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# Major water, power projects come on stream



© Tehran Times/ Rahbar Emamzadeh

## Iran ditches dollar in transactions with several countries

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran has made mutual monetary agreements with some countries on the way to abolish U.S. dollar in its financial transactions and the issue will be incrementally generalized to other countries in future," the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced in a meeting with Iranian economists on Monday, IRNA reported.

Briefing the attendees about CBI's measures during the four past months, Abdolnaser Hemmati added that Iran has activated its

financial transactions with several countries without any reliance of U.S. dollar.

In late April, Iranian cabinet ordered all state-run organizations and companies to replace U.S. dollar with euro in reporting their financial statements.

The country's financial system has intensified its efforts to establish ties with a number of countries based on the national currencies, as the U.S. sanctions against the country have complicated transactions in dollars.

## Govt. focusing on economic stability: Rouhani

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Tuesday that the government is making efforts to stabilize economy and reduce economic pressure on the people.

After a meeting of the heads of the three branches, Rouhani said that the U.S. worked hard to cause chaos in the

Iranian economy after November 4, but the people and businessmen acted in a way to prevent it.

On November 4, the U.S. officially enforced banking and oil boycott against Iran.

Rouhani said after November 4 the people, central bank and other economic bodies acted in a way that the market became more stable. **→2**

## 'Black Tuesday': French students hit the streets in protest again

Even as it grapples with violent demonstrations over living costs, the French government was hunkering down for a "Black Tuesday" of protests by high-school students who have jumped onto the Yellow Vest wagon.

Ever since the May 1968 protests that paralyzed France and precipitated the demise of its war hero Charles de Gaulle, French governments have

been terrified by the prospect of facing a united front of workers and student protests. While French universities are largely quiet nowadays, the prospect of a two-pronged offensive edged nearer to reality last week when high-school pupils seized on the momentum from the so-called Yellow Vest movement to vent their anger at President Emmanuel Macron's educational reforms. **→13**



### EDITORIAL

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## Le Pen's under-plot for the French president

The President of the French National Rally political party, Marin Le Pen, is trying to take little stances on the new protests in her country. Some French politicians have accused her of interfering in the recent protests in favor of the French National Rally. Meanwhile, many analysts believe that, ultimately, the outcome of Macron's removal from power will be the presence of far-right nationalists (led by Le Pen) at the Elysees Palace.

In any case, Marin Le Pen and the French National Rally continue to make lots of propaganda in their country's political and social atmosphere. It should be acknowledged that the recent protests in France have doubled their chance to win the public vote, and he has greatly encouraged Le Pen and her entourage to win the European parliamentary election which is to be held in June.

In 2014, the French National Rally was able to shine exceptionally well in the European parliamentary elections and overcame other French political parties. In the 2017 general election, Le Pen was able to reach the final round of the presidential competitions for the first time since the establishment of the French National Rally. However, at that time, Le Pen couldn't act against the broad opposition of the Socialist and Conservative parties. But the equation seems to have changed now!

Polls conducted in France suggested a decline in the popularity of Emmanuel Macron as the country's president. This is while only 18 months has passed since Macaron's presence at Elysee Palace. Under such circumstances, Le Pen and her companions will naturally try to change the French citizen's mind to the benefit of the French National Rally.

This is a very good time indeed, as many of the French citizens no longer trust Macron and his promises for making economic, social reforms in France. Le Pen and the senior members of the French National Rally, argue that the Socialist and Conservative Parties won't be able to redefine themselves in the near future, given the crisis that has stuck the two traditional French parties. **→7**

## IRGC confirms ballistic missile test

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force, has confirmed that Iran has recently test-fired a missile, saying that the country tests tens of missiles annually.

"We test our missiles and the recent test was important too," Hajizadeh told Fars in an interview published on Tuesday.

Asked about U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's reaction to the missile test, the general said, "Americans' reaction show that this test has been very important and caused them to make a hue and cry."

General Hajizadeh said that Iran tests over 40 to 50 missiles every year but the fact that the

U.S. react to some of these tests is that it has made them feel uneasy.

He did not mention the name of the missile that Iran test-fired recently.

Earlier this month, Pompeo had said Iran tested a medium-range ballistic missile, claiming that it was violation of the UN Security Council resolution 2231.

**■ Zarif: Iran's missile program not prohibited by UN resolution**

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif underscored that the resolution 2231 has not prohibited Iran's missile activities.

"I can make it clear as the foreign minister that the issue of missiles has never been subject to negotiations and that in resolution 2231

nothing has been approved or ratified about its prohibition for the Islamic Republic of Iran," Zarif told Tasnim on Tuesday.

"Our defense doctrine is basically founded upon deterrence and is defensive, not offensive," the top diplomat underlined, saying the Islamic Republic of Iran has proved its commitment to such a doctrine throughout its history.

Resolution 2231 calls upon Iran "not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons."

Iranian officials have time and again underscored that none of the country's missiles have been designed to be capable of carrying nuclear warheads, because nuclear weapons have basically no place in Iran's defense doctrine.

## Sanctions on Iran or trade warfare? What is the pretext for punishing Huawei in America?

**By Maryam Khormaie**

**TEHRAN** — Canada has arrested a senior Huawei technology company official suspected of violating sanctions against Iran at the request of U.S. officials.

Meng Wanzhou, who is one of the vice-chairs on the Chinese technology company's board and is the daughter of the company's founder, Ren Zhengfei, was arrested at the request of U.S. officials in Vancouver.

A spokesman for the Canadian Ministry of Justice said in a statement to the Globe and Mail website: "Wangzhou is wanted for extradition to the United States."

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said on Thursday that Beijing had separately called on the U.S. and Canada to "clarify the reasons for the detention" and "immediately release the

detained person". A spokesman for the Chinese embassy in Canada, in a statement, said: "Canada has arrested a citizen of China who has not violated any of the laws of the United States or Canada at the request of the United States."

In a short statement, China's Foreign Ministry said that Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng had issued the warning to release Meng to Canada's ambassador in Beijing, summoning him to lodge a "strong protest". But is his arrest linked to U.S. sanctions against Iran? To answer this question, take a look at the history of Huawei's work.

Huawei, in the 1980s, started its business in China as a telecommunications technology company, but from the outset it focused on developing indigenous technology rather than importing it from the West. Huawei targeted the global markets as a company with its own native technology

during the 1990s. In 2001, it developed its first presence in the United States, then in 2008 in Canada. According to a Bloomberg report in 2011, 45 of the 50 largest telecom companies in the world used some Huawei equipment.

Accordingly, Huawei's Chinese company has become a highly competitive rival to Western and American companies, which over the past few years has been able to develop a solid footprint in the United States and Canada.

**■ Reasons of punishing Huawei, Iran sanctions or trade warfare?**

At the British Columbia Provincial Tribunal during its first detention hearing on Tuesday, Huawei's chief executive announced that Meng Wangzhou, with the establishment of Sky Comex, has been pursuing Huawei subsidiaries throughout 2009-2014 to circumvent U.S. sanctions against Iran. **→7**



### REPORT

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## Yemen peace talks in Stockholm; the tale of negotiators with no authority

The Peace talks between Yemeni government delegation and Houthi representatives has begun since Thursday in Sweden. This is the third round of peace negotiations between the two sides, undergoing talks that had not been resolved in the past because of the abusive Saudi rulers.

However, this round of negotiations after months of deliberations by Martin Griffiths, the UN special envoy for Yemen, began on Thursday between the two sides, aimed at ending nearly four years of brutal war in the country.

The Yemeni peace talks in Stockholm, Sweden, have provided conditions for Yemeni groups, in the form of a state of national salvation, to revive and restore the ignored rights of the Yemeni people.

The strategic port of Al-Hudaydah was the most important issue in the talks holding in Sweden's capital. Saudi-led coalition has blocked Al-Hudaydah city, and after several months of aggressive attack by ground, air and sea, they failed to dominate the city of Al-Hudaydah, but the coalition has completely besieged the city.

The main demand of the Yemeni groups in the Stockholm negotiations is to determine the fate of Al-Hudaydah province and to remove the complete blockade. However, it seems that the Saudi Arabia's mercenaries squabbling excesses in the repressive Yemeni government continues. And they do not want a logical solution to the issue of Al-Hudaydah.

The Yemeni government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, demanded that the Houthis fully withdraw from Al-Hudaydah. Yemen's popular Houthi Ansarullah movement, Mohammed Abdul-Salam announced that the city of Al-Hudaydah should be neutral zone and there will be no need for a military presence there if the battles stop.

Despite the fact that the Yemeni groups have gathered in Stockholm, Sweden, to end the crises in the country, the other side, representatives of Saud-back Hadi government, has always been trying to defeat the negotiations by seeking unreasonable conditions, and to block bilateral agreements. **→7**



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## Rohingya survivors: 'Why do they want to destroy us?'

In Cox's Bazar, photographer Renaud Philippe met Rohingya Muslims who managed to flee the Myanmar military's brutal crackdown.

This photo shows girls and boys reciting Quran at Balukhali camp. Here, children are being given the opportunity to study their faith — and learn to read. Rohingya children were banned from accessing state education in Myanmar.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



**Zarif on Yemen:  
High time aggressors  
end crimes  
against humanity**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — It is well past time for foreign aggressors to end their airstrikes and crimes against humanity, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday, referring to the Saudi-led military campaign against Yemen.

"Iran welcomes initial agreements between Yemeni parties in Stockholm under supervision of UNSG envoy, and strongly supports continuation of talks to achieve final accords on all issues. It is well past time for foreign aggressors to end their airstrikes & crimes against humanity," Zarif said in a tweet.

The UN-brokered peace talks between the warring parties in Yemen's conflict began on Thursday in Sweden.



**Chabahar attack  
aimed to undermine  
economy:  
intelligence chief**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said on Tuesday the recent terrorist attack in the southeastern port city of Chabahar was aimed to undermine Iran's economy, Tasnim reported.

Chabahar is intended to turn into regional trade hub, rivaling port Gwadar, China's main trade route to Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

On December 6, a vehicle laden with explosives went off close to a police headquarters in the city. Two soldiers were killed and at least 43 individuals were injured during the attack.

Alavi also said Iranian security forces have foiled many terrorist attacks in recent years, adding, "No country in the world has such a successful intelligence service as the Islamic Iran."



**Jaberi Ansari,  
Schmid discuss  
Syrian, Yemeni  
issues**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Hossein Jaberi Ansari, a senior advisor to the Iranian foreign minister for political affairs, met on Monday with Secretary General of European External Action Service Helga Schmid in Brussels to discuss the Syrian and Yemeni issues and the prospects for the future of the two countries.

During the meeting, the two sides focused on regional developments, especially the situation in Yemen and Syria and ways to help advance the Yemeni-Yemeni dialogue in Stockholm as well as the ways to facilitate the work on the formation of the Syrian constitutional committee, Mehr reported.



**SPV to be  
established  
by year end:  
Mogherini**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini has said the special purpose vehicle (SPV) meant to help companies do business with Iran will be completed by the end of the year, Bloomberg reported on Monday.

"I would expect this instrument to be established in the coming weeks, so before the end of the year, as a way to protect and promote legitimate business with Iran," Mogherini told reporters in Brussels after a meeting of foreign affairs ministers. "Work is advancing well."

The EU has been trying to save the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) despite U.S. pressure.



**Iran lodges  
complaint to Tbilisi  
over mistreatment  
of citizens**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry on Monday voiced its complaint to Tbilisi regarding the mistreatment from Georgian border officials toward Iranian nationals seeking to enter the South Caucasian country.

The complaint was lodged during a meeting between Foreign Ministry Director-General for Eurasian Affairs Gholamreza Baqeri-Moqaddam and Georgian Ambassador to Tehran Ioseb Chakhvashvili, Mehr reported.

Chakhvashvili also provided explanations on the latest status of the Georgian border guards' misbehavior toward some Iranian nationals seeking to enter the country.

He added that he will personally visit Tbilisi to follow up on the issue and announce the results to the Iranian side.



**Envoy felicitates  
Iraq on  
Deash defeat  
anniversary**

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad, Iraj Masjedi, has congratulated the Iraqi government and people on the first anniversary of their victory against Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group.

In his message, Masjedi also congratulated the Iraqi armed forces, including the army and police, the Popular Mobilization Forces, and the nomads on liberating the "holy land of Iraq" from Daesh, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

"A free, stable and strong Iraq is what the authorities and people of the Islamic Republic want," he said.

The ambassador also voiced Iran's readiness to help the Iraqi government and nation in reconstructing Iraq.

# Iran will turn to alternate options if nuclear deal not saved: MP

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian MP Kazem Jalali said on Monday that Iran will turn to alternate options if Europe fails to start actions to save the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"European countries have adopted political position to keep the JCPOA, however, we expect serious actions and practical will of Europe," he said during a meeting with Tarja Cronberg, a member of the Executive Board of the European Leadership Network.

He noted that the European countries should make efforts to save the JCPOA for their own reputation.

"Europe should adopt practical policies to save the JCPOA and stand against the U.S. unilateralism at the international arena and also defend its political reputation in the international equations," the veteran lawmaker remarked.

For his part, Cronberg expressed hope



MP Kazem Jalali (L) talking to Tarja Cronberg, a member of the Executive Board of the European Leadership Network

## Iranian human rights organization worried over situation in France

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — In a statement on Monday, Iran's Human Rights Headquarters expressed concern over the violence exercised by the French police against protestors.

"The recent events in Paris and other cities of France are regrettable, dangerous and worrisome given the violent confrontation of the French police and security forces against the people who have risen against unbearable injustices and discrimination," the statement said.

It underlined the necessity for the French government to prosecute those who have killed or wounded the protestors, stop extensive arrests and account for the establishment of a secular dictatorship based on liberal capitalism.

The statement also called on the UN Human Rights Council to pave the ground for appointing a special rapporteur to scrutinize the recent events in France.

Since November 17 thousands of protestors, wearing yellow vests, have been gathering in major French cities including Paris to protest President Emmanuel Macron's



Policeman on duty during clash with protestors in France. AFP photo

controversial fuel tax hikes and the deteriorating economic situation.

The demonstrators, who generally live in rural areas due to high rents in the cities, have called on Macron to cut fuel

taxes and ease their economic difficulties.

According to a recent survey, 84 percent of the French people, mostly from the middle-income group, support the protests.

Fuel prices in France have risen more than 20 percent this year. This movement spread to Belgium and Netherlands in a short time.

French riot police fired tear gas and water cannon in Paris on Saturday, trying to stop tens of thousands of people from converging on the presidential palace to express their anger at high taxes and President Emmanuel Macron. Protesters smashed store windows and set fires around Paris and clashed with police, who fired tear gas and deployed water canon throughout the day in the French capital.

At least 135 people were injured in the protests on Saturday, including 17 police officers, while, throughout France, over 4,532 demonstrators were detained.

A total of 136,000 people demonstrated across France, including more than 10,000 in Paris.

## Leader warns of enemies' attack on spirituality

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has warned of the enemies' attack on spirituality and insisted on the need to boost the achievements of the Islamic Revolution.

During a meeting with members of a committee tasked with holding a congress to commemorate martyrs of South Khorasan province, which was held on November 5, the Leader said that promoting achievements of the revolution

will help defeat the enemies' attack on spirituality.

He also praised contribution of South Khorasan to the Islamic Revolution and their presence at the war fronts to defend the country against the invading Saddam

Army in the 1980s.

"Today, it is the best and most noble thing to commemorate the martyrs," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said that the sacred defense is an endless phenomenon and a "progressing fact".

## IRGC: U.S. military threats only part of psychological warfare

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has dismissed the U.S. military threats against Iran as bluffs and part of the psychological warfare against the Islamic Republic.

"We have not observed any move by America at our sea or land borders. People are familiar with the Americans' statements which are mostly for psychological warfare use and aimed at boosting the morale of their supporters, including the Zionist regime and al-Saud," General Ramezan

Sharif said on Monday, speaking to Fars.

Sharif stressed that Iran's regional and global enemies know that they can't confront Iran militarily. "Thanks God, we have all the necessary possibilities to give a strong and crushing response to any aggressive force against Iran."

Iran has made major progresses in manufacturing weapons. Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has urged the Armed Forces to reinvigorate their capabilities and deterrence power with full speed.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran does not intend to start a war against anyone but you (Armed Forces) should increase your capabilities to the extent that not only does the enemy fear attacking Iran but also the shadow of war against the Iranian nation will fade away with the help of the Armed Forces' solidarity, might and effective deployment," Ayatollah Khamenei told Navy commanders and other top military officials in late November.

He added that the Armed Forces' preparedness has played as a deterrent power against military threats.

## Pressure on Iran has backfired, Guards chief says

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Mohammad Ali Jafari said on Tuesday that Iran has disappointed the enemies who have been working relentlessly to exert pressure on the Islamic Republic.

The senior commander said the opponents have been forced to acknowledge the

progresses made by Iran.

"Great achievements of the Islamic Revolution are not just mentioned by the Islamic Republic's officials," he said, adding, "The enemies have also admitted them and have become disappointed with exerting pressure and making threats against Iran."

Speaking in a ceremony in South Khorasan

province, the IRGC commander noted that Iran has never given in to the U.S. economic pressure.

Iran's resistance can be a great lesson for the oppressed countries in the world, he added.

"The U.S. has sought to undermine the security and cause harm to the system, however, they do not dare to bring up the issue of overthrowing the system, and will take

this wish to grave," he said.

President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. unilaterally from the JCPOA in May and ordered sanctions against Iran. The first round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were snapped back on November 4.

## General warns Israel, U.S. might create new chaos in Mideast

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — A top military aide to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution warns the U.S. and the Zionist regime might create a new chaos in the Middle East region, calling on regional countries to beware of such threats.

"We, military people, must realistically monitor our national, regional and international environment as well as our national security threats," Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi stated, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

"When the geopolitics, geo-economics and geo-strategy of a region match, that region becomes strategically [important] and when a region becomes strategically and geopolitically important, all world powers will keep an eye on that region," Safavi explained.

The former IRGC chief also said Saudi Arabia and some other Persian Gulf Arab countries have purchased weapons ten times more than Iran over the past ten years.

"But weapons and equipment are



not considered as a factor for superiority and victory in war," the general remarked.

If that was the case, he continued, Saudi Arabia would have won the war in Yemen, but "during the last 45 months they have had the minimum political and military achievements and it can be said that they have faced problems in reaching their main goals."

Safavi also described the Islamic Republic of Iran as a stable and powerful country which should expand its relations with China, India and Russia based on its national interests.

## Embassy: Iran has no links to weapons seized in central Afghan city

Iran has roundly dismissed claims of its links to a weapons cache discovered in Afghanistan's central province of Ghazni, warning against attempts to harm growing relations between the two neighbors.

The Iranian embassy in Kabul was reacting to claims on Sunday by local officials in Ghazni Province that they had found "Iran-made" weaponry from a Taliban hideout in Ghazni City, the provincial capital.

They claimed the arms included nine Kalashnikovs, five pistols, a hand grenade and a large number of bullets.

"Currently, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan enjoy great economic and cultural relations and [no party] should be allowed to hamper the growing ties between the two friendly governments," Iran's mission in Afghanistan said in a statement on Tuesday.

The embassy has conveyed Iran's dissatisfaction with the matter to Afghan authorities, and seeks "clear documentation" on the claims.



Afghan people face insecurity 16 years after the United States and its allies invaded the country as part of Washington's so-called war on terror.

Although the Taliban militant group was removed from power as a result of the invasion, the country remains occupied and many areas are still threatened by insecurity.

Iran has repeatedly rejected allegations that it aids the Taliban, saying such claims are instigated by the U.S. in an attempt to divert public opinion from the real cause of violence in Afghanistan.

(Source: Press TV)

## Govt. focusing on economic stability: Rouhani

**1 →** He added, "The U.S. objective was to prevent exportation of Iran's oil, but I tell the people clearly that oil exportation has become better after Aban 13 [November 4]."

■ **'No way but making peace with Yemenis'**

Rouhani also said the situation in Yemen has developed in a way that Saudi Arabia and its allies, who made strenuous efforts to occupy the country and make the

Yemenis surrender, have no choice other than making peace with the country.

He also noted that Iran supports inter-Yemeni talks. UN-brokered peace talks between the warring parties in Yemen's conflict began on Thursday in Sweden.

The Saudi-led war in Yemen started in March 2015 as an attempt to crush the Houthi movement in the country and restore former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

In April 2015, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif submitted a letter to then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon outlining a four-point peace plan for Yemen. The plan called for an immediate ceasefire and end of all foreign military attacks, humanitarian assistance, a resumption of broad national dialogue, and "establishment of an inclusive national unity government."



# Yemen warring sides not there yet on key issues: UN envoy

The United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths says the country’s warring parties have not yet reached any agreement on the major sticking points on the agenda of the ongoing peace negotiations in Sweden, including a truce in the strategic port city of Hudaydah.

Griffiths made the remarks at a press conference in Sweden, where the UN-brokered peace talks continue between delegations from Yemen’s Ansarullah (Houthi) movement and the country’s former Saudi regime-backed regime.

Speaking on Monday -- the fifth day of the discussions -- the UN envoy described Hudaydah and Ta’izz as “two major population zones in Yemen caught in war.”

“I’m hopeful that we can reach agreements on de-escalation to reduce the fighting in both places. I’m hoping that we can, but we are not there yet,” he said.

Griffiths also hoped for agreements on a range of issues between Yemen’s warring sides during the current round of talks “in the next couple of days” and more consultations early next year to address the political and security issues.

“We are trying to close the distance so that we can ideally bring these negotiations forward to a public conclusion within the next few days,” he added.

The UN envoy further noted that the participants at the peace talks had exchanged views on the reopening of Sana’a airport, and that they would make an announcement about the release of prisoners in a couple of days.

“All I can say about the optimism, that you have referred to, is that bringing people together for the first time in two years since they sat down together, already having made an agreement on humanitarian issue, the release of prisoners, I think Yemen should be proud of these people sitting around that table today, rather than deriding them,” he said.

Top on the agenda of the talks have been four topics, including the situations in Hu-



daydah and Ta’izz as well as the reopening of the Sana’a airport and a prisoner swap deal.

### ■ Hudaydah truce rejected

Meantime, reports say both parties have dismissed an initial proposal for ending the fighting in Hudaydah, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis. The proposal urges the Saudi regime-led coalition forces to lay down their arms and the Ansarullah to retreat from the port city and hand it over to a UN administration.

The House of Saud regime and the UAE launched an offensive against Hudaydah in June but they have hit a stiff brick wall in the face of a strong resistance put up by Yemeni armed forces -- led by the Ansarullah -- and the city’s residents.

The Saudi regime-led coalition claims

that the Ansarullah are using the port city for weapons delivery, an allegation rejected by the Yemeni fighters.

### ■ No agreement on Ta’izz ceasefire

Elsewhere, reports said that the UN has called for an unconditional truce in the southwestern city Ta’izz, which is occupied by Saudi regime-backed militants but besieged by the Ansarullah fighters.

It has also proposed a joint working group that includes the UN to monitor the Ta’izz ceasefire, and the reopening of all roads and the city’s airport for humanitarian operations.

However, there has been no agreement over the issue.

### ■ Divisions remain on Sana’a airport

Additionally, reports say Yemen’s opposite parties are still widely divided in reaching an implementation plan for the reopening the airport, which has been closed to commercial flights since August 2016.

The negotiators from the former Saudi regime-backed regime insisted that all flights to and from the Sana’a airport must be inspected at airports in Aden or Say’un.

However, Mohammed Abdulsalam, the head of the Ansarullah delegation at the Sweden discussions, rejected the proposal.

The Ansarullah had earlier proposed to place the Sana’a airport under direct UN supervision.

“The Sana’a International Airport is a major airport in Yemen, serving about 70 percent of the country’s population. It is the most important transportation hub in the country. No obstacles or conditions should be set for the reopening of the Sana’a airport,” said Mazen Ghanem, spokesman of the Yemeni General Authority for Civil Aviation and Meteorology.

### ■ Mass prisoner swap expected

Ahead of the talks, a UN-chartered plane carrying 50 wounded Ansarullah movement forces and three Yemeni doctors left Sana’a for Oman’s capital, Muscat, for treatment.

A mass prisoner exchange has also been raised in the negotiations, but an announcement is yet to be issued.

The brutal Saudi regime-led war was launched in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall Yemen’s former Riyadh-allied regime and crush the Ansarullah, who have been running state affairs in the absence of an effective government.

In their latest joint statement, UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) and the World Food Program said that up to 20 million Yemenis -- two-thirds of the country’s population -- are food insecure.

(Source: agencies)

# Israeli forces fatally shoot Palestinian in southern West Bank

Israeli forces have shot dead a Palestinian man, alleging that he attempted to ram his car into the regime’s policemen in the southern West Bank.

The incident took place in the Palestinian town of Idhna near al-Khalil (Hebron) on Tuesday morning.

The Palestinian Red Crescent identified the victim as Omar Hassan al-Awawdeh, 27.

Witnesses told the Wafa news agency that Awawdeh had been shot by several bullets in the back and left on the ground bleeding until a Palestinian ambulance transported him to hospital, where he was proclaimed dead.

The Israeli army claimed the Palestinian was shot when he did not stop his vehicle for search upon orders by soldiers.

Israeli police also said the Palestinian man was shot after his car allegedly “drove towards border police” at a checkpoint.

The Israeli military regularly opens fatal fire on Palestinians, accusing them of seeking to attack its personnel.

Human rights groups have repeatedly slammed Tel Aviv for its shoot-to-kill policy as a large number of the Palestinians killed at the scene of attacks did not pose any serious threat to Israelis.

Israeli troops have on numerous occasions been caught on camera brutally killing Palestinians, with the videos going viral online and sparking condemnations of the regime’s military.

### ■ Israeli soldiers raid official Palestinian news agency in Ramallah

Meantime, heavily-armed Israeli forces have entered the Palestinian city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank and raided the offices of the official Palestinian news agency.

Wafa news agency reported on Monday that Israeli forces had broken into its offices and searched the premises, including checking the IDs of the workers present on site. They also searched the photography and editing offices.

According to employees, Israeli forces also inspected computer servers and the building’s security cameras. The troops seized the security camera footage of a nearby building.

This came after a series of fierce clashes erupted a few hundred meters from the house of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas after Israeli soldiers entered Ramallah on Monday morning.

Several were wounded as Israeli forces used live ammunition to disperse Palestinian protesters in the area. The Palestinian Red Crescent said at least two were wounded by live Israeli fire, four injured by rubber bullets and another 20 as a result of gas inhalation.

The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms, also known as MADA, says hundreds of violations of



media freedoms have been carried out by the Israeli regime since the start of the year.

Last month witnessed an escalation in the number and gravity of the attacks targeting media freedoms in Palestine in comparison with the preceding month. In November 2018, the number of attacks monitored by the MADA totaled 57 attacks, 49 of which were committed by the Israeli occupation.

In addition, the United Nations says violence and vandalism committed by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property have been on the rise since the beginning of the year 2018.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on Sunday made the news in a report published in its biweekly Protection of Civilians, comparing a weekly average of five attacks resulting in injuries with an average of three in 2017 and two in 2016.

Tensions between Israelis and Palestinians escalated in the occupied Palestinian territories after the United States President Donald Trump’s recognition of al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel’s “capital” and relocation of the U.S. embassy to the city.

On December 21 last year, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution that calls on the US to withdraw its controversial policy shift.

Despite the vote, the U.S. went ahead with the embassy transfer on May 14, triggering demonstrations in the occupied Palestinian territories, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco and other Muslim countries.

Angered by Trump’s move, Abbas boycotted his administration, saying Washington was no longer qualified to serve as the sole mediator in the decades-long conflict with Israel, and that an international mechanism should be devised to

replace the U.S. in the so-called peace process.

### ■ Brazil’s decision to move embassy to al-Quds could harm ties: AL

Elsewhere, the Arab League has slammed a plan by Brazil’s far-right President-elect Jair Bolsonaro to transfer his country’s embassy from Tel Aviv to Israeli-occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem), warning that the possible move could harm bilateral relations.

In a letter to Brazil’s Foreign Ministry seen by Reuters on Monday, Arab League’s (AL) Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit said Bolsonaro, who is set to be sworn in on January 1, should reconsider his campaign promise or risk downgrade in ties. Aboul Gheit said the decision on where to locate an embassy was the sovereign decision of any country, but “the situation of Israel is not normal” as it has been “occupying Palestinian territories by force - among them East Jerusalem [al-Quds].”

Relocating the embassy to al-Quds (Jerusalem) would be considered a violation of international law and the United Nations Security Council resolutions, Aboul Gheit wrote.

An unnamed diplomat told Reuters that ambassadors from the Arab League’s 22 member states are expected to meet in the Brazilian capital, Brasilia, on Tuesday to discuss the embassy move.

Shortly after he was elected in late October, Bolsonaro announced he intended to uphold his campaign promise and move the Latin American country’s embassy to al-Quds (Jerusalem) to follow in the footsteps of the U.S. and Guatemala.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly welcomed the plan and issued a statement in praise of the decision. The decision has drawn strong condemnation from the Palestinians.

Hamas calls on Brazilian President-elect Jair Bolsonaro to revoke his decision to relocate his country’s embassy to occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Meanwhile, Kan 11 television channel reported that during a meeting two weeks ago with the U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton, Bolsonaro said that no final decision had yet been made on the relocation of Brazil’s embassy to al-Quds (Jerusalem) and that there were various issues on the agenda before a final decision is reached.

According to the report, Bolsonaro’s main concern is possible damage to Brazil’s trade relations with Muslim countries if a decision is made to move the embassy.

Israel occupied al-Quds in 1967 in a move never recognized by the international community. The Palestinians want the city as the capital of their future state.

(Source: Press TV)

## 44 ex-senators warn U.S. is ‘entering a dangerous period’



A bipartisan group of nearly four dozen former senators of the United States warned current and future members of the Senate on Monday that the United States is “entering a dangerous period,” and urged them to defend America’s democracy by serving national interests rather than political ideologies.

“We are on the eve of the conclusion of special counsel Robert S. Mueller III’s investigation and the House’s commencement of investigations of the president and his administration,” the 44 ex-lawmakers wrote in an op-ed published by The Washington Post. “The likely convergence of these two events will occur at a time when simmering regional conflicts and global power confrontations continue to threaten our security, economy and geopolitical stability.”

The senators continued: “It is a time, like other critical junctures in our history, when our nation must engage at every level with strategic precision and the hand of both the president and the Senate. We are at an inflection point in which the foundational principles of our democracy and our national security interests are at stake, and the rule of law and the ability of our institutions to function freely and independently must be upheld.”

The senators -- 32 Democrats, 10 Republicans and two independents -- also stressed the importance of casting aside party differences in confronting impending challenges, noting that during their time in Congress, “we were allies and at other times opponents, but never enemies.”

“At other critical moments in our history, when constitutional crises have threatened our foundations, it has been the Senate that has stood in defense of our democracy,” the senators wrote. “Today is once again such a time.”

Though the op-ed did not refer to President Donald Trump by name, its ominous tone and solemn appeals were reminiscent of another opinion piece that recently riled up Washington -- the anonymous letter published by The New York Times in September alleging that a “quiet resistance” within Trump’s executive branch had banded together to “frustrate parts of his agenda and his worst inclinations.”

(Source: Politico)

## Kremlin brushes off U.S. criticism of bombers dispatch to Venezuela



The Kremlin on Tuesday rejected the United States criticism of Russian military flights to Venezuela, saying it had been inappropriate and wrong for the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to condemn the flight of two nuclear-capable strategic bombers to Caracas.

Two Russian TU-160 strategic bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons landed in Venezuela on Monday in a symbolic show of support for the government there.

Pompeo condemned the deployment on Twitter.

“The Russian and Venezuelan people should see this for what it is: two corrupt governments squandering public funds, and squelching liberty and freedom while their people suffer,” Pompeo wrote.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call that Pompeo’s comments were undiplomatic and wrong. “We consider it completely inappropriate,” said Peskov.

Earlier on Tuesday, Russia’s Defense Ministry-run Zvezda television channel published a video of the planes’ landing.

“Two Tu-160 strategic bombers, an An-124 heavy military transport plane and an Il-62 long-haul plane... have landed at the Maiqueta ‘Simon Bolivar’ International Airport of the Venezuelan capital city,” Zvezda reported, citing the Defense Ministry.

The Russian aircraft were escorted by F-16 fighters of the Norwegian Air Force at certain stages of the route, Russia’s Defense Ministry was cited as saying by the RBC news website.

Last week, Moscow and Caracas reportedly signed investment contracts worth billions of dollars during Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro’s three-day visit to Russia. The leader called Russia a “brother country” with which Venezuela had “raised the flag for the creation of a multipolar and multicentric world.”

(Source: The Moscow Times)

# China warns against ‘bullying’ of its citizens

China’s foreign minister warned on Tuesday against the “bullying” of any Chinese citizen, amid a diplomatic fracas over the arrest of a Huawei executive on a United States warrant in Canada.

Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of telecommunications behemoth Huawei, was on December 1 arrested in Vancouver on the U.S. fraud charges related to sanctions-breaking dealings with Iran, infuriating China.

“The safety and security of Chinese compatriots are our priority, China will never sit

idly by and ignore any bullying that violates the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens,” Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a speech in Beijing, without directly referring to the Huawei case.

“We will fully safeguard the legitimate rights of Chinese citizens and return fairness and justice to the world,” he said at the opening of a diplomatic symposium.

The detention has raised tensions following a truce in the U.S.-China trade war, with Beijing summoning both the Canadian and the U.S. ambassadors over the weekend.

Meng, who faces a possible extradition to the United States, is seeking her release on bail from a court in Vancouver.

China has accused Canada of treating Meng in an “inhuman” manner, citing reports in Chinese state-run media alleging she was not given adequate medical care.

Beijing has also claimed that the Chinese embassy was not immediately notified of her arrest.

“The Canadian government did not do this and the Chinese government learned this through other channels,” foreign ministry

spokesman Lu Kang said at a daily briefing.

In his speech, Wang also touched on tensions with the U.S., calling on Washington to stop seeing trade between the countries as a “zero-sum game”.

“Take a more positive look at China’s development, and constantly expand the space and prospects for mutual benefit,” he said.

“There is no need to artificially create new opponents, and an even greater need to avoid self-fulfilling prophecies.”

(Source: AFP)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	166235.0
IFX	1855.64

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,994 rials
GBP	53,528 rials
AED	11,380 rials

Source: iribnews.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$52.16/b
Brent	\$50.85/b
OPEC Basket	\$59.20/b
Gold	\$1,245.75/oz
Silver	\$14.73/oz
Platinum	\$789.55/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

U.S., Saudi plans for replacing Iranian gas in Iraq doomed to failure

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** – Considering Iraq’s geopolitical improvements in the past few years, the Iraqi government has been seeking to improve the country’s infrastructure and one of the main areas of focus has been Iraq’s electricity network and power infrastructures.

Consequently, the country has been in constant need to import gas to supply its power plants most of which are gas powered.

Being neighbor to a country which is the home to the world’s second largest gas resources is a good-enough reason for Iraq to look to Iran as one of its main suppliers of natural gas to meet its energy needs. Therefore, Iran for long has been one of Iraq’s main gas suppliers.

The neighbors signed a deal in 2013 for Iran to supply gas to Iraqi power stations, but poor security in Iraq hampered the implementation of the deal.

Later on in 2017, once again Iran signed two contracts with Iraq to export gas, one for the capital Baghdad and the other for southern city of Basra.



Based on these deals Iran was to supply 35 million cubic meters of gas on a daily basis to the capital Bagdad [gradually in three phases] while up to 25 million cubic meters of gas per day was supposed to be exported to Basra.

However, due to various issues some from the Iraqi side and some from Iran, the country is currently exporting only 25 million cubic meters of gas per day to Bagdad and only 5 mcm to Basra. That means Iran is only using about 80 percent of its full potential in exporting gas to Iraq.

■ **U.S. and Saudis efforts to replace Iran**  
After Trump withdrew from Iran’s nuclear deal in November, the U.S. government and its allies have been putting all their efforts together to isolate Iran and make the Islamic country bend under economic pressure.

Taking Iran’s energy market in the region has been Trump’s top agenda in order to succeed in his plans.

Consequently, the U.S. has been recently offering the customers of Iranian gas attractive offers in order to lure them away from Iran.

To this end, the United States has even announced that it will provide facilities for the establishment of LNG complexes in Iraq to supply the country’s power plants.

On the other hand, recently Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih has announced his country’s readiness to meet Iraq’s electricity and energy needs.

The Saudi minister even visited Iraq in order to further discuss the matter.

According to Energy Expert Ahmad Mohebi, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are aiming to achieve two major goals by cutting off Iran’s gas exports to Iraq over the next few years.

The first is to reduce Iran’s political, economic and strategic influence in Iraq, and secondly, to create new markets for themselves.

By facilitating private sector’s entry into Iraq’s market for constructing new power plants or renovating the country’s old power plants, the Iranian government will be able to cement its strategic position in Iraq and secure its gas exports to the neighbor country.

Iran and Iraq have such good diplomatic ties that the U.S. plots won’t be able to break it up. The great efficiency of importing Iranian gas should not also be taken for granted.

As Hayan Abdul Ghani, head of Iraqi state-run South Gas Co. (SGC), said last week “Iraq’s current production of gas is not enough to meet our power stations’ demand and therefore we are still importing gas from Iran. We need at least 24 months to operate new gas projects and start production.”

Major water, power projects come on stream

First VP Jahangiri inaugurated water desalinization, power plants in Hormozgan province

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Iranian First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri inaugurated the first phase of the country’s biggest water desalinization project and a 160-megawatt power plant in the southern province of Hormozgan on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

Accompanied by a delegation comprised of senior and provincial officials, Jahangiri also paid a visit to the third phase of Shahid

Rajaie port development project during his trip to Bandar Abbas, the provincial capital of Hormozgan.

“The first phase of the water salinization project, with the capacity of 20,000 cubic meter per day, was kicked off using 2.6 trillion rials (about \$61.9 million) of private sector’s investments,” the managing director of Water and Wastewater Department of Hormozgan Province announced.

Iranian MPO, industry ministry ink MOU to create 270,000 jobs

**E C O N O M Y** **TEHRAN** — Management and Planning Organization of Iran (MPO) and the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) based on which the two sides will allocate 210 trillion rials (about \$5 billion) to create 270,000 job opportunities across the country.

According to Shata, the MOU was signed by the Industry Minister Reza Rahmani and Mohammad Baqer Nobakht, the head of MPO, on Tuesday.

Completing 2,066 industrial and mining projects with above 60 percent physical progress and creating



Industry Minister Reza Rahmani (L) and Mohammad Baqer Nobakht, the head of MPO, exchanging the documents of an MOU they signed on job creation co-op on Tuesday

Minerals export rises 7% in 8 months yr/yr

**E C O N O M Y** **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran’s minerals export during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21) rose seven percent compared to that of the same period of time in the past year, IRIB reported citing the data released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Iran exported 39.882 million tons of minerals worth \$6.874 billion during the eight-month period, showing 10 percent fall in terms of weight.

Of the mentioned figure of exports, \$3.298 billion was related to the chain of

steel products and \$514 million was from the chain of copper products.

The worth of Iran’s minerals and mining exports stood at \$9 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2018), according to Mehdi Karbasian, the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries where 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world’s largest deposits of copper, zinc and iron ore, which are tempting international investors.

Automakers rise on report of China moving to cut U.S. car tariffs

Automakers’ shares rose on Tuesday following a report that China could move to cut tariffs on American-made cars, a step which was forecast by U.S. President Donald Trump after a meeting with China’s president in Argentina.

China is moving to cut import tariffs on American-made cars to 15 percent from the current 40 percent, Bloomberg reported on Tuesday citing people familiar with the matter.

The step hasn’t been finalized and could still change, according to the report.

Shares of U.S. automakers including General Motors Co (GM.N) and Ford Motor Co (F.N) rose about 2 percent in premarket trading on hopes that the move could revitalize sales that took a hit when China ramped up levies on U.S.-made cars.



European auto stocks .SXAP also rallied 2.8 pct on the news, as several of the carmakers build SUVs in the United States and sell in China.

BMW (BMWG.DE), Volkswagen AG (VOWG\_p.DE) and Daimler AG (BMWG.DE) rose between 2.3 percent and 4 percent.

A proposal to reduce tariffs on cars made in the U.S. to 15 percent has been submitted to China’s Cabinet to be reviewed in the coming days, according to the report.

Beijing had raised tariffs on U.S. auto imports to 40 percent in July, forcing many carmakers to hike prices.

The news would also be beneficial for Tesla Inc (TSLA.O) that has been hit hard by increased tariffs on the electric cars it exports to China.

The U.S. firm, led by billionaire Elon Musk, has said it will cut prices to make its cars “more affordable” and absorb more of the hit from the tariffs. Tesla is also building a local plant in Shanghai to help it avoid steep tariffs.

“China has agreed to reduce and remove tariffs on cars coming into China from the U.S. Currently the tariff is 40%,” Trump had tweeted last week. (Source: Reuters)



“The whole project has the capacity of 100,000 cubic meters and would employ 80,000 workers after becoming operational,” Amin Ghasi said, “Being accomplished, the project will supply 40 percent of Bandar Abbas potable water.”

“The capacity of the inaugurated 160-meg-

awats-power plan, which has been built within two years by €35 million to €40 million of investments made by the private sector, can be improved up to 480 MW in future by the help of Iranian Mapna Group Company, as an official from Thermal Power Plants Holding Company Mehdi Khabbaz announced.

more than 130,000 job opportunities are some of the plans underlined in this MOU.

Overhauling and rehabilitation of 2,165 industrial, mining, and factory units is also another item covered in this memorandum.

Earlier in September, Nobakht announced that the government has prepared a protective plan worth one billion dollars aiming to create jobs, support the domestic production and preserve the existing jobs.

Nobakht had earlier said that the government prepared five new packages and 12 programs to tackle the current economic problems.

NDF to pay nearly \$1b to support exports

**E C O N O M Y** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s National Development Fund will pay 40 trillion rials (about \$952.3 million) for supporting exports from the country, Morteza Shahidzadeh, the chairman of NDF board of trustees, announced on Monday.

Speaking at the 45th meeting of the board of representatives of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), Shahidzadeh said a big part of NDF’s reserve has been paid to provide working capitals for different sectors, and put the shares of agriculture sector at 14

percent, industry sector at 16 percent and tourism sector at 14 percent of working capital provided by the NDF.

NDF’s reserve is provided through 32 percent of Iran’s oil revenues and if the reserve is to be doubled it should be through external resources; therefore, setting up a financial channel and a private bank through support of the NDF is on the agenda, he added.

“Such plan has been discussed with the enterprises and it is hoped that we can use external financial sources to boost NDF’s reserve through contribution of the private sector”, Shahidzadeh noted.

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

EXTENSION OF INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97-07/171

Tender Holder:  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Two-Stage Tender:  
Equipment procurement for HEAD END Mpeg-4 according to the tender documents

Deadline of Receiving Documents:  
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on  
Monday December 17, 2018.

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

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:  
The amount of USD 11,000 which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:  
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than 15 p.m. on Wednesday January 16, 2019 and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes  
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday January 20, 2019 in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.  
It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.

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

Public Relations Dept. of IRIB



مشخصات فروشنده						Details of the foreign passenger (buyer)					
<p>نام شخص حقیقی / حقوقی: ..... شماره اقتصادی: ..... شماره ثبت / شماره ملی: .....</p> <p>نشانی: استان: ..... شهرستان: ..... شهر: ..... کد پستی 10 رتبی: ..... گواهی ثبت نام: .....  <small>(شماره ثبت)</small></p> <p>آدرس: ..... شماره تلفن انبار: .....  <small>(فرع)</small></p>						<p>Name and surname: ( نام و نام خانوادگی ) .....</p> <p>Passport No: ( شماره گذرنامه ) .....</p> <p>Visa No.: ( شماره روادید ) .....</p> <p>Residence Address: ( نشانی محل اقامت ) .....</p>					
مشخصات کالا ی مورد معامله											
11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total price + VAT	Total VAT	After discount price	discount	Total price	Unit price (I.R.I. Rials)	Unit of measurement	Number / quantity	Details of the goods	Code of the good	NO	
جمع مبلغ کل بهایه جمع مالیات و عوارض (ریال)	جمع مالیات و عوارض (ریال)	مبلغ کل پس از تخفیف (ریال)	مبلغ تخفیف	مبلغ کل (ریال)	مبلغ واحد (ریال)	واحد اندازه گیری	تعداد / مقدار	شرح کالا	کد کالا		ردیف
(9 + 10)	مجموع نرخ مالیات و عوارض - 9	(7 – 8)		(6 × 4)	نحوه محاسبه براساس شماره ستون						
					<b>Total value</b> <b>جمع کل</b>						
					Conditions and method of sale      شرایط و نحوه فروش :						
					cash <input type="checkbox"/> نقدی <input type="checkbox"/> non-cash <input type="checkbox"/> غیرنقدی <input type="checkbox"/>						
					Details      توضیحات :						
					.....						
signature of the buyer					Stamp and signature of the seller					مهر و امضاء فروشنده	



## Trump’s gamble on MBS looks worse by the day

By Ishaan Tharoor

More than two months after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, the Trump administration is desperate to sweep the whole episode under the rug. It won't be easy.

On Wednesday, Michelle Bachelet, the former Chilean president and current UN high commissioner for human rights, became the latest voice to call for an international investigation into his killing. “I do believe it is really needed in terms of ensuring what really happened and who are the [people] responsible for that awful killing,” she said at a news conference in Geneva.

The possibility of an outside inquiry into the affair has also been floated by Turkish authorities, who are still pursuing their own investigation. As my colleague Kareem Fahim reported on Wednesday, a Turkish court issued arrest warrants for two officials close to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman: Maj. Gen. Ahmed al-Assiri and Saud al-Qahtani. The new Turkish arrest warrants, noted Fahim, appeared to be part of an effort to “pressure Saudi Arabia to reveal more details about Khashoggi’s killing, as well as to isolate the crown prince.”

The Saudis owned up to Khashoggi dying under their watch only after weeks of obfuscation. Both the aides targeted by the Turkish court were relieved of their posts, while 18 others allegedly involved in the killing were reported to have been arrested. Qahtani numbered among the 17 Saudi officials sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury for their roles in the abduction and murder of Khashoggi — a contributor to The Washington Post’s Opinions section and a critic of the leadership in Riyadh.

But there’s a growing sense that the killing of Khashoggi reflects, rather than an aberration, a wider pattern of Saudi behavior that has become all the more apparent with rise of the young Mohammed. It emerged on Thursday that Qahtani, widely seen as Mohammed’s enforcer, was also allegedly involved in the torture of at least one Saudi female activist detained this year during a wider crackdown on civil society.

The Saudis are still hoping to ride out the storm. Last week, Mohammed carried out something of a comeback tour through a number of Arab countries; he then endured a mixed reception at the Group of 20 Summit in Buenos Aires, where a prosecutor even weighed pursuing the Saudi heir to the throne for his government’s alleged war crimes in Yemen.

“The global debate around Saudi Arabia’s abuses and MBS’s role in Khashoggi’s killing is not likely to disappear soon,” Sarah Yerkes, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace’s Middle East program, wrote, referring to the prince by his initials. “But this tour . . . made clear that MBS is back to business as usual.”

This week, Khalid bin Salman — Mohammed’s brother and the Saudi ambassador to the United States — returned to Washington for the first time since news of the journalist’s murder convulsed the capital. “The return of Prince Khalid suggests that Riyadh thinks the crisis is over,” Simon Henderson, a Saudi Arabia expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said to my colleague John Hudson. “Congress probably has a different view.”

Indeed, Trump has failed to stave off a growing insurrection among even Republican lawmakers in Congress. Senators emerged from a closed-door hearing with CIA Director Gina Haspel on Tuesday seething with rage at a White House that seems bent on helping Riyadh cover up its tracks. “There’s not a smoking gun — there’s a smoking saw,” Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) said, referring to the grisly tool possibly used to dismember Khashoggi’s body.

The following day, a bipartisan group of senators filed a resolution condemning the crown prince for complicity in Khashoggi’s death. In a statement accompanying the release, Graham called Mohammed a “wrecking ball to the region jeopardizing our national security interests on multiple fronts.” He added: “It will be up to Saudi Arabia as to how to deal with this matter. But it is up to the United States to firmly stand for who we are and what we believe.”

Trump, however, has taken a very different stance. He shrugged at the CIA’s own conclusion that the crown prince presided directly over Khashoggi’s killing. In a statement last month, he chalked up Khashoggi’s death to the “dangerous” times we live in, engaged in casual slander of the slain journalist by linking him to an outlawed Islamist faction, and insisted that the U.S.-Saudi relationship was far too important to be compromised by one “tragic event.”

Trump’s defense of Saudi Arabia is puzzling. There’s little electoral logic in pandering to Riyadh: Before November 2016, Trump was a vehement, if ill-informed, critic of the Saudi kingdom. His administration has artificially inflated the economic value of Saudi Arabian arms sales in a bid to justify turning a blind eye to Khashoggi’s killing.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has been even more outspoken, mocking the “caterwauling” of Mohammed’s detractors in Washington and pointing to the supposed greater threat of Iran as a reason to look beyond the assassination of a Post writer.

The president’s loyalty to the crown prince looked even more conspicuous after reports, including from my colleagues, pointed to the Saudis pouring vast sums of money into Trump Organization properties since Trump came to power. These pecuniary concerns underscore the extent to which Trump is indeed a “transactional” president, willing to sacrifice principle for what is, in this case, personal gain.

But it has helped make Trump’s relationship with Saudi Arabia an easy target for his critics — and it helps create distance between the American president and many of his political allies. “Washington has grown to detest the Saudi crown prince,” Middle East expert Steven Cook wrote in an op-ed for Foreign Policy, “because he represents a world that seems to be spinning out of control.”

(Source: The Washington Post)

# Why is Qatar leaving OPEC?

## The decision to leave the oil cartel is aimed at reinforcing the country’s autonomy from its neighbors

By Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

The surprising declaration by Qatar about leaving OPEC on Jan.1 is a strategic response by the country to a changing energy landscape and the 18-month old ongoing boycott of Qatar by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt.

Qatar’s decision to move away from a region wide consensus among the Persian Gulf’s OPEC members is a reminder of the regional tensions arising from the assertiveness of Saudi Arabia, led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

This display of autonomy spilled over into the six-nation Persian Gulf Cooperation Council to which Qatar and three of its detractors belong and which held its annual summit on Sunday. Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the emir of Qatar, did not attend the council and sent a lower ranking delegation instead. Kuwait and Oman also hold reservations about the hawkish axis between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and will follow Qatar’s decision closely.

The Persian Gulf Cooperation summit did not discuss the blockade of Qatar and the rift in the Persian Gulf remains unresolved and, perhaps, unresolvable, as positions have hardened and neither Qatar nor the Saudi Arabia-led quartet wants to be seen to blink first.

By becoming the first of the energy-rich Persian Gulf States to withdraw from OPEC, Qatar has signaled its disapproval with an organization perceived to be subject to increasing Saudi interference.

Saudi interference was starkly illustrated during an April 2016 meeting in Doha, the capital of Qatar, when Prince Mohammed, then the deputy crown prince, intervened to thwart an output agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC states. Emir Tamim had worked hard to secure the agreement both within OPEC and with Russia, a fellow OPEC member, and sink the deal midway through the meeting.

Although designed to address the sustained post-2014 slump in oil prices, the Cold War between Saudi Arabia and Iran trumped, in Prince Mohammed’s view, the need to secure an agreement that could stabilize oil prices and assist producers’ economies hit by shortfalls in revenue.

Qatar’s decision to withdraw from OPEC builds on two decisions taken before and after Saudi Arabia and its allies cut ties with Qatar and imposed a blockade last June. In



### By becoming the first of the energy-rich Persian Gulf Arab states to withdraw from OPEC, Qatar has signaled its disapproval with an organization perceived to be subject to increasing Saudi interference.

April 2017, it decided to significantly expand its production of natural gas to increase its natural gas capacity by 43 percent to 110 million tons annually. The Qatari leadership also responded to the attempt to isolate Qatar by forging a slew of new longer-term natural gas agreements with partners worldwide, including China, Japan and Britain, to demonstrate that Qatar remained open for business.

Qatar made a strategic decision to direct national resources toward gas rather than oil as the backbone of its energy policy. While the country discovered oil in 1939, a year after Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and joined OPEC in 1961, it never became a major player in global oil markets because its oil exports remained small by Persian Gulf standards.

In the 1970s, Qatar discovered vast quantities of natural gas in the offshore North Field, which straddles the maritime border between Qatar and Iran, with the largest part of the field in Qatari waters. The North Field remains the largest non-associated gas field ever found, with more than 130 years of re-

serves at current production rates of 77 million tons a year.

Since the early 1990s, Qatar has invested heavily in creating the infrastructure to export gas both through pipelines and as liquefied natural gas. By 2007, Qatar was the largest exporter of LNG in the world, with production plateauing in 2010 at 77 million tons a year. In contrast, its average oil production of 607,000 barrels per day in 2017 is less than 2 percent of OPEC’s total output.

In April 2017, Qatar Petroleum lifted a 12-year moratorium on the further development of its natural gas resources that it had imposed in 2005 to allow time to study the impact of such a rapid rise in production on the condition and sustainable management of the North Field.

The decision to increase LNG production capacity to 110 million from 77 tons a year came two months before the Saudi-led attempt to isolate Qatar last June. Throughout the ongoing, 18-month-long blockade, Qatar has continued to supply natural gas to the Emirates through a pipeline that accounts

for about a quarter of the Emirates’ daily gas demand.

In November — a month before announcement of Qatar’s OPEC exit — a government reshuffle in Qatar saw Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, the former chief executive of Qatar Petroleum, appointed as Minister of State for Energy Affairs, a new portfolio that replaced the Minister of Energy and Industry.

During his term at Qatar Petroleum, Mr. Kaabi had lifted the moratorium on increasing gas production in the North Field. In his new ministerial position, Kaabi has been entrusted by Emir Tamim to oversee the next phase in Qatar’s gas development. Plans include a range of new upstream developments and international partnerships intended to cement the country’s position as the world’s leading supplier of LNG.

Having displayed their resilience in the face of the Saudi-led blockade, Qataris seem to signal their determination to move on from OPEC and carve their own approach to global gas markets.

A new deal to supply LNG to Britain, which receives nearly a third of its gas supply from Qatar, was announced just as the blockade came into effect last June. In September Qatar gas signed a 22-year agreement to supply PetroChina with 3.4 million tons of LNG a year through 2040.

Those deals, along with Qatar honoring its natural gas commitment to the Emirates despite the rift, have reinforced the post-blockade effort to portray Qatar as a reliable energy partner and a responsible member of the international community.

Thus, Qatar’s decision to withdraw from OPEC is consistent with the strategic evolution of its energy interests that plays to their strength as a gas superpower and fits into existing plans to upscale significantly LNG infrastructure and production capacity.

It makes strategic sense to focus on a sector in which Qatar holds more than 30 percent of the global market share than on its far smaller and declining oil output. By also reinforcing Qatar’s autonomy from its Persian Gulf neighbors, the move exemplifies the failure of the 2017 blockade to force Qatar to clip its wings and return to a Saudi-led regional fold.

With neither Saudi Arabia nor the Emirates willing to back down or concede defeat, the Persian Gulf rift is reshaping regional and institutional partnerships and increasing the degrees of separation among the parties to the dispute.

(Source: The NYT)

# Where are the Gilets Jaunes in the Arab world?

By Dr Amira Abo el-Fetouh

The Paris demonstrations by the Gilets Jaunes — yellow vests — movement have grabbed public attention around the world, and have spread to several other European capitals. It has even been said that “Arab Spring fever” has reached Europe to sweep away governments.

The two, though, are not the same. The Arab people rose up against the corrupt dictatorships in power for more than 30 years and which ruled with an iron first. In Europe, the protests are against rising fuel prices and increased taxes. There are no demands for regime change. There is a huge difference between revolutions and demonstrations. Nevertheless, the people of countries such as Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Libya have relived their Arab Spring days while watching the Paris protests.

Revolutions are based on ideology and ideas; they do not die, because ideas do not die. Demonstrations, though, tend to be more spontaneous and in response to specific contentious issues; they come to an end when demands are met. The Arab peoples’ revolutions were truly a spring and there was hope that change would bloom in the Arab world; in France, the protests revolve around the need for warmth in the harsh winter.

In response to Gilets Jaunes, French President Emmanuel Macron has cancelled his decision to increase taxes and fuel prices. He has even donned a yellow vest himself.

Far from donning protesters’ garb — literally or metaphorically — the rulers of Saudi Arabia and the UAE conspired against the revolutions to thwart them, by paying for the counterrevolutions. The funds expended ended up with the enemies of the Muslim Ummah and have been spent on fighting Muslims all over the world.

We need to observe the difference between how the French police dealt with the Gilets Jaunes and how the police and armies in the Arab countries treated their people. No French citizens were killed and relatively few were arrested. Instead, the police in Paris used internationally-recognized crowd dispersal methods with a high degree of professionalism and skill. When President Macron



### When President Macron thanked the police and shook their hands, one officer said: “There is no need to thank me for doing my duty, President Macron, it is my job. However, I am also affected by the taxes that the people have protests against, and I am ashamed when I oppress people who are protesting in defense of my right.”

thanked the police and shook their hands, one officer said: “There is no need to thank me for doing my duty,

President Macron, it is my job. However, I am also affected by the taxes that the people have protests against, and I am ashamed when I oppress people who are protesting in defense of my right.”

This was the people’s police speaking and their loyalty is to the people, not solely to the government as they are in the Arab states. Moreover, the French leader’s loyalty is to the people who put him in power, and so he accepted their demands and backed down on his decision to raise taxes and prices.

A president’s decisions do not have to be imposed by force and accepted without any protest, as they are in our countries. Such is the advantage of democracy and the grace of freedom, which the West in general experiences. This illustrates the presence of a free media in which the people can express themselves; a media which is not simply a mouthpiece and promoter of the regime, as is the case in all Arab countries without exception.

Furthermore, the French army did not intervene or take to the streets. Western armies are rarely deployed against their fellow citizens, whereas thousands of Arab citizens have been killed and wounded by their own soldiers over the years simply for trying to stand up for their human and civil rights.

The Arab Spring countries were on the verge of achieving their objective of overthrowing their despotic regimes; on the threshold of democracy, a dignified life and freedom, like that enjoyed by civilized nations. There was a free and fair election held in Egypt for the first time in 7,000 years, won by President Mohamed Morsi. However, the forces of evil within and outside the country conspired against him so that the country could go back to the way it was, with the head of state living like a lord and the people as his slaves.

The Gilets Jaunes remind us of our painful recent past, but we will always have hope as long as our dream does not die. It will be passed down through the generations and the will of the people will not fade with time. Where are the Gilets Jaunes in the Arab world?

(Source: Middle East Monitor)

# The Brexit vote: The prime minister is on the run

Theresa May continues to treat parliament with contempt, as her authority drains away on the most important issue facing Britain.

Theresa May has decided to pull the parliamentary vote on her Brexit withdrawal agreement because she knew she would lose. She has been humiliated by her own MPs. It is staggering that this defeat only became obvious to her after it had been clear to everyone else for weeks. In the end, she chose to run rather than stand and fight for

what she had agreed with European leaders. Mrs May is not saving her leadership, she is devaluing it to the point of worthlessness. The prime minister has no one to blame but herself for this mess. In the last two years the government has devoted itself to leaving the European Union in a manner consistent with Mrs May’s obsessions — primarily controlling immigration. Her resulting withdrawal agreement has been rubbish by her own unruly troops. They will not be easily instructed to

march in a different direction.

The prime minister is trying to buy herself time by getting Brussels to accept some tweaks in her Brexit deal over the Northern Ireland backstop as a means of persuading some doubters to vote for it. These will be cosmetic, as EU leaders say there can be no further renegotiation of the terms of the UK’s departure. The threats to Mrs May are multiplying. Mrs May might claim that she lives to fight another day. But given that the leadership is on the run

from the hard Brexiters, she lives on only as a political zombie. Ensnared by her own convictions, she has resorted to dilatory tactics because she has belatedly realised the full weight of their burden. When, at last, she has been forced to recognise this, she found herself alone and politically friendless in a party that prefers accommodation of its prejudices to political calculation — let alone what is best for this country.

(Source: The Guardian)



Perhaps if representatives from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were present at the negotiating table with the Sana'a delegation, the talks further saw progress as the "reliant government" delegation virtually lack authority.



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# Road deaths in Iran sharply fall in 3 years: WHO

**HEALTH TEHRAN—** Iran's road traffic deaths fell from 32.1 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 20.5 in 2018, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2018 global status report on road safety published in December.

In 2015, Iran ranked 8 among all the countries surveyed in terms of their roads' mortality rates, but in 2018 the country's rank among others dropped to 53 as over this period its road traffic death rates fell from 17,994 to 15,932, the WHO report indicated.

09 SJ-1-B

The report revealed that the majority of people died on Iranian roads were either the passengers (28%) or drivers (20%) of 4-wheeled cars and light vehicles. Riders of motorized 2- and 3-wheelers (24%) and pedestrians (22%) were the two other major groups killed on the road; while a very small number of victims were drivers and passengers of buses (1%), drivers and passengers of heavy trucks (2%) and cyclists (<1%).

09 SJ-1-C

WHO estimated Iran's road traffic fatalities dropped from 24,896 in 2015 to 16,426 in 2016.



On November 22, Iran's Traffic Police chief Taqi Mehri announced that Road fatalities caused by traffic accidents occurred in urban areas have dropped by 6 percent during the first six months of

the Iranian current calendar year (March 21- September 22) compared to the same period last year.

At the 4th National Traffic and Safety Conference held on November 21, Dr.

Christoph Hamelmann Representative of World Health Organization (WHO) in Iran, said that proportion of traffic injuries in Iran is higher than in most other parts of the eastern Mediterranean region and elsewhere in the world, and is one of the country's most serious problems.

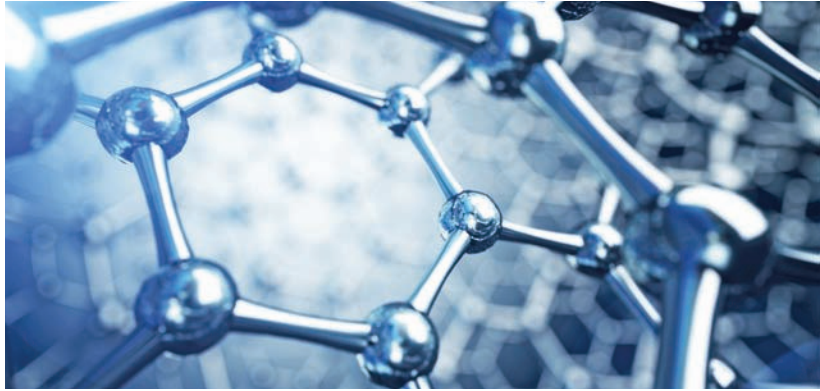
He referred to the national Road Safety Strategic Plan (2011-2020) of Iran that has 14 strategic objectives mainly on speed management, motorists' and pedestrians' safety, development of a comprehensive crash data bank, road infrastructure safety, vehicle safety, and post-crash management, adding that the plan would need a revision within 2 years and WHO is ready to support this process.

The WHO report on road safety 2018 presented information on road safety from 175 countries, accounting for almost 98.1% of the world's population.

The report highlighted that the number of annual road traffic deaths has reached 1.35 million.

Road traffic injuries are now the leading killer of people aged 5-29 years. The burden is disproportionately borne by pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, in particular those living in developing countries.

## Iranian researches develop biosensor to detect food spoilage



HEALTH

**TEHRAN—** Iranian Researchers in University of Mohaqeq Ardeabili have designed a biosensor using nanoparticles for detecting food spoilage, ISNA reported on Monday.

According to Dr. Mandana Amiri, a member of the research team, the sensitive superoxide biosensor is based on silicon carbide nanoparticles and can detect

bacteria in food.

The nanobiosensor can spot harmful bacteria in food both quickly and precisely, while it would have a low price as a fast, cost-effective method was used for its development, she explained.

In this method, uropathogenic E. coli cells were entrapped into ultra-thin sol-gel matrices on gold thin films, she added.

## Rapid test for cancer developed by researchers



A 10-minute test that can detect cancer cells anywhere in the body has been developed by researchers.

The team at the University of Queensland in Australia created the test after discovering that cancer forms a unique DNA structure when placed in water, CNN reported.

The portable, inexpensive test could

help detect cancer far sooner than current methods, according to the authors of the study in the Dec. 4 issue of Nature Communications.

They used the test on more than 200 tissue and blood samples and found that it was 90 percent accurate in detecting cancerous cells, CNN reported.

(source: WebMD)

## Study finds probiotics after antibiotics may not help your health

Experts are divided over the benefits of probiotics.

Share on PinterestThere's new evidence about the benefits and drawbacks of taking probiotics. Getty Images

If you're feeling sick from a bacterial infection, it's likely your doctor will prescribe antibiotics.

While antibiotics kill off bad bacteria, they can also disrupt your gut's complex microbiome, the microscopic community of bacteria that work together to make everything run smoothly.

To counteract this, your doctor might suggest you take probiotics supplements either during or following a regimen of antibiotics. Probiotic treatments contain helpful live bacteria — think the probiotics that are found in yogurt — to restore order to your gut.

But is this the most effective way to get back to health? New research reveals that this might not be the case.

What a new study found

A recent study published in the journal Cell, suggests that probiotics might not always be the most helpful course of measure to restore your gut to health.

The researchers from Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel and other institutions found that taking probiotics might actually delay your gut microbiome's return to normalcy, longer in fact than just allowing everything to return to normal following just antibiotic treatments.

The research team divided study participants in two groups — one was given an 11-strain probiotic treatment for a four-week period, and the other just given a placebo. While the probiotics given to the first group did effectively colonize the gut with new, helpful bacteria, this surprisingly delayed the microbiome to return to normal over the full six-month study period. Meanwhile, the gut microbiota of those in the second group actually returned to health in three weeks after going off the antibiotics.

This study was performed in both humans and mice.

It suggests there's a lot more we need to learn about how our gut microbiome works.

"The traditional view has been that the negative effects of antibiotics on the gut microbiome are being attenuated by taking

probiotics during and after the antibiotic course. There really hasn't been any strong scientific evidence that this would be beneficial," said Dr. Emeran A. Mayer, director of the G. Oppenheimer Center for Neurobiology of Stress and Resilience and co-director of CURE: Digestive Diseases Research Core Center at the David Geffen School of Medicine at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Mayer, who is the author of the book "The Mind Gut Connection," told Healthline that the traditional rationale for this kind of probiotic treatment frame of mind "has been kind of weak." He said that antibiotics can have a negative impact on many different taxa and it is "hard to see" how taking probiotics like Bifidobacteria and Lactobacilli would help bring the microbiome back to its original state.

That being said, he emphasized that this is "only one study using a particular cocktail of probiotics, after a particular course of antibiotics."

"In other words, a different probiotic may be helpful in a patient taking a different antibiotic," he added. "The findings are surprising and certainly have raised a lot of criticisms from probiotic companies. Given the caveats above, the implications of the study are that taking probiotics after a course of antibiotics will delay the return of the gut microbial architecture to its pre-antibiotic state. If this study is confirmed by other researchers it means that the traditional practice of taking a probiotic after antibiotic is wrong, and should no longer be recommended by physicians and advertisers."

Other options to strengthen the gut microbiome

Mayer added that this doesn't rule out that "other life microbes occurring in fermented food products" like sauerkraut and kimchi, for instance, "may be beneficial for patients following a course of antibiotics."

Traditionally, antibiotics are "one of the most prescribed medications" out there, according to Megan Meyer, PhD, director of science communications at the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation.

(Source: Healthline)

## Excess belly fat common in those with high heart risk

Excess waist fat is common in many people with a high risk of heart disease and stroke, according to a recent European study.

New research finds that two-thirds of people at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease have excess belly fat.

The study, called EUROASPIRE V, is a survey of cardiovascular disease prevention and diabetes. It forms part of a European Society of Cardiology research program.

The findings featured recently at the World Congress of Cardiology & Cardiovascular Health in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

They revealed that nearly two-thirds of individuals at high risk of cardiovascular disease had excess abdominal fat.

The results also showed that:

Only 47 percent of those taking drugs to reduce high blood pressure were achieving a target of under 140/90 millimeters of mercury, or under 140/85 for those who reported having diabetes.

Among individuals using lipid-lowering medication, only 43 percent had reached the low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol target of under 2.5 millimoles per liter.

Many who were not in receipt of treatment for high blood pressure and high LDL cholesterol had those conditions.

Only 65 percent of individuals receiving treatment for type 2 diabetes had attained the target blood sugar of under 7.0 percent glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c).

"The survey," says Kornelia Kotseva, chair of the EUROASPIRE Steering Committee and a professor at Imperial College London in the United Kingdom, "shows that large proportions of individuals at high risk of cardiovascular disease have unhealthy lifestyle habits and uncontrolled blood pressure, lipids, and diabetes."

Individuals with high heart risk

The recent study focuses on "apparently healthy individuals in primary care at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease, including those with diabetes." Altogether, 78 primary care practices from 16, mainly European, countries took part in the research, which took place during 2017–2018.

They recruited individuals who were under 80 years of age and had no his-

tory of coronary artery disease or other conditions arising from atherosclerosis.

However, assessments had shown that they were at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease due to one or more of the following: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes.

The researchers used medical records to identify those eligible for the study and invited them for an interview and clinical exam.

The interviewers asked questions about diet, exercise, smoking, and other lifestyle factors.

The analysis included a total of 2,759 people. Of these:

64 percent had central obesity, which is a measure of excess abdominal fat.

37 percent were in the overweight category for body mass index (25.0–29.9 kilograms per square meter).

18 percent were current smokers. 36 percent were achieving the typical guideline physical activity level of at least 30 minutes on 5 days of the week.

The researchers defined central obesity as having a waist size of at least 88 centimeters (34.7 inches) for women and at least 102 centimeters (40.2 inches) for men.

GPs need to be more proactive

Prof. Kotseva urges primary care practitioners to be proactive about looking for cardiovascular risk factors.

They need to probe beyond the risk factors that they are already aware of and "always investigate smoking, obesity, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes," she argues.

Individuals often don't realize that they should be receiving treatment. They may visit their doctor for diabetes care and not know that they also have high blood pressure.

"In our study, many participants with high blood pressure and cholesterol were not being treated," notes Prof. Kotseva. She suggests that the findings highlight a need for more investment and policy that focuses on prevention.

The recent news follows that of earlier research that featured at the European Society of Cardiology Congress in April 2018 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

(Source: Medical News Today)

## The state of cancer: Are we close to a cure?

Cancer is the leading cause of death across the globe. For years now, researchers have led meticulous studies focused on how to stop this deadly disease in its tracks. How close are we to finding more effective treatments?

How far has cancer research come?

The World Health Organization (WHO) note that, worldwide, nearly 1 in 6 deaths are down to cancer.

In the United States alone, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) estimated 1,688,780 new cancer cases and 600,920 cancer-related deaths in 2017.



Currently, the most common types of cancer treatment are chemotherapy, radiotherapy, tumor surgery, and — in the case prostate cancer and breast cancer — hormonal therapy.

However, other types of treatment are beginning to pick up steam: therapies that — on their own or in combination with other treatments — are meant to help defeat cancer more efficiently and, ideally, have fewer side effects.

Innovations in cancer treatment aim to address a set of issues that will typically face healthcare providers and patients, including aggressive treatment accompanied by unwanted side effects, tumor recurrence after treatment, surgery, or both, and aggressive cancers that are resilient to widely utilized treatments.

Below, we review some of the most recent cancer research breakthroughs that give us renewed hope that better therapies and prevention strategies will soon follow suit.

Boosting the immune system's 'arsenal'

One type of therapy that has attracted a lot of attention recently is immunotherapy, which aims to reinforce our own bodies' existing arsenal against foreign bodies and harmful cells: our immune system's response to the spread of cancer tumors.

But many types of cancer cell are so dangerous because they have ways of "duping" the immune system — either into ignoring them altogether or else into giving them a "helping hand."

Therefore, some types of aggressive cancer are able to spread more easily and become resistant to chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

However, thanks to in vitro and in vivo experiments, researchers are now learning how they might be able to "deactivate" the cancer cells' protective systems. A study published last year in Nature Immunology found that macrophages, or white blood cells, that are normally tasked with "eating up" cellular debris and other harmful foreign "objects" failed to obliterate the super-aggressive cancer cells.

That was because, in their interaction with the cancer cells, the macrophages read not one but two signals meant to repel their "cleansing" action. This knowledge, however, also showed the scientists the way forward: by blocking the two relevant signaling pathways, they re-enabled the white blood cells to do their work.

Therapeutic viruses and innovative 'vaccines'

A surprising weapon in the fight against cancer could be therapeutic viruses, as revealed by a team from the United Kingdom earlier this year. In their experiments, they managed to use a reo-virus to attack brain cancer cells while leaving healthy cells alone.

"This is the first time it has been shown that a therapeutic virus is able to pass through the brain-blood barrier," explained the study authors, which "opens up the possibility [that] this type of immunotherapy could be used to treat more people with aggressive brain cancers."

Another area for improvement in immunotherapy is "dendritic vaccines," a strategy wherein dendritic cells (which play a key role in the body's immune response) are collected from a person's body, "armed" with tumor-specific antigens — which will teach them to "hunt" and destroy relevant cancer cells — and injected back into the body to boost the immune system.

In a new study, researchers in Switzerland identified a way to improve the action of these dendritic vaccines by creating artificial receptors able to recognize and "abduct" tiny vesicles that have been linked to cancer tumors' spread in the body.

By attaching these artificial receptors to the dendritic cells in the "vaccines," the therapeutic cells are enabled to recognize harmful cancer cells with more accuracy.

Importantly, recent studies have shown that immunotherapy may work best if delivered in tandem with chemotherapy — specifically, if the chemotherapy drugs are delivered first, and they are followed up with immunotherapy.

But this approach does have some pitfalls; it is difficult to control the effects of this combined method, so sometimes, healthy tissue may be attacked alongside cancer tumors.

However, scientists from two institutions in North Carolina have developed a substance that, once injected into the body, becomes gel-like: a "bioresponsive scaffold system." The scaffold can hold both chemotherapy and immunotherapy drugs at once, releasing them systematically into primary tumors.

This method allows for a better control of both therapies, ensuring that the drugs act on the targeted tumor alone.

The nanoparticle revolution

Speaking of specially developed tools for delivering drugs straight to the tumor and hunting down micro tumors with accuracy and efficiency, the past couple of years have seen a "boom" in nanotechnology and nanoparticle developments for cancer treatments.

Nanoparticles are microscopic particles that have garnered so much attention in clinical research, among other fields, because they bring us the chance to develop precise, less invasive methods of tackling disease.

Vitality, they can target cancer cells or cancer tumors without harming healthy cells in the surrounding environment.

Some nanoparticles have now been created to provide very focused hyperthermic treatment, which is a type of therapy that uses hot temperatures to make cancer tumors shrink.

Last year, scientists from China and the U.K. managed to come up with a type of "self-regulating" nanoparticle that was able to expose tumors to heat while avoiding contact with healthy tissue.

"This could potentially be a game-changer in the way we treat people who have cancer," said one of the researchers in charge of this project.

These tiny vehicles can also be used to target cancer stem-like cells, which are undifferentiated cells that have been linked to the resilience of certain types of cancer in the face of traditional treatments such as chemotherapy.

(Source: Medical News Today)



## Iran plans to expand market for knowledge-based companies in S. Africa

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** —A 46-member trade delegation headed by the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari travelled to South Africa on Monday to expand international market for knowledge-based companies, Mehr reported.

The delegation includes owners of finance funds and knowledge-based companies active in the field of information and communications, health, biotechnology, mining industries and industrial equipment.

During the four-day trip to Johannesburg and Pretoria, the Iranian companies hold B2B meetings with their counterparts at the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

They will also attend the Science Forum South Africa (SFSa), which will be held from December 12 to 14 in Pretoria.

At the forum, the Iranian companies have the chance to get introduce to technology in Africa.

During their trip, Sattari paid visit to South Africa's Minister of Science and Technology Mmamoloko Tryphosa Kubayi and they discussed development of scientific and technological cooperation.

In October, Sattari headed a delegation of officials and knowledge-based companies' directors to Kenya and Uganda in order to boost the market of Iranian knowledge-based companies in eastern Africa.

According to weforum.org, as Africa transitions from the margins to the mainstream of the global economy, technology is playing an increasingly significant role.

Bolstering regional trends in business, investment and modernization is the emergence of an IT ecosystem – a growing patchwork of entrepreneurs, tech ventures and innovation centers coalescing from country to country.

## Nearly 47 percent of global population now online: UN report

Even though China and India are now the largest Internet markets on the planet, they are also among the six countries that together account for 55 per cent of the global 'offline' population, according to a new report of a United Nations commission.

Furthermore, 20 countries including United States, China and India make up almost three-fourths of the world population not using the Internet.

"These findings suggest that targeted efforts in just a few key markets could help enormously in redressing the gaping 'digital divide' between those who are online and those still offline," said the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a specialized UN agency, in a news release today.

Released just ahead of the 14th meeting of the UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, to be held on 18 September, in New York, the report The State of Broadband 2016 also highlighted the potential of mobile broadband, with 165 countries now having deployed the 4th generation or '4G' high-speed mobile networks.



"As smartphone penetration reaches near-saturation in the US, Europe and mature markets in Asia like Japan and [Democratic Republic of] Korea, India and Indonesia in particular are expected to drive future growth," ITU added.

Findings from the report also revealed that that India, which overtook the US to become the world's second largest Internet market (333 million users), also overtook that country to become the world's second-largest smartphone market, with an estimated 260 million mobile broadband subscriptions.

According to Houlin Zhao, the Secretary-General of ITU, and Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), who both co-Vice Chair the Commission, broadband connectivity and technology can play very important role as enablers of development.

Recalling that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for education, gender equality and infrastructure include bold targets for information and communication technology, Zhao said: "The SDGs are achievable, but require urgent efforts and progress in the speed, degree and equality of development. The Commission believes that can be realized through broadband."

Similarly, Bokova noted: "Broadband technologies can be powerful development multipliers but this requires combined investments in access and in skills and in education."

"This is about opening new paths to create and share knowledge. It is about enhancing freedom of expression and about widening learning opportunities, especially for girls and women. This is about developing content that is relevant, local and multilingual," she added.

Highlighting some of the findings from the present report, today's news release mentioned:

**\*\*By end 2016, 3.5 billion people will be using the Internet, up from 3.2 billion last year and equating to 47 per cent of the global population**

**\*\*There are now 91 economies where over 50 per cent of the population is online, up from 79 in 2015**

**\*\*The top 10 developing countries for household Internet penetration are all located in Asia or the Middle East**

**\*\*Republic of Korea has the world's highest household Internet penetration (98.8 per cent), followed by Qatar (96 per cent), and United Arab Emirates (95 per cent)**

Iceland has the highest percentage of individuals using the Internet (98.2 per cent), followed by Luxembourg (97.3 per cent), and Andorra (97 per cent); and

The lowest levels of Internet usage are in sub-Saharan Africa, with less than three per cent of the population using the Internet in a number of countries including Chad (2.7 per cent), Sierra Leone (2.5 per cent), Niger (2.2 per cent), Somalia (1.8 per cent) and Eritrea (1.1 per cent).

(Source: news.un.org)

# Taking smart decisions important for having smart cities: minister

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Taking smart decisions is as important as collecting and processing smart data for having smart cities, the information and communication technology minister said, IRNA reported.

Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi made the remarks during the opening ceremony of the 2nd Smart Congress at Tehran's Milad Tower on Monday.

He pointed out to meteorological data and air pollution indices as smart factors, which are monitored in Tehran.

"Unfortunately, we sometimes do not take smart decisions proportional to collecting data," he lamented.

Encouragement of citizens to use public transformation instead of personal vehicles is one of the solutions for solving air pollution problems, he explained.

The e-government is considered as an aid for making Tehran smart, he said.

Tehran Municipality has already collected and processed data in a smart method, however, what is needed is better decision making, he said.

The smart economy is an important



issue for making Tehran a smart city, he emphasized.

Several knowledge-based companies are now manufacture Engine Oil Temperature (EOT) Sensor for vehicles or provide big data knowledge in Tehran, which can lead to smart

market in the city, he said.

Big data is a term used to refer to data sets that are too large or complex for traditional data-processing application software to adequately deal with.

"We should choose a definite target for

## Application to introduce Iranian-made products

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research plans to launch an application through which all the homegrown products are registered and available for the users.

Named "Iransakht", which literally means "made in Iran", users in different cities can search for products and check for their availability.

The application, which will be available for iOS and android systems, introduces local products of each region of Iran.

One of the main problems in the domestic market is the disconnection of universities from the industry sector, the developer Ali Abdi said, adding that the application



## Artificial intelligence is creeping up on us—literally



hospitalized after a robot at an Amazon fulfillment center accidentally punctured a can of bear repellent and enveloped workers in eye- and lung-searing fumes. Days earlier in California, an auto-piloted Tesla

drove an allegedly drunk, sleeping "driver" down a highway, right alongside more alert travelers no doubt alarmed by the scene in the next lane. (Highway patrol officers figured out on the spot how to stop the

making Tehran a smart city. For example, define the number of smart buildings we should have in Tehran in coming year," he explained.

He said that the municipality can encourage citizens for construction of smart buildings with offering discounts on property tax.

The infrastructures for making Tehran a smart city is being done by the ICT ministry and some agreements have already signed between the ministry and Tehran Municipality, he said.

He referred to smart applications, which can be made available by the liberation of data as an opportunity which can be taken advantage of by application developers.

So, citizens can benefit from services provided in a smart city, he said.

Tehran Municipality held Tehran Smart Week from December 5 to 11, which included Smart Tehran Congress on December 10 and 11 as well as several workshops and meetings during the week.

Smart city road map, innovation ecosystem in smart cities, smart governance and digital transformation were amongst the themes of the congress.

can provide a way to connect these two.

"Promoting homegrown products can solve many economic problems we have already deal with," he said.

In many cases people are unaware of products, which are available with Iranian brands in the market, he said.

The application will provide separate panels for each Iranian city in which, products available at the place are introduced to the users, he said.

He said that the prices will be also available at the application and the users can benefit from discount provided by the producers.

The application will be unveiled in Khorasan Razavi province in February 2019, he concluded.

automated car.)

Of course, industrial accidents and drunk drivers existed well before AI. Tools with the power to alleviate the burden of physical labor—horses, threshing machines, self-driving cars—also come with the power to injure. And the presence of AI-powered machines just steps away from us is, for now, still a rarity for most people.

But the incremental nature of robots' creep into our daily lives will make it harder to recognize—or object to—the bigger changes they bring later. Walmart insists that the robot janitors will give employees more time for customer service and other tasks. Critics point out that they could just as easily become an excuse to reduce staff and wages. And if customers get used to ignoring robot workers, they may be even less cognizant of the needs of the human ones.

(Source: msn.com)

## Electronic health records often have mistakes — and they can be hard to fix

Mistakes can be harmful or even fatal if they lead to a misdiagnosis, a failure to recognize an allergy or a

Morgan Gleason has had a lot more experience with the health-care system than most college students. Nine years ago, she was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease called Juvenile Dermatomyositis, which causes symptoms like weak muscles and skin rashes.

Like many patients with a chronic illness, Gleason sees a lot of doctors. So she and her mother, Amy, who works at a health IT company called CareSync, always make it a point to request her medical records after a visit so they can store a copy of all her records in one place.

Two years ago, Gleason requested her records after visiting a women's health clinic in Florida. To her surprise, she found a note in the record saying she'd had two children. One was apparently still living and the other had died shortly after she gave birth.

According to the chart, which she provided to CNBC, Gleason would had to have given birth to the first child at age 13 for the dates to line up.

In fact, Gleason had never been pregnant.

It wasn't the first mistake. In a different record, Gleason had spotted a diagnosis of diabetes shouldn't have been there. She had looked into it after a doctor had gone off script by peppering her with questions about her blood sugar.

Gleason's case might seem extreme, but it is far from unusual.

Ross Koppel, a leading academic in the world of health IT, estimates that about 70 percent of records have wrong information.

"There are millions of records out there and screw-ups happen," he said.

Most errors are irrelevant to health outcomes — for instance, a record might state that a patient hurt her finger on Thursday, when it was in fact, Friday.

But mistakes can be harmful or even fatal if they lead to a misdiagnosis, a failure to recognize an allergy or a wrong dose of a medication. A Johns Hopkins study found that more than 250,000 people in the U.S. die every year from medical mistakes, making it the third-leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer. Other studies have found the numbers to be higher than 400,000.

After she discovered the mistake, Gleason called the doctor's office and informed them that she did not have any children.

But instead of fixing it, the assistant on the other end of the line insisted that Gleason was wrong. "If you hadn't told us this, there's no way this could have been in your chart," Gleason was told. She ended up having to file a formal document requesting a correction of her record, before any changes were made.

I've experienced how errors happen first hand. tldr; ER by policy turns your current medication list into secondary diagnosis codes. Doesn't matter that you didn't go to ER for that, or that they could pick the wrong diagnosis (i.e., drug treats multiple things).

Koppel, a sociologist and bio-informaticist at the University of Pennsylvania and Penn Medical School, was not surprised that Gleason had such a hard time getting the correction. Doctors don't like to admit wrongdoing for fear of being sued, he explained, but there's also an institutionalized distrust of patients. Some patients do lie or hide certain embarrassing facts.

That needs to change, suggests Koppel, because doctors are human. It's easy to imagine how mistakes might happen if a busy resident has multiple records open on a laptop, and they're using copy and paste. In other instances, they might simply mistype or mishear something: A common example of that is "hypo" versus "hyper."

There are also cases of mistaken identity. In the United



States, unlike in other developed nations, such as the United Kingdom and many of the Nordic countries, there's no unique patient identifier number linked to a single centralized record. That makes it a challenge for doctors to ensure that they've pulled up the record of the right patient if they happen to have a common name.

To rectify that, Koppel always encourages nurses and doctors to take photos of their patients and clip them to the record so they can at least ensure that they're talking to the right person.

Gleason is extremely concerned that these errors will continue to follow her, given the broad array of medical record vendors. It's already been hours of work for her to try to fix them across multiple systems.

For that reason, she has a few words of caution for new technology players like Amazon and Apple as they get deeper into health care with a particular focus on medical records.

"I hope that companies in tech don't start looking at the text in physician notes and making determinations without a human or someone who knows my medical history very well," she said. "I'm worried about more errors."

(Source: nbcnews.com)

## Nearly 40 percent of tech workers believe they're depressed

Some 38.78 percent of the 10,081 tech workers recently surveyed by the anonymous business social network Blind said they believe they believe they are depressed. Amazon had the highest rate of employee depression, followed by Microsoft and Intel.

Do you work in tech and battle depression? You're far from alone.

A new survey from anonymous business social network Blind asked its community of

tech employees to answer "true" or "false" to the following statement: "I believe I am depressed." Nearly 40 percent of tech workers answered in the affirmative.

"Users on Blind talk anonymously about burnout, high stress levels, insomnia, overworking, and irregular work hours," Blind wrote. "These are all characteristics that have [been] shown to increase a person's chance of developing depression."

The survey results follows recent research from job site Glassdoor indicating that employee satisfaction at Facebook has taken a big hit in the last year. Ranked number one last year, the social network is now the seventh best place to work, according to Glassdoor.

According to the World Health Organization, depression is "characterized by persistent sadness and loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inabil-

ity to carry out daily activities for at least two weeks." If you believe you are depressed, the organization recommends talking to someone you trust about your feelings and seeking the help of a local health-care professional or doctor. If you feel suicidal, immediately contact someone for help. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-273-8255.

(Source: pcmag.com)



# A dangerous chemical change is happening in our freshwater supply: new study

Human activity has shifted the chemical composition of our waterways. Now, it's beginning to corrode our freshwater supply.

A new study has confirmed that in the last 25 years, at least a third of the rivers and streams in the United States have gotten saltier. If nothing is done to curb this trend, the results suggest that more than half of these waterways could contain at least 50 percent more salt than they used to by 2100.

The findings are a major reality check. This extreme level of salt pollution would likely pose a serious threat to freshwater resources, urban infrastructure, and natural ecosystems across the nation.

Not only that, but it would also impact the agricultural industry, doubling the number of streams that are too salty for irrigation, from three to six percent.

Unsurprisingly, the study found several human activities to blame, including the use of fertilizers and de-icing salts, as well as land clearing, fossil fuel extraction, irrigation and even climate change.

Climate changes

"Most of the change is related to increases in human land use, with climate change accounting for only 12 percent of the increase," the authors conclude.

A study published earlier this year also found that acid rain, caused by human air pollution, can dissolve materials that hold salt, thus contributing to the problem as well.

Whether direct or indirect, in the U.S., salt pollution is not federally regulated, and state controls can be inconsistent. In



certain areas of the country, where pollution is especially bad, some freshwater streams were found to be nearly half as salty as the ocean itself.

"Today, the saltiest streams are in the northern Great Plains," lead author John Olson, a freshwater scientist at the University

of California, Monterey Bay, told PBS.

"Salinity is naturally high, and mining and oil and gas extraction are releasing more salt by exposing new rock and pumping out saline groundwater."

The effects of salinity are widespread and damaging. When salts, such as sodium

bicarbonate and magnesium chloride, make their way into our waterways, it can cause a domino effect, releasing toxic metals from the river soil into the stream itself.

It also makes the water less acidic and more basic. These slight changes may not seem like much, but they can be extremely disruptive to delicate freshwater ecosystems, potentially causing several species to die off, including insects.

Plus, it is also expensive for public health. In Flint, Michigan, the excessively salty river water even started a public health crisis that was reported the world over.

Chemical treatments

When this city began taking water from the Flint River, the water's high salt content along with chemical treatments corroded the city's plumbing system, releasing toxic lead into the pipes.

The consequences of salt pollution stretch right around the world, including Australia and Europe, where bodies of freshwater are becoming increasingly salty, causing severe economic and public health problems.

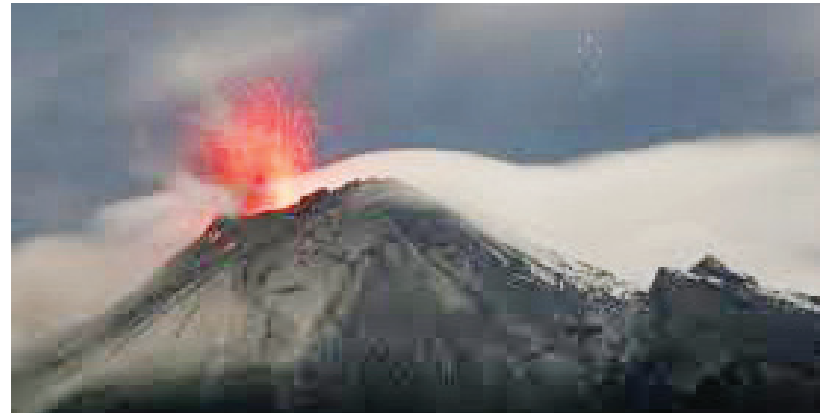
The new study goes a long way towards understanding the effect that human activity can have on our freshwater supplies - a problem that has only recently been identified and is still poorly understood.

The "predictions of increasing salinization of streams and rivers highlight the need for effective management and regulation to ensure we protect water resources and freshwater ecosystems," the authors conclude in the study.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

A study published earlier this year also found that acid rain, caused by human air pollution, can dissolve materials that hold salt, thus contributing to the problem as well.

## Scientists brew lava and blow it up to better understand volcanoes



What happens when lava and water meet? Explosive experiments with manmade lava are helping to answer this important question.

By cooking up 10-gallon batches of molten rock and injecting them with water, scientists are shedding light on the basic physics of lava-water interactions, which are common in nature but poorly understood.

The research shows that lava-water encounters can sometimes generate spontaneous explosions when there is at least about a foot of molten rock above the mixing point. In prior, smaller-scale studies that used about a coffee cup's worth of lava, scientists in Germany found that they needed to apply an independent stimulus -- in essence pricking the water within the lava -- to trigger a blast.

The results reported in JGR: Solid Earth also point to some preliminary trends, showing that in a series of tests, larger, more brilliant reactions tended to occur when water rushed in more quickly and when lava was held in taller containers.

The team ran a total of 12 experiments in which water injection speeds ranged from about 6 to 30 feet per second, and in which lava was held in insulated steel boxes that ranged in height from about 8 to 18 inches.

Powerful forces

"If you think about a volcanic eruption, there are powerful forces at work, and it's not a gentle thing," says lead investigator Ingo Sonder, Ph.D., research scientist in the Center for Geohazards Studies at UB. "Our experiments are looking at the basic physics of what happens when water gets trapped inside molten rock."

Sonder discussed the findings in a press conference at the 2018 AGU Fall Meeting on December 10. Eastern Time in room Shaw/LeDroit Park on level M3 of the Marriott Marquis hotel, 901 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20001.

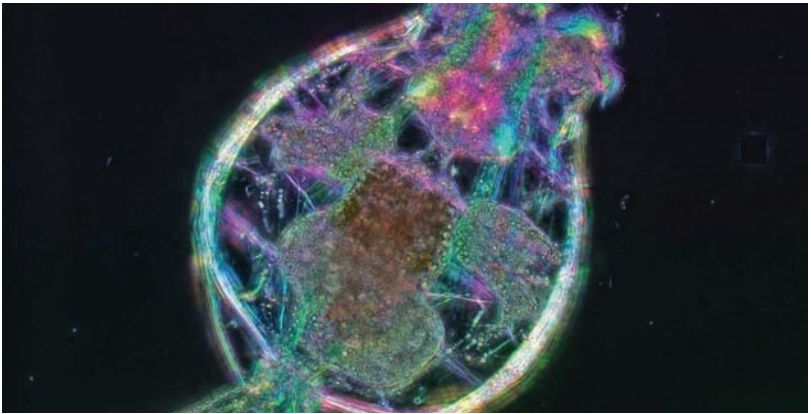
This press conference will also be streamed live on the AGU press events webpage and a recording of the press conference will be archived on AGU's YouTube channel.

Reporters interested in streaming the press conference and participating remotely should go to the Webstreaming page on the 2018 Fall Meeting Media Center website.

In nature, the presence of water can make volcanic activity more dangerous, such as during past eruptions of Hawaii's Kilauea and Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull. But in other cases, the reaction between the two materials is subdued.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

## Lifespan extension at low temperatures is genetically controlled, study suggests



Why do we age? Despite more than a century of research (and a vast industry of youth-promising products), what causes our cells and organs to deteriorate with age is still unknown.

One known factor is temperature: Many animal species live longer at lower temperature than they do at higher temperatures. As a result, "there are people out there who believe, strongly, that if you take a cold shower every day it will extend your lifespan," says Kristin Gribble, a scientist at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL).

But a new study from Gribble's lab indicates that it's not just a matter of turning down the thermostat. Rather, the extent to which temperature affects lifespan depends on an individual's genes.

Gribble's study, published in Experimental Gerontology, was conducted in the rotifer, a tiny animal that has been used in aging research for more than 100 years.

Strains of rotifers

Gribble's team exposed 11 genetically distinct strains of rotifers (Brachionus) to low temperature, with the hypothesis that if the mechanism of lifespan extension is purely a thermodynamic response, all strains should have a similar lifespan

increase.

However, the median lifespan increase ranged from 6 percent to 100 percent across the strains, they found. They also observed differences in mortality rate.

Gribble's study clarifies the role of temperature in the free-radical theory of aging, which has dominated the field since the 1950s. This theory proposes that animals age due to the accumulation of cellular damage from reactive oxidative species (ROS), a form of oxygen that is generated by normal metabolic processes.

"Generally, it was thought that if an organism is exposed to lower temperature, it passively lowers their metabolic rate and that slows the release of ROS, which slows down cellular damage. That, in turn, delays aging and extends lifespan," Gribble says.

Her results, however, indicate that the change in lifespan under low temperature is likely actively controlled by specific genes. "This means we really need to pay more attention to genetic variability in thinking about responses to aging therapies," she says. "That is going to be really important when we try to move some of these therapies into humans."

(Source: phys.org)

## Effects of antidepressants span three generations in fish, researchers suggest

The effects of antidepressant exposure during early development can pass down through three generations of offspring -- at least in zebrafish.

A new study, published on December 10 in PNAS, reveals that fluoxetine, a commonly used antidepressant that goes by the brand name Prozac, can alter hormone levels and blunt stress responses in an exposed embryo and its descendants.

The "paper is very intriguing," says Tim Oberlander, a developmental pediatrician at the British Columbia Children's Hospital who was not involved in this work.

The question of whether these medications have a trans-generational effect is a "really important one that requires further study in other animal models, and ultimately, when we have the data, we need to figure out whether it's also true in humans."

Fluoxetine is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), a class of drugs widely used to treat depression as well as other conditions such as obsessive-compulsive disorder and anxiety disorders.

Increasing antidepressant use

Recent data from the U.S. National Health and Nutrition Survey show increasing antidepressant use, from approximately 7.7 percent of the population in 1999-2002 to 12.7 percent from 2011-2014.

SSRIs are often prescribed as the first-line treatment for pregnant women with depression, and prior studies in humans suggest infants exposed to SSRIs while in the womb may experience developmental disturbances such as delayed motor development and increased levels of anxiety later in childhood.



Oberlander, whose research is focused on the influence of prenatal exposure to these medications, notes that it has been unclear whether those correlations represent a direct result of the drugs or if other factors, such as a genetic propensity for those outcomes or growing up with a parent with a mood disorder, may also play a part.

The hints that SSRIs taken by pregnant mothers may affect their children, as well as evidence from animal studies that chemicals such as certain fungicides could cause behavioral

disruptions in subsequent generations of offspring, spurred Vance Trudeau, a neuroendocrinologist at the University of Ottawa, and his colleagues to address the question of whether an antidepressant may affect an animal's descendants.

The researchers exposed embryos of zebrafish (Danio rerio) to fluoxetine for six days, then investigated the physiology and behavior of those fish and three subsequent generations of their offspring.

A stressful event

In zebrafish, levels of the hormone cortisol normally increase in response to a stressful event, such as when they're handled in a net. But the researchers observed that fish exposed to fluoxetine -- at concentrations within the range found in umbilical cord blood -- as embryos had blunted levels of cortisol, both during rest and in the presence of a stressor.

The animals also didn't explore their environments as much their unexposed peers. These kinds of "exploratory behaviors," Trudeau says, are important for survival strategies such as escaping from predators and finding food.

Examining several generations of the fish, the scientists revealed that the cortisol effects persisted through the exposed animals' offspring, grand-offspring, and great-grand-offspring -- but the behavioral disruptions only continued across two. "What we think is happening is that by generation three, the fish are already adapting to new low cortisol levels," says coauthor Marilyn Vera-Chang, a biologist who completed her doctoral studies under the co-supervision of Trudeau and Thomas Moon, a retired professor of comparative physiology at the University of Ottawa.

(Source: the-scientist.com)

## MIT's 'sun in a box' could solve our energy storage woes

The push toward renewable energy is essential to fight climate change, but it's also a vital part of planning for future power needs. As the world needs more energy, we can't let all this free solar power just bounce off the planet. Even if we develop more efficient solar panels, how do we store that power? Battery technology has lagged for years, but a team from MIT and the Georgia Institute of Technology may have the answer. They call it a "sun in a box."

The most efficient and widely used batteries we currently have use lithium-ion technology to store energy. Even the best batteries degrade over time, lose power to heat, and lack the kind of energy density we would need for powering the grid. The device detailed in the new study serves the same purpose as a battery, but it's not one.

The sun box is an insulated graphite silo containing a slug of white-hot molten silicon.

According to the researchers, this sun in a box could store excess electricity for long periods as heat. So, you would use solar panels to power the grid, but the panels stop generating power when the sun goes down. However, you just need to make sure there are enough panels to produce excess power during the day. That power gets funneled into the sun box to heat up the silicon core.

When the grid needs power at night, a multijunction photovoltaic system inside the silo captures light from the glowing silicone to convert it back into electricity. The system would work the same with wind power -- you're just heating up the silicon with power from a different source.

Based on initial small-scale testing, the team estimates a single TEGS-MPV storage tank could store enough power to supply 100,000 homes overnight in combination with solar panels or wind farms. That's a lot of homes that can run on clean, renewable energy 24 hours a day.

(Source: extremetech.com)

## Study reveals misleading claims on eco-friendly practices

Deforestation rates have increased in the past decade amid the sustainability classification of major palm oil forests. Researchers urged the stakeholders to consider other alternatives to mitigate its negative effects on environment and people.

Palm oil production is far from being sustainable, experts say, even in forests where harvest practices are classified as destruction-free. A new study published in the journal Science of the Total Environment found that forest loss in major oil palm-producing countries have been greater in the past decade even in areas labeled as sustainable.

Researchers from Purdue University and Tomsk State University in Russia reported that Indonesia, Malaysia, and Papua New Guinea have lost approximately 31 million hectares of forest from 2001 to 2016.

Interestingly, the rate of deforestation is higher in sustainable forest than in those with no eco-friendly conditions at 38 percent and 34 percent respectively.

"Our research shows quite unequivocally that, unfortunately, there is no way to produce sustainable palm oil that did not come from deforestation, and that the claims by corporations, certification schemes and non-government organizations are simply 'greenwashing,'" the lead author and research associate at the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources in Purdue Roberto Cazzolla Gatti said in an exclusive interview.

Global demand for palm oil has dramatically increased from 37 million metric tons in 2006 to 64.2 million in 2016. Palm oil is used in a variety of commercial and household purposes, including detergents, cooking, cosmetics, and food products.

Conservation is one of the chief complaints received by the RSPO, as well as issues on free, prior, and informed consent from the indigenous people. The same report noted that palm oil production is beneficial for West African countries especially that about 60 to 70 percent of the industry are represented by small-scale farmers.

(Source: Tech Times)

## Water found on asteroid, confirming Benu as excellent mission target, team says

Spectral observations made by the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft identified hydrated minerals across the asteroid, confirming that Benu, a remnant from early in the formation of the Solar System, is an excellent specimen for the OSIRIS-REx mission to study the composition of primitive volatiles and organics.

From August through early December, the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft aimed three of its science instruments toward Benu and began making the mission's first observations of the asteroid. During this period, the spacecraft traveled the last 1.4 million miles (2.2 million km) of its outbound journey to arrive at a spot 12 miles (19 km) from Benu on Dec. 3. The science obtained from these initial observations confirmed many of the mission team's ground-based observations of Benu and revealed several new surprises.

Team members of the mission, which is led by the University of Arizona, presented the results at the Annual Fall Meeting of the American Geophysical Union, or AGU, in Washington, D.C. on Dec. 10.

In a key finding for the mission's science investigation, data obtained from the spacecraft's two spectrometers, the OSIRIS-REx Visible and Infrared Spectrometer (OVIRS) and the OSIRIS-REx Thermal Emissions Spectrometer (OTES), reveal the presence of molecules that contain oxygen and hydrogen atoms bonded together, known as "hydroxyls." The team suspects that these hydroxyl groups exist globally across the asteroid in water-bearing clay minerals, meaning that at some point, the rocky material interacted with water. While Benu itself is too small to have ever hosted liquid water, the finding does indicate that liquid water was present at some time on Benu's parent body, a much larger asteroid.

"This finding may provide an important link between what we think happened in space with asteroids like Benu and what we see in the meteorites that scientists study in the lab," said Ellen Howell, senior research scientist at the UA's Lunar and Planetary Laboratory (LPL) and a member of the mission's spectral analysis group.

(Source: sciencedaily.com)



## Yalda night celebration held for child laborers

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — A symbolic ceremony for the working children in District 19 of Tehran was held on Tuesday to celebrate Yalda night, the longest night of the year which takes place on December 21.

Yalda Night is annually celebrated on the last day of Azar (the last month of autumn in the Iranian calendar year) and before the first day of Dey (the first month of winter) nationwide.

Nationally called “Shab-e Yalda” or “Shab-e-Chelleh”, it literally means the night of the forty, which refers to the first forty days of winter that are often the coldest and toughest to bear.

While on the most memorable night of the year, the entire families gather together to bear the winter chill with love, celebration and masses of red pomegranates, watermelon, and dried nuts overflowing on a big round korsī-low table, many children are working tough times with their minds obsessed with the question how to overcome the coldest days of the year.

The event aiming at making financially struggling children delightful was held by the help of philanthropists who tried to warm the hearts of many child laborers, Mehr quoted Saeed Ranjbarian, head of Mehr cultural center affiliated to the Municipality of Tehran, as saying.

“Some special ancient Persian programs have been performed during the event, such as, Shahnameh reading, happy musical shows, storytelling and traditional and local games for children and their families,” he further explained.

On the sidelines of the event, the symbolic ceremony of the Yalda night was held with the children’s families around korsī (a traditional item with a heater underneath it, and blankets thrown over it), and after recite Hafiz poetries, gifts have been granted to the children as memorials, he concluded.

## Govt. allots \$240m to mitigate water shortage

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s government has allocated some 10.02 trillion rials (nearly \$240 million) to reduce water shortage nationwide, Ismail Najjar, head of the National Disaster Management Organization has said.

The amount is allocated to the Energy Ministry for taking necessary measures to tackle the issue, YJC quoted Najjar as saying on Monday.

Climate change is actually happening in Iran, and with climate change, depletion of water resources, drought spells, low precipitations, changes in precipitation, temperature rise, desertification, and land subsidence also occur, he concluded.

## Studies on launching Iran’s first tram started

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — An appraisal study on the country’s first tram, to be established in the northern city of Rasht, has been started, an official with the municipalities and village administrations has announced.

“The research project has been started since past few months, which, according to preliminary information, will cost about 250 million euros,” ISNA quoted Hossein Rajab-Salahi as saying on Tuesday.

The lines operated by tramcars (tramways), which are under studies in Rasht county stretches to 16 kilometers, will highly reduce the traffic congestion, he added.

Under the law of support for the rail transport system, the government provides the cities with 50 percent of metro costs, he stated, adding, accordingly, it was suggested to the municipality of Rasht to pursue the provision of tramcars through legal and governmental funding, in order to be able to implement the project as soon as possible.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Job Interview

A: Okay, so let’s go over everything one more time. I really want you to get this job!

B: I know! It’s an amazing growth opportunity! They’re true industry leaders, and it would be so interesting to be part of an organization that is the **undisputed** leader in business process platform development.

A: So, let’s see, you did your research on the company, right?

B: Well, I visited their website and **read up** on what they do. They’re an IT service company that offers comprehensive business solutions for large corporations. They provide services such as **CRM** development, and they also offer **custom** designed applications.

A: So what would your role in the company?

B: Well, the position is for an account manager. That basically means that I would be the link between our customers and our development team.

A: Sounds good, and so, why do you want to work with them?

B: Well, as I said they’re the **industry leaders**, they have a really great **growth strategy**, amazing development opportunities for employees, and it seems like they have strong corporate governance. They’re all about helping companies grow and **unleashing** potential. I guess their **core values** and mission really **resonated** with me. Oh, and they offer six weeks’ vacation, stock options and bonuses... I’m totally going to cash in on that.

A: You, idiot! Don’t say that! Do you want this job, or not?

■ **Key vocabulary**

**undisputed:** definitely true, not doubted

**read up:** read to gain the most recent information on a subject

**CRM:** processes, services, technology, and people used to attract and keep customers

**custom:** specially made to fit the needs of a person or organization

**industry leader:** being the best in that particular field or industry

**growth strategy:** chance to gain new skills

**unleash:** release; allow something to happen

**core values:** most important beliefs

**resonate:** have a special meaning or importance for someone

■ **Supplementary vocabulary**

**integrated solutions:** combine things to find a plan or a way to deal with a problem (esp. in business)

**competitive advantage:** something that places a company above the competition

**optimize:** make something as effective as possible

**align:** join a group in supporting something

**platform:** a program that tells a computer how to work

# International Mountain Day: Mountains are vital for our lives

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Almost one billion people live in

mountain areas, and over half the human population depends on mountains for water, food and clean energy. However, according to the United Nations, mountains are under threat from climate change, land degradation, over exploitation and natural disasters, with potentially far-reaching and devastating consequences, both for mountain communities and the rest of the world.

Mountains are early indicators of climate change and as global climate continues to warm, mountain people — some of the world’s hungriest and poorest — face even greater struggles to survive. The rising temperatures also mean that mountain glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates, affecting freshwater supplies downstream for millions of people. Mountain communities, however, have a wealth of knowledge and strategies accumulated over generations, on how to adapt to climate variability.

Climate change, climate variability and climate-induced disasters, combined with political, economic and social marginalization, increase the vulnerability of mountain peoples to food shortages and extreme poverty. Currently, 1 in 3 people in developing countries is estimated to be vulnerable to food insecurity.

As the vulnerability of mountain populations grows, migration increases both abroad and to urban centers. Those who remain are often women, left to manage the farms but with little access to credit, training and land tenure rights. Out-migration from mountain areas will also result in an inestimable loss in terms of provision of ecosystem services and preservation of cultural and agro-biodiversity. Investments and policies can alleviate the harsh living conditions of mountain communities and reverse out-migration trends from mountain areas.



## Mount Damavand, an inactive volcano and the highest peak in the Middle East, is now being threatened by land use change and mining activities as well as waste.

■ **Iran’s Mount Damavand a victim of waste**

According to a report by Fars news agency published on Tuesday on average every week some 1 ton of waste is collected from the southern part of the area as mountain climbers dump their waste in the region.

Abbas Mohammadi a member of Alpine Club of Iran told Fars news agency that climbing mount Damavand should be regulated.

The waste strew around in the area will result in soil erosion, Mohammadi regretted.

Mount Damavand, an inactive volcano and the highest peak in the Middle East, is now being threatened by land use change

and mining activities as well as waste.

The mountain’s environment is pretty vulnerable up to an elevation of 4,000 meters while the protected areas stretch from the elevation of 4,200 meters to the peak and unfortunately most human activities that endanger the environment, such as overgrazing, land use change, and mining activities normally occur at lower elevation.

Mount Damavand is the highest elevation about 5,628 meters. It is an inactive volcanic mountain which was activated in Quaternary Period. It has numerous thermal springs. The peak of Damavand covers permanently snow during the entire year. The most important

thermal springs are Ask and Larijan. The flora and fauna is very rich and include about 2000 plant species. There are numerous endemic species which are important to flora of world.

■ **International Mountain Day 2018 theme: “#MountainsMatter”**

Even though they are mentioned in the 2030 Agenda, mountains are still often forgotten. Considering the crucial role they play in providing key ecosystem goods and services to the planet and their vulnerability in the face of climate change, we need to step up and raise attention to mountains.

Water as mountains are the world’s ‘water towers’, providing between 60 and 80 percent of all freshwater resources for our planet.

Disaster Risk Reduction as climatic variations are triggering disasters.

Tourism as mountain destinations attract around 15-20 percent of global tourism and are areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage.

Food as they are important centers of agricultural biodiversity and are home to many of the foods that come to our table, such as rice, potatoes, quinoa, tomatoes and barley.

Youth as despite the beautiful landscapes, life in the mountains can be tough, particularly for rural youth.

Indigenous Peoples as many mountain areas host ancient indigenous communities that possess and maintain precious knowledge, traditions and languages.

Biodiversity as half of the world’s biodiversity hotspots are concentrated in mountains and mountains support approximately one-quarter of terrestrial biological diversity

International Mountain Day 2018 celebrated on December 11 is an occasion to create a large social movement that can bring mountain issues on the tables of politicians. Through a global campaign, a social media strategy and events around the world, FAO plans to tell the world that the current neglect of mountains and mountain peoples must stop.

## Care center inaugurated for orphaned, abandoned girls



**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — A center

offering fulltime care and services to orphaned or abandoned girls has been inaugurated in Damghan, north-central Semnan province.

The establishment of the center provide orphaned or abandoned girls with [good] living conditions, Mehr quoted Habibollah Masoudi-Farid, deputy director of the Welfare Organization as saying on Monday.

Constructed by a philanthropist, the center is a 2-storey building, measuring 1,200 square meters. It hosts some 40 girls.

While a significant number of breadwinner women and their children are covered by the Organization, their population is larger in deprived rural areas

and villages, he regretted.

As provision of services to children without caretakers and those who are kept at these centers is among the Welfare Organization’s objectives, such centers receive subsidy from the Organization, he added.

Referring to the Organization’s plan to develop such centers across the country, he noted that since the past few years, with the participation of the philanthropists, steps have been taken towards the development of centers providing care services to the underprivileged.

The Welfare Organization had always cooperated well in this regard, issuing the necessary permits and licenses, he concluded.

## Amirkabir university, NODET to expand scientific co-op



**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Amirkabir

University of Technology and the National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents (NODET) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance scientific and research cooperation for the next three years, IRNA reported.

Fatemeh Mohajerani, head of NODET, and Ahmad Motamedi, the university’s chancellor, inked the MOU during a meeting held on Tuesday.

Conducting applied research projects, establishing and equipping of required laboratories and workshops, supporting postgraduate theses in line with the needs of the two parties, holding short-term and long-term training courses on

improving the scientific capability of the organization’s experts and researchers, and carrying out feasibility studies on the Organization’s needs were among the subjects of the MOU, according to Mohajerani.

“Assessing the need for advanced technologies by the experts, sharing educational facilities such as laboratories, workshops and classes, holding visits and camps for students, organizing seminars and specialized courses, along with skill development courses are also among subjects of the MOU”.

Also, joint scientific journals and compilations will be published, and the results of research projects will be bilaterally monitored and reviewed, she concluded.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

## National document on disabled-accessible cities approved

A national document which assigns all responsible organizations related tasks on improving accessibility in cities for persons with disabilities, has been approved, an official with the Welfare Organization has said.

The national strategic document will be unveiled next month (September 23-October 22) by the head of the Welfare Organization, IRNA quoted Ebrahim Kazemi Momen Saraei as saying on Tuesday.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “-gen, -gene, -genic, -geny”

■ **Meaning:** produces or is produced

■ **For example:** Healthy soldiers were taken down with **phosgene** gas poisoning up to 48 hours after inhalation.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Live something down

■ **Meaning:** to never forget about something and never stop laughing at them for it

■ **For example:** Wilbur will never be able to live down what happened at the party last night.

### IDIOM

#### Cloud on the horizon

■ **Explanation:** a problem or difficulty that is predictable, or seems likely to arise in the future

■ **For example:** They are happily married and for the moment there appear to be no clouds on the horizon.

## سند ملی مناسب سازی محیط برای معلولان تصویب شد

رئیس دبیرخانه ستاد هماهنگی و پیگیری مناسب سازی سازمان بهزیستی کشور اظهار داشت: سند ملی راهبردی ستاد مناسب سازی کشور برای تصویب شد، در این سند وظایف تمام دستگاه ها در رابطه با مناسب سازی مشخص و شفاف شده است.

ابراهیم کاظمی مومن سرانی روز سه شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: سند ملی راهبردی مناسب سازی تا یک ماه آینده با حضور رئیس سازمان بهزیستی کشور رونمایی خواهد شد.



# ‘Black Tuesday’: French students hit the streets in protest again

➡ Up to 300 French high schools, known as lycées, were barricaded every day last week, amid scenes of vandalism, bins set on fire and violent clashes between police and students. The tense standoff made international headlines on Thursday when video footage posted on social media showed riot police in a Paris suburb forcing dozens of students to kneel down in rows, their hands on their heads.

On Monday, France's education ministry said the number of affected schools had fallen to 120, only a third of which were fully blocked. But with student unions calling for a “Black Tuesday” in lycées across the country on December 11, the relative calm could prove to be merely a lull before the storm.

## Hands off ‘le bac’

High-school students have been angered by President Macron's plans to change the end-of-school exam, known as the baccalaureate or ‘bac’, and replace the broad subject areas pupils currently choose from – science, literature or social sciences – with more specific courses. They demand the repeal of a reform, passed last year, which introduces stricter selection criteria for university.

Critics say the government's moves breed inequality between rich schools and poorer, peripheral ones. They also oppose plans for a national civic service for French youths, due to be rolled out in 2026.



“We will continue protesting until our demands are met,” Jules Spector, head of the FIDL union, told FRANCE 24. “The government has made no gestures towards us,” he added. “On the contrary, it is obvious they are waiting for the end of term to slow down our movement.”

## French student protests intensify against education overhauls

Worryingly for the Macron administration, there are tentative signs the unrest may also be spreading to universities, where students

are angry at the government's plans to hike fees for non-EU nationals in a bid to make French universities “more competitive”. The Sorbonne shut its main campus in central Paris in anticipation of possible protests, while students in Nanterre and Rennes-2 – traditionally two of France's most politicised universities – voted to blockade their facilities.

## ‘Children of the Yellow Vests’

A major source of concern for France's embattled government is the traditionally

erratic and volatile nature of student protests – a potentially incendiary element at a time when Yellow Vest demonstrations have already erupted into violence in the streets of Paris and other cities. On top of their own demands, pupils in schools up and down the country have expressed solidarity with the Yellow Vest movement, which began as a protest against a tax-fuel hike but has mushroomed into a general revolt against stagnant wages and the high cost of living.

“If the student movement has taken hold it is in part thanks to the Yellow Vests,” said Robi Morder, head of the GERME centre for the study of student movements at Sciences-Po Paris, in an interview with FRANCE 24.

In both cases, Morder noted, the protesters come largely from peripheral areas and small towns that are starved of public services and jobs, and feel abandoned by Parisian elites. Behind the students' specific demands, “their discontent expresses a more deep-seated anxiety, about jobs in particular, and a fear of the future,” he added. “In this respect, [Education Minister] Jean-Michel Blanquer is wrong to claim there is no link between the students and the Yellow Vests. He does not understand that the students in the street are the children of the Yellow Vests.”

(Source: FRANCE 24)

# Australia subjected refugees to crimes against humanity, class actions allege

The Australian government subjected asylum seekers and refugees to torture, crimes against humanity and the intentional infliction of harm in operating its offshore processing system, two class actions launched on Monday will allege.

The parallel cases, led by Julian Burnside QC and comprising human rights lawyers from the National Justice Project, have been filed in the high court of Australia, representing all the remaining refugees and asylum seekers on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, and on Nauru.

Both groups, divided by place of detention, are seeking injunctions to stop the government's alleged breaches of duty of care, and to seek damages.

Their legal team will claim they have been subject to: Arbitrary imprisonment and other severe deprivation of physical liberty.

Denial of proper medical assessment and treatment. Inadequate security and protection. Inadequate food and water.

Inadequate accommodation and an unhygienic environment.

It is claimed this treatment inflicted severe mental and physical pain upon the asylum seekers and refugees.

The National Justice Project, led by the lawyer George Newhouse, said the Australian government was continuing to treat its clients in this manner “in order to deter other people from trying to get to Australia by boat in order to seek asylum”.

“Our clients are seeking to enforce their civil rights rather than criminal prosecution because a prosecution

for such acts under the commonwealth criminal code requires the approval of the attorney general,” it said.

There are more than 1,000 people still on Manus and Nauru, most of them found to have a legitimate claim for asylum and be granted refugee status.

Australia has held people in detention or alternative accommodation on Nauru and Manus Island for more than five years. Twelve people have died during that time, including from suicide, untreated medical conditions and murder.

While Australia often claims the respective host countries are in control of arrangements, memorandums of understanding note that Australia is in charge of contracting and operations, and all associated costs.

Crossbench MPs were unable to push through legislation before parliament ended on Thursday which would have allowed critically ill refugees and asylum seekers in the two offshore sites to be brought to Australia for medical care if two doctors agreed to it.

For several years both Manus and Nauru have been dogged by complaints and revelations of poor healthcare, and serious allegations and incidents of officials denying, delaying or blocking the transfers of people who doctors said required urgent medical care.

Dozens of cases have been brought to the Australian federal court by lawyers, seeking legal orders for urgent medical transfer. The Australian government agreed out of court to transfer some, but fought others, unsuccessfully, at a cost of \$480,000 in the first quarter of 2018-19 alone.

In September last year a judge approved \$70m in



compensation to current and former Manus Island asylum seekers and refugees – almost 2,000 individuals – over their illegal detention in dangerous conditions. It was Australia's largest human rights class action settlement.

In that case the Australian government settled in June rather than go through the expected six-month trial.

At the time the former Prime Minister Tony Abbott called the compensation decision “a windfall for people who unfairly took advantage of our nation's generosity”.

A separate case before PNG's Supreme Court, also seeking compensation as well as travel documents for more than 730 refugees living in PNG, was dismissed on a technicality in October.

(Source: The Guardian)

# Indian ruling party facing biggest election loss

India's ruling party could lose power in three key states, four TV networks said on Tuesday, citing vote count leads, potentially handing Prime Minister Narendra Modi his biggest defeat since he took office in 2014, and months ahead of a general election.

The main opposition Congress party could form governments in the central states of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, and in the western state of Rajasthan, all big heartland states that powered Modi to a landslide win in the 2014 general election.

Analysts say a big loss for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party would signify rural dismay and help unite the opposition, despite his high personal popularity in the face of criticism

that he did not deliver on promises of jobs for young people and better conditions for farmers.

The elections are also a test for Rahul Gandhi, president of the left-of-center Congress, who is trying to forge a broad alliance with regional groups and face Modi with his most serious challenge yet, in the election that must be held by May.

In Rajasthan, the Congress was leading in 114 of the 199 seats contested, against 81 for the BJP, in the initial round of voting, India Today TV said.

In Chhattisgarh, the Congress was ahead in 59 of the 90 seats at stake, with the BJP at 24. In Madhya Pradesh, the most important of the five states that held assembly elections

over the past few weeks, Congress was ahead, with 112 of 230 seats. The Hindu nationalist BJP was at 103, the network said.

Three other TV channels also said Congress was leading in the three states, with regional parties leading in two smaller states that also voted, Telangana in the south and Mizoram in the northeast.

Poll analysts cautioned that with the counting in preliminary stages, it was still too early to predict the outcome of state races involving millions of voters.

Local issues usually dominate state polls, but politicians are seeing the elections as a pointer to the national vote just months away.

Indian markets recovered some ground

after an early fall as the central bank governor's unexpected resignation the previous day shocked investors.

Gandhi, the fourth generation scion of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, has sought to build a coalition of regional groups, some headed by experienced firebrand, ambitious politicians.

Congress has already said it would not name Gandhi, who is seen as lacking experience, as a prime ministerial candidate.

“When one and one become eleven, even the mighty can be dethroned,” opposition leader Akhilesh Yadav said of the prospect of growing opposition unity.

(Source: Reuters)

# Decision to assassinate Arafat approved by Saudis: former senior advisor

A former senior adviser to Yasser Arafat, the late leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), has said that Arafat's death was not natural and he was actually assassinated, with the House of Saud regime approving the decision to assassinate him.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with Palestine's Arabic-language Shehab news agency, Bassam Abu Sharif said former United States President, George W. Bush, had contacted Saudi regime officials after a meeting with former Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, during which Arafat's liquidation was discussed, and Saudi authorities consented.

Abu Sharif went on to say that Riyadh approved of Arafat's assassination, because it viewed him as an obstacle to the Arab Peace Initiative, which envisioned a so-called two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“Sharon met with Bush at the White House and told him that he could no longer keep his promise of not physically attacking Yasser Arafat, because he was a leading terror figure and collaborating with Hamas, and that Hamas operations were carried out with the approval and blessing of Arafat,” the senior member of the PLO pointed out.

Abu Sharif highlighted that Bush contacted Saudi officials the following day and informed them of the matter, and the House of Saud regime agreed to the decision to assassinate Arafat.



The late Palestinian leader's adviser noted that his new book, titled Salty Fish, contains many secrets about the assassination of Arafat; Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the former leader of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in 2004; as well as senior Hamas figure, Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, who was found dead in his hotel room in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), back in 2010.

Arafat, who led an armed struggle against Israel in the late 1960s, died of unknown causes at a hospital near the French capital, Paris, on November 11, 2004. He was 75.

In 2012, Arafat's widow, Suha, filed a legal complaint in France, claiming that her husband had been assassinated while staying at the Mercy military hospital

near Paris in 2004. He had been moved to the hospital the previous month for diarrhea and vomiting.

According to French doctors, he died of a massive stroke, although the origin of his illness was unknown.

Arafat's tomb in Ramallah was opened the same year, so that three teams of French, Swiss, and Russian investigators could collect samples for investigation.

A subsequent French investigation found no proof of poisoning. However, separate probes from Swiss and Russian experts found that Arafat had been poisoned to death with polonium.

Many Palestinians believe that Israel poisoned Arafat. However, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his longtime rival, Mohammed Dahlan, have both accused each other of complicity in Arafat's death in the past.

Certain Arab countries are reportedly pressuring the PLO chairman to allow Dahlan, who has been in exile in the United Arab Emirates, to return to the West Bank amid talk of who will succeed Abbas.

In May, the online news portal, Middle East Eye, said that Israel as well as the UAE, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia were planning to overthrow Abbas and replace him with Dahlan.

It quoted unidentified Palestinian and Jordanian sources as saying that the UAE had discussed the initiative with Israel.

(Source: Press TV)

# Afghanistan: Suicide bomber targets security convoy in Kabul

At least four people have been killed and another six injured after a suicide bomber targeted a convoy of security forces in the Afghan capital, Kabul, in the latest attack claimed by the Taliban terrorist outfit.



The blast took place in Paghman district in western Kabul early on Tuesday as the convoy was returning from an overnight operation, Interior Ministry Spokesman Najib Danish told AFP news agency.

“It is still not clear whether the attacker was on foot or driving a vehicle,” the spokesman said.

Another security official, who wished to remain anonymous, said the attacker had used a car bomb to target the convoy.

Attacks on Afghan forces by the Taliban have been inflicting record-high casualties on security personnel this year.

The early morning attack in Kabul came hours after an overnight assault by Taliban terrorists on a checkpoint in Arghistan, a district in southern Kandahar province. At least eight police officers were killed, according to the provincial media office.

An estimated 2,798 civilians have been killed and 5,252 others injured in attacks across the country from January to September this year, according to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Last month, President Ashraf Ghani said 28,529 Afghan security forces had been killed since the start of 2015, a figure far higher than anything previously acknowledged. That is an average of around 20 soldiers killed every day.

The surge in violence comes as the United States is pushing for a peaceful resolution of the 17-year-old conflict, while the Taliban has increasingly asserted control over vast tracts of the country.

The United States President Donald Trump's administration is holding direct talks with the Taliban, which was toppled following a U.S.-led invasion in 2001. Taliban officials have held three days of talks with the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad in Qatar, aimed at renewing the peace process.

Last month, President Ghani formed a 12-member team to hold peace talks with the Taliban as his government tries to bring peace ahead of next year's presidential elections.

(Source: agencies)

# ‘Appalling’ video shows NY police pulling baby from mother’s arms

A video showing the United States police officers violently yanking a toddler from his mother's arms at a Brooklyn food stamp office last week prompted outrage, with public officials expressing horror and clients of the facility complaining it is indicative of how the city treats social-services recipients.

A witness said a security officer confronted the woman, Jazmine Headley, who had sat on the floor of the crowded office for two hours because of a lack of chairs. Police were called when she refused to leave.

The woman ended up lying face-up on the floor during a tug of war over the child.

“The baby was screaming for his life,” Nyashia Ferguson, who posted a video on Facebook on Friday under the name Monae Sinclair, told The New York Times. “The lady was begging for them to get off of her. I was scared.”

Other customers in the city office shouted at the officers. At one point, an officer can be seen on the video pulling her stun gun and pointing it at people in the angry crowd.

Headley was charged with obstructing governmental administration, resisting arrest, endangering the welfare of a child and trespassing. As of Monday morning, she was still in jail because there was a warrant for her arrest in New Jersey, prosecutors said.

“We did not request any bail and Ms. Headley's hold is in connection with a warrant from New Jersey,” the Brooklyn prosecutor's office said on Twitter. “We are reaching out to authorities in that state to expedite her release.”

The New York Police Department is investigating. The Brooklyn public defender's office called on prosecutors to dismiss the charges, asking “why police were ever involved”.

“In our experience, people are often treated abysmally when seeking support from many of the city bureaucracies that are supposed to be helping them,” Lisa Schreiberdorf, executive director of Brooklyn Defender Services, said in a statement that echoed the complaints of public assistance clients.

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, a Democrat, likened the officers involved in Headley's arrest to “Border Patrol police snatching away” a baby. He called the arrest “a blemish on our entire city”.

The Brooklyn district attorney's office said it was independently investigating and “reviewing all available videos and interviewing witnesses with the intention of reaching a swift decision.”

The NYPD (New York Police Department), which called Friday's confrontation “troubling”, said security guards had “brought the woman to the floor” before officers arrested her as she resisted.

Ferguson disputed that, saying a police officer had forced the woman to the floor.

A court document said the toddler was just under 18 months old. A family member was taking care of the child, authorities said.

Democrat Letitia James, the city's public advocate and the state's attorney general-elect, said “being poor is not a crime,” in a statement. “No mother should have to experience the trauma and humiliation we all witnessed in this video.”

(Source: Al Jazeera)



## FC Zurich condemn fans over banana-throwing incident

Swiss club FC Zurich have condemned fans who threw a banana at rival player Aldo Kalulu when he went to take a corner during their league match at FC Basel on Sunday.

Zurich admitted the banana came from the part of the St Jakob Park stadium occupied by their supporters.

"In the early stages of (the match) against Basel, a banana was thrown out of FCZ's fan zone towards FCB player Aldo Kalulu when he went to take a corner," the club said in a statement. "The club strongly condemns this racist behaviour and does not tolerate it in any way. There is no room for xenophobia and discrimination in football.

"FCZ has always been committed to diversity and welcomes all people, regardless of their background or religion."

Kalulu, a Frenchman of Rwandan descent, was also pelted with cigarette lighters when he went to take the corner in the ninth minute of Basel's 2-0 win, media reports said. The 22-year-old joined Basel in June from Olympique Lyonnais.

The Swiss Football League has yet to comment on the incident. *(Source: Reuters)*

## River coach Gallardo vows to stay through 2021

River Plate coach Marcelo Gallardo has quashed speculation he may head to Europe next year by pledging to remain at Copa Libertadores winners River Plate at least until 2021.

After leading his side to their second Libertadores triumph in four seasons on Sunday, Gallardo said he was happy in Buenos Aires and had no plans to leave the Argentine club.

"We have a contract until 2021," Gallardo told a local radio station after River's 3-1 win over arch-rivals Boca Juniors in Madrid that gave them a 5-3 aggregate victory.

The final, played in Spain because of violence caused by River fans in Buenos Aires, was one of the most unforgettable moments in the club's history and Gallardo said his solid relationship with the club where he also spent many years as a player was another reason to stay put.

"That to me is priceless," he said. "I wake up every morning and I enjoy going to work."

"This win was one of the happiest moments because of all it represented and because of what it means to the fans. It's something that can never be erased."

River now head to the United Arab Emirates to take part in the Club World Cup, which kicks off on Dec. 12.

*(Source: Mirror)*

## Cristiano Ronaldo wrong to say Real Madrid are not humble - Solari

Real Madrid coach Santiago Solari has disputed Cristiano Ronaldo's claim that the club lacks humility.

Ronaldo told Gazzetta dello Sport this week that Juventus, the club he joined for €100 million in July from Real Madrid, is "more humble and more of a family than Madrid."

Asked about Ronaldo's comments, Solari said in Tuesday's news conference ahead of Madrid's Champions League home encounter against CSKA Moscow: "Humility is a virtue of the greats.

"That is why, and more so for its values, this club has won so much. Cristiano will be ours forever, he is a living history of Real Madrid. His feelings belong to him and no one can judge them."

The Portugal captain, who is ranked No. 2 among the world's forwards in the ESPN FC 100, was the one who decided to leave Los Blancos this summer after scoring 450 goals and winning 16 trophies, including three straight Champions League titles, in nine seasons at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

"I have a lot of respect for Cristiano," Real Madrid right-back Alvaro Odriozola added. "He has given a lot for this club but that is in the past. This is a family and what has most surprised me is the humility of all my teammates and the hunger and work done by everyone on a daily basis."

Madrid have taken 12 points of a possible 15 in La Liga to bounce back after their bad start to the season.

The Spanish giants have already qualified for the round of 16 of the Champions League as Group G leaders heading into Wednesday's game, and moved into the top four of La Liga at the weekend with a 1-0 win at Huesca.

*(Source: ESPN)*

## 'racism is everywhere' says Man City boss Guardiola

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola says "racism is everywhere" following the alleged racial abuse of his forward Raheem Sterling in a game at Chelsea.

A police investigation is under way into an incident involving Sterling during City's 2-0 Premier League loss at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

"Racism is everywhere, it's not just in football," said Guardiola on Tuesday.

"We have to fight to make a better future for everyone, not just in England but everywhere."

Chelsea say they are "fully supporting" an ongoing police investigation.

The Premier League club have suspended four people from attending matches while the investigation takes place.

A Chelsea statement said evidence of racist behaviour will result in "severe sanctions, including bans".

"Chelsea Football Club finds all forms of discriminatory behaviour abhorrent," the statement continued, adding that the club "will also fully support any criminal prosecutions".

Guardiola added: "I appreciate what Chelsea did and if it happened in my club we would do the same."

Social media users posted a video of an incident during which Sterling was shouted at as he collected the ball from behind the goal.

*(Source: BBC)*

# Chelsea ban fans over alleged racial abuse of Sterling



"We stand with him in calling for the press to consider the coverage of all footballers carefully, and to end their imbalanced coverage aimed at young, black players.

"We have been aware for a few months of the targeting Raheem faces in the press,

it is evident that he is often singled out and treated more harshly than his colleagues."

No arrests were made after Saturday's match but the Metropolitan Police said they would review footage to determine whether any racist abuse took place.

## Larry Nassar abuse report: USOC apologizes for failing to protect athletes



The United States Olympics Committee has apologised after a report found that it failed to protect athletes from being sexually abused by Larry Nassar.

Former USA Gymnastics team doctor Nassar was jailed for more than 300 years after abusing at least 265 women.

The report found: "While Nassar bears ultimate responsibility for his decades-long abuse of girls and young women, he did not operate in a vacuum.

"Instead, he acted within an ecosystem that facilitated his criminal acts."

USA Gymnastics filed for bankruptcy earlier this month so it can "expeditiously resolve" claims by athletes sexually abused by Nassar. The 233-page independent report into the scandal was commissioned by the USOC and involved more than 100 people being interviewed and a review of more than 1.3 million documents.

"Numerous institutions and individuals enabled his abuse and failed to stop him, including coaches at the club and elite level, trainers and medical professionals, administrators and coaches at Michigan State University (MSU), and officials at both United States of America Gymnastics (USAG) and the USOC," it said in the report.

"These institutions and individuals ignored red flags, failed to recognise textbook grooming behaviours, or in some egregious instances, dismissed clear calls for help from girls and young women who were being abused by Nassar. "Multiple law enforcement agencies, in turn, failed effectively to intervene when presented with opportunities to do so."

The report added: "Nassar found an environment in elite gymnastics and Olympic sports that proved to be conducive to his criminal designs."

According to the report, former USOC chief executive Scott Blackmun and USOC chief of sport performance Alan Ashley were informed of sexual abuse allegations against Nassar in July 2015 but did not share the information with others in the organisation. "The USOC took no action between July 2015 and the date the Indianapolis Star published its account of Nassar's child sexual abuse in September 2016," added the report.

"USAG's and the USOC's inaction and concealment had consequences: dozens of girls and young women were abused during the year-long period between the summer of 2015 and September 2016."

Blackmun resigned, citing health reasons, from the USOC in February 2018.

"The US Olympic community failed the victims, survivors and their families, and we apologise again to everyone who has been harmed," said Susanne Lyons, USOC independent board member and incoming board chair. "The USOC board commissioned this independent investigation because we knew we had an obligation to find out how this happened and to take important steps to prevent and detect abuse."

The USOC says it has already implemented a number of reforms and initiatives to protect athletes and "will share information about additional actions it is taking as a result of these findings".

*(Source: BBC)*

## La Liga remains hopeful of overseas games despite Barca setback



La Liga has pledged to persevere with a long-term strategy of taking games outside of Spain after immediate plans to play Barcelona's January match against Girona in Miami were derailed by the champions' decision to back out of the fixture.

Following a board meeting on Monday, Barcelona withdrew from the game "after seeing the lack of consensus surrounding the proposal", ending a protracted saga since La Liga applied to move the game from Catalonia to Florida in September.

The league's organising body accepted that the game, set to take place on Jan. 26, could not be played abroad but pledged to continue its legal battle with the Spanish football federation (RFEF), the most vocal opponent of the plan.

"We regret to disappoint our fans in the U.S. and will work to, in the shortest possible time, stage an official La Liga game in the U.S., just like the major American leagues stage games outside their borders," a La Liga statement said.

"La Liga will continue the planned action, so an official league game can be played outside of Spain. La Liga is convinced that the RFEF is not acting in accordance with the law."

The league also said Barca's withdrawal did not affect its 15-year agreement with entertainment firm Relevant to promote Spanish football in North America.

Last month, La Liga filed a lawsuit in

Anti-discrimination charity Kick It Out said last month that reports of discriminatory abuse within football were up 11 percent from last season.

"While it may be true that no racial slurs have been used in the press coverage received by Raheem and others, we are in no doubt that the negative narrative influences public opinion and emboldens racist rhetoric," the PFA added.

Former international John Barnes, who like Sterling played for England and Liverpool and faced racist abuse during his career, said the issue of discrimination went beyond the pitch.

"More often than not the media influences society... The only way we can change racism is if we change the perception of the average black person in the street and then you will have many more average black people being given what they deserve," the 55-year-old told the BBC.

"It's a very long-term process, we're talking about hundreds of years of indoctrination ensuring that there are certain groups of people who are more worthy than others." *(Source: Eurosport)*

# James wins final duel with Wade as Lakers roll on

LeBron James won the final instalment of his long rivalry with Dwyane Wade on Monday, scoring 28 points as the Los Angeles Lakers held on for a 108-105 victory over the Miami Heat at the Staples Center.

James and Wade, who arrived in the NBA together as part of a star-studded draft in 2003, have formed one of basketball's most famous rivalries and closest friendships over the course of their careers.

Former team-mates at the Miami Heat, where the duo won back-to-back NBA championships in 2012 and 2013, the two faced each other for the last time on Monday with Wade retiring after the 2018 season.

The 31st meeting of the two men finished with a victory for James, who seized control of the contest in the fourth quarter to finish with 28 points, nine rebounds and 12 assists. Wade scored 15 points off the bench for Miami, whose top scorer was Justise Winslow with 28 points.

The Lakers win means James finished with 16 wins to Wade's 15 in head-to-head meetings between the two players.

The two NBA icons embraced at the buzzer before swapping jerseys in a mutual show of respect.

"It's bitter sweet man," said James. "A lot of emotions for me right now, just knowing that I'm losing a brother in this game that I've had so many wars against, so many wars together."

### Emotional tribute

Wade paid an emotional tribute to James. "It's tough," he said. "This is what you play for, playing against one of the greatest players ever."



"Whether we were team-mates or whether we were opponents, we brought the best out of each other. I'm just so grateful to have been drafted at the same time as this guy."

"The friendship we have is beyond basketball. But I'm going to miss the shit out of this."

The win saw the Lakers improve to 17-10 in the Western Conference and was another sign that James' arrival is starting to bear fruit. Wade said he is confident James will be able to transform the Lakers into championship contenders.

"He can do anything he wants. He's shown that, he's proven that," he said. "I have no doubt this team will be in the finals at some point."

Elsewhere Monday, Stephen Curry scored 38 points as the Golden State Warriors improved to 19-9 with a 116-108

win over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

### Triple for Westbrook

The Oklahoma City Thunder are in first place in the Western Conference, however, following their 122-113 win over the Utah Jazz.

Paul George scored 31 points and Russell Westbrook recorded his sixth triple double of the season as the Thunder bounced back from their upset loss against the Chicago Bulls on Friday to improve to 17-8.

Former NBA MVP Westbrook's triple included 12 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists.

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid set aside his recent indifferent form to score 24 points as the 76ers kept up the pressure on Eastern Conference leaders Toronto with a 116-102 win over the Detroit Pistons.

Cameroon big man Embiid has reportedly grown increasingly frustrated with his form since the acquisition of Jimmy Butler. Last week he voiced unhappiness at his new positional role in the team following Butler's arrival. Against Detroit on Monday, Butler left the court with a groin strain towards the end of the first quarter to allow Embiid to carry the offensive load for the Sixers.

The 24-year-old had no difficulty imposing himself, adding eight rebounds and three assists in addition to his double-digit points tally.

Ben Simmons had 18 points along with Furkan Korkmaz, who had 18 points from the bench for Philadelphia. Simmons also had 10 rebounds to complete a double-double.

*(Source: AFP)*



# Iran provisional 35-man squad for Asian Cup named

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Carlos Queiroz has named a provisional 35-man Team Melli squad for the AFC Asian Cup 2019.

Queiroz will announce his main team on Dec. 15 ahead of the training camp in Doha, Qatar.

Team Melli will also play a friendly match with Qatar as part of preparation for the Asian Cup.

Iran national football team have been drawn along with Iraq, Yemen and Vietnam in Group D.

The 2019 AFC Asian Cup will be held in the United Arab Emirates from January 5 to February 1.

**■ Squad:**

**■ Goalkeepers:**

Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis), Amir Abedzadeh (Maritimo), Hossein Hosseini (Esteghlal), Payam Niazmand (Sepahan), Rashid Mazaheri (Zob Ahan)

**■ Defenders:**

Ramin Rezaeian (Al-Shahania SC), Mo-



hammadreza Khanzadeh (Qatar's Al Ahli), Rouzbeh Cheshmi (Esteghlal), Majid Hosseini (Esteghlal), Milad Mohammadi (Sepahan), Sadegh Moharrami (Dinamo Zagreb), Vouria Ghafouri (Esteghlal), Mohammadhossein Kananizadegan (Machine Sazi), Ehsan Hai Safi (Tractor Sazi), Saied Aghaei (Sepahan), Pejman Montazeri (Esteghlal), Morteza Pour-aliganji (KAS Eupen)

**■ Midfielders:**

Omid Ebrahimi (Qatar's Al Ahli), Ashkan Dejagah (Tractor Sazi), Saman Ghoddos (Amiens), Masoud Shojaei (Tractor Sazi), Vahid Amiri (Trabzonspor), Ahmad Nourollahi (Persepolis), Saied Ezatolahi (Reading), Ali Karimi (Esteghlal), Ahmad Abdollahzadeh (Nassaji)

**■ Strikers:**

Ali Gholizadeh (Charleroi), Mehdi Taremi (Al Gharafa), Sardar Azmoun (Rubin Kazan), Karim Ansarifard (Nottingham Forest), Kaveh Rezaei (Brugge), Mehdi Torabi (Saipa), Ali Alipour (Persepolis), Alireza Jahanbakhsh (Brighton), Farshad Ahmadzadeh (Slask Wroclaw)

## AFC reveals Iran's Slogan at 2019 AFC Asian Cup

**S P O R T S** With the biggest and best AFC Asian Cup less than one month away, passionate fans from across the Continent and beyond have confirmed the Team Bus slogans for the 24 participating teams.

After shortlisting the thousands of entries in phase one, each nation was then given a selection of three catchphrases to choose from in the second phase, which ended on November 1, 2018.

The month-long contest, which was launched to give football fans the opportunity to showcase their passion and be a part of the continental showpiece, was a major hit on social media with the second phase receiving over 105,000 votes across the AFC's digital platforms.

Islamic Republic of Iran led the Continent in engagement numbers, garnering over 25,000 votes, with the winning slogan – Eighty Million People, One Nation, One Heartbeat – securing over 11,000 votes.

"The AFC Asian Cup is the pinnacle of Asian football and we are focused on giving our fans a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The glowing support from our fans across the Continent further underlines the increasing sense of excitement and passion as the tournament draws closer," said Dato' Windsor John, General Secretary of the Asian Football Confederation.

"We strive in every competition to improve on the legacy from the last edition and with stronger fan engagement and the world-class football on display, I have no doubts that the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 will exceed all our expectations."

The ultimate winners will now receive an autographed national team jersey and will see their slogans painted on the respective official team buses, which will ferry some of the world's biggest footballing names between the eight stadiums across the four cities, from January 5 to February 1, 2019.

The final results of the 24 winning team bus slogans are as follows:

- Group A**
- United Arab Emirates: Our time is now
- Thailand: Changsuek together as one
- India: Blue Tigers: The hope of a nation

- Bahrain: Never say never
- Group B**
- Australia: Heroes will rise
- Syria: One team. One nation. One Syria
- Palestine: We will triumph. We are Palestine
- Jordan: Make Jordan Proud.
- Group C**
- Korea Republic: We are the Reds!
- China PR: Fighting for the same dream
- Philippines: To dream the impossible
- Kyrgyz Republic: The White Falcons!
- Group D**
- Iran: Eighty Million People, One Nation, One Heartbeat
- Iraq:

- Lions always prevail
- Vietnam: Golden Star Warriors
- Yemen: Never give up.
- Group E**
- Saudi Arabia: From the desert to the throne of the Continent
- Qatar: We & the Nation of Pride are Fine
- Lebanon: The Cedars are coming
- DPR Korea: In the spirit of Chollima
- Group F**
- Japan: Respect all, fear none
- Uzbekistan: Here we are Uzbekistan
- Oman: 4 million hearts, one dream
- Turkmenistan: Green ground, Green team, Green Turkmenistan

(Source: the-afc)



## Seven on the starting line at UAE 2018



The 15th FIFA Club World Cup kicks off on Wednesday 12 December in United Arab Emirates, where six continental champions and host club Al Ain will vie for global glory.

Can anyone stop Real Madrid? They travel to the Middle East aiming for a record third successive Club World Cup title, presenting manager Santiago Solari with the chance to win his first trophy as Los Blancos boss.

The rest of the chasing pack will want

to have their say though, especially Copa Libertadores champions River Plate, who will be hoping to bring the trophy back to South America for the first time since 2012.

---The teams  
Al Ain (United Arab Emirates) - CD Guadalajara (Mexico) - Esperance de Tunis (Tunisia) - Kashima Antlers (Japan) - Real Madrid (Spain) - River Plate (Argentina) - Team Wellington (New Zealand)

(Source: FIFA)

## Galatasaray have loan bid for Liverpool's Divock Origi turned down



Galatasaray have had an offer to sign Liverpool striker Divock Origi on loan turned down because the Premier League club want him to stay nearer England, a source has told ESPN FC.

Belgium international Origi, who scored a late winner in the Merseyside derby against Everton earlier this month, is likely to leave on loan after struggling for first-team opportunities.

Galatasaray were linked with the 23-year-old last summer and had hoped to bring him in

next month. The source said they approached Liverpool through intermediaries but saw their bid turned down.

The Turkish Super Lig champions, being closely monitored by UEFA over financial fair play, could make another bid at the end of the window if Origi has not found a new club by then.

They have made a new striker a priority after failing to replace Bafetimbi Gomis, who scored 32 goals last season, over the summer.

(Source: Soccernet)

## Bayern Munich's Franck Ribery set for summer exit amid 'year of changes'

Franck Ribery will leave Bayern Munich at the end of the season, sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic indicated on Tuesday.

It comes after Arjen Robben said earlier this month that he would leave when his contract expires in the summer after a decade of success with the German champions.

Robben, 34, joined in 2009 and formed a formidable attacking partnership with 35-year-old Ribery, whose deal also runs out at the end of the campaign.

"The president [Uli Hoeness] talked about it [the possibility of Ribery leaving], and I think it will be like that. It's a year of changes," Salihamidzic told reporters.

Former France international Ribery has made 406 com-

petitive appearances for Bayern, scoring 119 goals, and has featured in 19 games this season.

"I am pleased that Franck is still playing that well," Salihamidzic said. "He's one of our key players."

For large parts of the first half of this season, Ribery has replaced his fellow Frenchman Kingsley Coman, who suffered an ankle injury in August.

Speaking to Telefoot, 22-year-old Coman said a disappointing year in which he missed the World Cup with a similar injury had made him think about his future despite a return to the Bayern squad this month.

"Perhaps my foot isn't up to it," he told Telefoot. "When I got injured, it was really the end of the world. I had put everything

in order in my life because I was aiming for the World Cup.

"I hope I don't have to go through that again. I don't think I'd have a third operation. Even if I protect myself and I try to be careful, if I get injured again it would be too much."

"Enough is enough. Perhaps my foot isn't up to it, and I'll go and get on with my life."

Salihamidzic, however, said he believed Coman may have allowed his emotions to get the better of him. "Rehab is no fun," he said.

"I'll talk to him. I tore my ACL twice in one year and had similar thoughts. I think the world of Kingsley. He's got a great future."

(Source: ESPN)

## Majid Jalali parts company with Paykan

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Majid Jalal left the Iranian top-flight football team Paykan by mutual consent on Tuesday.

The experienced coach was forced to step down following the poor results in Iran Professional League (IPL) in the recent weeks.

Under leadership of Jalali, Paykan suffered six successive defeat in IPL. Most recently, the Tehran based football team suffered a 1-0 home defeat to Nassaji.

On the official Paykan site, Jalali was praised for his work in the club.

"We would like to thank Majid jalali for his effort and dedication over the past two years, and wish him the very best of luck with his future endeavors," read the statement by the club.

Paykan sit eighth in the IPL 16-team with 16 points, 14 point adrift of IPL leaders Sepahan.

## Zahra Nemati's defeat biggest shock at Asian Para Games

The biggest shock at the 2018 Asian Para Games was Iranian para archer Zahra Nemati's defeat.

The biggest shock of in the Para archery world happened during October's Asian Para Games, where Paralympic and world champion Zahra Nemati was stunned.

She lost to her Chinese rival Wu Chunyan in the W2-ST women's individual recurve open event.

The biggest rivalry was between two-time Paralympic champion Nemati and Wu Chunyan, a 2015 world championship, who was unbeaten in international competition until losing to Nemati at the Rio 2016 Paralympics. But Wu finally got the better of Nemati, taking the final, 6-4, to claim gold in Jakarta, Indonesia.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

## Time to climb for Team Melli: Carlos Queiroz

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team coach Carlos Queiroz says it is time to climb for Team Melli in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Iran have been drawn with Iraq, Yemen and Vietnam in Group D of the AFC Asian Cup. The 2019 AFC Asian Cup will be held in the United Arab Emirates from January 5 to February 1, 2019.

"This is not time to make things easy or comfortable. This is time to deliver, with full focus, commitment and determination. To reach excellence we need to enjoy the adversities and sacrifices of our journey," Queiroz posted on his Instagram account.

"You climb and you go up to raise to the top and shine or you don't climb and you rock and roll down to the bottom of darkness," he added.

## Ashtiani takes charge of Afghanistan beach soccer team

**TASNIM** — Meysam Ashtiani has been named the new head coach of Afghanistan beach soccer team.

Ashtiani will head Afghanistan in the AFC Beach Soccer Championship Thailand 2019, which will be held in Pattaya, Thailand from March 9-17, 2019.

Afghanistan have been drawn along with host nation Thailand, Malaysia and Palestine in Group A.

Karim Moghaddam is another Iranian coach who has been recently named the Iraq beach soccer coach.

Iraq will meet Iran and Oman in Group D.

## Iran to host first diplomatic sports Olympiad

**IRNA** — The first diplomatic Olympiad, entitled 'Peace and Friendship,' will be held at the same time with the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution victory in Iran.

"The festival wants to convey the message of peace and friendship to the world through sports while Iran is under unilateral sanctions of the United States," said Reza Abdi, director of Association of Public Sport of Iranian foreign ministry.

The Olympiad will be hosted as January 18 will kick off with participation of Iranian diplomats and foreign diplomats in Tehran in chess, table tennis and futsal hosted by the relevant federations, Abdi said, noting that the Association of Public Sport is working to maintain Iran's political dignity.

## Hamedan to host representatives of 14 countries in O-sport

**IRNA** — Representatives of 14 countries are supposed to attend the WOF World Championships which is slated to get underway on Wednesday.

Speaking with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Head of O-Sport association Behrouz Karkhanei said that 1,300 athletes will participate in the event.

The competitions is aimed at promoting O-Sport, tourism and developing Iran's economy, he added.

O-Sport stands for Original Persian Sports and this nickname has been founded and presented to the world of Sport by the family of Manouchehri.

The multi-skilled technical structure of O-Sport is formed of Persian arts and games, such as Dooz, slingshot, Ley ley, Alak Dolak, swimming and struggling of Persian tribes. During a process of deep studies and modernization, these Games have become the industry of sport. These sports include Aqua O-Sport (the combination of struggling, swimming and passing through the barriers), Artistic O-Sport (The combination of shooting skills, passing through the barriers with acrobatic skills), Mind O-Sport (the combination of Dooz and others), and Combat O-Sport (the combination of self defense, shooting and martial arts skills). These competitive techniques and disciplines have been named with the benefit of Persian words and ancient names of Iranian cities.



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Patience is a fitting cover, and wisdom is a sharp sword. So cover your ugly conduct with patience, and kill carnal desires with wisdom.  
*Imam Ali (AS)*

Iranian artist Mahmud Nazari tops at Turkish cartoonist contest on Quds

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — Iranian cartoonist Mahmud Nazari won first prize at the 2nd Our Heritage Jerusalem Cartoon Contest in Istanbul, Turkey on Sunday, the Anadolu Agency announced.



Iranian cartoonist Mahmud Nazari (R) poses with his award and an organizer during the closing ceremony of the 2nd Our Heritage Jerusalem Cartoon Contest in Istanbul, Turkey on December 9, 2018. (Anadolu Agency/ Emrah Yorulmaz)

Second prize was awarded to Onder Onerbay from Turkey, and Shipo Shiryabadath from India took third place.

Over 230 artists from 40 countries participated in the competition with over 600 works on the themes of Quds, human rights, freedom, love, justice, culture and different aspects of social life.

The Association for Protecting and Maintaining Ottoman Heritage in Adjacency of Quds in Istanbul is the organizer of the competition that aims to help create greater awareness of Jerusalem through cartoons.

“Bohemian Rhapsody” now most-streamed 20th century song

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — They said it would never sell, with its six-minute playing time, operatic passages and lyrics about Galileo and Scaramouche, but the Queen song “Bohemian Rhapsody” on Monday became the most streamed song from the 20th century.

Boosted by the new movie “Bohemian Rhapsody,” the 1975 single and music video surpassed 1.6 billion streams globally, record company Universal Music Group said in a statement.



Actor Rami Malek and members of Queen Roger Taylor and Brian May attend the world premiere of ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ movie in London, Britain October 23, 2018. (Reuters/Eddie Keogh)

The song overtook the likes of Nirvana’s “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” and Guns N’ Roses’ “Sweet Child O’ Mine,” and is now also the most streamed classic rock song of all time, Universal added.

The “Bohemian Rhapsody” film, starring Rami Malek as late Queen front man Freddie Mercury, has brought the music of the British rock band to a new generation. Five weeks after its release, it has also become the highest grossing musical biography movie ever, with a global box office take of \$600 million.

Malek was nominated for a Golden Globe last week for his performance and is widely expected to get an Oscar nomination in January.

Universal said it had been promoting the single across streaming platforms in recent weeks. It used all registered streams on global on-demand services including Spotify, Apple Music and Deezer as well as streams from official song/video streams on YouTube to determine that “Bohemian Rhapsody” was the most streamed song from the 20th century.

Istanbul theater reviews Turkish-language films from Iranian cinema

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — A program titled “Days of Turkish-Language Films from Iranian Cinema” was held at Beyoglu Yesilcam Cinema in Istanbul, Turkey from December 7 to 11. Twenty-one short, documentary and feature films, including “Animal” and “Coldness”, both directed by Bahram and Bahman Ark, “Ardak” by Esmail Monsef, “I Am Esmat” by Leila Noruzi, “The Home” director Asghar Yusefinejad and “Snowy Roofs” by Hayedeh Moradi, were screened during the event.

Organized by the cultural section of the Istanbul Municipality, the screenings were followed by review sessions attended by Iranian and Turkish cineastes.

“Turkish-Language films from Iran should be reviewed under the umbrella of Iranian cinema, because we can trace the celebrated Iranian filmmakers like Abbas Kiarostami and Asghar Farhadi in all these movies,” Turkish film scholar Riza Oylum said in a review session on Saturday.

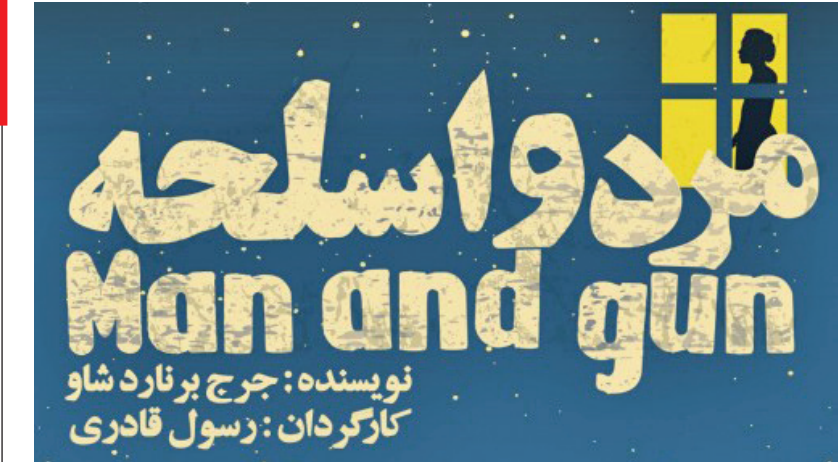
“These films can connect the aesthetic symbols of Iranian cinema with Turkish



A poster the program “Days of Turkish-Language Films from Iranian Cinema”.

culture,” he added. In addition, photos of the cultural attractions of the Iranian cities of Tabriz, Ardebil and Urmia were showcased in an exhibition on the sidelines of the festival.

“Arms and the Man” on stage at Tehran theater



A poster for “Arms and the Man” on stage at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Château Theater.

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — George Bernard Shaw’s 1894 play “Arms and the Man” went on stage at the Neauphle-le-Château Theater in Tehran with an Iranian troupe performing. Rasul Qaderi is the director of the play, which is about Raina Petkoff, a young Bul-

garian woman, who tries to save a Swiss mercenary soldier in the Serbian army, during the 1885 Serbo-Bulgarian War.

Hamidreza Rokni, Majid Vaziri, Tina Aqelnejad and Negin Ghaffari are the main members of the cast for the play, which will be on stage until December 29.

Iranian doc centers on clerics’ love of cinema

**A R T d e s k** TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Sadeq Davari, who is famous for his documentary films on Shia clerics such as “The Funny Sheikh of Kashan” and “Fihi Ma Fih”, has made his new film “The Principles of Acting” on the clerics’ love of acting in films.

The film had its premiere on Sunday at the 12th Cinéma Vérité festival currently underway at Tehran’s Charsu Cineplex.

In his efforts to make the previous documentary films on Shia clerics, Davari ascertained the desire to act in a number of clerics. “Accordingly, I began to hold talks with them and the outcome was ‘The Principles of Acting,’” he told the Persian service of MNA on Tuesday.

“To delve deeply into the issue, I also asked a number of professional actors to comment about starring as a cleric in a film,” he added.



A poster for “The Principles of Acting” by Sadeq Davari.

Easter Island mayor concedes Moai statue might be better left in British Museum

**SANTIAGO (Reuters)** — The mayor of the Chile’s Easter Island territory conceded on Monday that the British Museum might be a better home for a massive native Polynesian statue taken by British seamen 150 years ago.

Pedro Edmunds Paoa said Easter Island had a “thousand” of its iconic statues, known as the Moai, “both buried, ignored and discarded” and lacked the means to maintain them.

“Those thousand are falling apart because they are made of a volcanic stone, because of the wind and the rain are. We need global technology for their conservation,” he said.

He said one statue returned to the island from the Argentine capital Buenos Aires “four or five years ago” was now housed in a square where stray dogs urinated on it.

His comments will add weight to the argument of the British Museum to keep artifacts that originate from other nations in London where they are carefully curated and popular exhibits with visitors from around the world.

Last month, a delegation of Chilean officials and Easter Island dignitaries including Paoa’s brother, the Rapa Nui Council of Elders President Carlos Edmunds Paoa, traveled to London to appeal for the return of the seven-foot (2.13-meter) tall basalt figure, known as “Hoa Hakananai’a,” meaning “lost or stolen friend” in the local language.

The statue was among 900 statues or



A view of “Moai” statues in Rano Raraku volcano, on Easter Island, 4,000 km (2486 miles) west of Santiago, in this photo taken Oct. 31, 2003. (Reuters/Carlos Barria// File Photo)

“Moai,” meaning “ancestors,” carved by islanders between 1100 and 1600 A.D.

It was taken from the island, located 2,480 miles (3,990 km) west of the Chilean capital Santiago, in 1868 by Richard Powell, the captain of HMS Topaze, and presented to Queen Victoria who later gave it to the British Museum.

Pedro Edmunds Paoa said there had been intense debate on the island about whether the Hoa Hakananai’a should be returned or not.

“Are we going to bring the ancestors back? Fantastic,” he said. “We are going to bring them back and we are going to place them where?”

“That Moai is in a museum where six million people come each year to visit it.”

U.S. auctioneer withdraws ‘Star Wars’ lightsaber on authenticity issue

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — A California auction house on Monday withdrew from sale a lightsaber described as having been used by Luke Skywalker in the first “Star Wars” movie after fans raised concerns about its authenticity.

The lightsaber was due to be sold by Profiles in History at a Los Angeles auction on Thursday with an estimated sale price of up to \$200,000.

It was described as having been one of five designed by Oscar-winning “Star Wars” set decorator Roger Christian and used by actor Mark Hamill’s young Skywalker character in the 1977 film “Star Wars: A New Hope.” Christian had supplied a letter of authenticity to accompany the sale.

“In light of conflicting information regarding the origin of Roger Christian’s Lightsaber, Profiles in History has decided to withdraw the piece from this auction until Mr. Christian can clear up the inconsistencies that have been brought to our attention,” Profiles in History chief executive Joe Maddalena said in a statement.

Christian did not immediately respond to a request for comment, and Profiles in History declined to comment further.

Some Hollywood memorabilia and “Star Wars” fans had raised questions about whether the lightsaber was used by Hamill in the film, or might be a replica or prototype.



The original Luke Skywalker Lightsaber from the “Star Wars: A New Hope” movie, is among items on the auction block by Profiles in History in Calabasas, California, U.S., is shown in this photo provided November 29, 2018. (Courtesy Profiles in History Auctions/Handout via Reuters)

California-based Jason DeBord, the editor-in-chief of the originalprop.com blog, examined postings by Christian on social media websites in 2015 and 2016 in which the artist wrote about making recent exact prototypes of the 1977 Skywalker lightsaber.

“Star Wars” movies have made billions of dollars at the box office worldwide, and props and costumes from the sci-fi saga can fetch sky-high prices at auction.

A different lightsaber used by Skywalker fetched \$450,000 at auction last year.