offer kids cooking classes or will



Iran’s ambassador to the UN, Gholamali Khoshroo, is seen sitting beside the Persian artifact at the Islamic Republic’s diplomatic office in New York, September 4, 2018.

in exile changing hands among smugglers.

“I’m very pleased that today, a very important cultural item that was smuggled from Iran was delivered to me by the District Attorney of New York County,” Khoshroo told Press TV.

He said the artifact -- which depicts a Persian imperial guard holding a spear -- would be transferred to Iran “soon,” according to IRNA.

The Iranian envoy said the country presented documents pointing to its ownership of the work in order to stop its sale,

adding that it took investigators 11 months to disprove the ownership allegations by the artifact’s self-proclaimed owners.

Khoshroo expressed gratitude towards both the judge and the district attorney for their cooperation leading to the repatriation of the artifact.

“The humanity’s general heritage is comprised of these very cultural and historical works. There should be vast cooperation on the international scale to confront smuggling of cultural artifacts and items, and the institutions active in the endeavor should be reinforced,” he explained.

## Parthian, Sassanid tombs discovered in northern Iran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A total of 39 tombs and catacombs dating back to Parthian (247 BC–224 CE) and Sassanid (224 CE-651) eras have recently been discovered in Liar-Sang-Bon, an archaeological site in Amlash, northern Iran.

Radiocarbon dating tests indicated that the tombs, which have been come in various shapes, date from mid-Sassanid to mid-Parthian eras, IRNA quoted the project’s leader Vali Jahani as saying on Tuesday.

Liar-Sang-Bon was initially identified in [the Iranian calendar year] 1391 (March 2012-March 2013) while its related mapping and demarcating projects were completed in [the calendar year] 1393 and its first season of excavation commenced in [the calendar

year] 1395, Jahani said in June.

The excavations yielded helpful cultural information in archaeology anthropology and ancient botanist arenas. A field research in 2016 led to the discovery of funerary and stone architectural objects and that estimated to date from the Parthian and Sassanid eras.

However, the site was partly looted by antique seekers during a two-year gap in archaeological seasons, the senior archaeologist stated.

Earlier in July, another team of archaeologists discovered over 500 tomb chambers dating from Achaemenid (550 –330 BC) and Sassanid eras, during a magnetic survey conducted across the Mehdiabad-Oliya cemetery, southeastern Ker-man province.

Tangier’s fame as a destination for artists and writers from Europe and the United States during the 90’s appeared lost in recent past, the story is told differently in recent times as many writers still troop in their numbers.

“Many writers who have visited Tangier have written about the city, each in their own way, the same thing for painters, and more than 400 artists have painted paintings that can be seen today in international museums”, Ali said.

Gradually, the city is taking a pace which appears that more is yet to come.

(Source: africanews.com)

to entertain tourists, but also to explain local history and cultural traditions to people interesting in learning more about them. . “Even a little glimpse into local music and dance will deepen your child’s understanding and connection to where he or she is,” Ms. O’Connell said.

### ■ Get out to where people really live

While every traveler wants to hit the big attractions, tourist traps aren’t where locals spend their time, and they’re not where you and your family will get a feel for the culture of your destination. Instead, take your kids to play where the local kids play, and visit community centers away from tourist centers, where more interesting — and engaging — activities take place.

“Kids can best experience local culture by going where local kids go,” Ms. O’Connell said. Visit neighborhood parks instead of the ones near the city center. Join local sporting activities if you can find a pickup game — it’s another great way to immerse your kids in the locale. A game of soccer, beach volleyball or boule can be the beginning of a new international friendship.

### ■ Look for a hotel with a culture-rich children’s program

Historically, children’s clubs and activities at hotels usually included run-of-the-mill activities like cupcake decorating, and painting. Now, many hotel companies and resorts have introduced programs for kids that give them the opportunity to explore the cultural riches of a destination.

Look for a property that offers immersive activities which take kids out to see their surroundings — it could be hitting the beach to learn about ocean life or getting out into the city to visit a market, museum or other cultural site. Check with your hotel before you book to see what activities they have for kids, or do a quick web search or TripAdvisor search for leads.

(Source: The New York Times)



# First known omnivorous shark species identified, team finds

It is one of the most radical rebrandings in history: contrary to their bloodthirsty image, some sharks are not irrepressible meat eaters, but are happy to munch on vegetation too.

According to U.S. researchers, one of the most common sharks in the world, a relative of the hammerhead which patrols the shores of the Americas, is the first variety of shark to be outed as a bona fide omnivore.

The bonnethead shark is abundant in the shallow waters of the eastern Pacific, the Western Atlantic, and the Gulf of Mexico, where they feed on crab, shrimp, snails and bony fish. Though small by shark standards, adult females – the larger of the sexes – can still reach an impressive five feet long.

Scientists at the University of California in Irvine, and Florida International University in Miami, decided to investigate the sharks' dietary habits after reading reports of the fish chomping on seagrass, the flowering marine plant that forms subsea meadows in some coastal waters.

**■ Nutritional value**  
“It has been assumed by most that this consumption was incidental and that it provided no nutritional value,” said Samantha Leigh, a researcher on the team. “I wanted to see how much of this seagrass diet the sharks could digest, because what an animal consumes is not necessarily the same as what



it digests and retains nutrients from.”  
To see whether the sharks are truly flexitarian, the scientists retrieved sea grass from Florida Bay and hauled it back to the lab where

they re-planted it. As the seagrass took root, the researchers added sodium bicarbonate powder made with a specific carbon isotope to the water. This was taken up by the seagrass,

**Scientists have decided to investigate the sharks’ dietary habits after reading reports of the fish chomping on seagrass, the flowering marine plant that forms subsea meadows in some coastal waters.**

giving it a distinctive chemical signature.

The researchers next caught five bonnet-head sharks and brought them back to the lab. Once the fish had settled in, they were fed on a three week diet of the seagrass and squid. All of the fish put on weight over the course of the study.

**■ Tests on the sharks**  
The scientists then ran a series of tests on the sharks. These showed that the fish successfully digested the seagrass with enzymes that broke down components of the plants, such as starch and cellulose. Lacking the kind of teeth best suited for mastication, the fish may rely on strong stomach acids to weaken the plants' cells so the enzymes can have their digestive effects. In all, more than half of the organic material locked up in the seagrass was digested by the sharks, putting them on a par with young green sea turtles.  
The findings, published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B, overturn the idea that all sharks are exclusive meat-eaters, but that is not all. “This has implications for fragile and crucial seagrass meadow habitat management,” said Leigh. From now on, researchers who look after such habitats will have to factor in that bonnetheads not only eat the plants, but can make seagrass as much as 60% of their diet.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Head-turning violence helps tiny songbirds kill big prey: study



They may be small and striking, but shrikes are songbirds known for viciously impaling their victims with a razor-sharp bill although experts have long wondered about their ability to subdue much larger prey.

Now researchers say these carnivorous killers use powerful beak-and-jaw motions to shake their victims vigorously, whirling them around at speeds which cause injuries akin to whiplash.

“We already knew that they can kill surprisingly large animals for their size, but we didn’t know specifically how they do it,” said Dr. Diego Sustaita, lead author of a study published in Wednesday’s Biology Letters journal.

Although shrikes have sharply hooked, falcon-like beaks which they jab into the head or neck of their prey, causing partial paralysis, they don’t have the large talons possessed by other birds of prey to help them finish the job.

**■ The victim’s weight**  
But researchers at San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research on California’s San Clemente Island found clear evidence of violent shaking in a motion which uses the victim’s weight against it, Sustaita said.  
The “way that shrikes shake their prey is likely to be important for immobilizing and killing it because the accelerations of the prey’s own body around its neck results in forces that could break or damage the neck,” he told AFP.

The “rate at which the shrikes shake their heads was surprising, especially with relatively large animals in their jaws!” he said, with the study suggesting the movement resulted in accelerations equivalent of around 6g-force.

For the study, researchers studied footage of attacks by 37 loggerhead shrikes involving live domestic black mice and other creatures. In 28 cases, they observed prey-shaking behavior with the results giving a clear indicator of how the birds subdued larger creatures.  
“They help explain how a small songbird is able to kill relatively large animals in ways that differ from large raptors like hawks.

**■ Sharply-hooked beak**  
Shrikes have some of the ‘equipment’ like the sharply-hooked beak, but not all, like the talons, and so they seem to have found another way to get the job done.”

Shrikes, he said, are disproportionately strong for their size but their ability to kill is actually more reliant on speed.

“As a group, shrikes can take prey larger than you would expect for their body sizes and ‘types’ — keep in mind, these are songbirds. You wouldn’t expect a robin, for instance, to have the strength to kill a mouse and they don’t,” he said.

“This particular behavior relies more on speed to generate accelerations to take advantage of the prey’s body weight, so it might not necessitate as much strength as it would seem.” (Source: phys.org)

## Study says coral bleaching on the GBR not limited to shallow depths



A new study demonstrates that the recent mass coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) was not restricted to shallow depths, but also affected deep reefs. Although deep reefs are often considered a refuge from thermal anomalies, the new research highlights limitations to this role and argues that both shallow and deep reefs are under threat of mass bleaching events.

The study focuses on the mass bleaching event in 2016 that caused the death of 30% of shallow-water corals on the Great Barrier Reef. It details how the impacts of this bleaching lessened over depth, but were still substantial on deep reefs.

“During the bleaching event, cold-water upwelling initially provided cooler conditions on the deep reef,” says study co-author Dr. Pim Bongaerts, curator of invertebrate zoology and Hope for Reefs co-leader at the California Academy of Sciences. “However, when this upwelling stopped towards the end of summer, temperatures rose to record-high levels even at depth.”

**■ Beneath the ocean’s surface**  
Lead author Dr. Pedro Frade from the Center of Marine Sciences (CCMAR) says the research team was astounded to find bleached coral colonies down to depths of 131 feet beneath the ocean’s surface. “It was a shock to see that the impacts

extended to these dimly lit reefs, as we were hoping their depth may have provided protection from this devastating event.”

The Great Barrier Reef is known to harbor extensive areas of deep coral reefs that are notoriously difficult to study. Using remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), the team deployed sensors to 328 feet beneath the ocean’s surface to characterize how temperature conditions at depth differ from those in shallow habitats.

A team of divers then conducted surveys during the height of bleaching across a number of sites on the northern Great Barrier Reef. They noted that overall, major bleaching and mortality affected almost a quarter of corals at the deep sampling points, while confirming previous reports of impacts on close to half the shallower corals.

“Unfortunately, this research further stresses the vulnerability of the Great Barrier Reef,” says Dr. Ove Hoegh-Guldberg from The University of Queensland, where the study was conducted. “We already established that the refuge role of deep reefs is generally restricted by the limited overlap in species with the shallow reef. However, this adds an extra limitation by demonstrating that the deep reefs themselves are also impacted by higher water temperatures.”

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

## NASA launches new competition to turn CO2 into energy

NASA wants to equip its manned mission to Mars with a technology that can convert carbon dioxide into an energy source.

The space agency has launched the CO2 Conversion Challenge in the hopes of encouraging the public to find ways to turn carbon dioxide, which is abundant in the Red Planet, to compounds that will be useful to astronauts.

“Enabling sustained human life on another planet will require a great deal of resources and we cannot possibly bring everything we will need,” said Monsi Roman, Centennial Challenges program manager. “If we can transform an existing and plentiful resource like carbon dioxide into a variety of useful products, the space — and terrestrial — applications are endless.”

The competition will focus on developing glucose, a compound made up of hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen. On Earth, glucose or soluble sugar is plentiful and inexpensive because they are produced by plants.

However, because of the harsh conditions on Mars, recreating the approach would be nearly impossible. Resources



such as water, energy, and even the crew needed to tend to the creation of glucose through plants are extremely limited.

**■ Microbial energy sources**  
“Energy rich sugars are preferred microbial energy sources composed of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen atom,” read the press release disseminated on Aug. 30. “They could be used as the feedstock for systems that can efficiently produce a

variety of items. Glucose is the target sugar product in this challenge because it is the easiest to metabolize, which will optimize conversion efficiency.”

The winning design could also be used on Earth in order to reduce the carbon dioxide emitted to the atmosphere every day and hopefully, reverse the effects of global warming.

Entries will undergo two phases: Phase 1 is submission while Phase 2 is construction and demonstration. Those who want to be involved must submit a design with a description of their approach, including the process that will convert carbon to glucose. As many as five teams will be selected, with each getting \$50,000.

In April 2017, NASA announced plans to send humans to Mars. The space agency unveiled a five-phase plan, the most detailed plan to date, to get astronauts safely to the Earth’s neighboring planet.

Phase 1, set to take place from 2018 to 2025, includes the launch and testing of six SLS rockets. NASA expects to send a manned mission to Mars by 2030s.

(Source: Tech Times)

## IRANCELL to Offer Discount to Subscribers Using TD-LTE Services Again

Subscribers of MTN-IRANCELL who did not use their conventional internet services for more than 30 days (TD-LTE) can get discount up to 80 percent (80%) with reusing and providing their private internet packages, the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

Given the above issue, IRANCELL subscribers, who

failed to use their TD-LTE modem services for more than 30 days, can provide their fixed private package (4G and 4.5G) via the following website address: shop.iranell.ir. In this case, subscribers of MTN-IRANCELL can get up to 80 percent (80%) discount.

The special packages will be considered as ‘subscriber’ due to the timespan for lack of use of

fixed or TD-LTE internet services.

By logging on the sub-branch of ‘internet packages’, IRANCELL subscribers can be informed of their special packages with inserting their TD-LTE number in the section of ‘special proposal of inactive subscribers’ at IRANCELL Internet Shop, the Public Relations Dept. of the company concluded.

## Fish passes scientific test of self-awareness, scientists announce

A little fish just passed a classic scientific test of self-awareness by recognizing itself in a mirror, scientists have announced. The cleaner wrasse fish, which measures around 10cm in length, was recorded attempting to remove a mark that had been placed on its forehead while looking in a mirror — seemingly realizing it was looking at a reflection of itself and understanding something was wrong.

The mirror self-recognition test is a hallmark of animal intelligence. As of yet, only a relatively small group of animals have passed it. These include apes, elephants, dolphins and crows. However, Masanori Kohda, from Osaka City University in Japan, and colleagues are considering whether the test itself is flawed and that other animals we traditionally think of as having limited cognitive abilities are actually far more intelligent than we think.

To find out if fish could pass the test, they constructed an experiment where cleaner wrasses were placed in view of a mirror. Initially, they reacted territorially, as if their reflection were another fish. However, over the course of several days, their behavior began to change. Instead of warning off their reflection, they began to act differently, approaching it at different angles or from upside-down.

The researchers say this means the cleaner wrasse has passed the mirror self-recognition test—and that “this remarkable finding presents a challenge to our interpretation of the mark test.” It means, they say, that either fish are self-aware, that the test is flawed or that the fish behavior has emerged as a result of a cognitive process that is not self-recognition.

“Cleaner wrasses show behavioral responses that fulfill the criteria of the mark test, but as this result does not mean they are self-aware, a question naturally arises. Can passing the mark test be taken as evidence of self-awareness in one taxon but not another?” (Source: Newsweek)

## A fundamental physics law just failed a test using nanoscale objects

Planck’s law of radiative heat transfer has held up well under a century of intense testing, but a new analysis has found it fails on the smallest of scales.

Exactly what this means isn’t all that clear yet, but where laws fail, new discoveries can follow. Such a find wouldn’t just affect physics on an atomic scale — it could impact everything from climate models to our understanding of planetary formation.

The foundational law of quantum physics was recently put to the test by researchers from William & Mary in Virginia and the University of Michigan, who were curious about whether the age-old rule could describe the way heat radiation was emitted by nanoscale objects.

Not only does the law fail, the experimental result is 100 times greater than the predicted figure, suggesting nanoscale objects can emit and absorb heat with far greater efficiency than current models can explain.

“It’s important to experimentally measure something, but also important to actually understand what is going on.”

Planck is one of the big names in physics. While it’d be misleading to attribute the birth of quantum mechanics to a single individual, his work played a key role in getting the ball rolling.

Humans have known since ancient times that hot things glow with light. We’ve also understood for quite a while that there’s a relationship between the color of that light and its temperature.

To study this in detail, physicists in the 19th century would measure the color of light inside a black, heated box, watching through a tiny hole. This ‘black body radiation’ provided a reasonably precise measure of that relationship.

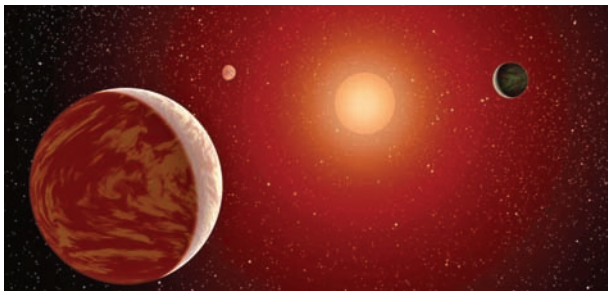
Coming up with simple formulae to describe the wavelengths of color and their temperatures proved to be rather challenging, and so Planck came at it from a slightly different angle.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Little star sheds light on young planets, new research says

Astronomers discovered a dense disk of material around a young star, which may be a precursor to a planetary system. Their research could vastly improve models of how solar systems form, which would tell us more about our own place in the cosmos.

Early in 2017, Assistant Professor Yoko Oya gave graduate student Yuki Okoda some recent complex data on a nearby star with which she could begin her Ph.D. Little did she realize that what she would find could unlock not only the secrets of how planets form but possibly her career as a professional astronomer.



The star in question (only known by its catalog number IRAS 15398-3359) is small, young and relatively cool for a star. It’s diminutive stature means the weak light it shines can’t even reach us through a cloud of gas and dust that surrounds it. But this doesn’t stop inquisitive minds from exploring the unknown.

In 2013, Oya and her collaborators used the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) in Chile to observe the star in submillimeter wavelengths, as that kind of light can penetrate the dust cloud -- for reference, red light is around 700 nanometers. A painstaking analysis revealed some interesting nebulous structures, despite the images they worked from being difficult to comprehend.

“The greatest academic challenge I’ve faced was trying to make sense of grainy images. It’s extremely difficult to know exactly what you’re really looking at,” says Okoda. “But I felt compelled to explore the nature of the structures Dr. Oya had seen with ALMA, so I came up with a model to explain them.” The model she produced came as a surprise to Okoda and her colleagues, but it fit the data perfectly. It describes a dense disk of material that consists of gas and dust from the cloud that surrounds the star.

(Source: Science Daily)



## September 5 International Day of Charity

In the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015, the United Nations recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

The Agenda also calls for a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. It also acknowledges the role of the diverse private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals, and that of civil society organizations and philanthropic organizations in the implementation of the new Agenda.



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth in the Agenda can be grouped into six critical areas: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. They have the potential to transform our lives and our planet by providing the framework needed for philanthropic institutions to enable all people to contribute to the betterment of our world.

**■ Background**  
Charity, like the notions of volunteerism and philanthropy, provides real social bonding and contributes to the creation of inclusive and more resilient societies. Charity can alleviate the worst effects of humanitarian crises, supplement public services in health care, education, housing and child protection. It assists the advancement of culture, science, sports, and the protection of cultural and natural heritage. It also promotes the rights of the marginalized and underprivileged and spreads the message of humanity in conflict situations.

The International Day of Charity was established with the objective of sensitizing and mobilizing people, NGOs, and stakeholders all around the world to to help others through volunteer and philanthropic activities.

The date of 5 September was chosen in order to commemorate the anniversary of the passing away of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 “for work undertaken in the struggle to overcome poverty and distress, which also constitute a threat to peace.”

Mother Teresa, the renowned nun and missionary, was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in 1910. In 1928 she went to India, where she devoted herself to helping the destitute. In 1948 she became an Indian citizen and founded the order of Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata (Calcutta) in 1950, which became noted for its work among the poor and the dying in that city.

For over 45 years she ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned and dying, while guiding the Missionaries of Charity’s expansion, first in India and then in other countries, including hospices and homes for the poorest and homeless. Mother Teresa’s work has been recognized and acclaimed throughout the world and she has received a number of awards and distinctions, including the Nobel Peace Prize. Mother Teresa died on September 5th 1997, at 87 years of age.

In recognition of the role of charity in alleviating humanitarian crises and human suffering within and among nations, as well as of the efforts of charitable organizations and individuals, including the work of Mother Teresa, the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution A/RES/67/105PDF document designated the 5th of September, the anniversary of the death of Mother Teresa, as the International Day of Charity.

(Source: United Nations)

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Bowling

A: Alright, so the first thing that you need to know about **bowling** is that you should never cross that line where the lane begins.  
B: Why not?  
A: Because they **polish** and oil it to make the ball slide down. If you step there you will slip and fall.  
A: OK, so I got my bowling shoes, my ball, our names on the scorecard, so now, how the heck do I play this?  
A: You throw the ball down the **lane** and try to **knock** down all the pins. If you do, that is called a strike. If you don’t knock them all down on the first try, then you get a chance to get the spare. After ten frames, we add up the points and see who has the most. Three hundred is a perfect score, but very hard to get.  
B: Got it! OK, I’m gonna give it a go. Oh no! My ball went in the **gutter**!  
A: I told you, it’s harder than you think. Now let a **pro** show you how it’s done.

**■ Key vocabulary**  
**bowling:** a game where you try to knock pins down with a ball  
**polish:** to make smooth and glossy, esp. by rubbing or friction  
**lane:** any narrow or well-defined passage, track, channel, or course  
**knock:** to strike in collision  
**gutter:** a sunken channel on each side of the lane  
**pro:** an expert player  
**■ Supplementary vocabulary**  
**split:** separate or apart  
**perfect game:** a game in bowling of 12 consecutive strikes.  
**pin:** a small, slender, often pointed piece of wood, metal  
**strike:** to hit, collide  
**gutter ball:** A ball that goes into the gutter  
(Source: irlanguage.com)



# Iranian traditional medicine can play a leading role in military medicine

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

**TEHRAN** — Iranian traditional medicine can play a major part in military medicine worldwide, Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, an Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine researcher, said on Wednesday.

Mirghazanfari, MD, who holds a PhD degree in medical physiology and is also an assistant professor in AJA University of Medical Sciences made the remarks in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times on the sidelines of a workshop on the potential contributions of traditional medicine to emergency medicine and in military health services.

“We are just taking the first steps in using traditional medicine as well as complementary medicine in military medicine and crisis conditions,” Mirghazanfari said.

The 4th International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM) Pan Asia-Pacific Regional Congress will be held on October 12 to 15 in Tehran and another workshop centering around the role of Iranian traditional medicine in military medicine and crisis conditions will be held on the sidelines of the international event, he noted.

So far some 25 to 30 research works have been conducted in this area as well as finding the best natural and herbal medicines in wound healing, stopping bleeding, treating inflammation, fatigue, severe thirst, etc. in crisis conditions and conflicts, he explained, adding that, “we are making a progress and holding a workshop on the aforesaid subject matter during the ICMM Pan Asia-Pacific Regional Congress is also a conclusive proof of that.”

Over the past three years some traditional medicine clinics have been set up at hospitals affiliated to the army and medical students are being trained and specializing in traditional medicine in universities of medical sciences affiliated to the army as well, he added.

Members of the military have a different lifestyle due to the fact that they have to participate in wars and conflicts and that’s why military medicine was introduced to the world, he said, adding that, military medicine strives to provide emergency health services to those suffering diseases and also injuries they sustained in battlefields.

Moreover, in large scale natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcano eruptions, and wildfires the Ministry of Health is not in charge anymore and the army would take charge; “accordingly the ICMM Pan Asia-Pacific Regional Congress is a chance for the countries to show their capabilities in offering medical services at the time of crisis and I believe that Iranian traditional medicine can play a significant role at the time of disasters.



Mirghazanfari went on to say that despite the fact that Iranian traditional medicine has been developed and used to treat acute and urgent illness for many thousands of year it has been widely perceived that it may only be effective to treat chronic diseases.

Using traditional medicine practices we can treat headaches and even stop bleeding within hours, he added.

“The workshop which is scheduled to be held on October 15 is a great means to introduce our culture and traditional medicine to the world,” Mirghazanfari suggested.

“While we believe that conventional medicine and alternative medicine should be both practiced to get the best results the brutal sanctions imposed on the country might result in drug shortages and it appears to me that medicinal plants being produced in Iran can definitely help treat many diseases ranging from cancers or multiple sclerosis, this only need proper research work,” he concluded.

**■ 4th ICMM Pan-Asia Pacific Congress on Military Medicine**

According to ICMM website International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM) is an international and intergovernmental organization, which was established in

1920, after World War One had revealed the importance of a closer cooperation between the Armed Forces Medical Services worldwide. The first International Congress of Military Medicine was held in July 1921, in Brussels, Belgium.

Today, ICMM has 116 Member States and 6 Observer Members, and has held 42 World Congresses, the 16th of which was held in Tehran, Iran in 1959. In addition, it has relations with international organizations, including World Health Organization (WHO), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), UNAIDS, International Military Sports Council (CISM), World Veterinary Association (WVA), and World Medical Association (WMA).

The main goals of ICMM are to maintain and to strengthen the bonds between all medical services of Member States, promote medico-military scientific activities, and participate in the development of the medical and medico-military setting of humanitarian operations.

The first Pan Asia-Pacific Regional Congress was held in China in 2010, the second one was in Thailand in 2012, the third one was in Russian Federation in 2016, and now Islamic Republic of Iran has the honor to host the 4th ICMM Pan Asia-Pacific Regional Congress.

## State handouts allocated for 2,000 cochlear implants

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Free state handouts were allocated to Shafa charity foundation for treatment of hearing impairment and 2,000 cochlear implants by Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad Ejraiye Farmane Hazrate Imam, Tasnim news agency reported on Tuesday.

A cochlear implant is a surgically implanted neuroprosthetic device that provides a sense of sound to a person who suffers severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss.

Mohammad Mokhber the head of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam explained that some 50 billion rials (nearly \$1.2 million) was also allotted to research works as well as preventive measures.

Mokhber also highlighted that another 70 billion rials (nearly \$1.7 million) for 30,000 cochlear implants will be also provided in due time to Shafa charity foundation.

Earlier in July head of the department of hearing health affiliated with the Ministry of Health Saeed Mahmoudian announced that eleven governmental cochlear implant centers are currently active in Iran.

Mahmoudian also noted that cochlear implantation costs



about 400 million rials (nearly \$9,000) in Iran, which is partially paid by the government and charitable foundations.

The average hearing loss in Iranian infants is 2.7 per 1,000 births, and since [the previous Iranian calendar year] 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), out of 1.5 million live births, hearing screening test has been conducted for 1.1 million

infants in the health centers and hospitals nationwide, Mahmoudian added.

This year, the Ministry of Health plans to provide a full insurance coverage for infants suffering hearing impairments, he concluded.

**■ Why some people need cochlear implants**

According to Health Hearing Website while most people with hearing loss are quite successful with hearing aids, there are some individuals with severe to profound hearing loss for whom hearing aids do not provide enough benefit. For these people with severe damage to the sensory cells in the inner ear, a cochlear implant is often the best option for better hearing.

These tiny, complex medical devices work differently than hearing aids. Rather than amplifying sound, which helps an individual with residual hearing ability, a cochlear implant provides the sense of sound by stimulating the auditory nerve directly. Cochlear implants do not cure hearing loss or restore hearing, but they do provide an opportunity for the severely hard of hearing or deaf to perceive the sensation of sound by bypassing the damaged inner ear.

## Charity event to support underprivileged students prior to school year

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Charity event, designed to solicit contributions for underprivileged students, is scheduled to kick off on Thursday nationwide, prior to the upcoming school year (starting September 23), Mehr reported on Tuesday.

Known as Jashn-e Atefeh (literally meaning the festival of kindnesses), the event has been held for 22 years by Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation.

While over the previous year people could make their contributions in-kind or cash by referring to schools, mosques, etc. over the

past few years many choose to transfer a donation electronically by online banking, Mehdi Bloukat, an official with the relief foundation has said.

Last year (March 2017-March 2018) some 30 percent of the education expenses of the underprivileged students were provided by the contributions the public has made, Bloukat highlighted.

Moreover, last year the public have donated some 800 billion rials (nearly \$19 million) for the financially struggling students through the charity event, he explained.

Majid Zarefard, another official with the

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, also explained that the foundation has allocated stationery packages as well as school books worth of 1.3 million rials (nearly \$30) to each student.

Zarefard went on to say that the foundation has allotted some 250 billion rials (nearly \$6 million) to underprivileged students for the current year, which only covers half of the financial needs and the rest will be provided by public donation.

In general, some 310,000 students are provided with financial support of the foundation, he concluded.



### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Iran, Iraq, Syria to join hands against SDSs

A plan on combating sand and dust storms (SDS) is scheduled to be prepared in a collaborative initiative with three countries of Iran, Iraq and Syria under the auspices of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the current Iranian calendar year (ending on March 20, 2019), Mohammad Ali Tahmasebi-Birgani, head of national working group on SDS has said.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “-blast, -blastic”

**■ Meaning:** a type of bud or embryo  
**■ For example:** Sea urchins also have radial **holoblastic** cleavage.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Knock somebody down

**■ Meaning:** to hit or push someone so that they fall to the ground  
**■ For example:** Something hit him from behind and knocked him down.

### IDIOM

#### Cause a stir

**■ Explanation:** to create an atmosphere of excitement or great interest  
**■ For example:** The arrival of the actress caused quite a stir in the village.

## ایران، عراق و سوریه تفاهمنامه مقابله باگردوغبار امضا می کنند

محمد علی طهماسبی بیرگانی مدیر ملی کارگروه مقابله با گرد و غبار گفت: تهیه برنامه جامع مقابله با گرد و غبار با منشا خارج از کشور با همکاری ایران، سوریه و عراق و زیر نظر برنامه عمران ملل متحد (UNDP) در دستور کار امسال است.



# Russia: Airstrikes hit terrorists not populated areas in Idlib

**1→** The statement further noted that the planes involved in the airstrikes had taken off from the Russian-run Hmeimim air base in Syria's western coastal province of Latakia.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported on Tuesday that Russian military aircraft had battered Idlib for the first time in three weeks.

"Russian warplanes resumed bombing Idlib province after a 22-day pause," Rami Abdel Rahman, who heads the Britain-based monitor group, said.

He added that the aerial attacks came a day after militants in Idlib hit Syrian army positions in neighboring Latakia province, which killed three pro-government fighters.

**■ White House: U.S. 'closely monitoring' situation in Syria's Idlib**

The United States is "closely monitoring" the situation in Syria's Idlib province, where efforts are underway to drive terrorists out.

"President Donald J. Trump has warned that such an attack would be a reckless escalation of an already tragic conflict and would risk the lives of hundreds of thousands of people," press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement on Tuesday.

Sanders' comments came a day after Trump warned Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his close allies, Russia and Iran, not to "recklessly attack" Idlib, claiming that civilian people could lose their lives "in this potential human tragedy."

Sanders added that Washington "will continue to work tirelessly with its allies to find a lasting diplomatic solution to resolve the hostilities in Syria."

The U.S. has been conducting airstrikes inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from Damascus or a United Nations mandate. It has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians across the country. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of destroying the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit.

**■ De Mistura begs Putin, Erdogan to stop conflict in Idlib**

Elsewhere, United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura asked the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan to talk and find a 'soft solution' for Idlib, at a press conference in Geneva on Tuesday.

"Our appeal, if I may to President Putin and to President Erdogan, to talk and go beyond perhaps technical discussions, and find a solution which can be a soft solution to this crisis," stressed De Mistura.

The UN envoy also warned against a bombardment against Idlib, the last militant stronghold in Syria. He echoed an earlier statement by the U.S. President warning



that an assault on Idlib would be "a grave humanitarian mistake".

**■ Russia dismisses Trump's warning about offensive in Syria's Idlib**

Meantime, Russia has strongly dismissed the U.S. President Trump's warning to Syria not to carry out a full-scale offensive against terrorists in the militant-held province of Idlib, stressing that the northwestern region is a "nest of terrorism."

"Just to speak out with some warnings, without taking into account the very dangerous, negative potential for the whole situation in Syria, is probably not a full, comprehensive approach," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said at a press conference in the capital Moscow on Tuesday.

His comments came a day after Trump warned Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and his close allies Russia and Iran, not to "recklessly attack" Idlib, claiming that civilian people could lose their lives "in this potential human tragedy."

The U.S. has accused the Syrian government of attacking civilians with chemicals in previous operations, including in Douma near Damascus and in Khan Sheikhun, in Idlib. The Syrian authorities have strongly 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. Moscow has already submitted evidence to the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) showing that terrorists in Idlib are preparing to set up another chemical attack false flag to frame Damascus.

Peskov added that the presence of militants in Idlib was undermining the Syrian

peace process and had turned the flash-point region to a base, from which terrorists carry out attacks, notably with "various unmanned aerial vehicles", on Russian "temporary bases" in the Arab country.

"A fairly large group of terrorists has settled there and of course this leads to a general destabilization of the situation. It undermines attempts to bring the situation onto the track of a political-diplomatic settlement," he further noted, adding that the Kremlin was aware that Syrian army was "preparing to resolve this problem."

Russia commenced an anti-terror campaign, mainly through airstrikes, in militancy-infested Syria in September 2015, upon an official request from the Syrian president. Its assistance to the Syrian military in eliminating terrorists has significantly helped Damascus in retaking militant-held areas and cities across the country.

Iran has been also helping Damascus in its fight against various factions of terrorists on its soil through providing the government troops with advisory assistance, based on an invitation by the Syrian government, since foreign-backed militancy broke out in the country in March 2011.

Peskov also confirmed that the situation in Idlib would be "one of the main issues on the agenda" at the upcoming trilateral peace talks in Tehran.

**■ Trump 'wanted Bashar al-Assad killed' after chemical attack**

The U.S. President Donald Trump wanted to have Syrian President Bashar al-Assad killed after the Syrian government reportedly carried out a chemical attack in April 2017, a new book by renowned journalist Bob Woodward alleges.

The attack, which was widely blamed on

forces loyal to the Syrian government, was carried out on the town of Khan Sheikhoun.

According to the book Fear: Trump in the White House, by Woodward, Trump wanted the U.S. military to go into Syria and assassinate al-Assad.

"Let's f\*\*\*\*\*g kill him! Let's go in. Let's kill the f\*\*\*\*\*g lot of them," Trump said according to Woodward's book.

Secretary of Defense James Mattis said the Pentagon would "get right on it" after Trump made his request, according to Woodward, but after getting off the phone with Trump, Mattis made it clear to his staff that they were not going to follow through with Trump's plan.

"We're not going to do any of that. We're going to be much more measured," Mattis said according to Woodward's book.

Instead of targeting al-Assad personally, the Pentagon drew up plans for air attacks to take out Syrian military infrastructure.

Following those attacks on April 7, 2017, Trump praised the U.S. military, saying the military personnel "represented the United States and the world so well".

In an official response to the allegations, Mattis called the quotes used in Woodward's book "fiction" and "a product of someone's rich imagination," adding that the publication was "a uniquely Washington brand of literature".

"In serving in this administration, the idea that I would show contempt for the elected Commander-in-Chief, President Trump, or tolerate disrespect to the office of the President from within our Department of Defense, is a product of someone's rich imagination," Mattis' statement said.

Trump also responded to the book, calling the quotes in the book "made up by frauds, a con on the public".

When asked about the allegations, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley denied ever hearing threats made by Trump against al-Assad.

"I have not once ever heard the president talk about assassinating Assad," Haley told Al Jazeera correspondent James Bays.

Woodward's book also details several other encounters in the Trump White House between senior staff and the president.

According to the book, sources told Woodward that White House Chief of Staff John Kelly regularly lost his temper with Trump, calling him "unhinged" and "an idiot", the Washington Post reported.

"It's pointless to try to convince him of anything. He's gone off the rails. We're in Crazytown. I don't even know why any of us are here. This is the worst job I've ever had," the book quotes Kelly as saying according to unnamed sources.

## Iran needs more help to support Afghan refugees – UNHCR chief

**1→** In Tehran, Grandi met government officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli as well as the Director General of the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs, Ahmad Mohammadifard, expressing UNHCR's commitment to support Iran's efforts in providing protection and seeking solutions for Afghan refugees while calling for greater international support. The High Commissioner's visit to Iran is the first leg of a three-country tour – to Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan -- to address the Afghan refugee situation.



UNHCR boss Filippo Grandi holding talks with Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli(R).

On the outskirts of Tehran, the UNHCR chief heard from members of the Afghan refugee community during a visit to the Persian Gulf Refugee Administration Centre which provides documentation services for refugees.

Iran's efforts to give documents to Afghans in the country are positive and must be supported. They allow better access to health and education services, and greater chances of self-reliance.

He also visited the city of Mashhad, home to Iran's second largest population of Afghan refugees – to meet the governor and visit a vocational training college for refugees and a Government-funded charity hospital providing medical services such as kidney dialysis for both documented and undocumented Afghans.

As well as the registered refugees, who hold 'Amayesh' identity documentation, the government also estimates that there are some 1.5 to two million undocumented Afghans present in the country. Over the past year, notable steps have been taken towards identifying this group and recording their presence, initially through a 'head count'. A growing number, some half a million, of Afghan passport holders with Iranian work permits are also present in the country.

At a meeting with Iran's diplomatic community in Tehran, Grandi said that at a time when Iran is facing economic pressures, vulnerable populations, including refugees, need more support. In hosting almost a million refugees, and working to address the situation of the undocumented, the Iranian government is making an important contribution to the management of population movements in the region and beyond, which should be supported.

While the volatile security situation in Afghanistan is currently not encouraging large-scale returns from Iran, some refugees are asking for support to find jobs or start businesses back home in Afghanistan. "It's a sign of people looking to their long-term future with hope," Grandi said. "We must not forget that the solution lies in Afghanistan -- and on the stability, security and prosperity of Afghanistan."

The Afghan refugee situation is one of the largest and most protracted in the world, with many having been in the country for as long as 40 years -- meaning many young refugees are third or even fourth generation, born and raised in Iran. Painfully aware of the ongoing insecurity in their homeland, they nevertheless still dream of one day returning to their roots.

"This is a long-term refugee community, some of them have been here for decades, some were born here. There is a lot of ... entrepreneurial potential in this community," Grandi said.

In a discussion with refugee entrepreneurs who are running businesses around the country, employing Iranians as well as their compatriots, Grandi heard from 27-year-old Somayeh Ghaznavi, who runs a tailoring business in Tehran. "It feels really good that I am working for myself. But I need support to continue," she said. "I lost everything once, but I am trying again. I am still hopeful to be more successful and manage my life."

"It feels really good that I am working for myself. But I need support to continue."

She started her business after completing a business skills training programme run by UNHCR partner ILIA, and now employs four women seamstresses to sew staff uniforms for a popular restaurant in Tehran and is able to support her family. Born and raised in Iran, Somayeh attributed her success to the ILIA centre, which not only trained her but now provides premises for her workshop.

"I encouraged them to use their entrepreneurial spirit, not to depend on aid, to achieve self-reliance," Grandi said. "These successful entrepreneurs, small but successful, have been able to pay back not through charity, not through aid, but by employing other refugees and by employing Iranians."

The challenge, said Grandi, is to make sure Iran is supported and funded by the international community so it can continue on this path, adding, "Iran has experienced 39 years of a refugee situation since it started receiving Afghans in 1979."

While in Tehran Grandi also highlighted the new global compact on refugees, due to be adopted by UN member states later this year, which provides a blueprint for how the international community will engage with countries – like Iran - hosting large refugee populations.

"This is the global compact on refugees made real, made live. Iran is already implementing many of the responsibilities and contributing to a shared public good - the well-being of refugees," he said. "I hope Iran's example will be taken up by other countries and will receive the support it deserves."

(news.trust.org)

## Israeli court upholds order to raze Palestinian village

Israel's Supreme Court has upheld an order to destroy a Palestinian Bedouin village in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, despite strong international appeal against the move.

In upholding the order on Wednesday, the court also rejected a petition filed by residents of the Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar.

"We reject the petitions" against the directive to demolish Khan al-Ahmar, the Supreme Court panel said in its ruling, adding that a temporary order preventing the razing of the village during court hearings "will be canceled within seven days from today," AFP reported.

For around nine years, various tribunals had been hearing various cases against the destruction of the village.

Palestinians were forced to build Khan al-Ahmar out of sticks and stones in the face of Israel's refusal to issue building permits across much of the occupied territory. The Israeli officials call the constructions "illegal."

In July, the European Union and the United Nations

each demanded that Tel Aviv refrain from going ahead with the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar.

Israel's minister for military affairs Avigdor Liberman hailed the court's decision, calling it a move in the face of "the coordinated hypocrisy attack by Abu Mazen (Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas), the left, and European states."

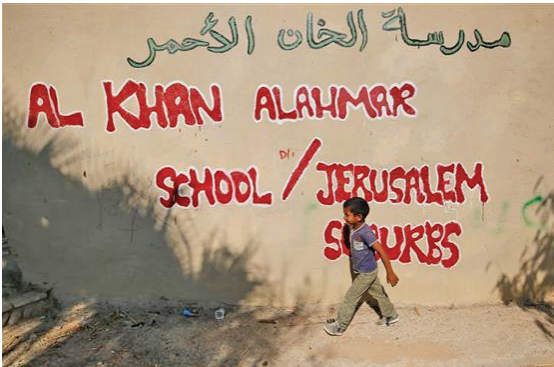
**■ Israel closes Gaza crossing**

In separate news, the Israeli military said it was closing the Erez Crossing, which is the Gaza Strip's sole crossing meant for people to travel to and from the blockaded enclave, just 10 days after it had reopened it.

It claimed "a violent riot" at the site had prompted the decision to close it.

By riots, it was referring to a protest by a group of Palestinians who had gathered at the site to condemn an earlier United States decision to cut all of its funding to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

Israel has been enforcing an all-out blockade of the ter-



ritory since 2007. The UN has warned that the blockade on Gaza would render it uninhabitable by 2020.

(Source: Press TV)

## Israeli army gives ammunition, money to terrorists in Golan Heights

The Israeli army has admitted, for the first time, that it provided large amounts of cash, weapons and ammunition to foreign-sponsored Takfiri terrorists operating in the occupied Golan Heights.

The Israeli ministry of military affairs admitted on Monday that Tel Aviv as part of the so-called Operation Good Neighbor, which was launched in 2016, had been regularly supplying militants in Syria with light weapons in order to fight Syrian government troops, and a substantial amount of cash to buy additional arms.

Moreover, the Israeli military provided over 1,524 tons of food, 250 tons of clothes, 947,520 liters of fuel, 21 generators plus 24,900 pallets of medical equipment and medicine through the operation.

The Israeli regime is reportedly arming

at least seven different terrorist groups in Syria's Golan Heights, including the Fursan al-Joulan militant outfit. The group, which is aligned to the so-called Free Syrian Army (FSA) terrorist network has been given an estimated \$5,000 per month by Israel.

On August 23, Syrian government forces have found a field hospital used by members of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham Takfiri terrorist group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, filled with Israeli-made medical equipment in the country's strategic southwestern province of Quneitra.

Syria's official news agency SANA reported that Syrian troopers made the discovery in the village of al-Rafid as they were carrying out clean-up operations in the area.

Syrian state media said loud blasts coming from an airbase early on Sunday, September 2, were from an explosion at an ammunition

dump caused by an electrical problem.

The report added that the hospital had modern CT scans, X-ray medical imaging machines, laboratory equipment and medications that were all foreign-made, particularly manufactured or produced in Israel.

Syrian army soldiers discovered a field hospital used by Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorists at the Quneitra Crossing and in close proximity to the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights on July 27.

It had an operating room with adequate Israeli-made medical devices, laboratory equipment and a warehouse where large quantities of Israeli and Jordanian-made medicine were being kept.

There were also medical products manufactured by a number of Persian Gulf littoral states, particularly the United Arab Emirates

(UAE), in the warehouse.

**■ Syrian air defense systems intercept Israeli missiles**

Meanwhile, Syrian air defense missile systems have intercepted and destroyed a number of Israeli missiles aimed at military sites in the country's western provinces of Hama and Tartous, forcing attacking military aircraft to leave the area.

Medical sources at Masyaf National Hospital said they had received the body of a civilian. Another 12 people were taken to the hospital with various degrees of injuries.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups wreaking havoc in the country.

(Source: Press TV)

## Protesters clash with security forces in Basra for second night

Five protesters were killed and 16 more were injured during a second night of clashes with security forces in Iraq's main southern city Basra on Tuesday, September 4, local health and security sources said.

Hundreds of people gathered at local government buildings in the city and hurled petrol bombs and stones while attempting to block roads leading to the building.

Some protesters stormed one of the provincial government buildings and set it alight. It was some of the worst unrest reported during months of protests sweeping the long-neglected south, heartland of Iraq's Shia Muslim majority.

Security forces fired live rounds in the air as well as tear gas to try and disperse the crowd, local

sources said. Twenty-two members of the security forces were also wounded, some by a hand grenade, the sources said.

The government buildings in Basra have been the target of demonstrators who are demanding better public services and an end to corruption.

(Source: agencies)



## European coaches ask UEFA to review away goals rule

Europe’s top club coaches have asked UEFA to review the use of the away goals rule in continental competitions because scoring away from home is not as difficult as it used to be.

They also want the transfer window to end at the same time in all the region’s major leagues.

UEFA’s deputy general secretary Giorgio Marchetti confirmed that the European soccer body would “open a discussion” on the use of the away goals rule which is used to determine the winners of knockout ties when the aggregate score is level.

The annual meeting included Massimiliano Allegri (Juventus), Carlos Ancelotti (Napoli), Unai Emery (Arsenal), Paulo Fonseca (Shakhtar Donetsk), Julen Lopetegui (Real Madrid) Jose Mourinho (Manchester United), Thomas Tuchel (Paris St Germain) and former Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

“This is one of the points that needs to be looked at,” he said.

On the transfer window, he said the coaches wanted more countries to follow the example of England and Italy and close them before the start of the season.

The transfer windows in England and Italy were changed this year in response to complaints last year that they had overshadowed the action on the pitch and made it difficult for coaches to plan.

However, in Spain, Germany and France, they continued until the end of August as before. “The coaches are of an opinion that there should be a unified window and the window should close before the competition starts,” said Marchetti. “The idea would be to try and bring them into line.”

(Source: Reuters)

## Pekerman resigns as Colombia coach

Jose Pekerman has quit as Colombia manager two months after leading them to the last 16 of the World Cup in Russia, the Colombian Football Federation (FCF) said on Tuesday.

“After a meeting with Jose Nestor Pekerman, the coach has expressed his desire not to continue as the head of the national side,” the FCF said in a short statement. “We at the FCF are proud to have counted on the coach, who qualified us for the World Cups in Brazil in 2014 and Russia in 2018.”

Pekerman, who took over in 2012, was not expected to continue after a World Cup campaign that ended with a penalty shootout defeat by England. He ends his reign with a record of 42 wins, 20 draws and 16 defeats in 78 matches.

“I am very happy and I always want the best for the team in the future,” Pekerman told a news conference. “There were no disagreements.”

The 69-year old could now be a candidate for the vacant jobs with Mexico or Argentina, the country where he was born and whose Under-20 side he took to the World Cup three times - 1995, 1997 and 2001. Pekerman also led his homeland at the World Cup in Germany, where the hosts knocked them out in the quarter-finals on penalties.

Interim coach Arturo Reyes will lead Colombia in friendlies against Venezuela in Miami on Sept. 7 and Argentina in New Jersey four days later.

(Source: Goal)

## Name of Beckham’s MLS team revealed

David Beckham’s Major League Soccer team will be called Club Internacional de Futbol Miami - or Inter Miami CF - and the club’s crest has been unveiled.

Inter Miami will make their MLS debut in 2020, after being awarded an expansion contact in January.

The crest is pink, black and white, featuring two herons and a sun with seven rays - which are a “homage” to the ex-England captain’s career. “This is such a proud day for myself and for the entire team,” said Beckham. The former Manchester United, Real Madrid, Paris St-Germain and AC Milan midfielder, who is team owner and president, added: “We are taking another important step in establishing our club and today marks an important moment in the history of Club Internacional de Futbol Miami.”

Managing owner Jorge Mas said: “Our city and our fans draw their strength from the dreams of a global population that calls Miami home. “It is only fitting that our name pays tribute to the inclusiveness that makes us who we are.”

The crest appeared on the front page of Wednesday’s Miami Herald.

(Source: BBC)

## Kaepernick advert a powerful statement, says Williams

Serena Williams has praised Nike’s new Colin Kaepernick advertising campaign, calling it a “powerful statement”.

Critics have burned Nike trainers and clothing in protest at the decision to use Kaepernick in the campaign.

Kaepernick was the first NFL player to kneel during the national anthem to highlight racial injustice. “Having a huge company back him could be a controversial reason for this company, but they’re not afraid,” said Williams, who is sponsored by Nike.

“I feel like that was a really powerful statement to a lot of other companies.” Williams, who has won 23 Grand Slam titles, was speaking after beating Karolina Pliskova to reach the US Open semi-finals in New York. She said of former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Kaepernick: “He’s done a lot for the African-American community, and it’s cost him a lot. “It’s sad. But he continues to do the best that he can to support.”

After Nike unveiled the campaign, Williams tweeted that she was “especially proud to be a part of the Nike family”.

Critics on Twitter used the hashtag #JustBurnIt - a play on Nike’s slogan “Just Do It” - which trended alongside #BoycottNike.

In announcing the deal, Nike said Kaepernick, who has been out of a contract since March 2017, was “one of the most inspirational athletes of this generation”.

The NFL said it “embraces the role and responsibility of everyone involved with this game to promote meaningful, positive change in our communities”.

(Source: CNN)

# What is the UEFA Nations League?

A heavyweight clash between the last two world champions kicks it off on Thursday, but what exactly is the UEFA Nations League? From the seedings to the qualification places up for grabs, DW explains the new competition.

The Nations League, which will kick off during the current international break, is meant to rejuvenate international football in Europe by giving national teams more meaningful matches, while at the same time reducing the number of friendlies.

That’s according to UEFA. However, as always with European football’s governing body, it’s a bit complicated, so here we answer some of the questions that are bound to be raised by the advent of this new competition:

### ■ Who takes part?

In a word, everybody. All 55 UEFA member nations are set to enter the Nations League which is to be held for the first time in the 2018-19 season. The teams are divided into four leagues (A-D) which in turn are split up into four groups of either three or four.

The draw for the inaugural “League Phase” is determined by UEFA’s national coefficient rankings as of October 11, 2017. League A includes the top-ranked European nations while League D is made up of the lowest ranked teams.

The setup is similar to a domestic league that has four divisions, and there will be relegation and promotion.

### ■ Who will Germany play?

Joachim Löw’s side get their campaign up and running against world champions France on Thursday in Munich. After that, Germany travel to Amsterdam on October 13 to face the Netherlands and then to Paris for the away match against the French three days later. The return match against Holland on November 19 in Gelsenkirchen concludes the group phase for the former world champions.

### ■ How will the winner be determined?

The winner can only come from League A and will be determined by a mini-tournament played in June, with semifinals, a game for third place and a final.

The teams who come bottom of their group will be relegated, while the group winners from the league below will be promoted.

### ■ How does the Nations League impact on qualifying for the European championship?

Twenty of the 24 teams to take part in Euro 2020 can



secure their tickets for the tournament by finishing first or second in the 10 qualifying groups. Qualifying matches will be held after the League Phase of the Nations League is completed.

The final four teams will qualify through playoffs involving the winners of the four Nations League leagues – which are to be held after the regular qualifying matches have been completed. Should any of the league winners have already qualified through qualifying, they are to be replaced in the playoffs by the next-best ranked team in their league.

### ■ When will Nations League matches be played?

The six League Phase matchdays are to take place between September and November, with the teams in groups of three playing on just four of the matchdays. The finals are to be held in June 2019 and the Euro 2020 playoffs in

March 2020.

### ■ Will this mean jamming even more matches into an already packed football calendar?

No. UEFA says the Nations League will be played out during the existing international windows and reduce the number of meaningless friendlies.

### ■ Isn't this just another cash grab on the part of UEFA?

No again, according to UEFA, which states on its website that “finances are not a driver for the new competition”.

In the next sentence though, it states that “the competition will have the same centralized media rights as have recently been introduced for all European Qualifiers so associations will have even more stability in their income”.

(Source: Deutsche Welle)

## If I don’t win the Ballon d’Or, I’ll wonder what else I have to do” - Griezmann



Antoine Griezmann has said he has a realistic chance of winning the Ballon d’Or this year but has criticized FIFA for failing to recognize France’s World Cup players at The Best awards.

Atletico Madrid and France forward Griezmann won the Europa League last season before lifting the World Cup in Russia. And after finishing third in the 2016 poll having lost the Champions League and Euro 2016 finals, Griezmann believes he has a realistic chance of picking up football’s most coveted individual prize.

“Yes, I’m thinking about it, especially as I’m getting closer and closer to it,” he told L’Equipe. “When I finished third in 2016, I had lost two finals. Now, I’ve won three. The Ballon d’Or is a prestigious award and for a player it’s the summit. There’s nothing better, nothing bigger. There can be trophies in your league, the World Cup, the Euros, it’s not the same.

“I would ask myself what I would have to do more. I have won three trophies, I’ve been important in decisive moments. But it’s not me who votes.

“Comparing with 2016, I have to be in the final three.”

Griezmann and his France teammates were missing when FIFA named their three-man shortlist for their The Best awards, with Cristiano Ronaldo, Luka Modric and

Mohamed Salah the nominees.

“It’s bizarre, and a shame, it’s FIFA who award the trophy right?” said Griezmann. “And the World Cup is organized by FIFA, right? We won the World Cup and there is no Frenchman at the end. It’s a choice, but it’s surprising there’s no world champion.”

Griezmann also praised Manchester United’s Paul Pogba for his performances and leadership in France’s World Cup campaign. Pogba has been criticized at times during his career at Old Trafford while Jose Mourinho said the tournament suited him better than club football.

“Paul really stepped up a level in the dressing room. He had the right words that pushed us on. Hugo [Lloris], Raph [Varane] and Blaise [Matuidi], we knew they were there, but Paul, yes, that surprised us more and it did us good that he spoke like that,” Griezmann added.

“For me, each time he speaks, I want to laugh. Paul is so used to messing around that it surprises me.

“He won back the ball and played quickly. He gained a lot of confidence during the World Cup. He must not change, nor that the comments about him change. He should be like N’Golo [Kante] -- he wins the ball and gives it to the forwards.”

(Source: AS)

## Nadal ‘bagelled’ but survives Thiem test to reach semis



Defending champion Rafa Nadal failed to win a single game in the opening set of his U.S. Open quarter-final against Dominic Thiem on Tuesday but fought back to beat the Austrian 0-6 6-4 7-5 6-7(4) 7-6(5) in a match that ended after 2 a.m. in New York.

Nadal won 40 percent of his first serves in the opener as he struggled with the high humidity on Arthur Ashe Stadium court, with Thiem becoming the first player to ‘bagel’ the Spaniard at Flushing Meadows since Andy Roddick 14 years ago.

“It’s been a great battle,” an exhausted Nadal said. “The conditions were tough, very humid for me.”

Thiem, who lost to Nadal in the French Open final but had beaten the Spaniard three times in 10 previous meetings, struck 74 winners, including 24 with his stylish single-handed backhand, to keep the champion under constant pressure.

“I’m very sorry for Dominic,” Nadal added. “He’s a close friend on tour, a great guy and I wish him the very best ... He is young and has plenty of time to win tournaments.”

After Nadal roared back to take a 2-1 lead, the fourth set went to a tiebreak. Thiem raced to a 3-0 lead before Nadal fought back, but the Austrian held his nerve to level the match.

There were no breaks of serve in the

deciding set and a second tiebreak ensued. The two were neck-in-neck at 5-5 when Nadal carved out a match point with his forehand.

Thiem’s wayward overhead smash handed the match to Nadal, who stood midcourt with his head thrown back and arms raised in the air in celebration.

“It’s going to be stuck in my mind forever,” Thiem said.

“I’m going to remember this match, for sure. It’s cruel sometimes tennis, because I think this match didn’t really deserve a loser. But there has to be one.

“If we skip the first set, it was a really open match from beginning to the end. The way it ended up in the fifth set tiebreaker, from there it’s 50-50. He made one more point than me.”

Nadal paid tribute to the crowd for hanging on until the early hours of Wednesday morning.

“Thank you very much everybody for staying here tonight,” Nadal said after the four hour, 49 minute marathon.

“It’s been an amazing feeling. I’m playing a lot of hours this year at this beautiful stadium.”

Next up for the top seed is a semi-final clash with big-serving Argentine and third seed Juan Martin del Potro.

(Source: Reuters)

## Zidane’s warning to Lopetegui: “You have to win everything”

On May 31, just five days after leading his team to a third consecutive Champions League title, Zinedine Zidane shocked the footballing world by resigning as manager of Real Madrid. Just over three months on, and the Frenchman has given a candid interview to Uefa, in which he speaks about winning the Champions League, Benzema, Ronaldo, and keeping the calm in the dressing room.

He also had some words of warning for his successor Julen Lopetegui: “When you’re coaching Real Madrid, you have to win everything.”

Here are his top five quotes from the interview.

On three Champions League titles: “All three titles were fantastic. They were all special for different reasons. The first stands out because it was my first as a coach; the second was both symbolic and intense – with us facing Juventus and turning in an exceptional second-half performance. And the third topped off my three seasons as coach of Real Madrid.”

On Benzema: “Karim was important for the balance of the side in terms of how I wanted the team to attack. He



helped to implement our possession game by playing his team-mates in. He makes himself available and is a real team player.”

On Ronaldo and Ramos: “They are both players with a

lot of energy and influence within the squad. Sergio Ramos is a natural leader and a big presence in the dressing room, and Cristiano Ronaldo is a leader on the pitch who inspires his team-mates. They complement each other well.”

On a poor home record in the Champions League: “Very often, we managed to achieve very good performances away from home, which might explain a slight loss of concentration during the subsequent return legs. At the same time, I never had the impression that the team were panicking. When you work with high-quality players, they know how to manage those periods of games when you’re not playing well, and they get things back on track very quickly. My job was to keep people calm!”

On the demands of LaLiga and Champions League: “For me, there is no difference. I have always prepared for all matches with the same level of application. In any event, when you’re coaching Real Madrid, you have to win everything, while maintaining a certain standard of play – that’s my philosophy.”

(Source: Marca)



# Reading coach Clement looks forward to work with Saeid Ezatolahi

**S P O R T S**  
d e s k

Paul Clement says highly-rated Iranian midfielder Saeid Ezatolahi will help Reading and has urged fans should not put too much pressure on Saeid Ezatolahi.

Ezatolahi was snapped up by Reading FC on a season-long loan deal last week.

He is expected to feature during the international break against Uzbekistan before linking up with his Royals team-mates later next week.

The 21-year-old FC Rostov playmaker - dubbed the 'Persian Pogba' - has spent time in Spain with Atlético Madrid, and Clement believes he will provide some much-needed physicality to the team after Reading plummeted to the bottom of the Championship table.

"He has had his medical. He is fit and is going to go with the Iran national team. As soon as

that's finished he will come and join us, subject to his UK Visa being approved," Clement said in an interview with the Reading Chronicle.

"Once that is done he will join us. We will have a good look how he is, what shape he is in and hopefully he will be involved very soon. Saeid is hopefully going to help, because he is good player. [He is] strong, he is over 6ft 2ins. I think we need a bit of physicality in this team. In this league you do need it.

"He can pass, he can head, he can tackle. I am really looking forward to working with him, but the responsibility is not on him, the responsibility is on me as the coach and every individual in the squad."

Royals went to the bottom of the table after losing 2-1 to Sheffield Wednesday at the Madejski Stadium on Saturday, a run of four defeats in six games.

The side have won just three times in 28 league games in 2018, and Clement responded to narrowly avoiding relegation last season by recruiting eight players.

On the international scene, Ezatolahi was called into the Iran national team by coach Carlos Queiroz and promptly became the youngest goalscorer in the history of the Iran national team at the age of 19 years and 42 days after scoring in a 3-1 victory against Turkmenistan in November 2015.

Ezatolahi was signed within 24 hours of the loan window closing, with an option to join Reading on a permanent basis.

## Ivankovic, Schafer attend AFC Elite Club Coaches' Forum

**S P O R T S**  
d e s k

TEHRAN — Persepolis and Esteghlal coaches Branko Ivankovic and Winfried Schafer attended the AFC's Third Elite Club Coaches Forum.

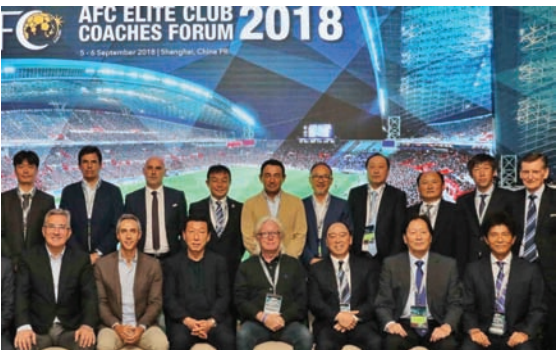
High-profile club coaches from across Asia gathered in Shanghai for the forum, the-afc.com wrote.

Two-time UEFA Champions League winner Paulo Sousa, now coach of Chinese Super League club Tianjin Quanjian, who face Japan's Kashima Antlers in the East Zone, was among the attendees.

Also joining the Forum was Choi Kang-hee, manager of another quarter-finalist Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors FC of Korea Republic and AFC Coach of the Year 2016 as well as Branko Ivankovic, the highly-experienced Croatian coach of Persepolis FC, from the West Zone who are involved in a tight game against Al Duhail of Qatar.

Winfried Schafer, the coach of Islamic Republic of Iran's other quarter-finalists Esteghlal, who are facing Qatar's Al Sadd, completed the four attending AFC Champions League representatives.

They were joined by coaches from Australia, Japan and China PR including Shanghai SIPG coach Vitor Pereira and Shanghai Shenhua's Wu Jingui.



Other Chinese Super League representatives were Chris Coleman, who led Wales to the semi-finals of Euro 2016 and now coaches Hebei China Fortune and Li Xiaopeng of Shandong Luneng Taishan.

AFC Technical Director, Andy Roxburgh, who will lead the two-day event, said: "These Forums are so valuable because it allows the sharing of views and experience from across Asia."

"For the second year in succession we have coaches from the West and East Zones of the AFC's flagship Champions League and it showed last year that some of the challenges they face are extremely similar."

"This Forum is now established as one of the most important for exchanging ideas and opinions in Asian club football. The beauty is that the coaches themselves direct the agenda and direction of discussion."

"This year we will have the opportunity to consider many elements of the game and also the chance to look in detail at tactical and logistical innovations from the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia and how it impacts a club coach."

From the original gathering in 2016 only Kevin Muscat, coach of Melbourne Victory, has been a constant. He said: "Every year we learn of the pressures on individual coaches and how they deal with those pressures. Coaching can often be an isolating job so sharing experiences in this Forum is vital."

Also in attendance, for the first time, are a group of elite coaches from the Chinese FA including several former national team coaches such as former Manchester City, Crystal Palace and China PR defender Sun Jihai.

## Five top moments at the Asian Games

With a glittering ceremony marking the end of the 2018 Asian Games, here are five top moments from the world's second-largest multi-sports event:

### ■ Falling standards

A flag blunder punctured Sun Yang's joy at winning the 200m freestyle — and prompted the Chinese swimming star to demand a re-run of his victory ceremony. The triple Olympic champion was overjoyed at winning his first gold of the Games, and all was going swimmingly until the flags of China and Japan came loose and crashed to the ground as Sun was belting out the national anthem from the podium. After a delay, the ceremony began again, to titters from the audience as three officials held up the flags, one self-consciously bending his knees as he tried to adjust it to the correct height.

### ■ Stray cat strut

A humble cat stole the show on the opening day of the athletics competition when it made an unexpected appearance during the women's 100m hurdles heats. The tortoise-and-white cat trotted nonchalantly down the track and onto the infield, as athletes and officials did a double take. It wasn't the first animal intruder at a



major sports event: a squirrel risked its life when it dashed in front of a snowboarder at this year's Winter Olympics, and at Formula One's 2011 Indian Grand Prix, a stray dog held up practice when it wandered onto the track.

### ■ Two Koreas

A joint team of athletes from North and South Korea reached an emotional women's basketball final — before fall-

ing at the final hurdle in a tense match against China. Nevertheless, the Unified Korea team was a resounding success in Jakarta. The neighbours marched together at the opening ceremony and also formed joint teams in canoeing, in which they clinched a gold and two bronze medals. The athletes even learnt a thing or two about each other: one South Korean basketball player said

she'd realised that North Koreans aren't "scary" after all.

### ■ Jokowi's motorbike skit

The opening ceremony got off to a roaring start with a skit purportedly starring President Joko Widodo on a motorbike doing stunts in Jakarta's streets. With the crowd whooping, he rode into Gelora Bung Karno stadium. The scene appeared to take inspiration from the opening ceremony for the 2012 London Olympics when Queen Elizabeth II seemingly made a dramatic entrance to the stadium by parachute along with James Bond.

### ■ Son's tears

After tears of anguish at the 2016 Rio Olympics when South Korea were defeated by Honduras in the quarter-final, Tottenham Hotspur's Son Heung-min sobbed with joy as his team was crowned 2018 Asian champions. It was an emotional rollercoaster ride for Son as he played to secure a gold that would spare him a career-threatening stint of military service. But it all went to plan in the end, with a 2-1 win against Japan leaving Son beaming from ear to ear and poised to return to Spurs to see out his new five-year deal.

(Source: Geo.tv)

## Asia's best kick off Road to UAE 2019

Kuala Lumpur: The 2019 AFC Asian Cup UAE cast will kickstart their preparations for the Continent's biggest showcase with a series of international friendly matches over the next week.

Almost all the 24 teams will be in action as they cast their eyes on UAE 2019 which is a mere 121 days away.

Defending champions Australia, however, will not be in action as new head coach Graham Arnold has opted to use the international break to gather his players for a training camp in Antalya, Turkey.

Asia's four other representatives at the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia will, however, be in action.

Japan, the only Asian team to advance to the knockout stage in Russia 2018, will play Chile in Hokkaido on Friday in Hajime Moriyasu's first match in charge of the four-time AFC Asian Cup winners.

Korea Republic, with Paulo Bento at the helm for his first match, face Costa Rica on Friday.

Bento will get a second chance to gauge his squad, which includes eight players who won the 2018 Asian Games Indonesia gold medal on Saturday, against Chile on Tuesday.

Korea Republic failed to advance to the knockout stage of the FIFA World Cup but stunned 2014 champions Germany 2-0 in their final group match in Russia.

Saudi Arabia, who recovered from their 5-0 defeat

to Russia in their FIFA World Cup opener, to end their campaign on a high after defeating Egypt 2-1, will play Bolivia at the King Fahd Stadium on Friday.

Islamic Republic of Iran, who came agonizingly close to a knockout stage appearance at Russia 2018, will face fellow UAE 2019 qualifiers Uzbekistan at the Bunyodkor Stadium on Tuesday.

The United Arab Emirates, who are hoping to go one better than their runners-up finish the last time the AFC Asian Cup was held on home soil in 1996, face Trinidad & Tobago on Thursday.

That will be followed by Alberto Zaccheroni's team playing Laos.

Teams who did not qualify for UAE 2019 will also be in action as they prepare for various regional championships that will be held later in 2018.

The SAFF Championship kicked off on Tuesday with seven teams competing while the AFF and EAFF qualifiers are also ongoing during the international break.

### ■ Friendlies

### ■ Thursday

UAE v Trinidad & Tobago  
Uzbekistan v Syria  
Kyrgyz Republic v Palestine  
Jordan v Lebanon  
Bahrain v Philippines



### ■ Friday

Korea Republic v Costa Rica  
Japan v Chile  
Qatar v China PR  
Singapore v Mauritius  
Chinese Taipei v Malaysia  
Saudi Arabia v Bolivia

(Source: the-afc)

## Ex-U.S. volleyball captain David Lee to come to Iran

**S P O R T S**  
d e s k

TEHRAN — Ex-U.S. volleyball captain David Lee will travel to Iran in October to take part at the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour

Lee, who is going to take part at an international beach volleyball event for the first time, will be accompanied by Mark Burik in the event.



Events in Zhongwei, China (September 13-16), and in Iran in Bandar Torkaman (October 2-5), Babolsar (October 9-12) and Bandar-e Anzali (October 16-19) are also planned and more information will be made in due course. Additional events in the 4-star and 1- and 2-star categories may also be confirmed in the near future.

The FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour is the worldwide professional beach volleyball tour for both men and women organized by the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB).

The World Tour was introduced for men in 1989 while the women first competed in 1992.

## Aleksandar Ciric wants to extend contract with Iran water polo

**S P O R T S**  
d e s k

TEHRAN — Three-time Olympic medal winner Aleksandar Ciric has shown interest in working with Iran national water polo team as a coach.

Under guidance of the 40-year-old coach, Team Melli claimed a medal after 44 years.

Team Melli defeated China 16-15 on penalty shootout (8-8 in the regular time) at the GBK - Aquatic Center in Jakarta, Indonesia on Saturday to win a bronze medal.

"I want to continue my work as Iran coach. First, I need to rest after of months hard work. Then I will talk to the Iran Swimming Federation president Mohsen Rezvani," Ciric said.

Ciric is a Serbian water polo player who played for two Olympic bronze medal squads, one for FR Yugoslavia at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, the other for Serbia at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, and one Olympic silver medal squad for Serbia and Montenegro at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

His most notable achievements during his club career are: winning the Euroleague with VK Becej in 2000, when he gained the title of MVP of competition; and four LEN Cups, three with Brescia and one with VK Radnicki Kragujevac.

## Sirous Pourmousavi sacked as Foolad coach

TASNIM — Sirous Pourmousavi was sacked by Iranian football club Foolad on Tuesday following poor start to the Iran Professional League (IPL) season.

Foolad sit ninth in the table after six weeks.

There's a possibility that Pourmousavi returns to his former club Esteghlal Khuzestan once again.

Abdollah Veisi, who has recently parted company with Naft Masjed Soleyman, and Hossein Faraki are two candidates to be appointed as Foolad coach. Foolad have won IPL titles twice in the 2004-05 and 2013-14 seasons.

## Iran volleyball to play the U.S. in Slovenia

Press TV — Iran national volleyball team will travel to Slovenia on Wednesday to hold a training camp in the European country ahead of the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship.

Team Melli will participate in a tournament in Slovenia with the participation of USA, Canada and host Slovenia.

Igor Kolakovic's men will play USA on Thursday and meet Slovenia and Canada in the following days.

The Iranian national volleyball team have been grouped with Bulgaria, Poland, Cuba, Finland and Puerto Rico in Pool D of the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship.

The World Championship will be held in Italy and Bulgaria on September 9-30.

## Marzban officially named Naft Masjed Soleyman coach

Persian Football — Alireza Marzban was officially named the new head coach of Naft Masjed Soleyman football team.

Marzban replaced Abdollah Viesi, who has recently resigned from his post in the Masjed Soleyman based football team due to financial issues.

"I think we can manage our current situation. First, I have to talk with the players in person. Naft Masjed Soleyman has one of the best turfs in Iran league and it helps us to reach our goals," Marzban told Tasnim.

The 60-year-old coach started his career in 2000 as assistant coach of German football team Eschborn.

Marzban has also worked at Persepolis and Sepahan as assistant coach. In 2014, he was appointed the head coach of Padideh and has also worked at Khooneh Be Khooneh, Siahjamegan and Paykan.

Naft Masjed Soleyman sits one place above bottom in the Iran Professional League (IPL) table.



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## France L'Étrange Festival to review Shahram Mokri films

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The 24th edition of the L'Étrange Festival, which opened at the Forum des images in Paris on Wednesday, plans to review two latest films by Iranian director Shahram Mokri.

"Fish & Cat", which is about restaurant owners who lurk around a student assembly holding a kite competition near a lake during the winter solstice, will be screened on September 9 and 11.



In 2013, the movie won the special jury prize at the Venice International Film Festival in Italy.

The organizers also will review "Invasion", which went on screen in the Panorama section of the 68th Berlin International Film Festival this year. Two screenings have been arranged for September 10 and 11.

The story of the film is set in a mysterious stadium covered by a strange fog, where a murder is committed. While a re-enactment is organized by the police, the murderer and his accomplices prepare another assassination. But little by little everyone seems caught in an infernal time loop.

Mokri is scheduled to attend all the screenings. "Shahram Mokri is surely one of the most fascinating new directors to come out of Iran," the organizers wrote.

The festival comes to an end on September 16.

## Cultural figures mark Hojaji's martyrdom anniversary

**C U L T U R E d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A number of art and cultural figures gathered in Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Monday to mark the first martyrdom anniversary of Mohsen Hojaji, an Iranian soldier who was killed by Daesh forces in Syria.



Poet Afshin Ala recites a text in honor of martyr Mohsen Hojaji in Tehran's Vahdat Hall on September 3, 2018. (Mehr/Asghar Khamseh)

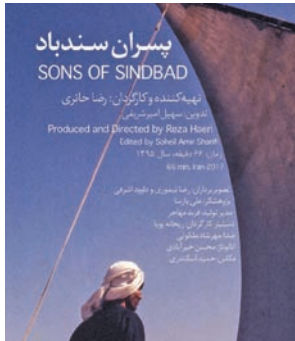
The honoring program included a theater performance by director Kambiz Banan, the performance of the symphony "Victory" composed by Majid Entezami, and live music performance by Mohsen Tavassoli.

The family members of Hojaji were also honored at the end of the ceremony followed by several poetry recitations performed in honor of the martyr.

The event was organized by Kasa Art and Cultural Organization.

## Kazan festival to screen 8 movies from Iran

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Eight movies from Iranian filmmakers have been selected to be screened in various sections of the 14th Kazan International Festival of Muslim Cinema, which opened on Tuesday.



"Golnesa" by Sattar Chamanigol is competing in the official section of the event, which will run until September 11.

"Saad's Olive Tree" by Ahmad Zayeri will go on screen in the short film competition while "Sons of Sindbad" by Reza Haeri will compete in the full-length documentary films section.

A number of the films have also been picked for the out of competition programs.

The Screen Test or Youth Cinema will screen "Pine" Mohammad Hormozi and "Starless Dreams" by Mehrdad Oskui is an entry to the Dialogue of Cultures section.

"The Chocolate" by Mehdi Heidari will be screened in the Childhood Cinema World category.

"Mahin's Issue, Maliheh's Problem" by Hossein Tabriz and "Arpachai, a Song of Separation", a co-production between Iran and Azerbaijan directed by Ali Abdali, will go on screen in the Russia — Islamic World and Persian Carpet Items section.

# MoMA to hold cinematographer Mahmud Kalari retrospective

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York plans to review three decades of cinematography by Iran's Mahmud Kalari in a program titled "The Eye of Iran: Cinematographer Mahmud Kalari".

The program, which will begin on September 14, will screen a number of movies shot by Kalari, a cinematographer who has made great efforts for the development of the image of Iran across the world, the organizers announced.

In a statement published on MoMA website, the organizers wrote, "Contemporary Iranian film has been earning worldwide acclaim since around 1990. The complex reality of Iran has, however, been explored by a wide range of cinematic voices, with formally and conceptually rigorous films dealing with subjects as diverse as urban life, women's issues, interpersonal dramas, and philosophy.

"One figure has contributed to the look of this rich, evolving cinema like no other, cinematographer Mahmud Kalari, who has lensed some of the most acclaimed works by Asghar Farhadi, Abbas Kiarostami, Dariush Mehrjui, and Jafar Panahi.

"Beyond these celebrated masters, Kalari has also collaborated with young and emerging directors, making him a constant presence across the wide gamut of Iranian cinema."

The screening program includes 12 films, including "A Separation" by Asghar Farhadi, "The Fish Fall in Love" by Ali Rafiei, "The Wind Will Carry Us" by Abbas Kiarostami, "Leila" by Dariush Mehrjui, "Pig" by Mani Haqiqi and "Fish and Cat" by Shahram Mokri.

Kalari is scheduled to attend the screenings of some of the movies, which will be followed by review sessions.



Mahmud Kalari filming scene from "A Separation" by Asghar Farhadi.

## Schiller records track with Iranian singer Hojjat Ashrafzadeh



Schiller's Christopher von Deylen and singer Hojjat Ashrafzadeh pose at the Shahre Sedaye Parsian Studio in Tehran on September 4, 2018.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — German electronic music band Schiller has recorded a single track in collaboration with Iranian singer Hojjat Ashrafzadeh.

The single recorded at Shahre Sedaye Parsian, a music studio in Tehran, on Tuesday will be released on the new album of the band led by Christopher von Deylen, the Persian service of MNA reported on Wednesday.

Schiller performed concerts in Tehran during November 2107 and March 2018. The organizers of Schiller's concerts in

Tehran did not pursue only commercial purposes, said Mostafa Kabiri who is the coordinator of the band's performances in Iran.

"But we also intended to prepare the ground for international cooperation on music," he added.

He said that such collaborations will help promote more Iranian music in the world.

Von Deylen did not provide any vocals for Schiller productions himself. Vocals are sung by guest artists, including Jette von Roth, Keta Jo McCue and Cristina Scabbia.

## Iranian music elites visit Kordestan



The Kordestan Philharmonic Orchestra performs during the Fajr Music Festival in Tehran in 2015. (Musicema/Sara Abdollahi)

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A number of prominent musicians are paying a visit to Kordestan Province in western Iran to study the music potentials of the province.

The visiting program has been arranged by the Kordestan branch of the Art Bureau, the organizers of the tour announced on Wednesday.

The musicians are Farhad Fakhreddini, the former conductor of the National Orchestra, composer Hushang Kamkar, Music House director Hamidreza Nurbakhsh, and

top musicians Mohammad Sarir and Hassan Riahi.

They held meetings with members of the Kordestan Philharmonic Orchestra and several other ensembles at the beginning of their trip on Wednesday.

The musicians are also due to visit several historical sites in Sanandaj and workshops for instrument making.

The group will also visit several music schools in the city during the two-day visit on Thursday. They are seeking ways to help develop the artistic activities of the region.

## No L.A. charges for Spacey, Seagal, Anthony Anderson

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — The Los Angeles District Attorney's office said on Tuesday it would not prosecute actor Kevin Spacey on a 1992 sexual assault accusation because it fell outside the California statute of limitations.

The District Attorney's office also said it would not charge actor Steven Seagal and television comedy star Anthony Anderson over two other sexual assault accusations.

The 1993 accusations against action star Seagal fell outside the statute of limitations, while Anderson's accuser declined to be interviewed and prosecution was declined due to lack of evidence, the office said.

Anderson in July denied wrongdoing. Seagal could not be reached for comment.

The Spacey case, involving an adult male, was presented to Los Angeles prosecutors in April and had been under review. The nature and origin of the accusation were not disclosed.

The District Attorney's office said in a charge evaluation sheet released on Tuesday that the allegation was outside the statute of limitations and that prosecution had been declined.

Spacey could not be reached for comment.

Spacey became embroiled in controversy in 2017 when actor Anthony Rapp accused him of trying to seduce him in 1986 when Rapp was 14.

He apologized for any inappropriate conduct with Rapp but has not commented since and has stepped away from public life.



Actor Kevin Spacey speaks with the media at the premiere of Netflix's television series "House of Cards" at Alice Tully Hall in the Lincoln Center in New York City January 30, 2013. (Reuters/Stephen Chernin)

The Los Angeles District Attorney's office said in August that it was reviewing a second sexual assault accusation against Spacey, but declined to give details. The case is still under review.

More than 30 men have said they were victims of unwanted sexual advances by Spacey, including 20 people who came forward during an investigation by London's Old Vic theater, where Spacey was artistic director for 12 years. Reuters has not independently confirmed any of the allegations.

Spacey, the Oscar-winning star of "American Beauty", is one of dozens of men in the entertainment industry and politics who have been accused of sexual misconduct in the past 10 months, partly as a result of the #MeToo social media movement.

## Stolen ruby slippers used in Wizard of Oz recovered by FBI

**NEW YROK (Reuters)** — A pair of ruby slippers worth millions that were featured in the movie "The Wizard of Oz" and stolen from a Judy Garland museum 13 years ago have been recovered in Minneapolis, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said on Tuesday.

The FBI said it was asking the public to help identify suspects connected with the original theft and a more recent scheme to extort money from the owners of the red sequined shoes, one of four pairs worn by Judy Garland, who played Dorothy in the 1939 classic.

"Dorothy's slippers are a treasured piece of Americana, and we are hoping members of the public can help us better fill in the details that will finish the script of this mystery so we can hold accountable all those who were behind the scheme," Jill Sanborn, special agent in charge of the Minneapolis bureau of the FBI, said in a written statement.

The slippers, known as the "traveling pair", were stolen from the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, during a "smash-and-grab" robbery during the overnight hours of Aug. 27-27, 2005 that took less than a minute and left behind only a single sequin.

They remained missing for the next 13 years despite an exhaustive investigation by local law enforcement that included a search of abandoned ore pits.

In 2015 an anonymous fan of the film offered a \$1 million reward for their safe



A pair of ruby slippers featured in the classic 1939 film The Wizard of Oz and stolen from the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids, Minnesota in 2005, is shown after it was recovered in a sting operation conducted in Minneapolis earlier this summer in this FBI Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S., image released on September 4, 2018. (Courtesy FBI/Handout via Reuters)

return. The Grand Rapids Police Department sought assistance from the FBI in 2017 over an extortion plot against the owners of the shoes, the Markel Corporation, which led to their recovery. The FBI released few details about that investigation or where they were found in July.

After their recovery, the slippers were sent to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. where conservators studying construction, materials and wear patterns of the slippers were able to confirm that they were the missing pair.