



Humanities are central to civilization: Taliaferro **7**



'Iranian women builders of the nation' **12**



German Winfried Schafer named Esteghlal coach **15**



My roots are in Iranian and Armenian cultures: "Yeva" director **16**

# Iran, Turkey dismiss Kurdistan referendum

## Truly independent Kurdistan remains distant unfulfilled dream: Lendman

By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — U.S. columnist Stephen Lendman says that "a truly independent Kurdistan remains a distant unfulfilled dream."

"I doubt regional Kurdish independence is likely any time soon. The idea has little support, other than from Israel and silently by Washington and Britain, while claiming otherwise", Lendman tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ The Kurdish referendum was held on September 25. How will this influence Kurdish movements in the region?

A: It's too early to know what will follow the results. Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem offered to negotiate local autonomy to Kurds in the north of the country once terrorism is defeated. **→7**



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Turkish Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar (left) shaking hands with Iranian Supreme National Security Council secretary Ali Shamkhani

## Iranians observe Mehregan to renew friendship

HERITAGE

**TEHRAN** — Yesterday evening, clusters of Iranian Zoroastrians came together in various reunions across the country to celebrate Mehregan, an ancient Persian festival that marks friendship, affection and love.

"Delivering speeches by several Zoroastrian religious figures and officials on the importance of the feast and conveying its message to new generations are among core elements of the Mehregan celebration at Markar cultural complex," the complex's secretary of the festivity told the Tehran Times on Monday. **→10**

## Las Vegas massacre: Deadliest mass shooting since 1949

By staff & agencies

Some 50 people died and more than 400 were hurt when a 64-year-old gunman with an arsenal of at least 10 rifles fired on a Las Vegas country music festival on Sunday, raining down bullets from a 32nd-floor window for several minutes before killing himself.

The death toll, which police emphasized was preliminary, would make

the mass shooting the deadliest in the United States history, eclipsing last year's massacre of 49 people at an Orlando night club by a gunman who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Some 22,000 people were in the crowd when a man police identified as Stephen Paddock opened fire. **→3**



### ARTICLE

By Mark Tebbit  
University of Reading professor

## How does morality relate to law?

This is one of the most contested questions in modern jurisprudence, but it is one of the least understood. For natural law philosophy, both in its ancient and modern manifestations, there are moral features right at the heart of law. Anything presented as law by a legitimate authority must, according to natural law, have certain moral qualities in order to qualify as a law. If an edict or statute is manifestly unjust in content, or promotes injustice in the society beyond a certain level, it is thought thereby to disqualify itself as law.

Legal positivism was born in the age following the scientific revolution. This brought with it a widespread movement in Europe to transfer the stunningly successful methods of the natural sciences to the younger social sciences, which the new discipline of jurisprudence was aspiring to become. The focus immediately shifted away from abstract notions such as justice and equity, to the hard tangible reality associated with law, with the positive laws of the land. The law was seen by positivists primarily as the practice of state coercion, originating in any number of motives, compelling people either with their consent or against their will, for good or ill, to follow the laws laid down by the sovereign. If such enforced laws could be seen as just and morally defensible, all the better, but such 'qualities' had no bearing on the question of what is to be seen as genuine law. This is only a question of how much obedience a sovereign can command over his or her subjects.

For natural law, then, justice and moral soundness in general are the priority. For positivism, these are commendable and to be welcomed, but entirely independent of the question of what the law actually is. State legislation that violates principles of justice are indeed regarded as immoral, but they have no effect on the legal validity of laws, on the question of what makes law the law. **→7**

## Iran-Pakistan ties on rise but still below expectations: ambassador

By Afshin Majlesi

**ISLAMABAD, Pakistan** — Tehran's ambassador to Islamabad says ties between Iran and Pakistan are on the rise but still far behind the existing potentials.

Mehdi Honardoost faults "lack of information" about each country's capacity for such a situation.

"One of the factors which have kept ties between Iran and Pakistan below the expectations is the lack of information and enough knowledge about each other," Ambassador Honardoost says in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times as a five-member Iranian media team visited Pakistan from Sept. 18 to 23.

In what follows the text of the interview has been given:

■ The Public opinion in Pakistan is in favor of Iran. How can Iran use this potential to deepen ties?

A: The fondness of the people of Pakistan is a treasure that makes it easy to exploit the existing capacities in the relationship. In fact with the removal of hurdles which had been imposed due to external factors on bilateral ties, mutual fondness as an active motive will work and we will witness further boost and expansion of ties in all the dimensions.

■ Why as two great neighbors - Iran having 80 million population and Pakistan about 200 million - the volume of trade ties is too low?

A: There are lots of commonalities between Iran and Pakistan. Culture, literature, history, civilization, religion, custom along

with a 900-kilometer joint border are factors which create unbreakable bonds.

I believe that one of the factors which have kept ties between Iran and Pakistan below the expectations is lack of information and enough knowledge about each other. The subject is noticed by all strata and classes of the two countries. Definitely, increase in trade volume between the two countries is possible through interaction among the chambers of commerce and business community of the two countries. This is also possible by increasing the information. In other words, boosting of ties in all spheres is subject to better knowledge and this identifies the role and position of media, which can be effective in providing information to the people.

The embassy, by having knowledge of the subject, sent a delegation of the media persons to Iran last year and already an Iranian media delegation has visited Pakistan.

Besides aforesaid subject, international-

**"There are lots of commonalities between Iran and Pakistan. Culture, literature, history, civilization, religion, and custom along with a 900-kilometer joint border are factors which create unbreakable bonds."**

sanctions have been an effective factor in low level of bilateral trade. In the period after the signing of the JCPOA (a landmark nuclear deal clinched between Iran and six world powers in 2015) and efforts made in this regard, a 35 percent increase has been witnessed in trade ties but still lack of banking ties with Pakistan is an important impediment to increase business ties.

After the signing of the JCPOA, Iran re-established banking ties with a number of countries, however banking ties with Pakistan has not yet been reestablished. But efforts are being made to resume banking ties and I hope soon this objective will be achieved with the cooperation of the Pakistani side.

■ Have you yourself visited the border lines to closely witness the steps that Pakistan had to take to prevent hooligans use the Pakistani soil for vicious acts along the border with Iran?

A: Yes, I have made a detailed visit to the border areas although the overall purpose of the visit was to get firsthand information about all the issues related to the border including border crossing points, border markets and existing problems and finding out solutions.

■ What are the main areas of cooperation? Agriculture, energy, transportation? Please explain.

A: Iran and Pakistan, in view of existing commonalities, enjoy vast potential for cooperation in all fields. In political area, they can cooperate bilaterally, regionally and internationally especially in efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan. **→2**



### ARTICLE

Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh  
Tehran Times Journalist

## JCPOA shall continue to stand: MEDEF VP

Iran's nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), opened gateways for European countries to boost their trade ties with Iran finding a share in its untouched lucrative market. Being implemented in mid-January 2016, JCPOA made European countries race to front of queue to enter various economic sectors in Iran.

Among them stood France. The country that signed a series of basic trade deals with Iran estimated to be worth billions of dollars during the historic visit to Paris by the Iranian president in late January 2016. Rouhani and his French counterpart, the then president Francois Hollande, oversaw the signing of the agreements, which concerned cooperation in different economic sectors such as aviation, car manufacturing and oil, among others. Since then, many French delegations, mainly from the French private sector, visited Iran to attend business forums and negotiate reinforcing bonds with their Iranian counterparts.

However, JCPOA has been subject to threat since Donald Trump became the U.S. president in January. He has repeatedly stated that the agreement should be renegotiated or even called off, however getting no support from other signatories including France, he has not been able to act on his words so far. Foreign trade delegations are still commuting to Iran and different agreements are being signed with the country.

Almost two weeks ago, Yves-Thibault De Silguy, Vice-President of the Movement of the Enterprises of France (also known as MEDEF) and Vice-Chairman of Vinci SA who is also Chairman of the French-Iranian Business Council and France's Secretary of State to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne led a high-ranking business delegation to Tehran and later to Isfahan organized by MEDEF and its local structure, CFAT (French Business Center of Tehran). **→4**



## Saudi regime forces demolish Awamiyah

Saudi regime forces have reportedly razed homes in the kingdom's oil-rich Eastern Province.

Since May, Saudi regime forces have imposed a deadly crackdown on Awamiyah - the hometown of late prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, whose execution by the Al Saud regime drew firm international condemnation and sparked mass protests across the Middle East.

Last month, foreign journalists paid a visit to Awamiyah after they were permitted entry for the first time, and witnessed the substantial level of destruction that Saudi forces had wrought on the town.

**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**Zarif, Mogherini are strong contenders for Nobel Peace Prize**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and European Union foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini could win this year's Nobel Peace Prize, according to researchers who predict potential winners.

Henrik Urdal, the head of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), which lists potential winners, said the two are strong contenders this year.

Zarif and Mogherini were the most senior negotiators in a lengthy diplomatic process, which saw the signing in 2015 of the landmark deal between Tehran and six world powers.



**No Iranians fighting in Yemen, says former Yemeni president**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Yemen's former President Ali Abdullah Saleh has said there are no Iranians fighting in Yemen, ISNA reported on Monday, citing Russia Today.

"Saudi Arabia should take its fight against Iran outside Yemen," Saleh said, questioning Riyadh's military campaign against Yemeni civilians which has so far killed thousands of civilians, including women and children.

"Show us one Iranian who has been captured or killed [in Yemen] and we will accept responsibility," he said. "Show us one missile which had been made in Iran."



**No reason to renegotiate nuclear deal: interior minister**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said on Monday that the nuclear deal is an internationally-endorsed agreement which is not open to renegotiation.

"Iran sees no reason to sit to the negotiating table (again)," Rahmani Fazli told reporters in Tehran on Monday, Fars reported.

He also emphasized that all inspections of Iran's nuclear sites by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have confirmed Tehran's commitment to its obligations under the 2015 nuclear accord.

The minister added should the other side violate the deal, Iran would respond appropriately.



**If Trump exits nuclear deal, Boeing may be the first loser: CNBC**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — If U.S. President Donald Trump scraps the Iran nuclear deal, the first loser may be U.S. aircraft maker Boeing, the CNBC reported.

The U.S. aircraft maker has an agreement to sell 80 new planes to Iran Air and another 30 to Iranian carrier Aseman. The total value of those deals is about 20 billion dollars.

Trump's administration has sought to scrap or weaken the 2015 deal and get rid of the limits it imposes on the U.S. ability to pursue more hostile policies against Iran.



**Nuclear deal parties oppose renegotiation: Chinese diplomat**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Chinese Ambassador to Tehran, Pang Sen, said in an interview with ISNA published on Monday that all sides to the 2015 nuclear agreement, including China, oppose a renegotiation of the agreement.

He emphasized that although the Trump administration is wavering on the issue, the other parties to the agreement underline the need to keep the multilateral deal.

"The nuclear deal proved that through negotiation, we can solve the problem peacefully," the Chinese diplomat said.



**Hashemi appointed deputy interior minister**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli on Monday appointed Hossein Hashemi, the former governor of Tehran province, as his deputy, ISNA reported.

Hashemi was a member of parliament from 1992 to 2012. He was also head of the Parliament Industries Committee and also president of Cycling Federation from 1995 to 2005.

He served as Tehran's governor from September 8, 2013 to September 24, 2017. He was succeeded by Mohammad Hossein Moghimi.

# Zarif meets top Omani officials

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met in Muscat on Monday with Sultan of Oman Qaboos bin Said al Said and his Omani counterpart Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdallah.

Zarif left Oman for Qatar on Monday. Prior to his meeting with the Sultan of Oman, Zarif told reporters that Iran and Oman have very good relations in various spheres.

Commenting on the 2015 nuclear deal, he said that the European Union and the international community supports the agreement.

He added Iran will not be the first to violate the nuclear deal, however, the country has various options if the agreement is breached.

The nuclear deal, known as the Joint



FM Zarif holding talks with Sultan Qaboos (R)

Comprehensive Plan of Action, was signed in July 2015 and went into effect in January 2016.

During his speech at the UN General Assembly last Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump hinted that he may not recertify the agreement when it comes up for review by a mid-October deadline, in which case the U.S. Congress would have 60 days to decide whether to reimpose sanctions waived under the accord.

Except the U.S. under Donald Trump, all other signatories to the nuclear deal - France, Germany, Britain, Russia and China and the European Union - have been insisting on the full implementation of the multilateral agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

## Iranian, Turkish military chiefs dismiss referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The top military commanders of Iran and Turkey on Saturday unanimously voiced strong opposition to the independence referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan, saying it is "unacceptable".

The renewed opposition to the September 25 independence referendum was made after a meeting in Tehran between Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Baqeri and his Turkish counterpart General Hulusi Akar.

Speaking at a joint press conference, the two top generals also said military cooperation between Iran and Turkey will increase.

"In addition to political and economic cooperation between Iran and Turkey, we try to develop military cooperation, especially in the campaign against terrorism," General Akar remarked. "We also reached mutual agreement on securing the two countries' borders."

The senior Turkish military commander added, "For development of military cooperation our efforts will continue."

General Baqeri also expressed hope that the visit to Tehran by the Turkish military chief would help strengthen "security cooperation" between the two neighboring countries.

Baqeri added Iran and Turkey are "unanimous" in their stance to protect the Iraqi territorial integrity and consider the referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan as "unacceptable".

**Shamkhani calls Kurdistan referendum 'irresponsible and thoughtless'**

The approach of the Iraqi Kurdish officials in holding independence referendum was "irresponsible" and "thoughtless", Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said in a meeting with the Turkish armed forces chief of staff.

Shamkhani said the move will cause distraction in fight against Takfiri terrorism in Iraq.

**'Proper decision to secure common borders'**

General Baqeri also said he and General Akar held talks on the victories of the Syrian and Iraqi armies over ISIL and "we hope to help the two countries to achieve security."

"We also held negotiations on fight against terrorism in the region and providing security in the borders of the two countries, and proper decisions were taken."

He added the armed forces from the two countries will also collaborate in areas of military training, participating in each country's war games, and exchanging information on border security.

General Akar who arrived in Tehran late on Sunday said, "Iran and Turkey can destroy terrorism".

Akar's visit to Tehran followed a similar visit by Baqeri to Ankara on August 16-17. While in Ankara, Turkish and Iranian military leaders held talks over cooperation in the Syrian conflict and counter-terrorism.

Turkey, Iran and Russia agreed in May to set up "de-escalation zones" in Syria to try to stem the fighting in some parts of the country, including the northern province of Idlib, which borders Turkey.

The reciprocal visits by the military chiefs are the first of their kinds between Iran and Turkey, a NATO member, since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.

## Nuclear deal has 'better than 50' percent chance to survive, FM says

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that the 2015 nuclear deal still has a "better than 50" percent chance of surviving the next year.

In an interview with Politico published on Monday, he said that Iran would consider everything from "walking away from the deal to somehow accommodating Europe" if the U.S. quits the deal.

He acknowledged that Trump has now created the expectation that he will refuse to recertify the nuclear deal - while noting pointedly that Trump could still flip-flop on this, just as he has in so many other cases.

"This would not be the first time that President Trump or other presidents have walked back from positions that they have taken during the campaign."

Zarif noted that decertification by itself would not rip up the deal and the Re-

publican-controlled U.S. Congress could decide—as it has in the past—not to take any action following through on Trump's rhetoric. Doing nothing would effectively leave the deal in place.

"It's up to Congress to adopt any decision, or not to adopt any decision, and I believe in the past a Republican Congress had this idea to let the nuclear agreement stay, as did our parliament," Zarif said. "It had decided in the past not to take action; it can decide again."

Commenting on Trump's speech at the UN General Assembly, Zarif called Trump's harsh attack on Iran in his speech "the most insulting statement that had ever been made by any U.S. president against Iran since the Revolution".

He said that it has backfired, isolating the U.S. and undermining its credibility "as a reliable negotiating partner" on the world stage.

## Iran says it is 'essential' Iraqi Kurdistan negotiate with central govt.

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that it is "essential" for the Kurdistan region to enter dialogue with the central government in Baghdad.

Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region held independence referendum on September 25. Kurdistan's President Masoud Barzani turned a cold shoulder to international calls against the referendum.

In an interview with IRNA published on Monday, Zarif called the independence referendum unconstitutional.

He noted that the referendum can be a threat against security in Iraq.

"This move will endanger security in Iraq and the [Middle East] region. We expect that the talks start respecting Iraq's constitution especially the first principle of it which stresses protect-

ing Iraq's national unity and territorial integrity as an unchangeable principle," the chief diplomat noted.

On September 26, a number of top ranking Iranian political and military figures voiced strong opposition to the independence referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, calling it an Israeli plot and warned about its consequences.

Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to the Supreme Leader, said "political chaos" in the Middle East would be one of the consequences of the referendum.

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said that Iran "will not accept" the partition of regional countries including Iraq and said Tehran will stand beside the Iraqi central government.

Defense Minister Amir Hatami also said Iran is against any move to disintegrate regional countries and change their geographical borders.

## Iran-Pakistan ties on rise but still below expectations: ambassador

**"The fondness of the people of Pakistan is a treasure that makes it easy to exploit the existing capacities"**

**1 →** As it has been mentioned, there are various economic areas like energy, trade, transportation, etc., which have vast potential to boost up.

Iran has the capacity to enhance exports of goods like propane and butane (LPG), bitumen, dried fruits and other gas and petroleum derivatives as important export items to Pakistan.

Businessmen of the two countries can cooperate with each other in various sectors like mines, gemstones, holding bilateral trade exhibitions, agriculture, tourism, medicine and medical industries and hopefully resolving the remaining problems regarding opening L.C. By removing trade irritants, trade volume between the two countries will start increasing.

■ As ambassador what steps have you taken to increase ties between the two countries?

A: Ties between Iran and Pakistan are very important; so effective steps have been made to further boost ties in all spheres. One indicator of boost in relations is the number of visits by authorities including political, economic and military officials.

During my tenure of responsibility in Pakistan, H.E. Hassan Rouhani, the Iranian president, twice visited Pakistan by leading high level delegations. The first visit was bilateral and the second visit was to participate in the ECO summit in Islamabad. In the first visit of the president, seven MoUs in the fields of economy, business, science, culture, health and university were signed. In the second visit besides negotiations regarding bilateral issues, role and place of regional and international cooperation between the two countries were strengthened. Reciprocally and in order to boost bilateral ties, Prime Minister of Pakistan (Nawaz Sharif) twice visited our country and these visits led to significant achievements.

In this framework we have constant meetings between the heads and ministers of the two countries; one typical example is the recent meeting between President Rouhani and the prime minister of Pakistan



Ambassador Mehdi Honardoost (right) talks to the Tehran Times reporter at the premises of the embassy on September 20, 2017.

on the sidelines of United National General Assembly meeting in New York.

The embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan has made efforts to boost ties in economic and trade fields. The value of trade ties has increased to around ½ billion U.S. dollars; the bulk of this figure is the share of Iran's exports to Pakistan. On the basis of that a lot of consultations are underway to enhance the volume of trade transactions between the two countries and I believe we can achieve the target of bilateral trade up to five billion U.S. dollars.

Already, steps are being taken with all seriousness to implement the orders of the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the prime minister of Pakistan. After a reestablishment of banking channels, the speed of business between the two countries will increase.

Two sides are working on a roadmap to remove problems of banking transactions to facilitate trade between the two countries. The removal of this irritant is also in its final stages and I hope it will be removed soon. The volume of exports and imports between Iran

and Pakistan during two years has been increasing; the total value of trade ties of the two countries in 2015 was just \$861 million.

The said amount increased to more than 1.15 billion in 2016 and it is expected to increase more by the end of the current year. The volume of export items by Iran to Pakistan was more than \$795 million and imports from this neighboring country around \$365 million.

A direct flight between the capitals of the two countries (Tehran-Islamabad) has been launched with the constant efforts and follow ups by the embassy, which is an effective factor in expanding more interaction between the businessmen of the two countries and enhancing bilateral transactions.

Enhancing bilateral cooperation in road and railway transit and maritime and air transportation are the other programs being implemented and we have reached some agreements on these areas which will be implemented in the near future.

One of the important areas of cooperation between Iran and Pakistan is energy sector. Iran is a country which is rich in fossil energy resources and also has a high potential for export of electricity. On the other hand, Pakistan requires energy to meet its internal needs for industrial and urban utilization. At the moment, Iranian portion of IP Gas Pipeline is complete and it is expected the Pakistani side will take necessary steps to complete the project on its soil. At the moment electricity exports to Pakistan are 76 MW and we have announced readiness to increase it to 100 MW and in a further step to 1000 MW.

Economic potential between Iran and Pakistan is not limited to bilateral ties only; currently Pakistan is working on CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) with Chinese investment and Iran has announced its readiness to participate in this project by providing energy and export technical engineering services.

Expanding of medical and cultural cooperation, exchange of journalistic and arts troupes and to activate border commission are within this framework.

# Bangladesh: Myanmar proposes Rohingya refugee return

Myanmar has proposed taking back the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who fled a brutal military crackdown into Bangladesh in recent weeks.

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali told reporters that Myanmar was willing to bring back more than 500,000 people from the persecuted Muslim minority after talks on Monday with a senior Myanmar representative.

"The talks were held in a friendly atmosphere and Myanmar has made a proposal to take back the Rohingya refugees," Ali said after meeting Myanmar official Kyaw Tint Swe in the capital, Dhaka.

"What Bangladesh has been saying is that we want to settle this issue peacefully and both countries have agreed to that."

Ali said both countries agreed to form a joint working group to start work on the massive repatriation. The Myanmar delegation did not speak to the media.

The United Nations has called the exodus of 507,000 Rohingya since August 25 the world's fastest-developing refugee emergency, and said Buddhist-majority Myanmar is engaging in ethnic cleansing against its Rohingya minority.

Myanmar rejects that. Its forces launched an offensive in the north of Rakhine state in response to coordinated attacks by Rohingya fighters.

Myanmar blames the rebels for attacks on civilians and for setting most of the fires that have reduced Rohingya villages to ashes. The fighters deny that.

Myanmar says more than 500 people have been killed in the latest violence, most of them rebels.



Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for an end to the violence and for safe zones to be set up in Myanmar to enable refugees to return.

She has also called for a UN fact-finding mission to go to Myanmar and for the government to implement recommendations on solving problems in Rakhine drawn up by a team led by former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan.

The crisis over Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya is the biggest problem leader Aung San Suu Kyi has had to face since forming a government last year after winning a landmark election in late 2015.

Suu Kyi, in an address to the nation last month, said Myanmar was ready to start a verification process under a 1993 agreement with Bangladesh and "refugees from this country will be accepted without any problem".

There were already about 300,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh before the most recent exodus.

■ **'Skin and bones': doctors fear for malnourished Rohingya kids**

Meantime, the United Nations says more than 14,100 children are at risk of dying from malnutrition in wretched camps where half a million mainly Rohingya refugees depend entirely on

charities for survival.

Food distribution in the vastly overcrowded settlements is still ad hoc and uncoordinated, the UN says, more than a month after refugees began pouring into southern Bangladesh to escape ethnic bloodshed in Myanmar.

Huge crowds descend on aid deliveries and soldiers need to herd starving people into bamboo pens where they squat cheek by jowl under the scorching sun for a meal.

Many go hungry as charities scramble to feed 500,000 mouths every day.

Children make up the bulk of new arrivals and are most vulnerable to the paucity of food, with 145,500 infants under five needing urgent intervention to stave off malnutrition, aid agencies say.

"Lots of children are showing all the signs of hunger and malnutrition, which is an alarming prospect when they've just fled so much horror," said Save the Children's emergency health unit director Dr. Unni Krishnan.

Many Rohingya children were already malnourished before making the perilous journey to Bangladesh, doctors say. Their health has since deteriorated further.

Their children's immune systems are already weakened, leaving them defenseless should a disease outbreak sweep through the camps as charities fear.

The Rohingya come from impoverished Rakhine, where state-imposed restrictions have ensured abysmal living standards for the persecuted Muslim community.

(Source: agencies)

## Saudi king due in Moscow on Thursday: Kremlin



The House of Saud regime's King Salman is to visit Russia on Thursday in the latest sign that Riyadh is coming to terms with the turn of the tide in Syria where Moscow is helping the government defeat terrorists.

"We are awaiting the king's visit on Thursday," senior Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov was quoted by Russia's TASS news agency as saying on Monday, without elaborating.

Riyadh has been supporting militants fighting to topple the central government in Damascus but those efforts have been dealt a blow by a series of decisive victories which the Syrian army has scored with the help of Russia, Iran and Hezbollah.

Turkey, a Saudi regime ally in the campaign against the Syrian government, has already shifted toward Russia, helping set up a number of de-escalation zones in Syria in coordination with Moscow and Tehran.

Meanwhile, it emerged recently that the Saudis, who have been hosting meetings of Syria militants for years, were pressing them on an accord with Damascus and two blocs closer to Moscow.

For years, Riyadh and the militant groups it supported had pushed for a situation which envisaged no role for President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's future.

In September, the House of Saud regime hosted Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov for the first official visit in years.

King Salman's visit also comes a month before OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil producers are due to meet with other nations outside the group to discuss extending a pact on cutting crude output, that has helped prop up prices.

Russia and the Saudi regime were key to the agreement in 2017 to cut production by around 1.8 million barrels per day for six months and subsequently extend it through March 2018.

The pact has helped drain additional crude supplies on the market and shore up prices to around \$55 per barrel.

Both Saudi Arabia and Russia are heavily dependent on oil exports and the plunge of the prices have hit their economies.

On Saturday, official data showed Saudi Arabia's economy has slipped back into recession as the oil sector stagnates and the government sector is hit by austerity policies designed to curb a state budget deficit.

Gross domestic product, adjusted for inflation, shrank 2.3 percent from the previous quarter in the April-June period, after dropping 3.8 percent in the first quarter, Reuters reported.

(Source: TASS)

## Trump to Tillerson: Don't bother talking to North Korea

The United States President Donald Trump dismissed the prospect of talks with North Korea as a waste of time a day after his own secretary of state said the United States was maintaining open lines of communication with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

"I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful secretary of state, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man," Trump wrote on Twitter, using his sarcastic nickname for Kim and seeming to contradict the top U.S. diplomat.

Trump, who has traded insults and threats with Kim in recent weeks amid escalating tensions over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs, later tweeted that his White House predecessors, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, had all "failed" on North Korea by "Being nice to Rocket Man."

"So why would it work now?" he asked.

Kim succeeded his father, Kim Jong Il, as North Korean leader in 2011, during Obama's administration. Previous presidents negotiated with Pyongyang but ultimately failed to prevent it from pressing ahead with its internationally condemned weapons programs.

Tillerson disclosed on Saturday that the United States was directly communicating with North Korea on its nuclear and missile programs but that Pyongyang had shown no interest in dialogue.

"Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done!" Trump said.

Tillerson said during a trip to China that the United States had multiple direct channels of communication with Pyongyang, the first such disclosure by the Trump administration, and that it was probing North Korea to see if it was interested in dialogue.

Tillerson expressed hope for reducing tensions with North Korea, which is fast advancing toward its goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the U.S. mainland.

"We are probing, so stay tuned," Tillerson told a small group of reporters. "We ask: 'Would you like to talk?'" He said the United States had "a couple of, three channels, open to Pyongyang."

In Beijing on Monday, China's foreign ministry said it supported dialogue.

(Source: Reuters)

## Multiple terrorist bomb attacks kill 15 people in Damascus

### U.S. drone kills 8 Hezbollah members in Syria: report

At least 15 people have been killed after multiple terrorist explosions hit a southern district of Syria's capital Damascus, state media say.

The explosions occurred in al-Midan neighborhood in the city on Monday after a number of terrorists detonated their explosive vests in front of a police station in the area.

Russia's RIA news agency, citing its correspondent who was reporting from the scene, noted that the dead included five policemen and 10 civilians.

RIA also quoted a source in the Syrian security services as saying that the attacks had been carried out by four bombers.

Meanwhile, al-Mayadeen TV channel also reported that four militants had carried out the attack.

The Arabic-language al-Watan newspaper reported that the attacks took place near a police station in Midan district of the Syrian capital city.

#### ■ 12 civilians killed in U.S. airstrikes in Syria

In another development, at least 12 civilians have been killed in the U.S.' latest airstrikes on Syria's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

According to Syria's official news agency, SANA, on Sunday, five people were killed while the United States jets targeted civilian areas located in the al-Kitf Street, the surroundings of al-Shafiei Mosque and al-Massiyeh roundabout in al-Bukamal city.

At least seven more people were killed in strikes on the village of Buqrus Fouqani in the province's eastern countryside.

According to local reports, some ten more people were also killed in the attacks which also destroyed large amounts civilian infrastructure.

Earlier, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that some than 2,800 civilians have lost their lives in three years by the U.S.-led coalition.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a United Nations mandate.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of achieving its declared goal of destroying ISIL.

The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, in two separate letters sent to UN Secretary General António Guterres and rotating President of the UN Security Council Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta on August 24, stated that the U.S.-led coalition was perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity through aerial bombardment of residential neighborhoods.

#### ■ U.S. drone kills 8 Hezbollah members in Syria

Elsewhere, a U.S. drone reportedly struck a Hezbollah base in Syria on Monday, a pro-Hezbollah website

reported.

"American rockets hit a Hezbollah base in Syria's eastern Homs countryside," a source told the pro-Hezbollah Mulhak website.

It added that the strike led to eight deaths and 15 injuries.

Although there was no independent confirmation of the incident, Hezbollah announced: "the martyrdom" of seven fighters on Monday before raising it to eight. Ahmed al-Aashek, a Hezbollah field commander, was named as the eighth death but no further details were given on the other deaths.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights - a Britain based Syrian monitoring group - said that eight Hezbollah fighters had been killed "at least," and the country the drone belonged to had not yet been identified.

"Other fighters were injured and some were severely injured, potentially leading to an increase in the number of deaths..." a statement from the center provided to The Daily Star said. The Observatory added that the strike took place in the Syrian town of Sukhneh.

If confirmed, this will be a major turn of events in the Syrian war. Rarely if at all have the U.S. directly hit Hezbollah targets in Syria, although Israeli warplanes have conducted dozens of strikes on Hezbollah bases and weapons shipments inside the country.

(Source: agencies)

## Las Vegas massacre: Deadliest mass shooting since 1949

### ISIL claims attack

➔ sparking a panic in which some people trampled on others, as law enforcement officers scrambled to locate the gunman.

Shocked concertgoers, some with blood on their clothing, wandered the streets afterwards.

Police said they had no information about Paddock's motive, that he had no criminal record and was not believed to be connected to any militant group. Paddock killed himself before police entered the hotel room he was firing from, Clark County Sheriff Joseph Lombardo told reporters.

"We have no idea what his belief system was," Lombardo said. A senior U.S. government official told Reuters that Paddock's name was not on any database of suspected terrorists.

Lombardo said there were more than 10 rifles in the room where Paddock killed himself after checking into the hotel on Thursday.

The dead included one off-duty police officer, Lombardo said. Two on-duty officers were injured, including one who was in stable condition after surgery and one who sustained minor injuries, Lombardo said. Police warned the death toll may rise.

As sunrise approached, police were still finding people who had taken cover



during the attack, Lombardo said. "It's going to take time for us to get through the evacuation phase," Lombardo said.

Video of the attack showed panicked crowds fleeing as sustained rapid gunfire ripped through the area.

"People were just dropping to the ground. It just kept going on," said Steve Smith, a 45-year-old visitor from Phoenix, Arizona, who had flown in for the concert. He said the gunfire went on for an extended period of time.

"Probably 100 shots at a time," Smith said. "It would sound like it was reloading and then it would go again."

Las Vegas's casinos, nightclubs and shopping draw some 3.5 million visitors from around the world each year and the area was packed with visitors when the shooting broke out shortly after 10 p.m. local time (0400 GMT).

Shares of U.S. casino operators fell in early trading on Wall Street, with MGM Resorts International, which owns the Mandalay Bay, down 4 percent. Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd, Wynn Resorts Ltd and Las Vegas Sands Corp each fell 1 to 2 percent.

#### ■ Deadliest in modern U.S. history

The United States President Donald

Trump tweeted his "warmest condolences" to the victims of the "terrible Las Vegas shooting".

Sunday's attack is the deadliest mass shooting in the U.S. since 1949.

So far in 2017, the watchdog group Gun Violence Archive has documented 273 mass shootings in the U.S.

The group also recorded 11,621 gun-related deaths and 23,433 firearm-related injuries during that period.

The Mandalay Bay attack comes just weeks after Spencer Hight carried out a mass shooting during a gathering at his estranged wife's home in Plano, Texas. The assailant killed eight people and was later shot dead by police.

#### ■ ISIL claims attack

The ISIL terrorist outfit has claimed responsibility for a shooting that killed at least 50 people and wounded over 400 in Las Vegas.

"The Las Vegas attack was carried out by a soldier of the Daesh (ISIL) and he carried it out in response to calls to target states of the coalition," the group's news agency Amaq said in reference to the U.S.-led coalition fighting the group in the Middle East.

"The Las Vegas attacker converted to Islam a few months ago," Amaq added.

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Minerals, mining exports at \$3.6b in 5 months**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Iran's minerals and mining exports stood at 26 million tons worth \$3.6 billion during the first five months of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22, 2017), IRNA reported on Monday.

According to the same report, Iran's minerals and mining industries exports exceeded \$7 billion in the previous Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017). The exports rose by 38 percent and 17 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.



**Iran's position in WEF's competitiveness ranking notches up**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — According to "The Global Competitiveness Report 2017-18", published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Iran's competitiveness index has improved seven places from its previous rank in the preceding year, IRIB news reported on Monday.

Iran presently ranks 69th among 137 countries included in the report.

Switzerland became the leader of WEF ranking. The country is followed by the U.S., Singapore, the Netherlands and Germany.



**Iran targets 1bcf output for Kish gas field's 1st phase**

**ENERGY TEHRAN** — A daily production of 1 billion cubic feet has been put on agenda for the first development phase of Iran's Kish gas field which is to be developed based on the country's new contract models, ISNA reported on Monday.

Kish gas field is a giant gas field in southern Iran in the Persian Gulf. It holds about 55.5 trillion cubic feet of gas in place of which 50 trillion feet is recoverable.



**FDI in industry, mining sectors to rise 10-fold by 2021**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Iran expects a 10-fold increase of foreign direct investment (FDI) in industry and mining sectors by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021).

According to ISNA, the FDI for industry and mining sectors stood at \$700 million in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2017), and it is expected to reach \$7 billion by the end of the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (March 2021).

**Catalonia worries knock euro against stronger dollar**

The euro slipped on Monday after a violence-marred independence vote in Spain's Catalonia region fuelled anxiety over political risk in the euro zone, and as a renewal of the "Trump-flation trade" lifted the dollar across the board.

Data showing factories across the euro zone enjoyed their most productive month since early 2011 in September could provide no support to the single currency, which slipped 0.7 percent to \$1.1730 (0.8813 pounds), close to its lowest in six weeks.



Investors were watching the political situation in Spain nervously, after police used batons and rubber bullets to try to prevent Sunday's banned vote in a show of force that left hundreds injured.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy now faces the country's biggest constitutional crisis in decades, with newspaper editorials saying the ballot - in which Catalan officials said 90 percent of voters had chosen to leave Spain - had set the stage for a decisive clash with Madrid.

"After the French election, a lot of risk premium was priced out of Europe... but now we have another against-the-status-quo European vote, so for financial markets, political risks in Europe have increased," said UBS currency strategist Constantin Bolz, in Zurich.

"There will be a little bit of noise going through the week, but overall our expectation is that it will not have a dramatic, long-lasting impact," he added.

Against the Swiss franc, often bought at times of uncertainty, the euro dipped to its weakest in three weeks at 1.13885 francs per euro. (Source: Reuters)

# JCPOA shall continue to stand: MEDEF VP

**I →** To have a better sight of De Silguy's opinion about the current and future Iran-France ties, the Tehran Times made an e-mail interview with him after his trip to Iran.

Being asked about his prospect of the future of Tehran-Paris economic and trade ties, under the impact of international political affairs, including President Trump's decision about Iran's nuclear deal, conflicts in the Middle East, etc., he replied: "It is true that Donald Trump's recurrent declarations created some level of uncertainty. We witnessed a slight slowing down of economic activities from January until May, after the result of presidential elections both in Iran and France. As a result, major investment decisions were postponed to the end of June. However, MEDEF International has been very busy debunking some unfounded fears," he said, "Indeed, it is true that the Iran nuclear agreement has been heavily criticized by the United States. However, the Trump administration is still part of this agreement and has dutifully carried out all its legal obligations deriving from it."

"On the other hand, French President Emmanuel Macron, the representative of the European Union External Action Services, Federica Mogherini, and other world leaders strongly showcased their support for this agreement, reminding that it has been signed by Iran and the United States, but also France, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany and the European Union. It shall thus continue to stand," he added.

Answering a question on the achievements of his visit to Iran, the signed contracts and the fields of cooperation for instance, and also about the prospect of French companies in Iran, De Silguy explained that: "This visit was the 5th high level French business delegation in only three years. Representatives from top French companies as well as very innovative SMEs met with newly appointed ministers, the Iranian and Isfahan Chamber of



Vice-President of the Movement of the Enterprises of France (also known as MEDEF) Yves-Thibault De Silguy

Commerce and the governorate of Isfahan, among others. In this respect, interest of the French private sector for Iran remains, as ever, extremely high. Many contracts attracted public attention. This is the case of Vinci [French construction firm], which is currently in negotiations with regards to the renovation of the Isfahan and Mashhad airports. We see strong areas of cooperation between France and Iran, for instance in the transports and infrastructure sectors. According to recent declarations from the [Iranian] transportation and infrastructure minister, Dr. Akhoundi, Iran is planning to create, renovate or expand ports, rails and metro/tramway infrastructures. French companies and their subsidiaries are ready to join forces with Iran to reach these ambitious objectives. Oil & gas, environment, pharmaceuticals, digital and communica-

tions or consumer goods are also areas where French companies have much to offer."

As Iranian media quoted Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Gholam-Hossein Shafeie as saying, the trade between Iran and France is expected to reach \$4.8 billion by the end of the next year. The Tehran Times asked MEDEF vice-president about how the target will be hit.

"Several major contracts have been finalized recently. In July, Total signed a \$5 million agreement with Petropars for the development of South Pars [phase] 11. In August, Renault signed an agreement with Iran Khodro for the construction of up to 300,000 cars per year in Iran," he said.

"These new areas of cooperation will contribute to strengthen trade relation-

ships between France and Iran. This encouraging forecast from the Iran Chamber of Commerce is also the result of past contracts signed over the last year and a half, such as Airbus, ATR, Peugeot, Renault etc. In other terms, this very promising trade relationship is due to the commitment of French companies on Iran's side, on many major and strategically contracts, reaching a wide array of industries," he added.

Describing about the existing impediments on the way of French companies to boost activities in Iran, For example, compensating the absence of European and French banks in Iran, the French official explained: "It is true that trade activities in Iran have been hindered by the lack of financing solutions from French and European banks. However, we remain positive. Few days ago, Nicolas Dufourq, head of the French public investment bank, Bpifrance, announced that it will shortly provide financing for French companies in Iran, with credit lines up to 500 million euros. This solution will be the most important step taken by a European bank with regards to Iran. Thus, I am confident that when this credit line comes into place, France will be able to develop even further and quicker into the Iranian market."

De Silguy also described France's plans for making investments in Iran.

"Of course, not all sanctions have been lifted by the nuclear agreement of July 2015. American sanctions remain in place and French companies are compelled to take them into account before investing in Iran. Therefore, we always advise French companies to be cautious about the international legal framework before entering negotiations in Iran. Once relevant due diligence have been made, Iran has a very promising market to invest in! Furthermore, the French government's support to our companies, as showed by the presence of the Minister of State Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, during our delegation in Iran, is also of great help," he said.

## Asian factories rev up in Sept. ahead of year-end spending spree

Factories in Asia's largest economies cranked up activity in September as a synchronized upswing in growth globally pointed to solid consumption of manufactured goods heading into the lucrative end-of-year shopping season.

However, pockets of weakness in regional economies are likely to keep Asian central banks slanted toward more accommodative monetary policy, even as their Western counterparts move to scale back stimulus.

China's central bank on Saturday cut the amount of cash that some banks must hold as reserves for the first time since February 2016 in a bid to encourage more lending to struggling smaller firms and energize its lackluster private sector.

The world's second-largest economy has defied expectations for a slowdown this year, growing at a strong clip in the first half thanks to a construction boom. Beijing's latest easing comes ahead of a key party gathering this month.

"It's a solid backdrop for manufacturing in the region as we head toward the big shopping season," said Rob Carnell, Asia's head of research at ING.

That sentiment was backed by an official Purchasing Managers' Index from China's vast manufacturing sector, which showed activity last month grew at the fastest clip since 2012 on solid demand.

But cost pressures from high raw materials prices and continued underperformance of smaller firms mean some manufacturers are still struggling, which was reflected in a separate private survey of Chinese factories showing growth slowed in September.

In Japan, factory activity grew the fastest in four months, thanks to robust exports growth and underpinned improving economic momentum even though inflation remained tepid. Meanwhile, a closely watched Bank of Japan survey showed big manufacturers have more confidence in business conditions than they have had for a decade, thanks to a weaker yen and robust global demand.

In South Korea, manufacturing activity expanded at the fastest pace in almost two years.

Indonesia, Southeast Asia's biggest economy, also showed an improvement in factory growth but the pace was tepid and production contracted slightly. Indonesia has cut interest rates twice this year in a bid to boost stubbornly weak domestic consumption, while India slashed rates once in August to spur growth and inflation.

(Source: Reuters)



IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

## INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 96-07/131

*Second Announcement*

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

**Subject of Two-Stage Tender:**  
Infrastructure of Storage Network and Delivery of Cyberspace Content according to the tender documents

**Deadline of Receiving Documents:**  
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Tuesday Oct. 10, 2017**.  
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 223,529** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee (its equivalent of rials guarantee according to the exchange rate of Central Bank of Iran)  
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 Nov. 15, 2017** 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 Monday Nov. 20, 2017** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.  
It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.

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

*Public Relations Dept. of IRIB*

# Oil slips further below \$57 after third-quarter rally

Oil dipped further below \$57 a barrel on Monday as an increase in U.S. drilling and higher OPEC output put the brakes on a rally in which the market scored its biggest third-quarter gain in 13 years.

U.S. energy companies added oil rigs for the first week in seven and Iraq announced its exports increased slightly in September when OPEC overall boosted output according to a Reuters survey.

Brent crude, the global benchmark, was down 12 cents at \$56.67 a barrel at 0846 GMT. It notched up a third-quarter gain of around 20 percent, the biggest third-quarter increase since 2004 and traded as high as \$59.49 last week.

"I think it's going to be a struggle to move above \$60 Brent," said Olivier Jakob, oil analyst at Petromatrix.

U.S. crude was down 17 cents at \$51.50. The U.S. benchmark posted its strongest quarterly gain since the second quarter of 2016.

Oil's rally has been driven by mounting signs that a three-year supply glut is easing, helped by a production cut deal by global producers led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

"Brent crude oil prices have gone from strength to strength as surplus oil stocks are being depleted," Bank of America Merrill Lynch said in a report. "Importantly, this rally is supported by a tighter physical market, providing a fundamental backbone that was not present before."

But a Reuters survey on Friday found OPEC oil output rose last month, gaining mostly because of higher supplies from Iraq and also from Libya, an OPEC member



exempt from cutting output.

The Libyan gain appears short-lived, though. The country's largest oilfield, Sharara, has been closed since Sunday, an engineer at the field and a Libyan oil source said.

And in a sign U.S. oil output could rebound, energy

services firm Baker Hughes said on Friday energy companies added oil rigs for the first week in seven after a 14-month drilling recovery stalled in August.

Middle Eastern oil producers are concerned the price rise will only stir U.S. shale producers into more drilling and push prices lower again. (Source: Reuters)

## Abu Dhabi expands worldwide solar investments



In May Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (ADWEA) closed a project finance agreement for the 1.17-GW Noor Abu Dhabi, a project set to be the largest independent solar plant in the world. The photovoltaic (PV) facility will cost \$872m – of which \$650m will be debt and \$222m equity – and is slated to be operational by the second quarter of 2019.

Located in Sweihan, 120 km south-east of the capital, the project is being implemented by the Sweihan PV Power Company, a consortium led by ADWEA (60 percent) alongside Japan's Marubeni Corporation (20 percent) and China's JinkoSolar Holding (20 percent).

The May announcement comes on the heels of a power purchase agreement in March stipulating that Marubeni and JinkoSolar would construct, own, operate and maintain the PV plant under a 25-year deal.

In terms of capacity, Noor will be larger than India's 648-MW Kamuthi Solar Power Project located in the state of Tamil Nadu, as well as California's 550-MW Desert Sunlight Solar Farm.

The Noor project builds on the solid

foundation Abu Dhabi has developed in renewable energy, a sector with a central role in targets set out at a federal level. The UAE's Energy Plan 2050 aims to shift the energy mix in the UAE to 44 percent renewables by that year, whereas fossil fuels currently make up around 90 percent of energy needs.

Abu Dhabi's investments both within the UAE and abroad have been spearheaded by local renewable energy and clean technology firm Masdar, launched in 2006 and owned by Mubadala Investment Company. Research around renewables was carried out largely by the associated Masdar Institute of Science and Technology until early 2017, when the institution was consolidated under the umbrella of the government-owned Khalifa University of Science and Technology.

The emirate's credentials in renewable energy development were underscored in 2011 when the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) moved its head office to Masdar City, the region's first sustainable urban development. (Source: oilprice.com)

## ExxonMobil dethroned as top energy company



Gazprom dethroned ExxonMobil as the top energy company in the world, according to the 2017 S&P Global Platts Top 250 Global Energy Company Rankings. The rankings measure the financial performance of energy firms on four key metrics: asset worth, revenues, profits, and return on invested capital. The list only includes companies that have assets greater than \$5.5 billion.

For 12 years, ExxonMobil was second to none. But that changed this year – Exxon was ejected from the top spot, and fell all the way to ninth place.

Gazprom's surge reflects its state ownership, its captured market in Europe for its natural gas, as well as the fall of some of its peers. But the Russian gas giant's ability to weather sanctions, regulatory threats from the EU, low oil and gas prices, and the rise of competition from new supplies of LNG is impressive.

The reshuffling was the result of some dramatic changes underway in the energy industry, according to S&P Global Platts. Typically, the companies topping the list have been integrated oil companies. But this year, utilities and pipeline

companies moved up the list. That, combined with the stumble by Exxon, marks a "changing of the guard, the most profound in the Rankings history," S&P Global Platts said in a press release.

Still, to some degree, the shakeup is not surprising. After all, oil prices have languished for a third year, weighing on the oil industry. That doesn't necessarily affect utilities and pipeline companies. While oil producers have stumbled, revenues for regulated utilities are pretty stable, and the same is true for pipeline companies that typically ink long-term deals with relatively inflexible pricing.

"European utilities and North American pipeline operators got a boost from sticking to what they know best and shying away from more risky enterprises and territories," Harry Weber, senior natural gas writer of S&P Global Platts. "Regulated utilities, in particular, have an advantage because their revenues are largely defined and consistent, and are not as susceptible to swings in oil and gas prices."

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Lower for longer oil prices vs higher, sooner

As the great Canadian rock band Rush put it in their 1981 classic "Tom Sawyer": "Changes aren't permanent, but change is."

Only two months ago, oil analysts and executives were lining up to discuss the prospect of crude prices staying at about \$50 per barrel. Ben van Beurden, chief executive of Royal Dutch Shell, said the company should be prepared for prices to be "lower forever".

This week, benchmark Brent crude for a while went over \$59 per barrel, and Ed Morse of Citigroup, who was one of the analysts who saw a price fall coming in 2014, has warned of the possibility of a "supply gap" emerging and a tighter market next year.

The immediate cause of the latest surge in oil was the threat from Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to cut off the pipeline that carries about 500,000 barrels per day of crude to world markets from the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq. The Kurds' overwhelming vote for independence in Monday's referendum outraged Turkey and other neighboring states. Even before the vote and Erdogan's comments, however, there were clear signs that the market was tightening, with inventories declining.

The central planks of the "lower for

longer" argument for oil are still in place. On the demand side, rising fuel efficiency and then electrification of transport are expected to chip away at consumption, while on the supply side the U.S. shale industry is expected to be able to respond with surging production as higher prices improve returns. The U.S. Energy Information Administration was already forecasting that the country's oil production would hit a record high next year. Shale producers have been taking advantage of the latest uptick in prices to lock in next year's revenues with swaps and options.

Recently, though, both sides of the thesis have been under attack. Developed countries' oil demand, which had been on a declining trend for a decade, has now been growing for the past three years as low prices draw drivers back into gas-guzzling cars. Cutting oil demand might take more radical government action, such as the long-term ban on internal combustion engine vehicles now apparently being considered by California. It may be a while before Shell's electric car charging stations are everywhere.

On the supply side, meanwhile, there is still uncertainty about how strong and how sustained the rise in U.S. production can be. Wood Mackenzie, the research company, suggested production in the

Permian Basin of Texas and New Mexico, the hottest spot in the shale oil industry, could top out in 2021. Dan Murtaugh reported for Bloomberg that the hectic pace of activity in the Permian was "so reminiscent of the last boom that went bust that it has folks on edge." Moody's, the rating agency, argued that shale producers need oil to be above \$50 to make "meaningful" returns.

To clarify Ben van Beurden's point, he was not forecasting that oil would be "lower forever"; he meant that Shell should be operating with the mindset that it might be. If you are a risk-averse oil producer, that makes sense. Oil consumers should probably likewise be thinking about the possibility that prices could be higher, sooner.

This year's hurricane season in the Atlantic has been one of the most costly on record, even allowing for inflation. The scale of the devastation in Puerto Rico caused by Hurricane Maria has been becoming apparent this week. It has been estimated that 90 percent of the electricity grid has been wrecked, and it could be months before supplies are restored. Satellite images from Nasa show how the island has gone dark as a result of the storm. Simon Johnson, a former chief economist of the IMF, wrote about how

Puerto Rico needed a new, more resilient electricity system.

The need for a resilient grid is one of the reasons being used to justify government support for coal-fired power plants in the U.S., but it seems that during Hurricane Harvey gas was more useful.

Philip Verleger, a fellow at the Colorado School of Mines, explained how, in spite of the widespread damage caused by hurricanes Harvey and Irma, there was only a "minimal" impact on energy markets.

Cost-effective energy storage has long been the Holy Grail of electricity systems. This British company has a technology based on liquid air, and hopes to sign its first commercial deals in the next 12 months.

Renewable energy is at a crossroads in India, with fears growing that some uneconomic projects may be abandoned.

The Calgary Herald carried a fascinating history of Alberta's oil sands over the past 21 years, telling how the region entered an "unprecedented era of expansion."

James Dyson, the British inventor made famous by his vacuum cleaners, is the latest entrepreneur to seek to try his luck with electric cars, and is aiming at a 2020 launch for his first vehicle.

(Source: Financial Times)

## Oil market stars risk being dimmed by China's mega refineries

China's independent refiners burst onto the international oil market scene only a couple of years ago and lifted the nation past the U.S. as the world's No. 1 crude buyer. Now, a new generation of firms building some of the globe's biggest plants are threatening to eclipse them.

The original set of private processors, known as teapots, is clustered in the eastern Shandong province, and operate relatively small refineries that pump out fuels such as gasoline and diesel. By contrast, the budding giants supported by the regional governments in Zhejiang and Liaoning will focus on making petrochemicals -- the building blocks of everything from sportswear to soda cans and Star Wars figures.

At last week's Asia Pacific Petroleum Conference in Singapore, one of the industry's largest gatherings, traders and company executives were speculating about how the upcoming Chinese mega refineries would shake up oil markets worldwide just as the smaller plants did. Saudi Arabia, OPEC's largest producer, broke with tradition to sell a test cargo to one of the teapots, and the world's top oil traders such as Trafigura Group have also sought to supply the companies. The refiners bought U.S. crude as well.

Still, it's not been all smooth sailing for the Shandong firms. They have been plagued by infrastructure issues, have come under the scrutiny of China's taxman, have been denied fuel export licenses and are facing increased competition from the nation's state-owned behemoths. And with the first of the new plants expected to come online in 2018, they are turning wary.

"Independent refiners in Shandong think of themselves as wolves, alongside tigers that are the national oil companies," said Zhang Liucheng, vice president of Dongming Petrochemical Group, one of the largest teapot refiners. "But with the emergence of other bigger independents that will soon bring new capacity online, they will become the wolves, while the tigers remain, and we will be the sheep in their presence."

### ■ Zhoushan island

One of the version 2.0 plants is a \$24 billion refinery on Zhoushan island in Zhejiang province, expected to refine 20 million metric tons a year, or about 400,000 barrels per day, when it's completed in 2018.

The facility's operator, Rongsheng Petrochemical Co., plans to double its capacity by 2020, a move that would make it bigger than energy giant Royal Dutch Shell Plc's Singapore refinery, the company's largest, as well as Exxon Mobil Corp's Baytown refinery in Texas. It would also rival plants run by India's Reliance Industries Ltd. and South Korea's SK Innovation Co.

At full capacity, the mega-complex will be able to produce 10.4 million tons a year of aromatics including paraxylene and 2.8 million tons of ethylene. Gasoline produced at the refinery will be marketed at pump stations operated by Rongsheng's unit, Zhejiang Petroleum Co.

Hengli Group, another Chinese petrochemical giant, is planning a facility that aims to process 20 million tons in the northern Chinese city of Dalian in Liaoning province. The plan is supported by the country's economic planner, according to a statement posted on the company's official website earlier this month.

### ■ Shipping logistics

While crude imports by teapots in Shandong have been plagued by shipping and logistical challenges because of shallow ports and the lack of pipeline infrastructure that has led to vessel pile-ups, the newcomers have the advantage of access to deep-water ports. That would benefit them by reducing freight costs as they can ship cargoes on larger vessels.

"The market is closely watching Rongsheng and Hengli as they're able to accommodate larger vessels, which means it could be more viable to supply long-haul crudes in addition to regional barrels," said Neveyn Nah, a Singapore-based analyst at industry consultant Energy Aspects Ltd. "The units come at a time when other refineries like Saudi Arabia's Jazan, Malaysia's Rapid and Brunei's Hengli are expected to be completed, adding to the list of new refinery builds that we'll see in 2019."

Rongsheng plans to import crude feedstock via purpose-built wharfs capable of receiving vessels that are of the very large crude carrier class or larger, while Hengli's terminal will be able to handle VLCCs. The ability to receive bigger tankers will add to the ease and affordability of purchasing oil from farther-away sources such as the Middle East, Europe or the Americas.

Some Shandong units have struggled to do the same due to ports that can accommodate only smaller ships. Dongming is planning to build a bigger receiving terminal at Lanchan port.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Thailand again delays auction of Erawan, Bongkot gas fields

Thailand will delay the auctions of the concessions for the Erawan and Bongkot gas fields for at least another month and expects to announce winners in the middle of next year, a senior official said on Monday.

Chevron Corp operates the Erawan field and state-owned PTT Exploration and Production operates the Bongkot field under licenses set to expire in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

The fields have combined output of 2.2 billion cubic feet a day, about 76 percent of output from the Gulf of Thailand.

Mubadala Petroleum and Mitsui Oil Exploration (Moeco) are interested in bidding, Veerasak Punggrassamee, director-general of the mineral fuels department, told reporters.

Thai energy firms, Bangchak Corporation and Palang Sophon Ltd. were also invited to bid.

"The council of state is reviewing the production-sharing contract (PSC) law that will be used for the Erawan and Bongkot fields and should conclude within one to two months," Veerasak added.

Bidding will begin after the cabinet approves the law and auction terms, with winning bids expected to be announced six or seven months after the auction in the middle of 2018, he added.

In September, the energy ministry said the auction would begin in November and winning bids announced in April next year. (Source: Reuters)

## Europe's future after Germany's election

Observers have been wringing their hands over Germany's recent election, in which the large mainstream parties, the CDU and the SPD, suffered significant setbacks, while the far right exceeded expectations. But the election also upended a governing coalition that had avoided desperately needed reforms for too long.

There is no doubt about it: the outcome of Germany's recent federal election is as important as it is remarkable. The parties that have dominated German politics for years – the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), plus its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU) – all lost support at the ballot box.



The CDU/CSU and SPD's inward-looking election campaigns were astonishingly parochial. The most widely discussed topics included a proposed diesel ban, tax policies, rental fees, and internal security issues. Yes, these are relevant matters for German voters. But when it came to the most pressing challenges confronting the European Union and the eurozone, Germany's mainstream parties were largely silent.

Those challenges are manifold. The United Kingdom is negotiating its exit from the EU, and there is deep uncertainty as to what the future UK-EU relationship will look like. The EU desperately needs to prevent a further decline of democracy and the rule of law in Poland and Hungary. It has yet to develop a long-term solution to the migration and refugee crisis. And it must confront the security challenges stemming from terrorism, a rudderless America under President Donald Trump. At the same time, while the eurozone is finally showing signs of growth, its recovery still must be stabilized.

How these issues are (or are not) addressed will define the future of Europe, and Germany's position in it. Mainstream German leaders should have discussed them more broadly as they campaigned in TV studios, convention halls, classrooms, and on city streets. Indeed, the two big parties' failure to do so helps to explain why they lost support. By patching up small problems and avoiding the big issues, the CDU/CSU and SPD created a vacuum. And populist nationalists from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) were happy to fill it, capturing 13% of the vote.

To sideline these illiberal elements, Europe will have to deliver on meaningful reforms. And the only way to do that is for those in Europe who still stand for liberal democracy to join forces.

### ■ The European project

When the German election result was reported, many analysts were quick to conclude that it represented a damaging blow to French President Emmanuel Macron and his plan to reinvigorate the European project. But I disagree with that assessment. Let us not forget, it was the CDU's German Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schäuble who blocked most of the proposed eurozone reforms over the past decade.

Another way of looking at the German election outcome, then, is as an opportunity for a new beginning. An end to the CDU-SPD "grand coalition" could mean an end to political stagnation not just in Germany, but at the European level, too.

Germany's post-election coalition negotiations are now underway, and, with the SPD determined not to join the government, the most likely result is a "Jamaica" alliance (named for the colors of that country's flag), comprising the CDU, the Free Democrats (FDP), and the Greens. Germany's next government, one hopes, will include pro-European politicians with fresh ideas and a willingness to push for European-level reforms, possibly along the lines of what Macron has proposed. In that case, a new crop of leaders could be a driving force shaping Germany's role in Europe for years to come.

Like Macron, the FDP aims to make Europe more democratic: it supports transnational candidate lists for EU-level elections; and it wants to bring European citizens closer together with democratic conventions in member states. The FDP is also pushing for common European rules on migration, and for a shared border and coast guard. And it supports the establishment of a European FBI to coordinate the fight against terrorism.

The FDP's leader, Christian Lindner, is right to say that the rules of the EU Stability and Growth Pact must be respected, and that spending taxpayers' money without proper budgetary accountability will only nourish populist and nationalist forces such as AfD. Fortunately, in this respect, his outlook does not conflict with Macron's. Both agree that Europe needs better governance, based on a combination of consistently applied fiscal rules and growth-enhancing investments.

This is a decisive moment for Europe. We Europeans need to find solutions to shared problems, and we need Germany and France to lead the way. The French-German axis that drove European integration forward in the past must do so again. I am confident that a new coalition government in Germany will be able to work with France to build a closer political and economic union. Making the EU more democratic is the only way to push back the nationalist tide that the European project was meant to prevent.

(Source: project-syndicate.org)

**Germany's next government, one hopes, will include pro-European politicians with fresh ideas and a willingness to push for European-level reforms.**

# Did Washington lift the veto on Palestinian reconciliation?

By Nour Abu Aisha & Mohamed Majed

Palestinian political analysts agree that the United States has lifted the ban it had imposed on achieving Palestinian reconciliation.

The position is based on extensive evidence, most notably the statement issued on Thursday by the International Quartet on the Middle East, made up of the U.S., Russia, the EU and the UN. The statement welcomed the reconciliation efforts and did not attack Hamas as it usually does.

In the statement, the Quartet's envoys said it supports the efforts "to create the conditions for the Palestinian Authority (PA) to assume its responsibilities in Gaza."

The statement, a copy of which was obtained by the Anadolu Agency, urged the parties to "take concrete steps to reunite Gaza and the West Bank under the legitimate Palestinian Authority."

Acting out of character, the Quartet refrained from criticizing Hamas.

In an interview with Anadolu published on Thursday, Mousa Abu Marzouk, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said that the U.S. had lifted the ban it previously imposed on achieving reconciliation.

In response to a question regarding his source of information in this regard, Abu Marzouk said: "We received information from their sources and other information from Western diplomats confirming that the U.S. lifted the veto on the Palestinian reconciliation. American news reports also mentioned that there has been a shift in the American administration's policy."

Political analyst Talal Okel, who writes for Palestine's Al-Ayyam newspaper, believes that "the events taking place in the Palestinian arena and the statements made by international representatives regarding the Palestinian reconciliation suggest that the U.S. has indeed lifted its veto on this issue."

### ■ An unclear vision

The timing of lifting the veto on the reconciliation coincides with the general shift of American policy for the region, which is moving towards activating the regional peace process, according to "an unclear vision", Okel said.

Okel also noted that the Quartet's statement was issued at Washington's request, after a long absence from the Palestinian arena, in order to strengthen the position suggesting that "the whole international community is demanding reconciliation and is ready to support it."

"This statement is also a part of the international Quartet's adoption and support for the U.S. move towards a regional settlement," said Okel. He added: "Through its support for the reconciliation efforts, the Quartet is aiming to remove the obstacles hindering the PA, participate in the political activity and deal positively with it."



Hamas Political Bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh (L) and Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas (R)

**According to Abu Sharkh, the international parties want to deal with the PA as the sole party, with Hamas under its wing.**

Okel believes that the Quartet refrained from criticizing Hamas or describing it as a terrorist organization in order for its efforts to successfully reinforce the reconciliation and to add credibility to its position.

He noted that the Quartet is accepting Hamas as being involved with the PA, which will re-establish its control over Gaza. This is especially true as Hamas is not opposed to this step and will not have sole control of Gaza.

"Hamas has made the concessions it needs to eliminate any excuses and to establish good will needed to facilitate any reconciliation. It has also shown great flexibility thus easing the work of the government," said Okel.

Political analyst Mustafa Ibrahim agreed with Okel. Saying that "the indicators on the ground suggest an international consensus regarding the success of the Palestinian reconciliation."

He added, "The behaviour of America and the international envoys for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, along with the statement by Abu Marzouk, all indicate that the U.S. lifted the veto and gave the green light to achieve the reconciliation."

Ibrahim believes that the statement by the Quartet reinforces the idea of lifting the veto on the reconciliation and giving

the green light for its success.

"The international climate and the settlements taking place in the region or at the international level, have all contributed to the achievement of this reconciliation," he said.

The Quartet, says Ibrahim, remains a component of the international community and represents its overall position.

He also stated that Israel seems to be welcoming of the rapprochement between Egypt and Hamas, as it removes the specters of a military confrontation in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli press reported that they are satisfied with the rapprochement between Hamas and Egypt and consider the process of cooling the Gaza Strip front important for Israel at a time when the tension on the northern border [the border with Lebanon and Syria] is growing said Ibrahim.

He believes that the success of the Palestinian reconciliation will delay the occurrence of any military operation in the Gaza Strip.

### ■ The reconciliation issue

The political analyst predicts that the U.S. administration has played a role in progressing the reconciliation issue, noting that the UN's announcement of

the establishment of a fund to support the reconciliation government's assuming of its tasks in Gaza confirms this.

During his visit to the Gaza Strip on Monday, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nikolay Mladenov said that the UN would work to establish a fund to support the government's takeover of Gaza.

In the same context, the Palestinian writer and academic Asaad Abu Sharkh has agreed with his colleagues regarding the presence of international approval for the success of a reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas.

In an interview with Anadolu, Abu Sharkh said he believes that the international parties that intervened in order to end the division have consulted with Israel.

"Israel is interested in the reconciliation (...) it does not want violence or wars at this point in time and wants to focus its efforts outside of Palestine," he said.

He believes that the Quartet is supporting the reconciliation in order to "reduce the role of the resistance and to rein in the armed organizations."

Abu Sharkh also notes that this will be impossible for the factions, but it is possible to "reach a long-term truce with Israel by means of diplomatic action involving the Quartet."

According to Abu Sharkh, the international parties want to deal with the PA as the sole party, with Hamas under its wing.

"The peace process failed miserably and Israel and America do not recognize or authorize the two-state solution. In order to avoid this, these parties see reconciliation and unity as a solution," he added.

In the eyes of the international parties, says Abu Sharkh, the reconciliation will control the area and ward off wars.

On 17 September, the Hamas movement announced the dissolution of the administrative committee formed in the Gaza Strip to manage government institutions. This move was in response to Egyptian efforts to achieve a Palestinian reconciliation and end the division.

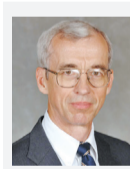
In a statement issued by Hamas at the time, the movement invited the consensus government to immediately assume its responsibilities in the Gaza Strip.

The dissolution of the committee was carried out in the context of efforts by Egypt recently to achieve a Palestinian reconciliation and end the division since mid-2007. These efforts were made during the visit of Hamas and Fatah delegations to Cairo.

The Palestinian government announced on Tuesday that it will head to Gaza on Monday and hold its weekly meeting there. It also stated that it will begin assuming its responsibilities and tasks there.

(Source: middleeastmonitor.com)

## The muddled travel ban



By Paul R. Pillar

Former CIA veteran

The Trump administration's travel ban is in its third version, and it still does not respond convincingly to the ostensible need it was supposed to address. The supposed purpose itself is unclear. The latest version introduces additional confusion about the ostensible objective, even without getting into the real motivations behind it.

Most administration statements on the subject, including the more formal ones as well as less scripted defenses of the ban, center on the idea of keeping bad guys out of the United States by restricting travel from countries in which such guys are presumed to live. The disconnect between justification and reality that has existed ever since version 1.0 is that there is little or no correspondence between the countries listed in the ban and where terrorists gunning for the U.S. homeland have come from. Over the past four decades, no Americans have been killed in the United States by foreign terrorists who came from any of the countries in either the original version of the ban or the latest version.

Moreover, the whole idea of a ban on entry to the United States overlooks how much terrorism within the United States, even when it has involved foreign-born individuals, has not involved crossing of borders to commit the act. According to a study by the New America Foundation, all the perpetrators of post-9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States were U.S. citizens or legal residents and would not have been stopped by the travel ban. The evident ethnic targeting of the ban is likely only to increase the resentment, suspicion, and alienation — and thus the propensity to resort to extremist violence — of members of the communities who feel kinship with those targeted.

Other rationales that administration officials have offered for the ban have mentioned cooperation or lack of



**According to a study by the New America Foundation, all the perpetrators of post-9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States were U.S. citizens or legal residents and would not have been stopped by the travel ban.**

cooperation on counterterrorism from governments of the countries involved, especially in sharing information about possible terrorists. Although this rationale is still about terrorism, it is quite different from the question of where bad guys are most likely to come from. Countries with cooperative regimes are not necessarily the same as countries with nonviolent, peace-loving citizens. The result is new confusion about exactly how the measure is supposed to make Americans safer.

### ■ The latest version ban

The latest version ban goes clearly beyond terrorism-related considerations of any kind. This is true of the addition of Venezuela, evidently put on the list as just one more way to express disapproval of the Maduro regime. This is also true of North Korea, where any legitimate

policy motivations have to do with weapons proliferation, not terrorism, and with the search for new ways to punish or condemn Pyongyang. Given that there are almost no North Koreans other than diplomats (who are not affected by the ban) traveling this way, the listing of North Korea has no practical effect.

The true principal motivation for this measure is the one that has been all too obvious all along: it is a Muslim ban, just as Donald Trump had been calling for. This observation isn't something that needs to be confirmed in a court of law. With the replacement of an earlier temporary ban, which had been the focus of a lawsuit, by a newer permanent one, the courts might not weigh in on this anyway. The observation follows from the words of Trump himself, such as his request to Rudy Giuliani for advice on how to erect a Muslim ban "legally."

The selection of which Muslim states to target has had much less to do with terrorism than with other reasons Trump has had to pick on some states but not others. The most glaring omissions in a measure supposedly designed to keep would-be terrorists out of the United States are the countries from which the 9/11 hijackers came: Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and especially Saudi Arabia. All are ruled by regimes whose side Trump has taken in regional rivalries. The deletion of Iraq from the most current version of the ban also is hardly consistent with the idea of listing the countries where anti-U.S. terrorists are most likely to be found. Iraq is one of the two countries where the so-called Islamic State has been enconced for the past three years, and where many former members of the group no doubt still dwell. The contrived addition of Venezuela and North Korea hardly removes all the other evidence of the primary and original intent.

The Muslim travel ban is another instance of Trump playing to his base and acting out the rhetoric of a demagogic campaign, with all the prejudices that entails. The shuffling and revising after the original proposal constitute an effort to ward off inevitable and well-founded objections to an ill-motivated measure.

(Source: The National Interest)

# How does morality relate to law?

1 → There are numerous versions of each of these philosophies in the modern world, some harder and uncompromising, others softer and more flexible, and I cannot do justice here to the richness of the debates that have raged between the two camps, or within them. Another strain of thought worth mentioning is the regular outbreak since the 1890s of legal realism, which has taken many forms around the world, especially the United States and Scandinavia, and stands out against both the traditional schools.

While sharing many of the positivist criticisms of natural law, their own emphasis is on bringing the study of law into direct contact with every social development that impacts upon the evolution of the law, such as the economic needs of the society, the growth of population and the need to control the dynamic forces that are driving social change, the evolving perceptions of the place of women and ethnic minorities in the society that the law is there to promote and protect the interests of. Realists also tend to look for the real locus of legal power in the courts, rather than that of the political sovereign or the central government, because the court is the arena in which the decisive battles are fought, and it is the power of the highest judges, who have the ability to interpret and enforce the laws laid down by the sovereign, that is nearly always decisive.

Despite this positivist and realist emphasis on coercion and effective commands, the disputes over the moral content of the laws that do get enforced are pervasive. Even when it is allowed that coercion is the dominant factor in defining the law, even if not strictly speaking its essence (given that law has many non-coercive functions), the question remains as to the moral content of the law that is being enforced. In this respect, there are perennial standards and restraints placed upon legitimate government.

The ideals to be respected or at least aspired to are found in such questions as these: Is the law aimed at promoting the common good of the society? Does it conflict with any longstanding principles of justice? Is it compatible with international law? For contemporary natural lawyers and for other critics of positivism, these questions have



as much force today as they have ever done. They see the fundamental issue as the battle for defending and advancing the moral integrity of the law.

To this purpose, the ability and freedom to criticise existing law is of the greatest importance, because without such critical discussion, it will remain static.

Any serious examination of the nature of law must engage with the central problems of how we give concrete expression to the abstractions of the 'eternal justice' of natural law. While the leaders and officials of every legal system pride themselves on the law being the principal instrument for the upholding and promotion of justice, there is much disagreement on how the moral

content of laws on specific issues is to be determined. On the one hand, some principles and standards are seen as absolute and negative, in the sense that they prohibit the same kind of actions as any legal system under any historical circumstances should do.

In this way, it is seen as self-evident, for example, that laws should not be vehicles for unfair and arbitrary policies and decisions, such as depriving people of their liberty or property, or the right

to have their case heard, without good cause. The laws should be open and clear, so that they are not applied retroactively, disallowing its subjects from understanding the need for the laws in particular areas.

It is respect for principles such as these that allows the law to serve its main function, which is the service of the common good. Lon Fuller called this the internal morality of law. Calling these permanent or 'eternal' principles does not mean, however, that they have been and always will be recognised everywhere. It means, rather, that the kind of procedural justice emphasised here exhibits a morality that should always surround the practice of government and law, regardless of historical and cultural

and morally acceptable. So when natural lawyers insist that for the law to be genuine law it must incorporate moral values or standards of basic justice, they are always open to debate exactly what this means, and how these values and this justice is to be cashed out in terms of what kinds of behaviour will be permitted, and which will be criminalised.

So should the law simply reflect the dominant moral codes of the day, or should it be constantly subject to what the British positivist professor H.L.A. Hart called the standards of critical morality, always understanding that within our own societies we have always had blind spots about our own moral shortcomings? With such standards in mind, the law should always be the principal forum for rational discussion of the values that the society should protect and promote. In Hart's more enlightened version of positivism, there should be considerable flexibility in how judges interpret the law. He nevertheless stays in line with the non-negotiable insistence of positivism that what is laid down by the authentic sovereign or the basic validating rules created by the constitution, is indeed law.

This is directly disputed by natural lawyers, most notably the German politician Gustav Radbruch, who insist that laws receive their authority not from the de facto power of the sovereign, but from the intrinsic morality and rationality of the law. If – like Nazi law, of which Radbruch was himself a political victim – it is grossly immoral, because it violates self-evident principles of natural justice or betrays the very purpose of law, with the systematic crushing of human dignity and rights, then it should be regarded as a usurpation and regarded as illegitimate law. This debate, which goes back to Aquinas, and even as far back as St Augustine and Cicero, lies at the heart of the dispute between the two philosophies, natural law and legal positivism. It has created a labyrinth of questions and problems, and is not easily resolved, but continual engagement with its complexities is vital for any serious jurisprudence.

Note: This and other related issues are discussed at much great length in my recently published *Philosophy of Law: An Introduction* (3rd edition), Routledge, 2017.

**Any serious examination of the nature of law must engage with the central problems of how we give concrete expression to the abstractions of the 'eternal justice' of natural law.**

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variations.

On the other hand, we find in the substance of law many principles that are not reasonably seen as historically and culturally transcendent. What also has to be recognised in our evaluation of specific laws, is that every society is in a state of constant evolution, sometimes involving relatively rapid change and radical transition, and the lawmakers need to be sensitive to changing perceptions of what is morally required

## Truly independent Kurdistan remains distant unfulfilled dream: Lendman

1 → They may accept the idea, rather than engage in conflict with Damascus. It could also split them off from US-supported terrorists in the so called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

■ What is the reaction of the regional powers to the separation of the Kurdish Regional Government from Iraq?

A: I doubt regional Kurdish independence is likely any time soon. The idea has little support, other than from Israel and silently by Washington and Britain, while claiming otherwise.

■ What is the reaction of international powers to the independence referendum?

A: Other than Israel, all other regional nations oppose Kurdish independence. They're against partitioning Iraq. Syria is a separate story, partitioning one of the objectives of Washington and its rogue allies. Iran, of course, opposes it in both countries.

Baghdad, US and EU parliamentarians rejected the referendum, saying the results won't be recognized, ex-



pressing support for Iraqi unity and territorial integrity.

The statement cynically ignored US support for partitioning regional and other countries, Britain endorsing the same policy, Russia and China against it.

Netanyahu cynically endorsed "the legitimate efforts of the Kurdish people to achieve their own state" - polar

opposite his opposition to Palestinian self-determination.

He hopes Kurdish independence aims can help Israel divide and dominate the region, easier with smaller weaker states. Iran opposes Kurdish separatism, calling for Iraq's territorial integrity to be preserved, days earlier suspending flights to and from the region to its territory.

The Security Council unanimously issued a statement voicing alarm over "the potentially destabilizing impact" of the plebiscite, urging "dialogue and compromise" with Baghdad.

■ After referendum, we saw intense sanctions on Arbil. According to this sanctions, do you think that Barzani will back down from his decision on separation from Baghdad?

A: Barzani shows no signs of backing down so far. It doesn't mean he won't later on.

A truly independent Kurdistan remains a distant unfulfilled dream. Iraqi Kurds have semi-autonomous status, what's next after its referendum still uncertain.

## Humanities are central to civilization: Taliaferro

By Jalal Heirannia

TEHRAN — American philosopher Charles Taliaferro who specializes in philosophy of religion says "I believe the humanities are central to civilization, keeping in mind that the humanities includes history, the arts, rhetoric, and the disciplines that address matters of value and meaning, such as one finds in philosophy and theology."

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Taliaferro says, "I suggest that any enduring civilization that involves a willing citizenship requires a population that is trained or educated in terms of history and collective purpose."

He adds that "To establish such a healthy base requires the cultivation of humanities."

This is the text of the interview:

■ What are the key factors to making a civilization?

A: The idea of what should count as a civilization is controversial. The term is based on the word "civic," meaning "city," but one may argue that some cohesive cultures deserve to be thought of as civilizations without fostering major urban areas. Less controversial,

though, would be the claim that a key factor in achieving civilization in terms of cultivating learning, organized governance, producing goods for trade, and so on, is surplus agriculture. If agriculture is only subsistent and there is no surplus, entire populations need to be devoted principally to providing food for survival; there would be few resources and little energy for developed architecture or the arts except perhaps the military arts insofar as a people would need to defend what sources of food they have. Moving beyond such a base line, however, the civilizations in the ancient world, whether Persian or Egyptian, Greek or Roman, required a rule of law. These civilizations had bouts of capricious and dangerous rulers to tyrants, but historically it is nearly impossible to find what we would recognize as civilization without a manageable, predictable order of governance and rules that define everyday life, from birth to death. This requires the existence of some kind of public worldview or philosophy about the meaning of life, values, authority, ways of resolving conflicts, internal and external.

■ What is the status of humanities

to making a civilization?

A: I believe the humanities are central to civilization, keeping in mind that the humanities includes history, the arts, rhetoric, and the disciplines that address matters of value and meaning, such as one finds in philosophy and theology. Think of the alternative. What kind of civilization would flourish if we only relied on mathematics, logic and geometry, physics, chemistry and biology? These disciplines alone actually would not exist without there being something more than these disciplines, namely a philosophy of values, morality, and an ethic of responsibility for persons to respect one another, however imperfectly such respect is displayed. I suggest that any enduring civilization that involves a willing citizenship requires a population that is trained or educated in terms of history and collective purpose. To establish such a healthy base requires the cultivation of humanities.

■ What is the status of philosophy in making a civilization?

A: I suggest that civilizations themselves require some kind of worldview, and thus some kind of philosophy, to exist and be sustained. As for philos-



ophy as a practice, historically and today, there have been and are philosophers who have worked to sustain different civilizations such as Solon in 6th century BCE Athens who established democracy and overturned some oppression or the great 6th and 5th century BCE Confucius in his work to end the warring factions in his life time. But then there are philosophers like Socrates who question the wisdom of the powerful. The philosopher Gandhi was once asked what he thought of Western Civilization. While the questioner assumed that, of course, there is such a thing as Western Civilization, evidently Gandhi who had witnessed the West being quite barbaric was less sure. So, Gandhi replied that he thought Western Civilization was a good idea.

## Will Corbyn be the next British prime minister?

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Recent polls in Britain show a decline in UK Prime Minister, Theresa May and her party's popularity. The publication of these polls worries the conservative leaders of their political future. A poll published in "Mail on Sunday" in Britain shows that the Labor Party was able to gain 43% of the vote against the conservative ruling party, which has won 38% of the vote.

Interestingly, in the poll, about 40 percent of the conservative party supporters have conceived Theresa May's presence in the next round of congressional elections unimaginable.



able. This reveals the gap that exists between conservative supporters over the survival of May in power. Moreover, 40 percent of the participants in this poll supported the victory of Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn in the upcoming British elections, which is one percent more than the votes for the Prime Minister. In other words, in this poll, not only did the Labor party has an obvious superiority to the conservative party, but Jeremy Corbyn's political position is better than Theresa May, the current prime minister of Britain.

The reality is that issues such as the relative failure in the early elections, the slowness and disagreement over the Brexit negotiations, the re-launch of Scotland's independence, etc., have all contributed to a decrease in British Prime Minister's popularity. This issue affects the popularity of May's party, the Conservative Party. At the moment, some prominent conservative figures believe that after the defeat of Theresa May in the early elections this year, there is no longer any excuse for her presence in power. However, some other conservative leaders believe that she should remain in her position until the conclusion of the negotiations on the British exit from the European Union.

It is noteworthy that May announced that she will step down in 2019 along with some members of the conservative party. In this way, the Conservative Party will nominate another person to appear at No. 10 Downing Street. But there is no guarantee that the next conservative candidate will be able to resist Jeremy Corbyn, whose popularity is still rising. Meanwhile, the publication of recent polls also triggered an alarm for the ruling British party.

Jeremy Corbyn, in one of his recent statements, has announced the formation of a "Government in Waiting" instead of "Shadow Government." In other words, Corbyn is seriously prepared to be at No. 10 Downing Street. Corbyn, of course, will face obstacles from his political opponents. One of these people is former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who in spite of being a member of the Labor Party, is extremely dissatisfied with Corbyn's presence in the party's leadership. Blair did a lot of efforts to prevent Corbyn's appearance in this suit, but ultimately failed to achieve his will. Jeremy Corbyn has always condemned the start of the Iraq war by Blair (accompanied with Bush Jr) and described it as a catastrophe.

In recent months, Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the British Labor Party, has become an influential figure in the British political equations. In spite of the predictions made on the Labor Party's heavy defeat in the British parliamentary elections, Corbyn was able to provide a short-term ground for strengthening his party's position. We are now witnessing an increase in the seats of the Labor Party in the House of Commons on the one hand and the decline of the ruling party (conservative party) on the other.

More importantly, some of Labor party members, including former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, were keen on turning Corbyn out of power after his and Labor Party defeat in recent parliamentary elections. However, Corbyn now has more power than any other time. In recent days, Corbyn has made clear remarks. In the course of the fire in the Grenfell Tower, Corbyn had a responsible entry to this equation. The leader of the Labor Party urged those who were injured during the fire at Grenfell Tower to seize empty houses in the richest neighborhood in London.

A proposal that has been praised by many leftist and anti-monarchist activists in the UK Corbyn, with this proposal, once again revealed his viewpoint on changing the economic structure in his country. From the beginning of his presence in the Labor Party, security institutions and opposition political parties in Britain, and even some intra-Party opponents, explicitly called Corbyn a dangerous person at the head of the Labor Party and called for his restraint.

Jeremy Corbyn is now one of the main critics of British foreign policy. He also considers Donald Trump, the US president, as a dangerous person. Young people's turning toward Jeremy Corbyn and the Labor Party is another issue that could overwhelm the political future in Britain. Anyway, Jeremy Corbyn finds more maneuvering power in London's political equations with the results he has gained in the recent election and the consequent strengthening of the Labor Party position in the House of Commons.

This has led to concerns from the conservative and monarchist party officials in Britain. On the other hand, the growing popularity of Corbyn with the British Republicans shows that his social and economic policies have been more and more taken into consideration by British citizens. As it has been pointed out, during the recent general election, most young people in Britain cast their votes for The Labor Party. The British Labor Party has had the best performance in its parliamentary election compared to the past years. The party has won about 40 percent of the seats in the British parliament in the current election.

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# Pancreatic cancer symptoms

By Taylor Shea

Pancreatic cancer often goes undetected until it's advanced and difficult to treat. In the vast majority of cases, symptoms only develop after pancreatic cancer has grown and begun to spread.

Because more than 95% of pancreatic cancer is the adenocarcinoma type, we'll describe those symptoms first, followed by symptoms of rare forms of pancreatic cancer.

## ■ Pancreatic cancer symptoms: location matters

Initially, pancreatic cancer tends to be silent and painless as it grows. By the time it's large enough to cause symptoms, pancreatic cancer has generally grown outside the pancreas. At this point, symptoms depend on the cancer's location within the pancreas:

- Pancreatic cancer in the head of the pancreas tends to cause symptoms such as weight loss, jaundice (yellow skin), dark urine, light stool color, itching, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, back pain, and enlarged lymph nodes in the neck.

- Pancreatic cancer in the body or tail of the pancreas usually causes belly and/or back pain and weight loss.

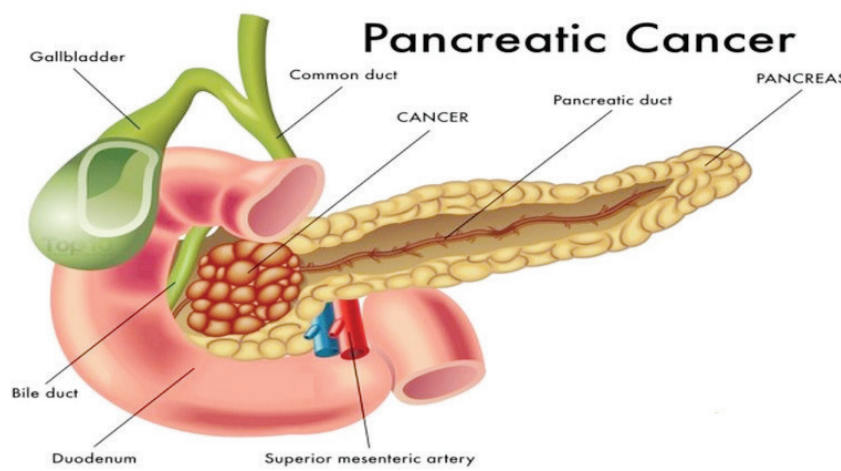
In general, symptoms appear earlier from cancers in the head of the pancreas, compared to those in the body and tail.

## ■ Pancreatic cancer and gastrointestinal symptoms

Because pancreatic cancer grows around important areas of the digestive system, gastrointestinal symptoms often predominate:

- Abdominal pain. More than 80% of people with pancreatic cancer eventually experience some abdominal pain as the tumor grows. Pancreatic cancer can cause a dull ache in the upper abdomen radiating to the back. The pain may come and go.

- Bloating. Some people with pancreatic cancer have a sense of early fullness with meals (satiety) or an uncomfortable swelling in the



abdomen.

- Nausea
- Diarrhea

• Pale-colored stools. If the duct draining bile into the intestine is blocked by pancreatic cancer, the stools may lose their brown color and become pale or clay-colored. Urine may become darker.

## ■ Pancreatic cancer: whole-body symptoms

As it grows and spreads, pancreatic cancer affects the whole body. Such symptoms can include:

- Weight loss
- Malaise
- Loss of appetite

• Elevated blood sugars. Some people with pancreatic cancer develop diabetes as the cancer impairs the pancreas' ability to produce insulin. (However, the vast majority of people with a new diagnosis of diabetes do not have pancreatic cancer.)

## ■ Pancreatic cancer and skin symptoms

**As pancreatic cancer blocks the duct that releases bile into the intestine (common bile duct), the ingredients of bile build up in the blood. This turns the skin and the eyes yellow, a condition called jaundice.**

**Jaundice:** As pancreatic cancer blocks the duct that releases bile into the intestine (common bile duct), the ingredients of bile build up in the blood. This turns the skin and the eyes yellow, a condition called jaundice. The same blockage causes dark urine and light-colored stools.

**Itching:** People with pancreatic cancer sometimes report itching all over. Blockage of the bile ducts is often responsible.

## ■ Symptoms of rare pancreatic cancers

Islet cell tumors, also called neuroendocrine tumors, arise from the cells in the pancreas that make hormones. Islet cell tumors account for only 1.5% of all pancreas tumors.

Like pancreatic adenocarcinoma, islet cell tumors may cause abdominal pain, weight loss, nausea, and vomiting. Hormones released by an islet cell tumor can also cause symptoms:

- Insulinomas (excess insulin):

sweating, anxiety, lightheadedness, and fainting from low blood sugar.

- Glucagonomas (excess glucagon): diarrhea, excessive thirst or urination, weight loss.

- Gastrinomas (excess gastrin): abdominal pain, nonhealing stomach ulcers, reflux, weight loss.

- Somatostatinomas (excess somatostatin): diarrhea, weight loss, abdominal pain, foul-smelling fatty stools.

- VIPomas (excess vasoactive intestinal peptide): abdominal cramping, watery diarrhea, facial flushing.

## ■ Pancreatic cancer's sneaky symptoms

In a very small number of people with pancreatic cancer, early symptoms might be present that could lead to an earlier diagnosis. Unfortunately, researchers have been unable to identify any predictable pattern. One study that surveyed 305 people with pancreatic cancer illustrated the challenge:

- About 4% reported having a sudden disgust for preferred tastes (like coffee, smoking, or wine) that preceded other symptoms by more than six months.

- 5% of people had loss of appetite, a feeling of early fullness with meals, or profound weakness, more than six months before more obvious symptoms developed.

- 1% of people had attacks of acute pancreatitis more than six months before their diagnosis with pancreatic cancer.

The rarity and vagueness of these situations points out the difficulty of using early symptoms to catch pancreatic cancer at an earlier stage.

That said, symptoms like weight loss, persistent loss of appetite, yellowing of the eyes or skin, dark urine, or light-colored stools should always prompt concern. Consistent or worsening discomfort, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea are also disconcerting. If you feel something's not right, see your doctor.

(Source: webmd.com)

## Is protein powder really necessary?

If you've been to the gym or have even wandered down the aisles at your local health food store, you've definitely noticed the endless options of protein powders and shakes. So, what's all the hype about?

Although there's often a huge misconception against protein powder, especially amongst females who fear that it's only for those who are looking to bulk up, that is just not the case. Protein is a powerful macronutrient and it plays an important role in pretty much every bodily function. (This includes hormone regulation, stabilizing blood sugar levels and fighting off bacteria. Need I say more?). Put simply: whether or not you work out, protein should be on your radar. In fact, your intelligent body will give you signs if you are not getting enough protein. If you suffer from any of the below, you may benefit from increasing your daily protein intake.

## ■ Signs you may not be getting enough protein in your diet:

- Trouble losing weight
- Low energy levels and fatigue
- Poor concentration and trouble learning
- Moodiness and mood swings
- Muscle, bone and joint pain
- Low immunity

## ■ Supplementing with protein powder

When coaching clients, my top priority is to always ensure nutrition through whole foods, but there is a time and place where protein powders can be beneficial. If you have an intense workout schedule, are looking to drop a few pounds, need a satiating snack, or are transitioning to a plant based diet, then you can definitely use a good quality protein powder. Just remember, protein powders are meant to supplement your diet and not become your primary source of protein!

## ■ Need some help understanding protein powders?

You can't just pick up any protein powder and assume it will be healthy. The number one thing you want to look at is the ingredients list, and make sure to always choose an option that has a minimal list without unnecessary additives and flavors.

Another thing to avoid is additional sweeteners. Stick to a protein powder that uses sweeteners like monk fruit or coconut sugar. In general, you want to make sure that your protein has limited sweetener in it, since you can always sweeten it up on your own. ALOHA's organic, plant-based protein powder is completely free of artificial sweeteners or filler ingredients.

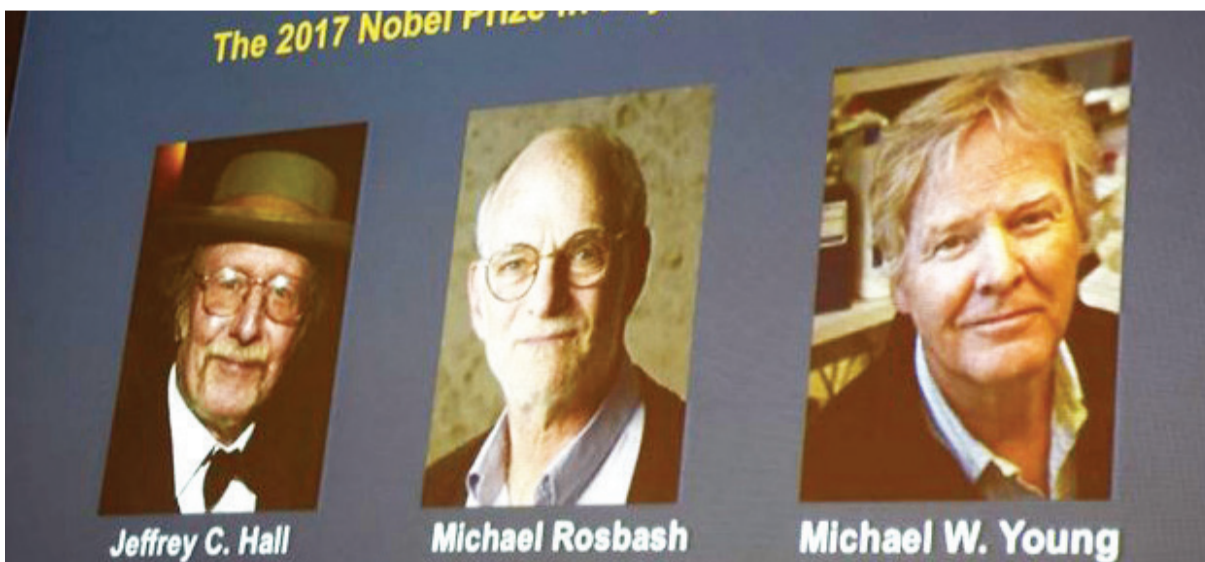
## ■ The final verdict

Overall, it might take some time to see which flavours and combinations you like best, but ultimately, you should be adding a healthy protein powder into your regular routine. Our bodies need adequate amounts of protein to function properly and a good quality protein powder is an excellent way to help with this.

Ready to sprinkle some more protein into your diet? Try adding a scoop to your pancake batter or whip up a protein packed smoothie!

(Source: aloha.com)

## Nobel prize in medicine winners: Award given to scientists who explained the mysteries of the biological clock



The researcher is a reminder of the importance of keeping regular sleep patterns

The 2017 Nobel Prize in medicine has been given to three scientists "for their discoveries of molecular mechanisms controlling the circadian rhythm", or the biological clock. Their work helped illuminate one of the central mysteries of human life: why we need sleep, and how it happens.

Jeffrey C Hall, Michael Rosbash and Michael W Young were given their award for understanding the mysteries of how life tracks time and changes itself according to the movement of the sun.

Circadian rhythms are the ways that the body keeps itself regulated with the passing of the day, and that the process can affect sleep, behaviour, hormone levels, body temperature and metabolism. They show why disturbed sleep – like in the case of jet lag, or people with insomnia – can have terrifying knock-on consequences, like an increased risk of various diseases.

The researchers discovered that all types of life on Earth – from plants to humans – regulate their body clock using the sun, with special technologies inside the body. They showed how the body clock can disrupt the central ways the body works, including things like metabolism, and explained how if it is thrown off it can cause huge problems for people and other parts of life.

The researchers "were able to peek inside our biological clock and elucidate its inner workings", according to the Nobel committee's citation for the more than \$1m (£750m) prize. The discoveries "explain how plants, animals and humans adapt their biological rhythm so that it is synchronized with the Earth's revolutions", it said.

The work didn't reveal any tips for regulating our own

circadian rhythm or improving sleep, said experts. But it was a reminder of the importance of doing so – and of keeping good sleep hygiene, by ensuring that people maintain good sleep patterns and keep themselves in sync with the sun, they said during the press conference.

The win comes soon after one of the world's leading sleep scientist argued that a "catastrophic" lack of sleep is slowly killing us and spreading damage throughout society.

The laureates used fruit flies to isolate a gene that controls the normal daily biological rhythm and showed how this gene encoded a protein that accumulates in the cell during the night and degrades during the day.

Thomas Perlmann, secretary at the Karolinska Institute Nobel Committee, described the reaction of Rosbash when first informed of the award: "He was silent and then he said 'you are kidding me?'"

Medicine is the first of the Nobel Prizes awarded each year. The prizes for achievements in science, literature and peace were created in accordance with the will of dynamite inventor and businessman Alfred Nobel and have been awarded since 1901.

Nobel medicine laureates have included scientific greats such as Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, and Karl Landsteiner, whose identification of separate blood types opened the way to carrying out safe transfusions.

The prize has not been without controversy, especially with the benefit of hindsight, such as with 1948 award for the discovery of DDT, a chemical that helped battle epidemics but was later banned due to its harmful environmental impact.

(Source: independent.co.uk)

## "SHAHR" Welfare Complex, a Gem in Northern Iran

### Special Offer for Travelers Who Want to Enjoy a Trip in Northern Iran

In hot days of summer, travelers, who choose the coastal towns of Mazandaran Province for recreations alongside of the sea with breathtaking views, will experience a memorable days with their families in "SHAHR" Welfare Complex. Travelling to the northern cities of the country and visiting must-see sites and sceneries of the Caspian Sea is one of the first decisions taken by families for summer trips and holidays.

Meanwhile, most travelers prefer to use the coastal waters of Mazandaran Province to make unforgettable memories along with family or friends.

Among coastal cities of Mazandaran Province, Izadshahr is an ideal place for summer trips due to its favorable climatic condition. This city is located at 8 km West of Mahmoudabad and 7 km east of the Noor city in Mazandaran Province.

"SHAHR" Welfare Complex is one of the best welfare and recreational hubs in Izadshahr which is offered to the northern travelers. It has a beautiful residential and tourist area along with all amenities and facilities and can be considered as the most suitable option for staying a few days along the Caspian Sea.

This modern and newly-built complex is equipped with 188 seafront apartment units, constructed in seven floors with a unique view, located in a dreamy town for passengers and travelers special of ESKANO.

All units of this residential and welfare complex are equipped with two- and three-bedrooms, duplex, fully furnished (with stylish and classy furniture). It should be noted that the beachfront terrace has increased the attractions of the surrounding environment to a great extent.

Of the other amenities of this Complex, it should be referred to the private beach, a children's park, a football field, beach volleyball, basketball, Ping-Pong, a gym, a bike ride, a swimming pool, sauna and Jacuzzi as free of charge, etc.

On the other hand, senior managers of "SHAHR" Welfare Complex have considered special offer for government departments and organizations and can benefit from special discount within the framework of conclusion of a yearlong and/or long-term contract.



For more information about the facilities of this Complex and other units, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the following number: 01144536231, 01144536250 and/or 02144536093 @shahr\_66

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## Iran to welcome 22nd foreign tourists train in October

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — A total of 21 luxurious trains with foreign sightseers aboard have toured Iran over the past three years and a new one will arrive in the country in October, an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways said on Friday.



An undated photo depicts foreign passengers standing in Mashhad railway station as they have just got off Golden Eagle luxurious train for a layover from Moscow to Tehran.

The landmark nuclear deal in July 2015 between Iran and the six world powers has opened up a new chapter in tourism influx to the country.

"21 foreign tourist trains have entered Iran throughout the past three years and a 22nd is scheduled to come in October," IRNA quoted Ali Kazemimanesht as saying.

Each of the trains are equipped with large and sophisticated cars carrying 80 passengers on average, the official added.

The Golden Eagle Luxury Trains is amongst long-distance rail tour operators to the country that offers exclusive itineraries between Moscow and Tehran and vice versa under the name "Persian Odyssey."

The company also operates another prestigious tour titled "Heart of Persia" that commences and ends in Tehran. The 14-day voyage explores so many of Iran's remarkable sites and incredibly scenic landscapes.

"The highlight of our stay in Tehran is undoubtedly the visit to the breathtaking Crown Jewels Museum in the Central Bank of Iran Building, with its vast array of crown jewels used by the Qajar and Pahlavid royalty," Golden Eagle website says.

For the time being, citizens of about 190 countries can obtain visas on arrival at the country's airports with one-month validation.

In 2016, over 5.5 million foreign travelers from the Middle East, the Americas, Europe and South and East Asia set foot in Iran, fetching close to \$8b in revenues.

Abundant from corner to corner with ancient bazaars, museums, mosques, monuments, gardens and palaces set inside bustling cities, historical ruins and rich rural landscapes, Iran is increasingly filled with camera-wielding foreign travelers seeking adventure, archeology and art.

# Iranians observe Mehregan aiming to renew friendship

Timeline of the event also includes contests for Shahnameh reciting, storytelling and Zoroastrian dialect speakers," Rashin Jahangiri added.

Widely referred to as the Persian Festival of Autumn, Mehregan is dedicated to the deity of Mithra which is venerated as the angel of friendship, love, and affection. The event is regarded as a traditional autumn harvest festival as well.

Attendees to the event usually wear colorful clothes. Amongst features of the event is also setting a relatively large spread in purple which is laden with various ingredients, dishes and elements each on behalf of a particular belief.

Fruits, vegetables, dried nuts, sweets, rosewater, grilled lamb meat, lotus seeds and silver coins and a scale are typically placed on the tablecloth, as the latter is a symbol for the autumnal equinox.

Mehregan falls on the 196th day of the Iranian calendar year that usually equals to October 2 in the Gregorian calendar.

### Origins

There are many accounts about the origins of Mehregan. Avestan texts divide the Iranian year into two equal parts or seasons; summer and the winter. The advent of the two seasons would be celebrated through Noruz and Mehregan.

During Achaemenid era (c. 550-330 BCE), Mehregan was celebrated in an extravagant style at Persepolis. It was both the time for harvest and time when



Picture depicts a typical spread dedicated to Mehregan, a time-honored Persian celebration that marks friendship, affection and love.

the taxes were collected.

Visitors from different parts of the empire brought gifts for the king, which contributed to a lively festival.

The legend says Mehregan was a

day of victory for Fereydoon and Kaveh, who overcame Zahak. They imprisoned him in Mount Damavand where he later died of his wounds. After the capture of Zahak, Fereydoon was nominated as

the king and the people celebrate this occasion with great fervor. The story has been narrated in Shahnameh, a long epic poem by the illustrated Persian poet Ferdowsi (940-1020 CE).

## U.S. travel warning sends chill across Cuban tourism industry

Businesses catering to U.S. tourists visiting Cuba have had a rude awakening in the last few months after enjoying a 2-1/2-year boom.

First, U.S. President Donald Trump in June ordered tighter restrictions on travel to the Caribbean island. Then the U.S. State Department warned on Friday against going there after a spate of alleged attacks on its diplomats in Havana, stating until the cause was determined, it could not guarantee Americans' safety.

The new regulations have not yet been published, and the warning does not mean Americans cannot travel to Cuba. Still, the moves relegate the island back to the realm of "forbidden fruit" to be enjoyed at one's peril.

"Just as the re-establishment of Cuba-U.S. relations was a positive influence, now this will be very negative," said Jose Enrique Montoto, who rents an apartment, often to American guests, through the online marketplace Airbnb. "They are creating a mood of insecurity for those who want to travel to Cuba."

Montoto, 57, said three U.S. citizens who were set to arrive in Havana on Saturday had canceled their reservation with him at the last minute without an explanation. He worried that more would do the same.

To be sure, less than 10 percent of foreign visitors to the island are Americans, even though the number of those travelers tripled to 285,000 last year due to new exemptions to the travel ban in the wake of the 2014 U.S.-Cuban historic detente under former U.S. President Barack Obama.

According to Cuban government statistics, that would place local revenues from Americans' sojourns at about \$300 million.

Cuba has long catered largely to Canadian and European tourists, and some local business owners said recent events under Trump were a harsh reminder not to rely too much on one market.

Still, others said Americans were particularly good clients who paid well. They also feared the U.S. travel warning would further tarnish Cuba's image as a safe and idyllic destination after Hurricane Irma wreaked havoc there last month.

A dip in tourism this year would be a further blow to Cuba's economy, which already is struggling with a drop in cheap oil shipments from key ally Venezuela, lower exports and a cash crunch.

**What about the bottom line?** Airbnb, American Airlines (AAL),

United Airlines (UAL) and other U.S. companies said on Friday that they would continue their operations on and to Cuba despite the travel warning and the new, tighter regulations.

However, business could suffer if fewer Americans visit there.

Trump has said he wants to eliminate one of the most popular exemptions to the U.S. travel ban on Cuba, the self-directed "people-to-people" category. Confusion remains about what will be allowed.

"I'm concerned about the impact (the warning) will have on our 2018 and 2019 business," said Andrea Holbrook, owner of Gainesville, Florida-based Holbrook Travel, which runs tours to more than 30 countries.

"Cuba certainly has been an emerging destination," she said on Saturday at a Havana conference organized by the Responsible and Ethical Cuba Travel association (RESPECT), a U.S. group of more than 150 businesses and non-profits bringing Americans to the island.

(Source: Reuters)

**Cuba has long catered largely to Canadian and European tourists, and some local business owners said recent events under Trump were a harsh reminder not to rely too much on one market.**

## Richard Branson to invest in Saudi Arabia's tourism project

Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson will invest in a Red Sea project that aims to turn 50 Saudi Arabian islands into luxury tourism destinations, the Saudi government announced on Sunday.

Branson is the first international investor to commit to the project, Saudi Arabia's information ministry said, in what officials called "a clear sign that Saudi Arabia is opening its doors to international tourism".

Branson also visited the tombs at Mada'in Saleh — a UNESCO world heritage site located near a string of new hotels — in a trip to the Persian Gulf kingdom that appears to be aimed at attracting further international attention, in terms of both investment and tourism.

"This is an incredibly exciting time in the country's history, and I've always felt that there's nothing like getting a first-hand impression," Branson said in a statement released by the information ministry.

Saudi Arabia is one of the most conservative countries in the world, only last week passing a decree al-



Richard Branson visiting Mada'in Saleh, a UNESCO world heritage site

lowing women to drive.

But since the shock appointment in June of Prince Mohammed bin Salman as successor to his father's

throne, the oil-rich state has launched a media offensive aimed at promoting its image.

Prince Mohammed, who sidelined his cousin, Mohammed bin Nayef, to be appointed the royal heir, is also the champion of Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 economic plan.

The scheme aims to pull the region's biggest economy out of its dependence on oil and diversify the country's economic revenue model.

On 1 August, Saudi Arabia announced plans to turn 34,000 sq km (13,127 sq miles) of its Red Sea coastline into luxury resorts.

The Saudi Public Investment Fund, which is headed by Prince Mohammed, will provide the initial investment into the Red Sea project, with construction slated to start in 2019.

The Red Sea project is expected to generate 35,000 jobs, according to the Saudi government.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Sustainable travel can be budget-friendly

Gorilla trekking in Uganda, perhaps, or a sojourn in a remote yet well-appointed eco-lodge in the forests of Costa Rica, or even a luxurious stay at a Galapagos safari camp with an infinity pool and locally made teak furniture. If these high-cost trips are what pop into your head, your picture of what qualifies as sustainable tourism is not necessarily wrong — it's just incomplete.

The term sustainable travel has been inextricably tied to opulent eco-travel. Fueled by a desire for guiltless extravagance and increasing attention paid to climate change, sustainability became a misused, industrywide buzzword associated with far-flung, expensive trips.

But sustainable tourism doesn't have to be expensive. Not only that, "it should actually be cheaper," said Kelly Bricker, vice-chair of the board of directors of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, or G.S.T.C. "There should be cost savings for doing the right thing. If you're sourcing locally, reinvesting back into the community, it should be cheaper than if you're importing from all over the world to create your product." Not only should traveling sustainably not break the bank — it's frequently a better, more enjoyable product than its non-sustainable

counterpart.

While there aren't definitive statistics on the percentage of the hospitality industry deploying a sustained commitment to sustainable travel, there are indications that it is on the rise. A Booking.com study shows that 65 percent of travelers intend to seek out green accommodation in 2017 — nearly double that of the previous year. And a study conducted by McGraw Hill Construction shows that green building increased by 50 percent from 2011 to 2013, and now encompasses 25 percent of all hospitality construction.

The first challenge facing travelers is defining what sustainable travel actually is — and distinguishing it from the many varieties of travel that advocates and marketers have tried to label as sustainable. "When people think of sustainable tourism, they think of small eco-huts," said David Picard, a former professor of anthropology of tourism at the University of Lausanne and an author of a Unesco study on sustainable development. "Eco-tourism rings a bell — Costa Rica, luxurious safari lodges in East Africa. But that's just a tiny element." While those businesses certainly have their place, he said, a small lodge

built in a remote location is unlikely to have a significant impact on local and national development.

"You don't create enough jobs or income," he said. "You don't create enough capacity. Paradoxically, what we recommend is work with AccorHotels because they have a huge professional capacity. They'll train an entire hotel — 300 or 500 people — and what we saw is that these staff, once they're trained, is that they'll start opening smaller hotels." That large-scale paying forward of both skill and financial viability is key, Mr. Picard said. "That's the definition of sustainability — it's preserving resources for future generations." (He added that he would "endorse any hotel that has a Green Globe certificate.")

As the notion of sustainable travel has become more mainstream, so has the notion that it implies a level of discomfort — but that need not be the case. "It's not drinking water out of a vine, holding a machete and getting bitten by bugs," said Geoff Bolan, chief executive of Sustainable Travel International. What it does mean, he said, is simply exploring the nature and culture of a place.

(Source: The New York Times)

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Portuguese City of Mazagan

The Portuguese City of Mazagan (El Jadida), one of the first settlements created in Africa by Portuguese explorers on the route to India, bears outstanding witness to the exchange of influences between European and Moroccan cultures from the 16th to the 18th centuries, which are evident in the architecture, technology and town planning.



A view of El Jadida, a World Heritage site in Morocco

Mazagan was built as a fortified colony on the Atlantic coast at the beginning of the 16th century. Located 90 km south of Casablanca, it dominates a natural bay of great beauty.

The brothers Francisco and Diogo de Arruda built the first citadel in 1514. In 1541-1548, in accordance with the plans of the Italian architect Benedetto da Ravena, Joao Ribeiro and Juan Castillo enlarged the citadel transforming it into a star-shaped fortification.

The Mazagan fortress with its ditch and inclined ramparts is one of the first testimonies in the Lusitanian period of the application by Portuguese technology of new architectural concepts of Renaissance adapted to the advent of the firearm.

Following the departure of the Portuguese in 1769 and the resulting abandon of the city, the fortress was rehabilitated in the middle of the 19th century and named El Jadida (The New), and became a commercial center and a multicultural society, embracing Muslims, Jews and Christians.

(Source: UNESCO)

# FSU research shows climate change a major threat to bumble bees

New research from a team of Florida State University (FSU) scientists and their collaborators is helping to explain the link between a changing global climate and a dramatic decline in bumble bee populations worldwide.

In a study researchers examining three subalpine bumble bee species in Colorado's Rocky Mountains found that, for some bumble bees, a changing climate means there just aren't enough good flowers to go around.

The team examined the bees' responses to direct and indirect climate change effects.

"Knowing whether climate variation most affects bumble bees directly or indirectly will allow us to better predict how bumble bee populations will cope with continued climate change," said FSU postdoctoral researcher Jane Ogilvie, the study's lead investigator. "We found that the abundances of all three bumble bee species were mostly affected by indirect effects of climate on flower distribution through a season."

## Climate change

As the global climate changes gradually over time, delicately poised seasonal cycles begin to shift. In the Rocky Mountains, this means earlier snowmelts and an extended flowering season.

On the surface, these climatic changes may seem like a boon to bumble bees -- a longer flowering season might suggest more opportunity for hungry bees to feed. However, Ogilvie and her collaborators found that as the snow melts earlier and the flowering season extends, the number of days with poor flower availability increases, resulting in overall food shortages that are associated with population decline.

"When researchers think about flower effects on bees, they typically consider floral abundance to be the most important factor, but we found that the distribution of flowers throughout a season was most important for bumble bees," Ogilvie said. The "more days with good flower availability, the more bees can forage and colonies can grow, and the bigger their populations become. We now have longer flowering seasons because of earlier snowmelt, but floral abundance has not changed overall. This means we have more days in a season with poor



flower availability."

## Bumble bee populations decline

Declining bumble bee populations globally have long been cause for alarm among conservationists, who see the buzzy pollinators as a bellwether for the malign effects of a changing climate.

Ogilvie said these most recent findings contribute to a growing body of evidence for the grave ecological consequences of climate change.

"Declining bumble bee populations should be a warning about the expansive detrimental effects of climate

change," Ogilvie said. "Bumble bees have annual life cycles, so their populations show responses to change quickly, and many species live in higher altitude and latitude areas where the change in climate is most dramatic. The effects of climate change on bumble bees should give us pause."

The damage inflicted by climate change on global pollinator populations is of particular concern for scientists, as these species are crucial to agricultural productivity and the propagation of natural plant communities.

(Source: EurekAlert)

**Declining bumble bee populations globally have long been cause for alarm among conservationists, who see the buzzy pollinators as a bellwether for the malign effects of a changing climate.**

## Lockheed Martin unveils sleek, reusable lander for crewed Mars missions

A commercial effort to get humans into orbit around Mars in the late 2020s now includes a sleek vehicle to send astronauts down to the surface of the Red Planet.

The aerospace company Lockheed Martin on Sept. 28 revealed new details for its Mars Base Camp plan, an architecture aimed at building a crewed space station in orbit around the Red Planet that would support long-term exploration at Mars by astronauton 1,000-day missions. Among the updates unveiled was a tantalizing design for a reusable, single-stage surface lander called the Mars Ascent/Descent Vehicle (MADV).

The MADV would attach to the space station, and travel to and from the Martian surface via supersonic retropropulsion, which uses rocket engines to slow

the lander from supersonic speeds during its descent, according to three Lockheed Martin engineers who discussed the lander in a presentation at the International Astronautical Congress (IAC) in Adelaide, Australia. Supersonic retropropulsion is the same approach used by SpaceX in to land its reusable Falcon 9 rocket boosters.

### Surface landing vehicle

The surface landing vehicle for Lockheed Martin's Mars Base Camp is shown to the left of the space station in this artist's illustration.

The surface landing vehicle for Lockheed Martin's Mars Base Camp is shown to the left of the space station in this artist's illustration.

The initial crewed missions to the Martian surface would be "relatively short-du-

ration, science-focused missions," according to a newly-released report from the company (which you can read and download here). Eventually, the reusable lander would allow up to four astronauts to take two-week missions to the ground. The report suggests sending two landers, mostly for redundancy purposes to ensure astronauts don't get stuck on the surface of the planet.

### Refuel on space station

The lander would refuel on the space station, and would utilize liquid hydrogen fuel, which would come from water molecules broken into their composite oxygen and hydrogen atoms. (This requires energy that would be supplied by the solar panels on the station.)

The use of liquid hydrogen and liquid

oxygen as propellant is an integral part of the entire Mars Base Camp (MBC) architecture, the company representatives said. While that water could initially come from Earth, it could later come from water ice frozen on asteroids, in shadowed regions of the moon's surface, from possible sources on Mars' two moons, or from Mars itself. The water would be delivered to the station by a Water Delivery Vehicles (WDVs), which could be operated by a separate commercial entity, the Lockheed Martin engineers said.

The crew quarters on the lander would be designed after NASA's Orion human crew capsule for deep-space exploration, which is still in development, but which NASA plans to use in its pursuit of a human Mars mission. (Source: space.com)

## Are computers already smarter than humans?

Who's smarter — you, or the computer or mobile device on which you're reading this article? The answer is increasingly complex, and depends on definitions in flux. Computers are certainly more adept at solving quandaries that benefit from their unique skillset, but humans hold the edge on tasks that machines simply can't perform. Not yet, anyway.

Computers can take in and process certain kinds of information much faster than we can. They can swirl that data around in their "brains," made of processors, and perform calculations to conjure multiple scenarios at superhuman speeds. For example, the best chess-trained computers can at this point strategize many moves ahead, problem-solving far more deftly than the best chess-playing humans.

Computers enjoy other advantages



over people. They have better memories, so they can be fed a large amount

of information, and can tap into all of it almost instantaneously. Computers don't

require sleep the way humans do, so they can calculate, analyze and perform tasks tirelessly and round the clock. Notwithstanding bugs or susceptibility to power blackouts, computers are simply more accurate at pulling off a broadening range of high-value functions than we are. They're not affected or influenced by emotions, feelings, wants, needs and other factors that often cloud the judgment and intelligence of us mere mortals.

On the other hand, humans are still superior to computers in many ways. We perform tasks, make decisions, and solve problems based not just on our intelligence but on our massively parallel processing wetware — in abstract, what we like to call our instincts, our common sense, and perhaps most importantly, our life experiences.

(Source: Popular Mechanics)

## BMI Wins Top Ranks in Shahid Rajaee Festival

Five branches of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) in five provinces of the country managed to win top ranks in Shahid Rajaee Festival, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Five branches of the bank in the

five provinces of Lorestan, Ilam, Chaharmahal-o Bakhtiari, Zanjan and Yazd managed to win prestigious rank in Shahid Rajaee Festival.

In the same direction, the bank branch in Lorestan Province also

managed to stand at top rank among other executive organizations of the province in the past Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017) in terms of materializing objectives of resistance economy, the report

added.

Also, the bank branch in Zanjan Province won the first rank in the field of public relations and communications, Public Relations Department of the bank ended.

## SAMSUNG Electronics Rises to No. 6 in INTERBRAND'S Best Global Brands in 2017

According to the latest statistics announced by world's "Inter Brand" Institute, SAMSUNG was promoted to the top sixth brand in the world.

The report put the total value of SAMSUNG in the current year at \$56.2 billion, showing a considerable nine percent (9%) hike as compared to the same period of last year.

The South Korea's leading industrial and production unit "SAMSUNG" has always been listed by the "Inter Brand" Institute among top 10 brands from

2012 to 2017, Public Relations Dept. of SAM Service Co. reported.

South Korean-based SAMSUNG Company's achievements in the current year are significant due to some of challenges that SAMSUNG faced in the past year and managed to overcome them.

Fast and exemplary recovery of this prestigious company after last year's crisis on "Galaxy Note 7" is considered as one of the most important and key factors which promoted the Institute

to name SAMSUNG among top sixth brand in the world.

Particularly, SAMSUNG Company's pioneering role was confirmed again with the supply of "Galaxy S8+" in the world's mobile market.

Also, SAMSUNG's memory production division helped promote the company's brand with its powerful performance in financial profitability.

In the same direction, SAMSUNG's digital appliances division supplied innovative products such as "Family Hub"

and "Add Wash" Washing Machine to the consumer markets and won valuable awards.

In the field of audiovisual division, SAMSUNG supplied "QLED" and also "FRAME" TVs, as a new generation of fully digital televisions, to the consumer markets and won top ranks in this respect in the global level.

It should be noted that a prestigious ceremony for introducing top brands in the world was held at World Trade Center, New York on Sept. 27.

## Two hour Sydney-London flight on track for 2018 launch

Hypersonic travel that could propel people from London to Sydney in just two hours is one step closer to reality, following a successful test.

The project, which saw U.S. and Australian military scientists combine resources, is on track to launch in 2018 after its latest engine trial hit the target speed of Mach 7.5 - more than seven times the speed of sound.

It could revolutionize global air travel and prove cost-effective access to space, Alex Zelinsky, the chief Australian scientist working on the project said.

For a jet or rocket to be classified as hypersonic, it must travel at five times the speed of sound, or Mach 5. The latest trial at the world's largest land testing site in Australia saw a rocket hit the target speed of Mach 7.5 (5760 miles per hour), reaching an altitude of 279 kilometers.

"We want to be able to fly with a hypersonic engine at Mach 7," Michael Smart, a hypersonic expert from the University of Queensland who is working on the test, told the AFP. "You could fly long distances over the Earth very, very quickly."

The team plans to run 10 trials on the rocket, which has a supersonic combustion engine that uses oxygen for fuel, making it lighter than traditional rockets. The next test is scheduled for 2017, while the first was in 2009.

The team isn't the only group to be looking at hypersonic technology. Earlier this year a concept design for the Antipode, which could travel from London to New York in just 11 minutes at 12,427 miles per hour, was released.



Spike Aerospace, an engineering company in Boston, also unveiled plans last year to develop a 12 to 18 seater supersonic private jet that could cross the Atlantic in under four hours. (Source: The Telegraph)

## Sharks, rays live longer than previously thought

With a spate of recent incidents involving conflict between humans and marine creatures — specifically sharks — it would perhaps bring no comfort to people affected by or generally scared of the toothy animals to know that scientists have been estimating the longevity of sharks mostly wrong till now.

Sharks, and even rays, live much longer than previously thought, some even twice as long, new research has shown.

Most current methods for determining the age of sharks rely on counting the growth rings on their vertebrae — similar to what is done with trees and their trunks.

In recent research published in the journal Fish and Fisheries, Alastair Harry from the James Cook University in Australia found this method led to often underestimating the age of a given individual, and he found the discrepancy to be quite prevalent across numerous species.

### Isolated cases

"Age underestimation appears to happen because the growth rings cease to form or become unreliable beyond a certain size or age. Across the cases I studied age was underestimated by an average of 18 years, and up to 34 years in one instance. From the amount of evidence we now have it looks like the problem is systemic rather than just a few isolated cases," Harry said in a statement Friday.

For his research, Harry decided to look at 53 populations of sharks and rays that have already been thoroughly studied by scientists, because doing so would give him data to compare notes with.

"Age was likely to have been underestimated in nine of 29 genera and 30 percent of the 53 populations studied," he wrote in the paper, which was titled "Evidence for systematic age underestimation in shark and ray aging studies." (Source: IBT)

## The oldest rocks on Earth could contain signs of life

Earth is teeming with life today, but there was a time in the distant past that our planet was as inhospitable as you can imagine. Frequent asteroid and comet impacts during Earth's first few hundred million years made the surface molten and the air poisonous, but something might have been alive back then. A team of Japanese scientists studying the oldest rocks on Earth has found new evidence to support the existence of life during the "Late Heavy Bombardment" period. To quote Dr. Ian Malcolm, "Life, uh, finds a way."

Earth's history is broken up into four eons. We live in the fourth, known as the Phanerozoic. It started 542 million years ago, which is when complex multicellular life began to appear. This is also when macroscopic fossils begin to appear in rock formations. The first era of Earth is known as the Hadean Eon, taking its name from Hades, the Greek god of the underworld. Scientists literally named this time "hell on Earth" because of the apocalyptic conditions. The surface was regularly vaporized by large impacts, including one that most likely created the moon.

It seems hard to believe that something could live in such an environment, but scientists have been looking at ancient rocks in northern Canada and southern Greenland to find out for certain. In this most recent study, geologists from the University of Tokyo surveyed rocks from the Labrador region of Canada. These rocks are as old as 4 billion years, only half a billion younger than the Earth itself. Surprisingly (and controversially), the team reports evidence of long-dead organisms in the rock. (Source: extremetech.com)

## Iranian city expects first-ever female mayor

**W O M E N** TEHRAN — Fatemeh Javadi has been introduced as the first-ever woman to take the position of mayor in the city of Khalkhal, northwestern Ardabil province.



Although she has won the majority of votes from the city council, but it needs to get an approval from the governor general's office to take effect, Mehr reported.

Javadi holds a PhD in geology. She has previously served as an advisor to the governor general of Ardabil.

## Female victims of terrorism offer recommendations at UN Human Rights Council

**ISNA** — The women victims of terrorism called for strengthening international cooperation to reduce the problems of women affected by terrorism in the world in the 36th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.

Representatives of the Association for Defending Victims of Terrorism attended the 36th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council under the motto "Empowering Women Victims of Terrorism as a Necessity for the Future of Human Beings", and offered recommendations to UN mandate holders, representatives of states, human rights activists, and other NGOs.

The Association proposed some projects to the UN mandate holders to strengthen the role of the UN in protecting women affected by terrorism and emphasized the implementation of such proposals which were welcomed by the UN officials.

## RECIPE OF THE WEEK

### Pear bread

"The delicate flavor of fresh pears and pecans dance enchantingly in this lovely summer loaf. Freezes well if double wrapped. Delicious and easy."

#### Ingredients:

1 cup vegetable oil



2 cups granulated sugar  
3 eggs  
2 1/2 cups pears - peeled, cored and chopped  
1 cup chopped pecans  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly grease two 8x4 inch loaf pans.

In large mixing bowl combine oil, sugar and eggs, beat well. Stir in pears, pecans and vanilla. In another bowl, combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir dry ingredients into the pear mixture; mix well. Pour batter into prepared loaf pans

Bake in preheated oven for 60 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into center of a loaf comes out clean. Allow loaves to cool in pans for 10 minutes before moving to a wire rack to cool completely.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### The Weekend - 1980's

A: Jim! What's up man!

B: Charlie! Is that your **ride**? It's **butt ugly, dude!**

A: Don't be an **airhead!** This is a nineteen sixty-nine Chevy Impala! I just need to ?x it up a bit. In a couple of months, this baby is gonna be **wicked!**

B: Not even! Check it out! Now that's a **fresh ride!**

A: Too bad the driver is a major **dweeb**. Anyone can have a car like that if their daddy is **loaded** like his.

B: He's coming this way, be cool.

C: Hey guys! What do you think of my automobile? Isn't it **bad to the bone?**

A: Word! People in the street wish to get into your car while you driving around in that.

C: You really think so?

B: For sure!

C: Awesome!

#### Key Vocabulary

**butt ugly:** very ugly

**dude:** man (slang)

**dweeb:** nerd, loser

**airhead:** a silly or stupid person

**wicked:** very good (slang)

**ride:** car (slang)

**fresh:** cool (slang)

**loaded:** rich

**bad to the bones:** completely cool

#### Supplementary Vocabulary

**take a chill pill:** relax; chill out

**jock:** a male who plays a lot of sport

**jet:** leave a place quickly

**bite me:** leave me alone; go away; I don't care

(Source: [irlanguage.com](http://irlanguage.com))

# 'Iranian women builders of the nation'

By Naghmeh Mizanian

**TEHRAN** — Women in Iran have always been the builders of the nation. The same holds true for the Iranian women living in the United Arab Emirates where they are engaged in different fields of activity, said Sheida Nasser, the founder of a female-based nonprofit organization in the UAE called Persian Today's Woman of Dubai.

"Iranian women living in the UAE have made their mark in every field," Nasser, an ex-colleague of the Tehran Times, said adding, "There are big groups of successful women in all areas of society."

"With more than 2,000 members, the Dubai-based NGO was established in 2014, with the aim of sharing important news with ladies. The group swiftly became an indispensable resource for Iranian women living in the UAE or those who are willing to travel to the country," Nasser explained. She has been residing in Dubai since 1999.

Our mission is to support women and their families to be connected to the society as well as to each other, the mother of three added.

The group also covers special Iranian events like Yalda, Norouz and Mehregan with only women gatherings and coffee mornings with cultural programs, including Persian poetry, literature, traditional music, as well as briefing historical events, she further explained.

The gatherings are open to all Iranian women living in the UAE, no matter what their age, marital status or background,



From left to right: Maryam Najafi, Sheida Nasser (former Tehran Times correspondent), Arezoo Panahi (Iranian poet), Arezoo Borozjani

said Nasser grown up in Tehran and learned how to preserve and love her own culture while respecting and loving others.

She further explained that Persian Today's Woman of Dubai has grown into a vibrant organization that connects more than 330 women with a supportive network of fellow expatriates, cultural integration, charitable works and of course, plenty of fun activities.

The group seeks to provide support for women who are residents of the UAE by sponsoring informational programs, arranging social functions, providing common interest groups, and promoting

charitable activities for the members. To these ends, it offers a selection of activities and opportunities to get involved.

"The meetings of Persian Today's Woman of Dubai are usually held at various Persian restaurants in Dubai and usually include a social hour with time for our breakfast buffet and a different program each month," she said, "Some of our past programs included cultural programs, speeches on women's health issues, Persian literature and traditional eves and many other wonderful topics. We have also enjoyed traditional customs and instruments."

Persian Today's Woman of Dubai is

to hold the festival of Mehregan - the ancient festival of Autumn - the second greatest feast after Norouz (the Iranian New Year celebration) this week.

"Although the UAE is very close to Iran, but the lack of Persian media experts was strongly felt until I decided to take the responsibility by using my experience in media and contributed to the Persian society with the help of a number of other ladies," she said.

Nasser is the author of several books, including "My Persian Table" published in English in 2010 and available by Amazon.com. Later, she published two books in Arabic, "My Sweets" and the "Al Maeda Iranian" which was the first Persian-style cooking book written in Arabic language in the Middle East.

In her book, Nasser shows readers how to break out of their meal routines by providing what she says are easy-to-follow recipes elaborate enough to impress family and friends.

Later on, she published "My Sweets" in Arabic and English.

In "My Persian Table", she teaches the tricks of making hot Persian soups and slow-cooked stews packed with healthy vegetables and meats. She wants to bridge the gap between Iran and the world.

"My Persian Table" explains the Persian culture's theory of the four elements: water, earth, fire and air, Nasser said, adding this custom stems from Mithraism, a 14 B.C. religion originated in Persia that became popular among the Romans and in other parts of the ancient world.

## Saudi Arabia has a long way to go on women's rights

By Barry Soper, Newstalk ZB's political editor

A couple of weeks ago we celebrated giving women the vote 124 years ago which was largely lost in the pre-election haze.

As was the decision by the Royal Saudi Arabian household to allow women in that country to drive from June next year - hallelujah, praise the benevolent House of Saud and pass the wheel brace.

Visiting Saudi Arabia with John Key a couple of years back was like stepping back into Biblical times, only then women had more rights. Dining in a shopping mall's fast food hall, the segregation of the sexes shocked us all. One of my colleagues had the audacity to take his food to an area of the dining room, only to be told to move to another area because he was a single man.

Lining up at McDonalds men were to the left, petitioned off from the women placing their orders behind a screen on the right.

It never occurred to us at the time that these women would have had to have been driven to the mall. They have always been denied the right to drive because it was frowned upon as being promiscuous. As it is when they are finally allowed behind the wheel it's not as



Saudi Arabia authorities announced that women will be allowed to drive for the first time in the ultra-conservative kingdom from next summer. Photo / AP

straightforward as it sounds.

If they want to drop off the kids off at school, drive to the supermarket, or visit friends, under guardianship laws they'll have seek their husband's permission first. Indeed whether she'll be allowed to get a driving license will again

have to meet with the approval of her husband.

The decision to let them drive came from the 32-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and was evolutionary rather than revolutionary. The Prince will eventually rule the Kingdom and he knows pressure for change will come from his fellow millennials, half of whom are women with little to no social life, prohibited from almost all forms of entertainment and most forms of employment. Two years ago just 13 percent of the workforce were women even though more of them graduate from university than men.

This is the country that we bent over backwards for to get its signature on a free trade deal with the Persian Gulf states and pumped more than eleven million bucks into an agribusiness hub, with four million of it going into the pocket of a wealthy businessman if he'd withdraw his thirty million dollar "threat" to sue our government. The threat, according to official papers released in the election haze, never existed even though National repeatedly claimed it did.

And it wasn't money well spent. We were told several years ago the ink simply had to dry on the trade deal for it to be a goer. We're still waiting.

(Source: [New Zealand Herald](http://New Zealand Herald))

## Austria face veil ban 'criminalizes Muslim women'

Activists and experts have condemned a law implemented in Austria on Sunday prohibiting the face veil as "counterproductive" and as an "attack on religious freedom".

The law, commonly known as the "Burqa ban," came into effect in advance of a general election on October 15, which could see the traditionally xenophobic far-right Freedom Party make gains.

Of approximately nine million Austrians, between 100 to 150 Muslim women - or 0.002 percent - wear the face veil.

There are around 700,000 Muslims in the country.

The garment covers the entire body and face except for the eyes, but violators may now face a fine of up to \$180.

The Austrian government says the law safeguards Austrian values and the concept of a free society.

Officials have carefully marketed the law, termed "Prohibition on the Covering of the Face", as being religiously-neutral by also restricting the donning of medical masks, party masks, and scarves in public.

But activists and experts have denounced the nature of the law as "counterproductive" and "Islamophobic".

Carla Amina Baghajati, a rights activist and spokeswoman for the Austrian Islamic Religious Authority, a public institution representing Muslims, says the law threatens the concept of an open society.

"They believe that they are 'freeing these women' and that they're taking action to secure the identity of Austria, but this is hypocritical as the idea of an open society is that everybody has the liberty to act and dress as they please as long as nobody else is harmed," Baghajati told Al Jazeera.

"These ladies are being criminalized. Everybody thinks that they are victims, but you cannot be patronizing them. They say that they do not want to be freed because they are already free and chose to wear the face veil," said Baghajati.

The legislation was approved in May as part of a wider set of proposals aimed at countering the rise of the Freedom Party, which came close to winning Austria's presidential election in January.



Austria has followed in the footsteps of France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Bulgaria in banning the face veil

### Only 100 or so Muslim women wear the face veil but Austria has joined other European countries in outlawing the garment.

In those measures, Austria also banned the distribution of the Quran and required all refugees and immigrants to participate in an "integration" program to learn the German language and "Austrian ethics".

Baghajati attributed the face veil ban as an attempt by politicians to "send a message to the public that they are in control" of the security situation.

Fears over "extremism" have been fuelled by the arrival of refugees.

But Austria has taken a tough stance against the entry of refugees.

Earlier this year, the government told the European Union that it would no longer accept any refugees, many of whom are Syrians seeking refuge from the six-year war plaguing their country.

In February, Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz called for setting up mass camps in North Africa for refugees who fled to Europe.

#### Islamophobia

Farid Hafez, senior research fellow at Georgetown University's Bridge Initiative, says the notion of

the face veil ban is reflective of the "Islamophobic imagination of what has been construed to be the 'Muslim problem'" in several countries across Europe.

"Islamophobia is a problem in Austria as it is a problem and a challenge to democracy, human rights and religious freedom in many European countries today," Hafez, who is also a professor at the University of Salzburg, told Al Jazeera, warning that the ban could have "serious consequences".

"Common people on the street [will] feel enabled to act disrespectfully towards Muslim women, insult them openly on the street," said Hafez, adding that young aspiring Muslim women would feel "obstructed".

Austria is the latest European country to implement such a ban.

In 2011, France and Belgium introduced such laws. In 2015, the Netherlands approved a partial ban on the veil, while Bulgaria implemented a full ban in 2016.

The bans have fuelled a debate about multiculturalism across the continent.

Supporters say the face veil threatens security and hinders interaction, while those against say a ban violates religious rights against the backdrop of Islamophobia.

"At the moment, we are very worried about the political discourse against Islam, which has entered mainstream politics," said Baghajati of the Austrian Islamic Religious Authority, expressing anxiety over the rise of the Freedom Party, which, like similar groups across Europe, pedals an anti-immigration, anti-Islam line for political gain.

Last week, the far-right nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party won seats in Germany's Bundestag, the first to do so since World War II, stirring fears of similar waves in Austria.

"We are worried that this will have an effect on Austria, as well," said Baghajati. "Accusations against Muslims, prejudices, and all kinds of negative thinking have now entered the mainstream".

"It feels as though it is a general threat against society to be a Muslim."

(Source: [Aljazeera.com](http://Aljazeera.com))

# Iraqi PMU forces retake 19 villages near Hawijah from ISIL

Iraqi Kurdish forces deport Arabs, Turkmens: paper

Iraqi fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU/Hashd al-Sha'abi) have managed to regain control over more than a dozen villages west of Mosul as they engage in joint military operations with army troops to purge the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorists out of their last bastion in the country's oil-rich northern province of Kirkuk.

The media bureau of Iraq's Badr Organization announced in a statement that the PMU forces, had established full control over 18 villages, including Abdul Aziz, Sayyed Hassoun, al-Saan, Mulla Nasif, Tar al-Hamar, Kordarah, Tal Khadija, Al-Fashka, al-Sakhour and Dukmat.

The statement added that PMU fighters had also recaptured Heynas airbase.

Meanwhile, a local source, requesting anonymity, told Arabic-language al-Sumaria television network that a high-ranking ISIL commander had been killed in fierce clashes with PMU fighters.

The source identified the slain terrorist as Abu Bilal al-Masri, better known by the nom de guerre al-Hummer. He was reportedly adept at using rocket-propelled grenades to target the Iraqi military's Humvees.

**Mass grave of army, security personnel found south of Hawijah**

Separately, pro-government PMU fighters and members of the Federal Police force have discovered a mass grave south of Hawijah.

The grisly discovery was made on the outskirts of the recently-liberated al-Zarban village. The grave contained the remains of dozens of army and police conscripts.

**ISIL torches oil wells near Hawijah**

Moreover, ISIL terrorists have set fire to three oil wells near Hawijah, located 45 kilometers west of Kirkuk.

Military and oil officials said on Monday that security forces were using bulldozers to control the fires started by the terrorists two days earlier.

Officials said the fire had been brought under control at one of the wells, while the other two are still burning. They said



it would take about three days to put out the fires.

Oil officials from the state-run North Oil Company said it was still too risky to send its crew members in to assess damage at the wells as militants may have left landmines and hidden bombs.

ISIL Takfiris torched the oil wells in the early hours of Saturday in a bid to slow the advance of PMU fighters toward Hawijah.

The Allas oilfield, situated 35 kilometers (20 miles) south of Hawijah, once served as one of the main sources of revenue for ISIL terrorists.

"Terrorists are trying to use the rising smoke to avert air strikes while retreating from the area towards Hawijah," army Colonel Mohammed al-Jabouri said.

Military officials said the fire had been brought under control at one of the wells, while the other two were still burning. They said it would take about three days to put out the fires. Oil officials from the state-run North Oil Company said it was still too risky to send its crews in to assess damage at the wells as militants may have left bombs and landmines.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on September 29 announced the start of the second phase of an offensive to liber-

ate Hawijah from the grip of ISIL Takfiris.

The first phase of the operation to liberate Hawijah was launched on September 21.

The operation to free Hawijah came as tensions are running high between Baghdad and the semi-autonomous region of Iraq's Kurdistan after the region held a controversial referendum on independence of Kurdistan and disputed areas, including Kirkuk, from the rest of the Iraqi territory.

**Iraqi Kurdish forces deport Arabs, Turkmens: paper**

Elsewhere, Kurdish security forces known as Asayesh and Peshmerga fighters have deported scores of Arab and Turkmen families from Iraq's northern province of Kirkuk following last week's referendum on secession.

The London-based al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper on Monday quoted informed sources at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as saying that 58 families had been "forcibly displaced" from Kirkuk so far.

The daily further said that the families were displaced to Diyala Province's Miqdadiyah City.

The deported Arab families said Kur-

ish forces made copies of their documents and forced them to sign papers. They later found to have signed their purported endorsement of the referendum and participation in it.

The families said the Kurdish forces also marked their houses with a letter in red.

Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region (Kurdistan Regional Government/KRG) held a non-binding referendum on secession from Iraq in defiance of Baghdad's stiff opposition on September 25. Kurdish officials said over 90 percent of voters said 'Yes' to separation from Iraq.

The voting was held in the three provinces of Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Dohuk that form the Iraqi Kurdistan Region as well as in the disputed bordering zones such as the oil-rich province of Kirkuk.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi government on Monday allowed foreigners stranded in the Iraqi Kurdistan after an international flight ban to leave the country via Baghdad despite not having a federal visa.

Foreigners who had entered the northern region on regional visas not recognized by Baghdad, previously could not travel to other parts of Iraq.

"Any person can leave the country via Baghdad without paying a fine or for an exit visa," Interior Minister Qassem al-Araji told reporters.

Baghdad imposed a ban on international flights into and out of the Iraqi Kurdish region on September 29.

Much of the international community, including the United Nations, the European Union and Iraq's neighbors, has also opposed the referendum.

Israel has been the only entity to openly support an independent Kurdish state, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu backing "the legitimate efforts of the Kurdish people to attain a state" of their own.

Political observers have warned that Kurdish President Massoud Barzani's referendum scenario is in line with Israel's policy of dividing the regional Muslim states.

(Source: agancies)

## Catalan leader calls for international mediation in Madrid stand-off

The leader of Spain's Catalonia called for international mediation on Monday to resolve a stand-off with Madrid, the day after hundreds were injured as police tried to forcibly disrupt a referendum on independence that had been ruled illegal.

"It is not a domestic matter," Carles Puigdemont, the current President of the Generalitat of Catalonia, told a news conference on Monday. "It's obvious that we need mediation."

Sunday's events in the autonomous region dramatically raised the temperature in a festering split between Madrid and Barcelona and made it harder for the two sides to sit down to try to find a political compromise.

Images of riot police using rubber bullets and batons in a show of force to stop the vote shocked Spain and drew international condemnation. Authorities said

almost 900 people had been injured.

Puigdemont had gone ahead with the referendum in defiance of a court order. On Monday, he said the vote was valid and binding, and had to be applied.

He urged Spain's Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to say whether he was in favor of mediation in talks over the region's future, which he said should be overseen by the European Union.

He added that he had received no indication that the European Union could sponsor this mediating role, and said Brussels had been timid and lacked courage on the matter.

In a statement issued shortly before Puigdemont made his proposal, the European Commission said: "We call on all relevant players to now move very swiftly from confrontation to dialogue. Violence can never be an instrument in politics."

The ballot, which asked voters if they wanted an independent republic, has no legal status as it was banned by Spain's Constitutional Court for being at odds with the 1978 constitution, which states Spain cannot be broken up.

The overwhelming "Yes" vote among the 42 percent who authorities said had made it to the polls was not a surprise as those favoring continued union had been expected to stay at home en masse. Opinion polls in the run-up to the vote had put support for independence at only around 40 percent.

On Monday, Justice Minister Rafael Catala said Spain could use its constitutional power to suspend Catalan's existing autonomy if the regional parliament declared independence.

(Source: Reuters)

## Palestinian prime minister in 'historic visit' to Gaza

Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah arrived in the occupied Gaza Strip on Monday, in the latest effort at national reconciliation between the West Bank-based PA and the Hamas government in Gaza.

In a press conference upon his arrival, Hamdallah described the visit as a "historic moment" towards unity of the Palestinian people.

"We came at the orders of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to announce to the world, from the heart of Gaza that the Palestinian state cannot be without political and geographic unity between the West Bank and Gaza."

"We know that the only way to achieve our goals is through unity, and to protect the Palestinian political system," said Hamdallah, adding that the national unity government would start to assume its administrative responsibility of the Strip.

The premier also announced that several committees have been established

to handle issues such as border crossings and PA employees in the Strip.

The visit is Hamdallah's first to Gaza in two years.

"We look forward to turning over the page of division forever, and achieving comprehensive national reconciliation that would strengthen the perseverance of our people and preserve their rights," Iyad al-Buzom, spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior in Gaza, said in a statement ahead of the visit.

Hamdallah will also be visiting the Shujayea neighborhood, where the Israeli army committed a massacre during the 2014 war on Gaza.

An Egyptian security delegation led by the Egyptian ambassador to Israel, Hazem Khairat, will be monitoring the reconciliation process.

After a Hamas delegation met Egyptian diplomats in Cairo late last month, the movement decided it would dissolve



its administrative committee and expressed its willingness to reconcile with Fatah political party, after a decade of division.

Hamas has been the de-facto ruler in

the Gaza Strip since 2007 after the party defeated President Mahmoud Abbas' long-dominant Fatah party in parliamentary elections.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Turkish military officer seeks asylum in Cyprus

A Turkish military officer has requested political asylum in Cyprus, whose northern third is controlled by troops from Turkey, the official CNA news agency said Monday.

It said the officer and his wife arrived at Larnaca marina on the south coast on Sunday, telling Greek Cypriot officials he faced persecution in Turkey and was seeking asylum.

The couple are staying on their boat at the marina

under the surveillance of marine police, CNA said.

Police kept mum on what is seen as a sensitive political case, and government spokesman Nicos Christodoulides said he did not comment on "matters of national security."

Ankara has carried out a massive arrest campaign against suspected supporters of exiled cleric Fethullah Gulen, who it accuses of having masterminded a failed July 2016 coup.

Cypriot media outlet Sigmalive, quoting official sources, said the officer seeking asylum, whose name and rank have not been disclosed, had been accused of membership of the Gulen movement.

The eastern Mediterranean island has been divided since 1974 when Turkish troops invaded the north in response to an Athens-inspired coup seeking union with Greece.

(Source: AFP)

## Anti-Taliban leader in Swat Valley escapes deadly blast

A remote-controlled roadside bomb explosion targeting an anti-Taliban leader in the northern Pakistani Swat Valley has killed one man and wounded two others, police say.

The blast targeted the vehicle of Ahmed Zeb, a local leader opposed to the Taliban near the town of Malam Jabba, about 150km north of the capital Islamabad, on Monday.

Zeb's father Mian Sher was killed in the attack, police said. His brother Muhammad and another companion were also wounded.

"The attack killed his father. [Ahmed Zeb] was not even in the vehicle. It was a remote controlled IED [improvised explosive device] planted on a remote rural road," Akhtar Hayat Khan, the Swat Valley police chief, told Al Jazeera.

Pakistani Taliban fighters took partial control of the Swat Valley in 2007, the first territory outside of the country's tribal districts where they were able to establish their rule.

They were defeated two years later after a series of military operations that have since been hailed as the blueprint for the Pakistani military's continuing battle against the group.

Zeb is a member of the local Village Defence Committee (VDC), a network of councils created across the valley in the wake of those operations to establish and maintain government control in conjunction with local tribal elders.

Anti-Taliban leaders have often been targeted by the Pakistani Taliban in revenge attacks that have continued long after their defeat.

In 2012, gunmen attempted to kill then 14-year-old student Malala Yousafzai, who had often written against the brutality of their rule, in one such attack.

Monday's attack, however, is the first such assassination attempt in more than 15 months, said Khan.

Many VDC leaders such as Zeb, particularly those facing repeated threats, are accorded police protection. Not all, however, can be given such protection, given that there were scores of such committees, said Khan.

"Some of them are still getting police protection [...] as per agreed lists with the councils," he said. "Given the number of VDCs, if we provide protection to every VDC member then the police in Swat would only be doing one job: protecting them."

Ahmed Zeb was not one of those currently assigned police bodyguards.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## British man charged after Muslim teenager stabbed at mosque

A man has been charged after a 15-year-old Muslim boy was stabbed outside a Shia mosque in the central English city of Birmingham.

Dominic Palmer, who is 29 years old, is expected to appear in front of magistrates early on Monday accused of the attempted murder of Syed Hasan on Friday at the Idaara Maarif-e-Islam Hussainia Mosque in the Small Heath area of the city.

The teenager, who had celebrated his birthday two days before the incident, is in critical condition with injuries to his neck.

The alleged attacker is believed to have lived on the same road where the mosque is located.

"Our investigation is continuing as we work to establish the circumstances of what happened so that we can provide his family with the answers they need," said Detective Inspector Jim Colclough of West Midlands Police.

Earlier, Colclough said investigators were keeping an "open mind" as to whether the incident could be racially or religiously motivated.

The alleged attack took place as worshippers were gathering at the mosque to mark the Islamic month of Muharram, one of the holiest occasions for Shia Muslims.

A statement by the mosque administration said it was too early to speculate on a motive but called on worshippers to remain vigilant.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Kenyan police fire tear gas at opposition protesters

Before a rerun presidential election, supporters of Kenya's opposition have called for electoral officials to be sacked and demanded the ruling party is blocked from changing voting laws.

In the opposition strongholds of Kisumu and Siaya, police on Monday fired tear gas at protesters who jammed roads and burned tires.

Security forces hurled fired tear gas canisters at demonstrators in the capital, Nairobi.

The nationwide demonstrations were called by Raila Odinga, the opposition leader, on Thursday.

He has promised that protests will take place twice a week until the demonstrators' demands are met.

"We have no other option but to take the battle to the people," Odinga said at a press conference on Thursday, as he called his supporters to turn out in force.

"I call upon on this generation to resist. They must arise and resist an attempt to try and take them back to the eras of single-party dictatorship. We are calling our people to action," Odinga said.

On the same day, the ruling Jubilee party - which has a majority in parliament - presented their proposal before the legislature to prevent the country's Supreme Court from annulling the results of the rerun presidential election, scheduled for October 26.

The Supreme Court annulled President Uhuru Kenyatta's election on September 1, citing illegalities and irregularities in the way results were transmitted.

Opposition leaders accused the electoral commission of manipulating the results.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Pep Guardiola says Barcelona should have called off match over vote violence

Former Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola expressed dismay on Monday at the violence that marred Catalonia's independence vote, which he said should have led the club to postpone their match against Las Palmas.

Barcelona beat Las Palmas 3-0 in an empty Nou Camp stadium on Sunday afternoon, after club president Josep Maria Bartomeu decided to play behind closed doors in protest at widespread police violence against voters.

"Barcelona against Las Palmas should never have been played, not at all," Catalonia-born Guardiola, now manager of Premier League high-flyers Manchester City, told Catalan radio station RAC1.

"In Catalonia they have injured a lot of people, people who only went to schools to vote," said Guardiola, who also captained Barcelona during a stellar playing career. "The images are not deceptive. There were people who went to vote and they were violently attacked."

Catalan officials said 840 people had been injured while trying to cast their ballots.

The handling of the referendum by authorities in Madrid, who had declared it illegal, has left Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy facing Spain's biggest constitutional crisis in decades.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Retaining league title in Italy was easier, says Chelsea's Conte

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte believes that retaining the league title is an easier task in Italy than it is in the English Premier League due to the transfer policies of the leading clubs.

Conte won the second of his three consecutive Serie A titles at Juventus in 2013 after rivals AC Milan sold forwards Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Alexandre Pato and defender Thiago Silva. Napoli had off-loaded winger Ezequiel Lavezzi in the previous transfer window.

After Chelsea won the league last season their main rivals, Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester City, Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal, made significant investment in their squads.

"It is very difficult for every team in this league. To defend - it is very difficult to win two titles in a row," Conte said.

"We won the title with Juventus and I was expecting a really strong challenge from AC Milan, but instead they sold Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Thiago Silva to Paris St Germain, so they became weaker. It wasn't simple second time, but it was easier.

"Here, from last season to this season, you have big teams and now they are bigger... And now after I think a great transfer market, they have improved a lot. It's not simple to play this league."

City and United splashed out in the last transfer window and the two Manchester clubs lead the league table on 19 points from seven games, followed by Tottenham in third.

Chelsea dropped to fourth, six points behind the leaders, after losing 1-0 to City on Saturday and the defeat was compounded by a muscle injury to striker Alvaro Morata.

Conte's team travel to basement side Crystal Palace, who are yet to win a league game this season, on Oct. 14.

(Source: Mirror)

## Navas defends Ronaldo amid goal drought

Cristiano Ronaldo's LaLiga goal drought continued in Real Madrid's 2-0 win over Espanyol, but goalkeeper Keylor Navas believes his team-mate's good all-round play should be valued in the same way as scoring.

Madrid forward Ronaldo is still yet to score in the 2017-18 league campaign, which got off to a delayed start for the 32-year-old due to a five-match suspension.

The goal scoring slump comes despite him firing in 22 shots across his three appearances, only four of which have hit the target.

It was Isco who scored both of the goals for Zinedine Zidane's side at the Santiago Bernabeu in a 2-0 win over Espanyol on Sunday, his first being assisted by the Portugal international, who missed two glorious opportunities in the first half.

But Navas believes Ronaldo's all-round play, such as creating chances for his team-mates, should be treated in the same way as goals would be.

"Ronaldo worked well and defended with all of the team," Navas was quoted by Marca after the match.

"He assisted when he had the ball and passed to his team-mates.

"These are good pieces of play that should be valued like goals."

Madrid's victory was the champions' first home win of the league campaign, having picked up only two points from their opening three games in the capital.

Navas added: "Many times things don't go the way you want. We played a good game and I hope there will be more victories now."

(Source: Four Four Two)

# Amid violence, Camp Nou game 'worst of my life,' says star Gerard Pique

Gerard Pique has played hundreds of games for Barcelona, but Sunday's 3-0 victory over Las Palmas was the "worst professional experience" he's had, according to the defender, who was born in the Catalan city.

Pique's bleak outlook had nothing to do with sporting reasons and everything to do with the political and constitutional crisis facing Spain after an independence referendum descended into chaos when police launched a widespread and violent crackdown.

That ensured Sunday's game took place in an empty Camp Nou stadium after the national league refused to postpone it.

An outspoken supporter of independence for the region, Pique voiced his fears over how the vote was handled by the Spanish government and said he might consider retiring from the national side if the violence continues.

"It was very difficult to play the game," the defender, who has won six league titles with Barcelona, told reporters after the game.

"We have had seven years of demonstrations without violence and what happened today has been seen around the world."

Almost 850 people were injured as riot police raided polling stations on Sunday, dragging away voters and firing rubber



bullets.

The Catalan government said it had earned the right to independence from Spain after results showed 90% of those who voted were in favor of a split.

But amid an unexpectedly harsh response from Spanish police to the vote, which was declared illegal by Spain's top court, turnout was under 50%.

The Spanish north eastern region has its own language, culture, and a degree of political autonomy

### 'I couldn't believe it'

Barca's game against Las Palmas was played out in tense circumstances fol-

lowing the decision to ban fans from the Camp Nou.

Las Palmas showed its opposition to a breakup of Spain as players took to the pitch with small Spanish flags sewn onto their jerseys.

Barcelona's players, meanwhile, wore red and yellow shirts — the colors of Catalonia — before reverting to the club's normal strip for the match.

With 91 caps, Pique is one of Spain's most experienced footballers. He was part of sides that won the World Cup in 2010 and European Cup in 2012 and, despite already announcing he will retire

from international football after the 2018 World Cup, said recent events might force him to do so sooner.

"I think I can continue going with the national team because I truly believe there are many people in Spain totally against the events that took place today in Catalonia and that believe in democracy," said the 30-year-old.

"If not, I will not go. If anyone in the federation thinks I am a problem I don't have a problem in stepping aside and retiring from international football before 2018."

Spain is scheduled to play a World Cup qualifier against Albania at the Estadio José Rico Pérez in Alicante on Friday.

Pique, who posted a photo of himself voting on his social media accounts, also admitted his shock at the Spanish government's reaction to the vote.

"For a moment I couldn't believe it," he said. "I thought they would try to block the vote but they would try to do it in a peaceful manner."

"It wasn't like that, but at least the whole world has seen it. This decision has made things a lot worse. It is one of the worst decisions made by this country in 40 or 50 years.

"It has only served to separate Catalonia and Spain more and it will have consequences."

(Source: CNN)

## Gago recalled as Argentina seek ideal Messi partner



Argentina coach Jorge Sampaoli's search for an ideal attacking partner for Lionel Messi has earned Fernando Gago a first recall in two years as they seek victory in Thursday's crucial World Cup qualifier at home to Peru.

Playmaker Gago is one of three players of Argentine first division leaders Boca added to Sampaoli's squad after the weekend's league action along with uncapped midfielder Pablo Perez and striker Dario Benedetto.

Argentina must beat Peru, direct rivals for a berth in next year's finals in Russia, to have a chance of taking one of the four automatic places from the South American group or remain in contention for an intercontinental play-off.

Sampaoli had planned to link Sergio Aguero with Messi up front but has been denied that opportunity after the Manchester City striker's injury in a car crash in Amsterdam last week.

Paulo Dybala and Mauro Icardi were seen by Sampaoli, who dropped Gonzalo Higuain, as the future alongside

Messi but the pair have struggled to settle into the side.

Former Real Madrid midfielder Gago and Messi enjoyed a fruitful partnership in the 2014 World Cup campaign in which Argentina reached the final but injuries have curtailed his international career since 2015.

Argentina, lowest scorers in the 10-team group with 16 goals in as many matches, have chosen Boca's Bombonera cauldron for its intimidating atmosphere to host Peru, who are looking to reach the finals for the first time in 36 years.

The top-four teams after the final round of matches go through to the finals while the fifth-place nation face a playoff against Oceania qualifiers New Zealand.

Argentina are in fifth place, level on 24 points with Peru but behind them on number of matches won. Brazil, on 37 points, have qualified, while Uruguay are second with 27, Colombia third with 26 and Chile sixth on 23.

(Source: Goal)

## United injuries are opportunities for others - Mourinho



Manchester United's injuries gives team mates the opportunity to prove their worth and flourish for the starting side, the Premier League club's manager Jose Mourinho has said.

Frenchman Paul Pogba is the latest to join United's long-term injury list with a hamstring problem but the club have won five consecutive games without the playmaker, including Saturday's 4-0 league win over bottom-side Crystal Palace.

United have been dominant over the last five games, scoring 17 goals and conceding just two, and Mourinho is focused on the players on the pitch rather than those absent from it.

"When we moan all the time about injuries it looks like we don't trust the other people and we have to. We never miss the players that are injured, that's our way of seeing," Mourinho told British media.

"They are injured, we don't think about them. It's an opportunity for others, is a moment for others to step up and to get the chance, so I think that's

good"

Pogba scored two goals and provided two assists in four league appearances before sustaining the injury and his midfield partner Nemanja Matic is confident that the 24-year-old will regain his form once he recovers.

Matic also echoed his manager's words, saying that United had "great players" that could help them win despite the absence of key players.

Last year's top-scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic and defender Marcos Rojo are yet to return from serious knee injuries sustained last season, while midfielder Michael Carrick has missed the previous two games with a knock.

Mourinho also said that it was too early to assess United's title chances as they lie second in the league table, behind local rivals Manchester City on goal difference, after seven games.

After the international break, United renew their fierce rivalry with Liverpool when they travel to Anfield on Oct. 14.

(Source: Reuters)

## Some NFL players kneel during U.S. anthem again

Several dozen NFL players, fewer than last week, chose to sit or kneel during the U.S. national anthem at the start of games on Sunday, a day after President Donald Trump again demanded an end to a protest he sees as a sign of disrespect for the flag.

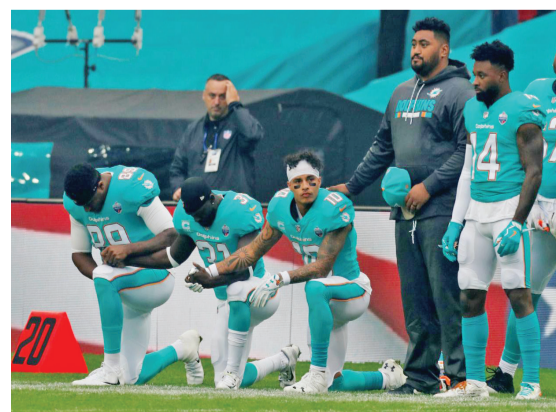
The symbolic gesture, initiated last year by then-San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, snowballed last week following calls by Trump for team owners to fire athletes who sat out the anthem.

On Sunday, more than 40 players, many of them on the 49ers, sat or knelt on one knee during renditions of the "Star-Spangled Banner" in the 15 National Football League games, compared with 180 players in all 16 games a week earlier.

Some African-American players have adopted the practice of kneeling during the anthem to protest against police treatment of racial minorities.

Critics including Trump object to any protest, regardless of its merits, during a ceremony meant to honor the flag and military veterans.

Some 30 members of the 49ers knelt before a game in Arizona on Sunday, and their general manager and chief executive stood behind them, The Mercury News in the San Francisco Bay area reported.



In Seattle, several members of the Seahawks sat out the national anthem, while their opponents, the Indianapolis Colts, linked arms along the sidelines.

In other games, players on some teams went to one knee before the anthem was played and then rose as a team when the song began. Players on a handful of teams stood with raised fists during parts of the anthem or after it, according to a team-by-team rundown from

sports television network ESPN.

At London's Wembley Stadium, where the NFL's first game was played on Sunday, three members of the Miami Dolphins knelt as U.S. singer Darius Rucker performed the U.S. anthem. All of the other uniformed Dolphins and their opponents, the New Orleans Saints, stood along the sidelines, many with their right hands over their hearts.

The three players who had knelt stood for the British anthem, "God Save the Queen."

"Before last weekend's games, Trump wrote a series of tweets that fueled the debate over whether the players should be able to protest during the anthem.

The controversy quickly enveloped the most popular U.S. sports league, preoccupied the news media and became a hot topic of discussion at bars and offices across the country.

The Saints and some other teams sought a compromise stance, kneeling in unison before the anthem and standing together during the song. The aim was to show respect for both the flag and the position taken by the protesters.

(Source: Reuters)

# Russia ready to face strong Iran: Stanislav Cherchesov

**S P O R T S** Russia coach Stanislav Deshkov says that they are ready to play Asia's best football team Iran in a friendly.

No. 64 Russia will host Team Melli (25th) in Kazan Arena in Kazan on October 10th. The Russian will face South Korea three days earlier in Moscow.

"I've previously talked about a friendly between Russia and Iran with Carlos Queiroz and now it's going to happen," Cherchesov said in an interview with IRNA.

"We've seen Iran's match with South Korea and I have to say they take advantage of good players such as (Sardar) Azmoun, (Milad) Mohammadi and (Saeid) Ezatollahi. The friendly match will be an important warm-up match and I am sure my friend Queiroz thinks so. We are going to play a beautiful football and I am sure the fans will fill the seats," he added.

"We have new players with new ideas in our football. Just 30 percent of the former players are in the new team. Russia football team are more interesting at the moment," Cherchesov stated.

Russia played a friendly match against Iran in Abu Dhabi, the UAE in February 2011, losing the game 0-1. The team of the former Soviet Union played against Iran on three occasions winning all of them - in 1976 (Olympic Games 2-1), in 1978 (1-0) and in 1985 (2-0).



## German Winfried Schafer named Esteghlal coach



**S P O R T S** German football coach Winfried Schafer has been named as new head coach of Iran's Esteghlal.

Schafer, who was without a team after parting company with Jamaica in last September, replaced Alireza Mansourian in the Tehran-based football team until the end of the season.

A source close to the club said the 67-year-old coach will come to Tehran within the next two days.

Winfried Schafer started his coaching career at Borussia Mönchengladbach II in 1982. He also worked at VfB Stuttgart,

Tennis Borussia Berlin, Cameroon, Thailand and Emirati football clubs Al Ain and Al Ahli.

Esteghlal sacked Alireza Mansourian in mid-September after a string of dire results this season in Iran Professional League.

The Iranian popular football team negotiated with Fatih Trim but the former Turkey coach didn't reach an agreement with them over financial issue.

Former Real Madrid coach Bernd Schuster and ex-Al Hilal coach Zlatko Dalic were also among the candidates to be appointed as Esteghlal coach.

## IPC President thanks Iran on supporting Mexico earthquake victims



**S P O R T S** International Paralympic Committee (IPC) President Andrew Parsons has expressed his appreciation to the Iranian Paralympic officials and athletes for supporting Mexico earthquake victims.

Mexico hit by a powerful 7.1 magnitude earthquake in mid-September that killed more than 340 people.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) postponed the World Para Swimming and World Para Powerlifting Championships

which were due to begin in Mexico City on 30 September.

"Congratulations on the initiatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran's NPC to Support the victims of the earthquake in Mexico. It is amazing to see the solidarity of the Paralympic Family with our Mexican brothers," Parsons said in a letter sent to Iran's NPC Secretary General Masoud Ashrafi.

"Please forward my gratitude to President Mr. Mahmoud Khosravi Vafa, your athletes and coaching staff," the Brazilian added.

## Iran counting on Goa to power FIFA World Cup U-17 challenge

Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Republic of Iran are hoping their familiarity with Goa will give them additional power in the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017 which kicks off on Friday.

Goa was the scene of their run to the AFC U-16 Championship final last year, which Iran lost on penalties to Iraq.

The loss in the final aside, Iran have fond memories of Goa and are hopeful that this can help them sustain a strong challenge against the world's best U-17 teams.

Drawn in Group C, Iran have Guinea, Germany and Costa Rica for company but head coach Abbas Chamanian believes in his team's chances.

"It's awesome to return to the same city where we spent 22 days. We played six difficult and memorable matches at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (Fatorda) but now the situation at the World Cup will be different.

"We are trying to make the players realize that we will face stronger teams and the conditions will be different



too. We feel that returning to Goa is a good omen for us," the Iran head coach said in recent interviews.

While Chamanian is quietly confident Iran can impress, his immediate target is for the team to emulate the 2009 squad who made the quarter-finals.

"The group looks tough as there isn't much that separates teams in age group tournaments but having seen videos of recent matches involving Germany and Guinea, I feel that all the teams are equally strong.

"However, we have a common goal and are working as a team to reach that target," said Chamanian.

And with Goa filled with happy memories, Iran may well go one better than they did in the AFC U-16 Championship when the curtains come down on the FIFA U-17 World Cup India on October 28.

### Iran's Group C Fixtures

October 7: vs Guinea  
October 10: vs Germany  
October 13: vs Costa Rica

(Source: the-AFC)

## Socceroos making their way to Melaka for FIFA World Cup 2018 Play-off

Melaka: The Socceroos have started to arrive in Melaka, Malaysia ahead of Thursday's 2018 FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers - Asian Play-off match against Syria.

Two of the first players to settle in Melaka were Western Sydney Wanderers FC defender Josh Risdon and AGF Aarhus midfielder Mustafa Amini.

The Socceroos will hold their first training session on Malaysian soil on Monday afternoon (local time) at the Hang Tuah Stadium.

The Hang Tuah Stadium will also be the location for Tuesday's training, before the squad familiarises itself with Thursday night's match venue, the Hang Jebat Stadium, on Wednesday.

Ange Postecoglou's side will take on Syria at the Hang Jebat Stadium on



Thursday, before returning home to play Ayman Hakeem's team at Stadium Australia, Sydney on October 10.

Should Australia defeat Syria over two legs, the Socceroos will advance to the CONCACAF-Asian Zone Play-off (home

and away) in November for a place at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

### Australia's road paved with challenges

Fixtures  
2018 FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers - Asian Play-offs - 1st leg  
Syria v Socceroos  
October 5  
Hang Jebat Stadium, Melaka, Malaysia  
Kick-off: 8.30pm (local); 11.30pm (AEDT)  
2nd leg  
Socceroos v Syria  
October 10  
Stadium Australia, Sydney Olympic Park, NSW, Australia  
Kick-off: 8pm (AEDT)

(Source:the-AFC)

## I'll decide my future after World Cup: Sardar Azmoun

**Tasnim** — Iranian national football team's striker Sardar Azmoun says that he will make a decision about his future after the 2018 World Cup.

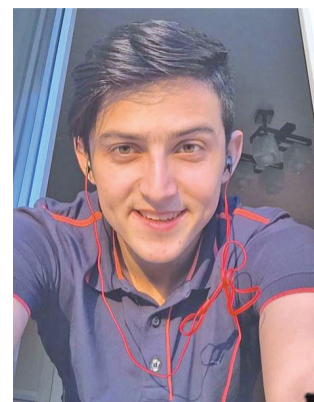
Team Melli striker currently plays at Rubin Kazan, despite being linked with European giants Liverpool, Arsenal and Lazio.

"I want to play in the big leagues and I will make the best decision after the 2018 World Cup. I need to play the first team because I believe that dropping out of starting lineup for a month can harm each player's form," Azmoun told IRNA.

The 23-year-old striker will make his debut for Iran national football team at the 2018 World Cup.

"All teams coming to the World Cup are very well-equipped and we have to be ready as well. I like to score in the World Cup since I think it is the best tournament in the world," Azmoun added.

Azmoun also said he is interested in playing at Real Madrid one day since he has been the team's fan since childhood.



## Iran U-17 defeats Mexico in Marbella Football Center

**IRNA** — Iran U-17 football team defeated Mexico 3-0 in the Costa del Sol 2017 Friendly Match Week in Marbella Center on Sunday.

Mohammad Ghaderi opened the scoring for the Persians in the 65th minute. Sobhan Khaghani extended Iran's lead in the 80th minute and Saeid Karimi made it 3-0 with two minutes remaining.

Abbas Chamanian's boys had already defeated France 4-0 in their first match.

The friendlies were part of preparation for the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup, which will be held in India from October 6 to 28.

Iran is drawn with Guinea, Germany and Costa Rica in Group C.

## Neymar's father surprised he left Barcelona for Paris Saint-Germain

Neymar's father has told Telefoot that his son's decision to quit Barcelona for Paris Saint-Germain "took me by surprise," but he left the Camp Nou to get out of his comfort zone.

Neymar, 25, has been in scintillating form since making a €222 million move from Barcelona to PSG over the summer. He has eight goals and seven assists in just eight matches for his new club, netting a double -- which included a spectacular free kick -- in the 6-2 thrashing of Bordeaux on Saturday.

"Neymar's decision to come to Paris took me by surprise," Neymar Sr. told French TV show Telefoot. "We had an offer last year but we didn't reach an agreement. This time PSG's offer was very interesting. The idea of winning the Champions League and the league pleased him.

"The truth is that it was me who hesitated until the last moment. I said to Neymar that 'you're relaxed, you're in your comfort zone at Barcelona. So the best choice for you is to stay.' But he wanted to get out of [his comfort zone] and put himself in danger.

"His friends [Lionel] Messi, [Luis] Suarez, [Ivan] Rakitic and [Gerard] Pique all tried to hold on to him. It was very difficult but Neymar really wanted to come. He wanted this challenge and we supported him."

(Source: Soccernet)

## Nadal felt like crying after Catalonia violence

Tennis world number one Rafael Nadal said Spain has presented a "negative" image of itself and he felt like crying after seeing the violence that ensued as people tried to vote in the banned independence referendum in Catalonia.

The Spanish government threatened anyone who defied their orders not to vote with reprisals and criminal charges but thousands of Catalans proceeded anyway, leading to clashes between police and voters with polling boxes seized.

Nadal, who grew up and lives in Mallorca but speaks Catalan, spoke out before the referendum to condemn it but was visible moved when he spoke about it during a press conference in Beijing before he starts his China Open campaign on Tuesday.

"I want to cry when I see a country where we have known how to co-exist and be a good example to the rest of the world get to a situation like this," he said.

"I think the image we have presented to the world is negative.

"It was a sad moment, my heart sank all day. Moreover, from here, at a distance, you experience it differently.

"I have spent many parts of my life in Catalonia, important moments, and to see society so radicalized surprises and disheartens me."

(Source: Independent)

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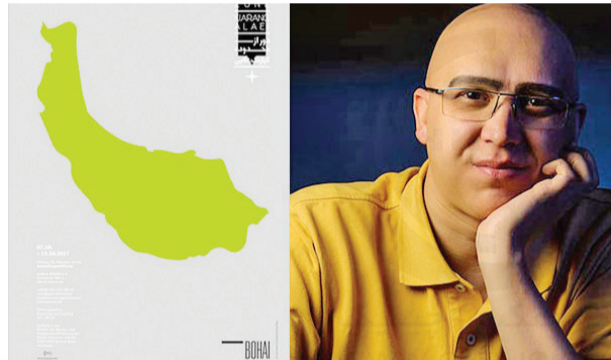
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## German gallery to hang works by Iranian photographer Kiarang Alai

**A R T TEHRAN** — An exhibition of photos by Iranian photographer Kiarang Alai will open at Bohai Gallery in Hannover, Germany on Friday.

The exhibition entitled "Out of Zone" will feature the natural environment and people in the northern Iranian region of Gilan in 16 black and white photos.



Alai is scheduled to meet the visitors to this exhibition during a meeting, which will be organized on Saturday.

The exhibition that will be run until October 15 has been organized in collaboration with the Cameo Kollektiv, a Hannover-based cultural organization.

## Three Iranian cities to host Brazilian film festival

**A R T TEHRAN** — The three Iranian cities of Tehran, Shiraz and Isfahan will be playing host to a weeklong Brazilian film festival opening next week.

Roberto Berliner, a Brazilian director and producer, is scheduled to attend the Brazilian Film Week, the organizers announced on Monday.



Brazilian Ambassador Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos and diplomats from other embassies in Tehran will be attending an opening ceremony, which will be held at the Iranian Artists Forum on October 7.

Berliner is known for "Nise: The Heart of Madness" (2015), "A Farra do Circo" (2014) and "Herbert de Pertó" (2009).

Iran's Art and Experience Cinema has organized the festival in collaboration with the Embassy of Brazil.

## "Loving Vincent" brings Van Gogh's art alive

**NEW YORK(Reuters)** — You have seen his "Sunflowers" in a museum, sung along with Don McLean to "Vincent (Starry Starry Night)" and gawped at the tens of million of dollars his works have fetched at auction.

But you have never seen Vincent Van Gogh's art quite like it is shown in the film "Loving Vincent."

Seven years in the making and billed as the world's first fully-painted feature film, "Loving Vincent" uses more than 130 of the Dutch artist's own paintings to tell his own story.

Each of the 65,000 frames of the animated independent film, created by Polish artist and animator Dorota Kobiela, is an oil painting hand painted by 125 professional artists who traveled from around the world to be a part of the project.

"It looks like something completely different, and that doesn't happen very often in our media-saturated world," said Hugh Welchman, who co-wrote and directed the film with Kobiela.

"Loving Vincent," showing in limited release in New York and Los Angeles and arriving in Europe in October, was first filmed with actors playing some of the people Van Gogh captured on canvas.

They include Saoirse Ronan as doctor's daughter Marguerite Gachet and Chris O'Dowd as postman Joseph Roulin, who walk through and inhabit his paintings as his story unfolds.

Then came the hard part. Finding and training the painters to reproduce Van Gogh's work.

More than 4,000 artists from around the world applied for the job and 125 were chosen and put through three weeks training.

"Even though we were hiring the very best oil painters, Vincent's style look like it should be very easy but actually it's difficult to do well," said Welchman.

# My roots are in Iranian and Armenian cultures: "Yevea" director

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian-Armenian filmmaker Anahid Abad, whose latest drama "Yevea" has been selected to represent Armenia at the Oscars, has said that she has her roots in the cultures of both countries.

She made the remarks in an interview with the Persian service of ISNA on Monday after the co-production by Iran and Armenia was submitted to the 90th Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category.

"I'm really happy that this film has been chosen for the Oscars, because it is a joint production of Iran and Armenia," Abad said and added, "Due to my dual nationality, I have my roots in the cultures of both Iran and Armenia and I really love both of them."

She said that she has learned cinema in working with some prominent Iranian filmmakers as an assistant director, but "Yevea" as her directorial debut, which has been made in Armenia, directly represents the history and culture of the country.

"Yevea" has been co-produced by Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation and the National Cinema Center of Armenia.

The film tells the story of Yevea, a young woman who escapes her influential in-laws with her daughter Nareh after her husband's tragic death, and takes refuge in one of the villages of Karabakh, Armenia.

The film is currently on screen in several Armenian cities.



Anahid Abad, the director of Armenia's submission to the Oscars "Yevea", attends the 35th Fajr International Film Festival at Tehran's Charsu Cineplex on April 26, 2017. (FIFF/Yasaman Zohuratalab)

## "The Pillowman" to censure child abuse in Tehran



A poster for "The Pillowman"

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian director Siavash Asad plans to amalgamate three plays by British dramatist Martin McDonagh to stage a performance that he will present to children who have been sexually and physically abused.

Asad wrote the play "The Pillowman" based on McDonagh's play of the same title "The Pillowman" and two other of his works "The Beauty Queen of Leenane" and "A Skull in Connemara".

"Few performances have focused on a subject such as child abuse in our society, so I decided to spotlight this issue by writing a play based on McDonagh's works," Asad

told the Persian service of Honaronline last week.

He said that he plans to highlight the coldness in human relationships that is perceptible in McDonagh's plays.

A cast composed of Sanaz Samavati, Mohsen Rashidi, Kiarash Haqgu, Behnam Sarlak and several other actors will perform "The Pillowman", which is scheduled to premiere at Paytakht Theater on October 8.

McDonagh's "The Pillowman" tells the tale of Katurian, a fiction writer living in a police state, who is interrogated about the gruesome content of his short stories and their similarities to a number of bizarre child murders occurring in his town.

## Innsbruck festival to screen Iranian films



**A R T TEHRAN** — Two Iranian films will go on screen at the 16th Innsbruck Nature Film Festival, which will be held in the Austrian city from October 10 to 13.

"Poets of Life" by Shirin Barqnavard will compete in the documentary section of the festival, while "Pet Man" by Marzieh Abrarpaydar will be screened in the animation section.

"Poets of Life" is about Shirin Parsi, an Iranian graduate of French literature from the University of Paris who returns home to work on her rice

farm in northern Iran, where many farmers are forced to sell their land at very low prices to developers.

The 2D animation "Pet Man" is the story of an animal dealer who falls asleep in his shop and has a nightmare in which he finds himself caught in an animal cage. He manages to escape and seeks to rescue other animals, but every time he is faced with an obstacle. He finally awakes from his nightmare but still feels surrounded with uncertainty and fear of the animals.

## Mahmud Farshchian to do painting on Zayandehrud River in Isfahan

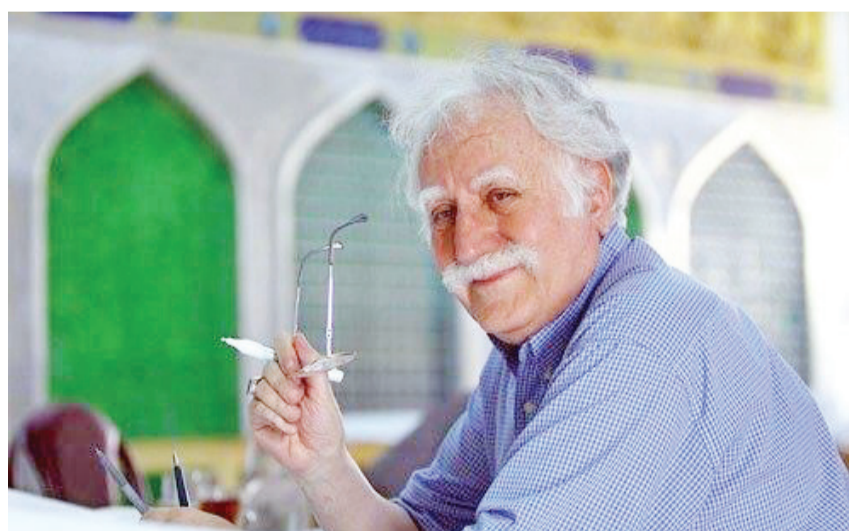
**A R T TEHRAN** — The master of Persian miniature Mahmud Farshchian plans to create a painting on the Zayandehrud, a river that once flowed in the beautiful city of Isfahan and renowned for its historical Safavid era bridges.

Based in New York, Farshchian frequently visits his hometown of Isfahan and says he is in love with the Zayandehrud River and the historical monuments of the city.

"When I come back again, I will do a painting of the river," he told the Persian service of ISNA on his recent visit to Isfahan.

Once the largest river in the central plateau of Iran, the river has completely dried up over the past decade.

Iranian expert on deserts Parviz Kardavani believes that digging deep



Mahmud Farshchian in an undated photo

wells is the main reason behind the river's demise. However, less rainfall and improper irrigation planning by authorities are some other reasons.

Farshchian, who has also met Isfahan's Governor General Rasul Zargarpur to discuss the issue, said that the governor is well aware of the situation and is making his best efforts to solve the problem.

He said that, like him, all other citizens of Isfahan feel sorry when they see the "dried lips" of the river and have asked the officials for help.

The river, which used to flow for 400 kilometers from the Zagros mountains in the west through parks and under the Safavid-era bridges and was known for its fertile fishery, has been replaced by dirt and stones these days.

## Replicant or human? "Blade Runner 2049" reignites existential debate

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Was Harrison Ford's Officer Rick Deckard a human or a Replicant robot in 1982's "Blade Runner"?

That is the question that fans of Ridley Scott's sci-fi thriller have been pondering for 35 years and now in a long-awaited sequel, that question is explored further.

Out in theaters Oct. 6, "Blade Runner 2049" takes place 30 years after the original film, when human-like robots called Replicants were hunted by police officers called "blade runners" in a dystopian Los Angeles.

In the new film from Time Warner Inc's Warner Bros, LAPD Officer K (Ryan Gosling) hunts illegal Replicants hiding on a decaying Earth and he stumbles across something that can disrupt the current strained co-existence between humans and Replicants. He is tasked with finding Deckard (Ford) for answers.

"It's an existential story," director Denis Villeneuve told Reuters.

"It says a lot about reality. It says a lot about our relationship with broken dreams. It says things about as human beings we are programmed by our genetic background and our education, and that we are like

trapped by that background and it's very difficult for us to get free out of it," he added.

Before journalists including Reuters saw "Blade Runner 2049" at advance press screenings, they were read a note from Villeneuve urging not give away any key plot points.

What is known is that an older, rugged Ford reprises his role as Officer Deckard. The veteran actor called the film an "experiential opportunity" for audiences to engage in the philosophical rhetoric.

"There's a wonderful emotional context in the film, which is one of the things I most admire about it," Ford said. "So much of what I had an ambition for seems to have been achieved."

Scott's "Blade Runner" envisioned Los Angeles in 2019 as a sprawling urban metropolis infused with Eastern and Western cultures. In "Blade Runner 2049," Los Angeles has sprawled across much of California, and is built on top of Scott's world, the gritty city a melting pot of English, Japanese and Russian influences.

Villeneuve said he made "Blade Runner 2049" as a standalone movie but given the new film's higher stakes



A scene from "Blade Runner 2049" and bigger scope, a continuing franchise is not out of the question.

"The idea was to make a movie inspired by the universe of 'Blade Runner' with a very specific story and yes, I'm positive that if (it) ever is welcomed, Ridley will come up with another idea," the director said.