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# Funeral held for Tehran terror victims



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## Al-Sauds doing what Saddam did to Kuwait: Saudi Arabia expert

By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — An expert on Saudi Arabia is of the opinion that the Saudi kingdom “is doing what Saddam Hussein did to Kuwait” in 1990 but the only difference is that “the Al-Sauds want to take over Qatar with U.S. support.”

Hossein Askari, who teaches at George Washington University, tells the Tehran Times that “the world must not allow Saudi Arabia to bully Qatar with U.S. support.”

Following is the text of the interview:  
**■ What are the real reasons behind the decision of some Arab states to cut ties with Qatar?**

A: Please understand that this was not an Arab decision, but a Saudi one.

The Arab and other Muslim countries that followed the Saudi decision are countries that rely on Saudi Arabia one way or the other—money or assumed political protection. Saudi Arabia has long been irritated by Qatar. They have had border disputes with armed skirmishes. The Al-Sauds have been upset with Al-Jazeera because of freedom to criticize Persian Gulf rulers. As you know, there is zero press freedom in Saudi Arabia and the Al-Sauds find Al-Jazeera objectionable. They look at Qatar as a small country that talks too much and acts too big for its size. Simply said, they want Qatar to follow Saudi Arabia's lead as a ‘little boy’.

## Wounded May vows to stay as British PM

Spectacularly punished by voters who took away her majority in Parliament, a politically wounded but defiant Theresa May soldiered on Friday as Britain's prime minister, resisting pressure to resign after the failure of a high-stakes election gamble that made the massive challenge of untangling Britain from the European Union only more complex and uncertain.

Having called an early election in hopes of getting an increased majority that could have strengthened her hand in Britain's exit talks with the European Union, May instead saw her majority evaporate completely — leaving her fortunes hanging by a thread and dark clouds over the Brexit negotiations just

10 days before they are due to start. She insisted that she would stick to the Brexit timetable. But she was forced into an alliance with a small party in Northern Ireland just to stay in power. Grim-faced, May said her Conservatives and the Democratic Unionist Party would work together to “provide certainty and lead Britain forward at this critical time.”

“This government will guide the country through the crucial Brexit talks ... and deliver on the will of the British people by taking the United Kingdom out of the European Union,” she said after seeking Queen Elizabeth II's approval — a formality — for the new, hastily cobbled-together arrangement.

## Iran offers Qatar use of its ports as blockade bites

Iran has rallied to Qatar's aid, offering the Persian Gulf state the use of three of its ports to import supplies as its Arab neighbors seek to isolate the emirate.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, Qatar's foreign minister, said Doha would be able to import all the goods it needed. He described the de facto blockade imposed on Qatar by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain as “collective punishment.”

“We have been isolated because we are successful and progressive. We are a platform for peace not terrorism,” Sheikh Mohammed told reporters.

Riyadh and its allies on Monday announced their move to isolate Qatar, accusing the Persian Gulf state of supporting terrorist groups and being too close to Iran, Saudi Arabia's regional rival.

Iran's offer underlines how the dispute is taking on regional dynamics. Turkey on Wednesday threw its weight behind Doha, fast-tracking plans to deploy extra Turkish troops to Qatar, potentially putting Ankara on a collision course with Riyadh.

Qatar, which hosts the U.S.'s main military base in the Middle East, admits that it supports Islamist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, the Palestinian faction. But it denies it backs terrorism.

The small nation imports virtually all its goods, but Sheikh Mohammed said that only 16 percent of food supplies come into Qatar via the countries that have imposed the de facto blockade.

“It's replaceable and has been replaced in one day,” he said. “They [Qataris] can survive at the same standard forever,” he said.

But he decried the humanitarian cost of Qatar's neighbors' actions, which has meant that Saudis, Emiratis and Bahrainis have to leave Qatar in two weeks. Qataris also have the same amount of time to leave those nations.

“What is really hurting here is the families,” Sheikh Mohammed said. He cited the examples of a Qatari mother split from her son in the UAE and a Saudi mother forced to return home, leaving her sick children in Qatar.

## Iran arrests 41 Daesh elements connected to terror attacks

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Intelligence Ministry issued a statement on Friday announcing that 41 elements connected to the Daesh operatives who carried out the Wednesday terrorist attacks in Tehran have been arrested.

“Following a chain of complicated intelligence operations and cooperation of families of some terrorists in Kermanshah, Kurdistan, West Azarbaijan and Tehran, 41 elements of the Wahhabi terrorist group of Daesh were arrested and some documents and equipment were seized,” the statement read.

In two simultaneous terrorist attacks on the administrative building of Iran's Majlis and the shrine of Imam Khomeini in Tehran on Wednesday,

17 people were killed and 52 injured. Daesh claimed responsibility for the attacks. The Iranian Intelligence Ministry released on Thursday the names of the five terrorists

**Suspects linked to Daesh (ISIS) and in connection with Wednesday attacks were arrested in provinces of Kermanshah, Kurdistan, West Azarbaijan and Tehran.**

who were killed after carrying out the deadly attacks.

In addition to the killed, one woman was arrested on Wednesday, who was said to lead the cell.

A funeral ceremony for the victims of the attacks was held on Friday.

President Rouhani, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, and Judiciary Chief Sadeq Amoli-Larijani, Ayatollah Mohammad Mohammadi-Golpayegani - head of the office of the Supreme Leader- as well as a number of other officials, top ranking military commanders, and foreign ambassadors, survivors of the attacks and people from different walks of life attended the funeral procession.

## Trump reaction to Tehran ISIS attacks ‘repugnant’, Zarif says

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that US President Donald Trump's reaction to murderous attacks in Tehran was “repugnant” as Iranians were hit by U.S. clients.

“Repugnant WH [White House] statement... as Iranians counter terror backed by US clients,” Zarif tweeted.

Zarif was making the comment in response to Trump's comment that “states that sponsor terrorism risk falling victim to the evil they promote.”

Sixteen people were killed and more 40 injured in the attacks on Tehran's parliament complex and the shrine of revolutionary

leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the first claimed by Isis in Iran.

Trump has long accused Iran of backing terrorism and has threatened to tear up a 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers.

Iranian security officials counter that it is their regional rival Saudi Arabia — a close U.S. ally — that is responsible for funding and spreading the extremism that underpins Isis.

Trump's comments also brought criticism from Iranians on social media, who recalled their government's offers of support and the candlelight vigils held in Iran after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

Many contrasted Trump's reaction with

**ARTICLE**  
 By Seyed Hossein Mousavian  
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## Tehran terrorist attacks risk unleashing all-out war between Iran and Saudi Arabia

Iran's parliament and the shrine of its revolutionary father were the targets Wednesday of what appears to be the Islamic State militant group's first major attack on Iranian soil. In an operation that seemed to require a level of coordination not often typical of ISIS attacks in the West, gunmen and suicide bombers penetrated deep inside Iranian territory and attacked two symbols of Iranian political identity, killing at least 17 people and wounding 56.

The twin assault, the worst terrorist attack Tehran has seen in more than a decade, also came at a time of heightened regional tension, with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir calling for Iran to be punished for what it deemed interference in regional affairs and various politicians weighing in on an escalating Qatar crisis. The shocking strike, coupled with the chaos, could mean an exacerbation of several bad situations if tensions aren't quelled.

While the overwhelming majority of the international community condemned the deadly incident, U.S. President Donald Trump not only failed to issue a direct condemnation, but also suggested, in a statement released hours later, that Iran deserved it.

“We grieve and pray for the innocent victims of the terrorist attacks in Iran, and for the Iranian people, who are going through such challenging times,” the two sentence press release began. It concluded: “We underscore that states that sponsor terrorism risk falling victim to the evil that they promote.”

Trump's insensitive remarks evoke both dangerous ignorance and glaring hypocrisy on his part. During his presidential campaign, Trump directed his ire towards Saudi Arabia. He declared that he was “not a big fan” of the Saudis. And as a citizen, he proclaimed they were the “world's biggest funder of terrorism.”



## Masal; the green roof of Iran

The city of Masal in Iran's northern province of Gilan includes two parts of Masal and Shanderman which both feature the natural tourist attractions.

The green roof is not dominated by villa constructors and dealers yet and has still preserved its beauty and peace.

The beautiful city with over 70,000 hectares of forests and pastures is a well-worth destination.

**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**Attacks lacked operational value: Army official**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Wednesday terrorist attacks in Tehran lacked operational quality and value, the Iranian Army's second in command said on Friday.

Daesh was trying to engage Iran at a large scale since 2012, Ground Force chief Ahmad Reza Pourdastan said, Nasim reported.

He said the terrorist attacks were the result of billions of dollars spent by "arrogant countries" to launch some militarily and operationally significant act, but they clearly failed, the Ground Force commander underlined.



**Police seize arms cargo in western Iran**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Iranian police announced it has arrested two terrorists in the western Kermanshah province and seized over 92 handguns from them.

A total number of 92 Colt handguns were accordingly seized in a Peugeot 405 car and the two terrorists were arrested in connection with the Wednesday terrorist attacks in Tehran, Fars reported.

The Wednesday attacks on Majlis and Imam Khomeini shrine took 17 lives and wounded more than 50 people.



**Cleric: Iranians never stop countering U.S.**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Tehran's interim Friday Prayers leader said that the Iranian people and the establishment will never abandon confrontation against the U.S. and other arrogant countries.

Addressing a large crowd of worshippers, Kazem Seddighi also said that the terrorist attacks can never deal a blow to the Islamic Revolution, IRNA reported.

He said that the terrorist incidents in Tehran on Wednesday solidified vigilance and alertness among the Iranian people.



**Detailed presidential election results published**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran's Ministry of Interior on Thursday published the detailed report about the May 19 presidential election.

Zooming in to the results to the scale of counties, the report mentions the number of cast, valid, as well as spoilt ballots.

The May 19 election saw incumbent President Hassan Rouhani re-elected for a second term by garnering 23.5 of 41 million votes counted. His closest rival, Ebrahim Raisi, received 15.7 million votes.



**Iran condemns deadly terrorist attacks in Iraq**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman has strongly condemned Friday's terrorist attacks in the Iraqi town of Musayyib, south of Baghdad, and the holy city of Karbala, in which dozens of innocent people were killed and injured.

Bahram Qassemi offered his condolences to the Iraqi nation and government as well as the bereaved families of the victims of the deadly terror attacks in the neighboring country.

He said heavy and successive defeats of terrorists in Iraq and Syria have caused their ideological and organizational failure.



**VP: Terrorist attacks forge unity among Iranians**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran's first vice president said on Friday that the recent terrorist attacks in Tehran led to forging unity and solidarity among Iranian nation in their struggle against terrorism.

Es'haq Jahangiri made the remarks on the sidelines of the funeral processions held for victims of the Wednesday terrorist attacks, IRNA reported.

"When Takfiri terrorist groups disrupted order and attacked various countries and Muslims in the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran was the only country to stand up against them," he stated.

# Funeral held for Tehran terror victims

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — As thousands of mourners gathered on Friday for the funeral of the victims of the twin terrorist assault in the capital Tehran, senior Iranian authorities pledged to remain adamant in their anti-terrorism cause.

On Wednesday, two terrorist attacks, one on executive building of Iran's Parliament and the other on the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, left 17 dead and 56 injured.

Islamic State took credit for the attacks. The Intelligence Ministry released the photos and names of the five perpetrators, all killed. One female member of the cell was detained.

The ministry announced on Friday it had caught more than 41 suspects in connection to the Tehran attacks across the country.

**Leader offers condolences to victim families**

In a message read at the funeral of victims of terror attacks, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei offered condolences to families of the victims, noting that such acts will have no impact on will of the Iranian nation.

"Such crimes" which prove the "vice" and "humiliation" of their backers, organizers and perpetrators will not hurt "the Iranian people's determination", Ayatollah Khamenei said in the message.

The Leader said the terrorist attacks are "clear examples of the vicious hostility of the mercenaries" of arrogant countries against the decent Iranian people and Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic.

Such acts will inevitably result in "more hatred" toward the U.S. government and its stooges such as the Saudi regime, the Leader remarked.

"It will not damage our nation's determination to fight terrorism ... but will only increase hatred for the governments of the United States and their stooges in the region like Saudis."

He added the Iranian nation will move forward "unitedly and with great determination".

Hours after the raids, the Leader highlighted: "The Iranian nation is moving forward and advancing; even these firecrackers that were set off today will not impact our nation's will; everyone must know this."

**President Rouhani: The terror acts were 'revenge against democracy'**

Attending the funeral, President Rouhani condemned the terror assaults as "a revenge against democracy in Iran", a reference to the May 19 elections in Iran in which nearly 42 million voters participated.

"Whenever the Iranian nation achieves a victory, ill-



**Leader says the attacks "will not damage our nation's determination to fight terrorism ... but will only increase hatred for the governments of the United States and their stooges in the region like Saudis."**

wishers seek to deliver a blow to the country and the people," Rouhani said.

"In our region, both those who back terrorism and have not seen democracy in their political life, and terrorists are against democracy," he added.

Rouhani added that it is not the first time the nation witnesses such acts of terror, stressing that "people will find their own path to national goals and unity, and the nation will undoubtedly emerge victorious."

According to official accounts, more than 17,000 Iranians have been killed in acts of terrors over the past three decades.

**Parliament speaker: Saudis wearing anti-democracy, pro-terrorism badge**

In his remarks in the funeral, Parliament speaker Ali

Larjani rapped Saudi Arabia and the U.S. for the current situation in the Middle East and indirectly for the terror attacks in Tehran.

"Today, the Saudis wear the badge for fighting democracy and backing terrorists," Larjani said.

"Once the U.S. claimed to manage the world to promote democracy and human rights; but now its president exchanges democracy for money."

In making the comments, the parliament speaker was referring to the recent trip to Riyadh by President Donald Trump, during which he signed a \$100-billion arms deal with the Saudi side.

Also, Trump, contrary to his campaign remarks, praised the U.S.-Saudi "strategic partnership" and made Iran the focus of his anti-terrorism rhetoric.

## Tehran attackers identified, 41 more terrorists nabbed

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — One day after a twin assault in Tehran, the country's Intelligence Ministry released pictures of the dead bodies of five ISIS-linked men who launched the attacks, saying they had been fighting for the extremist group in Iraq and Syria.

The Wednesday attacks on the Majlis and the mausoleum of late leader Ayatollah Khomeini killed at least 17 people and wounded over 50. Islamic State took credit for the attacks.

The ministry, however, identified the perpetrators by their first names only, saying it didn't want to reveal their last names due to security and privacy concerns for their families.

Nor did it identify the men's hometowns. By etymology, two of the names were Arabic, one Kurdish, and the other two Iranian.

According to the report, the perpetrators had been "long affiliated with the Wahhabi," an ultraconservative form of Sunni Islam practiced in Saudi

Arabia, and had emerged scot-free from clashes last August in Western Iran, when their ringleader Abu Aeshe Kurdi, commander of a Daesh (IS) brigade in Mosul, Iraq, was killed.

In addition to the five men, a woman suspected to be involved in the attack was arrested on Wednesday, who had been the team's sexual partner, according to a parliamentarian.

On Friday, the Interior Ministry said 41 suspects has been arrested in connection with the attacks in different

provinces across the country.

"With the help of security forces and families of the suspects, 41 people linked to the attacks and to Daesh have been arrested in different provinces," state TV quoted the Interior Ministry as saying. "Lots of documents and weaponry have been seized as well," it added.

The Wednesday attacks were the first such assault by ISIS-linked cells on Iranian soil, which had been shielded from acts of terror ever since the creation of the terrorist group.

## SCO summitters praise efforts to implement Iran nuclear deal

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The heads of state participating in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, have praised efforts to implement the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The summit was attended by Chinese and Russian leaders among others. China and Russia are part of the 5+1 who signed the landmark nuclear deal with Iran in July 2015. The accord went into effect in January 2016.

"The heads of state praised the efforts to implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to resolve the issue of the Iranian nuclear program between the Islamic Republic of Iran and six international mediators plus the European Union," part of the SCO statement said.

**Historic agreement**

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif represented Iran in the SCO meeting which started on Thursday and ended on Friday.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres who had attended the meeting discussed the nuclear agreement



and international developments with Zarif. Guterres called the nuclear deal, a "historic agreement".

On the sidelines of the SCO conference, Zarif also with a number of other senior officials including his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, discussing bilateral ties and the latest developments in the Middle East.

Zarif also held separate meetings with Uzbek Foreign

Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov and Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Eran Abdylbaev.

During his meeting with President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Iranian foreign minister said that expansion of ties with neighbors especially Kazakhstan is among Iran's objectives.

Issues related to cooperation in fight against international terrorism, security and situation in the Middle East and Afghanistan were on the agenda the SCO summit.

The SCO is a Eurasian political, economic, and military organization which was founded in 1996 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

India and Pakistan were formally given full membership in the organization on Friday.

Iran, Belarus, Mongolia, and Afghanistan hold observer status in the organization and Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Armenia, Nepal, Turkey and Sri Lanka are dialogue partners.

China and Russia have expressed support for Iran's membership to the organization.

## Zarif condemns Tehran terror attacks, implicitly points finger at Riyadh

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Condemning twin terrorist attacks in Tehran on Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif implicitly pointed the finger of suspicion at Saudi Arabia.

"Terror-sponsoring despots threaten to bring the fight to our homeland. Proxies attack what their masters despise most: the seat of democracy," Zarif tweeted.

The tweet appeared to refer to comments made by Saudi Arabia's deputy crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman al-Saud, in May, who said Riyadh would bring "the battle" for regional

influence to Iran.

Any struggle for influence between the Sunni Muslim kingdom and the revolutionary Shi'ite theocracy ought to take place "inside Iran, not in Saudi Arabia," he said without elaborating.

Also, just hours before the murderous attacks in Tehran, the Saudi foreign minister, Adel al-Jubeir, had claimed that

Iran is the world's leading supporter of terrorism and must be punished.

The twin attacks, one on executive building of Iran's Parliament and the other on the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, left 17 dead and 56 injured.

Iran, unlike much of the rest of the

Middle East and North Africa, had been relatively free of terrorist attacks.

The raids come also two weeks after nearly 42 million Iranians took to ballot boxes on May 19, overwhelmingly voting to keep incumbent President Rouhani in post, an election Zarif called "the seat of democracy".

In a press conference two days following sweeping win, Rouhani reacted to anti-Iran comments made by Saudi officials during meetings with visiting U.S. President Donald Trump, saying, "The Saudis have never seen a ballot box in their life and don't know what elections are".

**"Terror-sponsoring despots threaten to bring the fight to our homeland. Proxies attack what their masters despise most: the seat of democracy," Zarif tweeted.**

# Qatar rejects Saudi-led bloc's 'terror' list

Qatar on Friday rejected allegations of supporting individuals and groups blacklisted as "terrorists" by four Arab states which cut ties with it this week amid a major diplomatic fallout.

The House of Saud regime, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt published a list of 59 people and 12 groups with links to Qatar late on Thursday, alleging that they have ties to "terrorism".

"The recent joint statement issued by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the UAE regarding a 'terror finance watch list' once again reinforces baseless allegations that hold no foundation in fact," the Qatari government said in response.

The list included Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the most prominent Muslim religious leaders in the Middle East, as well as Qatari-funded charitable organizations.

In London, the independent Britain-based Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) released a statement condemning the Saudi bloc's list as "arbitrary".

"The list was clearly made up arbitrarily, to serve political agendas, without relying on any evidence or an impartial judicial authority," the group wrote.

"The exact legal definition and crime of 'terrorism' needs to be determined by a neutral judicial authority, which is not available in these countries [Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain]."

The human rights group also criticized the countries for abuses carried out among their population by broadly applying "terrorism" to crack down on activists and ordinary citizens.

The AOHR also warned that the list violated clear laws against defamation, as the reputation of individuals and charitable organizations is put at risk.

The list's release was just the latest escalation in the bloc's efforts to isolate Qatar, as allegations that it interferes in the affairs of its neighbors by supporting and financing Islamist groups continue to be levied against it.

Qatar has vehemently denied the charges.

In its statement, the Qatari government said it has been leading the region in attacking what it called the roots of "terrorism", including giving young people hope through jobs, educating hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees and funding community programs to challenge agendas of armed groups.

"Our position on countering terrorism is stronger than many of the signatories of the joint statement - a fact that has been conveniently ignored by the authors," the government said.

The House of Saud regime, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have suspended all flights to and from Doha and closed off sea and air links to Qatar.

The Saudi regime has also closed off Qatar's only land border.

Qatar's Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani on Friday described the blockade as a violation of international law and said there was an attempt to mobilize international opinion against Qatar.

"These procedures that were taken have clear violations of international law and international humanitarian law. They will not have a positive impact on the region but a negative one," he told a press conference during a visit in Germany.



In an interview with Al Jazeera on Thursday, the foreign minister said that the country would not bow to the pressure being applied by the Saudi regime, the UAE and their allies to change its independent foreign policy - a move Qatar considers a violation of its sovereignty.

Most residents of Qatar were still fast asleep when neighboring Bahrain on Monday announced it was cutting diplomatic ties with Doha, delivering the first of a series of coordinated diplomatic strikes that has left the region in disarray.

It happened at 5:50am local time, on the 10th day of Ramadan. Within 10 minutes, the House of Saud regime had followed suit. The kingdom announced via state media that it was taking action to "protect its national security from the dangers of terrorism and extremism".

By 6:20am, the UAE had completed the troika. "It was bound to happen. It was something that was ready to explode," Anwar Gargash, the Emirati foreign minister, later told the Reuters news agency.

At least three other countries, including Egypt, joined in later in the day. But Oman and Kuwait, two other countries in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC), of which Qatar is also a member, stayed neutral.

Qatar strongly denied the allegations cited in the announcements justifying the moves against it, decrying a "campaign of lies that have reached the point of complete fabrication".

Despite mediation efforts led by Kuwait, the standoff continues five days into the dispute.

## ■ Economic blockade

Along with the severing of diplomatic ties, a Riyadh-led blockade was imposed against Doha. The Saudi regime, which shares the only land border with Qatar, shut the crossing and halted transport of goods into its gas-rich neighbor.

Saudi, UAE and Bahrain also closed their airspace to flights from and to Qatar, forcing airlines to remove Doha from their list of destinations. The move stranded thousands of passengers and resulted in lost revenues to airlines caught up in the rift. The International Air Transport Association pleaded that air links be restored, but its request has so far been met with silence. Qataris were even barred from transiting through the UAE.

Qatari citizens were also ordered out of the three countries, while the Saudi, UAE and Bahraini nationals were told to leave Qatar within two weeks.

Sea links were also cut. At the UAE's port of Fujairah, all vessels flying the Qatari flag, or destined for Qatar, were not allowed to go through.

Tankers carrying liquefied petroleum gas from Qatar also had to change course in the Gulf of Aden, according to reports. Another ship was also diverted from Suez Canal in Egypt.

Even as countries such as the UAE blocked Qatari exports like gas and aluminum, Qatar continues to let natural gas flow to UAE, making it possible for Dubai and Abu Dhabi to keep meeting their energy needs.

Amid the crisis, analysts have estimated that the fallout could cost the Persian Gulf economies billions of dollars.

## ■ Turkey sending troops

As the House of Saud regime and its allies tightened the noose on Qatar, other countries in the region stepped in.

Turkey and Iran opened their airspace to more Qatar flights. Both countries also offered food shipments after a rush for items was reported in many Qatari grocery shops in the immediate aftermath of the rift. Iran said food shipment can reach Doha in 12 hours.

An estimated 40 percent of food items in Qatar are transported through Saudi Arabia. Qatar quickly said there was no need for panic-buying as supplies are adequate.

Following the threats made against Qatar, its close ally Turkey voted to accelerate the deployment of troops to its base in the peninsula.

Reports said that the base, which was set up following a 2014 agreement, could accommodate as many as 5,000 Turkish troops.

Turkey, which also enjoys strong relations with the Saudi regime, said it will work to help resolve the crisis peacefully.

## ■ Media attacks

As accusations heated up, the Saudi regime signaled that it was escalating the row in the media sphere - first by shutting down the local office of the Doha-based Al Jazeera Media Network.

In addition to targeting news channels, UAE for instance, also blocked BeIn network, a Qatari-owned sports

broadcaster.

## ■ Trump's tweets

In the first hours of the diplomatic scuffle, the United States weighed in, with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson saying it is important that the PGCC members remain "unified", adding that he does not think it would affect the fight against terrorism. The U.S. maintains a military base in Qatar, its largest in the Middle East, with an estimated 10,000 troops.

Tillerson's assurances, however, were thrown in doubt after U.S. President Donald Trump wrote a post on social media referencing Qatar when he said leaders of the Middle East had stated that they "would take a hard line on funding extremism". He later made a phone call to Qatar's leader to offer help in resolving the crisis.

Instead of diffusing the already heated situation, Trump's tweets only led to more discord.

Hours later, Jordan downgraded its relationship with Qatar. Mauritania also broke off diplomatic relations with Qatar, followed later by Senegal.

Meanwhile, Bahrain ordered a ban on showing sympathy to Qatar on social media, while the UAE warned its residents that they could face 15 years in jail and a fine of as much as \$136,000, by posting messages of support for Qatar.

In response, Qatar urged its citizens to take the high-road on social media, telling citizens and residents to mind "Islamic and Arab values" on social media.

## ■ Qatar 'not prepared to change its foreign policy'

Meantime, Qatar's foreign minister has told Al Jazeera that Qatar will never surrender to the pressure being applied by its Arab neighbors and won't change its independent foreign policy to resolve disputes that have put the region on edge.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani made the remarks in Doha on Thursday.

"We are not ready to surrender, and will never be ready to surrender, the independence of our foreign policy," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman said.

He also said Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani would not leave the country while it was "in blockade", and therefore could not attend an offered mediation by Trump at the White House.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Syrian government soldiers make new advances against ISIL

Syrian government forces have reportedly managed to establish complete control over dozens of areas across the war-ravaged country following intense clashes with members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group.

A military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Syria's official news agency SANA that Syrian Air Force fighter jets pounded ISIL positions and armored vehicles in Deir Malihan, Dibsi Afnan and al-Qadisiyah villages of the troubled and militant-held northern province of Raqqah, killing and injuring dozens of terrorists.

Separately, Syrian army troops, backed by volunteer fighters from popular defense groups, regained full control over the hilly regions of Tal Dakwa, Tal Dukhan, Tal Abu al-Nayyas, Tal al-Hallah and Tal al-Matallah on the eastern of the capital Damascus.

A large number of terrorists were killed during the liberation operations.

Elsewhere in the southeastern flank of Syria's northern province of Aleppo, army troops and allied fighters restored security and stability to 37 villages, killing more than 500 ISIL terrorists in the process.

An unnamed military official said Syrian forces also injured hundreds of the Takfiris, and destroyed six battle tanks and two armored vehicles. Syrian government soldiers and their allies shot down three unmanned aerial vehicles as well.

Meanwhile, army units, in cooperation with pro-government forces, fought the last pockets of ISIL terrorists in al-Badayah district southeast of the ancient city of Palmyra in the west-central Homs Province.

The forces also established control over al-Abassiyah region as well as the historic Hammamat al-Zonoubiyah area.

Furthermore, Syrian warplanes bombarded ISIL vehicles and positions in the west-central province of Hama, killing and injuring many terrorists.

And, Syrian army units foiled ISIL attacks on a number of military posts in the southern outskirts of Dayr al-Zawr city, inflicting heavy losses upon the Takfiris in terms of military equipment and personnel.

Syria has been fighting different foreign-sponsored militant groups since March 2011. United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimated last August that more than 400,000 people had been killed in the crisis until then.

(Source: Press TV)

## ISIL bombings claim 40 civilian lives in central Iraq

More than three dozen people have been killed when separate bomb attacks struck commercial districts in Iraq's central provinces of Babil and Karbala as Iraqi government forces, backed by fighters from allied Popular Mobilization Units (Hashd al-Sha'abi), are battling to expel the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists out of their last urban bastion in the country.



Security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a woman detonated her explosives-laden belt at the entrance to a crowded market in the mainly Shia populated town of Musayyib, located 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the capital Baghdad, on Friday.

The sources added that at least 31 people lost their lives in the attack, while 35 others sustained injuries. The injured were transported to nearby hospitals to receive medical treatment, while the bodies of the victims were shifted to the forensic medicine department.

The Takfiri ISIL terrorist group, which has been leading a campaign of death and destruction in Iraq over the past few years, claimed responsibility for the bombing.

The development came only a few hours after nine people were killed and 16 others wounded in a bomb explosion at the entrance to a garage in the center of the holy shrine city of Karbala.

An unnamed official at Karbala health department said most of the victims were pilgrims, who had travelled to the city to pay homage to Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and his brother Abolfazl al-Abbas (PBUH).

ISIL later claimed the act of violence in a statement published on its Amaq news agency.

According to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), a total of 354 Iraqi civilians were killed and 470 others injured as a result of acts of terrorism and violence in the conflict-ridden country last month.

The UN mission, however, did not mention the number of Iraqi police forces, who were killed or sustained injuries in the unrest.

A large number of the fatalities were recorded in the troubled northern province of Nineveh, where 160 civilians were killed and 52 others wounded.

The capital province of Baghdad saw 86 people killed and another 226 injured.

Iraqi army soldiers and volunteer fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units, have made sweeping gains against the Takfiri elements since launching the Mosul operation on October 17, 2016.

The Iraqi forces took control of eastern Mosul in January after 100 days of fighting, and launched the battle in the west on February 19.

(Source: Press TV)

## Iraqi Kurdistan's referendum plan as 'grave mistake'

Turkey has censured as a plan by Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region to hold a referendum on breaking away from the mainland.

On Friday, Turkey's Foreign Ministry warned the decision announced earlier this week to hold the independence vote on September 25 would be a "grave mistake."

"The maintenance of Iraq's territorial integrity and political unit is one of the fundamental principles of Turkey's Iraq policy," it added.

Turkey is wary of Kurds, especially those in its southeastern regions and others living in Syria and Iraq.

This has been caused by a decades-long and ongoing militancy campaign waged by the outlawed



Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) aimed at carving out an independent state in

southeastern Turkey.

Turkey has been bombing alleged PKK hideouts in the mountains north of Iraq.

It has also invaded both Syria and Iraq via ground to contain the progress of Kurdish fighters, whom it accuses of links with the PKK.

Turkey fears that the potential of creation of an independent Kurdish state in its backyard could further embolden the militants towards stiffer confrontation with Ankara.

Damascus and Baghdad have, time and again, asked Ankara to end its military presence in the Arab states, which comes without their approval.

(Source: agencies)

NEWS IN BRIEF



**ICCIMA to dispatch trade delegation to Luxembourg, Belgium in mid-July**

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) is planning to dispatch a trade delegation to Luxembourg and Belgium on July 11, ICCIMA portal reported.

According to the report, ICCIMA head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie will be heading the delegation visiting the European countries.

The visit is aimed for the two side's businessmen to get to know each other and explore grounds of cooperation.



**Iran Air managing director elected to IATA board of governors**

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Managing director of the Airline of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iran Air, was chosen as a member of the board of governors of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), IRNA reported citing Iran Air portal.

As Iran Air reported, Farhad Parvaresh's membership to the IATA board of governors was accepted during the association's 73th annual general meeting which was held in Mexico on June 4-6.

"Along having access to the latest knowledge and technologies in aviation industry, this membership could pave the way for Iranian airliners' more significant presence in the world markets," Iran Air portal wrote.

**China 'strongly' questions EU tariffs on hot-rolled steel imports**

China's Commerce Ministry said on Friday it "strongly" questioned the legitimacy of the European Union's decision to slap duties of up to 35 percent on imports of hot-rolled steel from China.

In a statement, it said the European Commission ignores the fact that China's steel exports to Europe declined in 2016 and said it will take all necessary measures to protect the interests of Chinese firms. (Source: New York Times)

**Airbus ready to boycott suppliers who perform badly**

Airbus warned suppliers on Friday that they risk a group-wide boycott if they fail to come up to standard for one of the group's businesses.

The warning from the chief operating officer of Europe's largest aerospace group follows a series of glitches in the supply chain that delayed aircraft deliveries last year.

"A supplier who is delinquent in Airbus Helicopters for example has no reason to think they can work in Airbus Commercial," Fabrice Bregier told a media briefing. (Source: New York Times)

**UK vote means tougher Brexit talks, bad news for German firms**

Germany's VDMA engineering association on Friday said the unclear political situation in Britain would complicate negotiations on its departure from the EU, and failure to reach a deal in the two-year timeframe could seriously impact trade.

"The unclear political situation in Britain will make Brexit negotiations even more difficult. That is bad news for German engineering firms," said Thilo Brodtmann, who heads the trade association.

"The future British government will not have a clear majority and therefore will have little room for maneuver in the negotiations," he said in a statement.

Given the election outcome, Brodtmann said it would be difficult for Britain to begin negotiations with the EU as planned on June 19, which increased the risk that no agreement would be reached within the two-year period.

VDMA said trade could be seriously affected and perhaps halted if Britain and the European Union failed to reach an agreement within the designated two-year negotiating period. (Source: New York Times)

**Verizon plans to cut 2,000 jobs at Yahoo, AOL**

Verizon Communications Inc. is expected to cut about 2,000 jobs when it completes its \$4.48 billion acquisition of Yahoo Inc.'s core assets next week, a person briefed on the matter said.

The cuts are expected to come from Verizon's AOL and Yahoo units and represent about 15 percent of the staff at the two units. About 14,000 people work at AOL and Yahoo.

Many of the jobs are in California and some are outside the United States, according to the source, who asked not to be identified because the matter is not yet public.

Yahoo shareholders on Thursday approved the company's sale, according to preliminary results from a shareholder meeting, and it is expected to be completed on Tuesday.

The No. 1 U.S. wireless operator is combining Yahoo's search, email and messenger assets as well as advertising technology tools with its AOL unit, which it bought in 2015 for \$4.4 billion. Verizon expects mobile video and advertising to be new sources of revenue outside the oversaturated wireless market. (Source: Reuters)

**South Pars phase 13 refinery joins national gas network**

**ENERGY** TEHRAN — Refinery of phase 13 of developing Iran's South Pars gas field (in the Persian Gulf) was connected to the country's national gas network, Payam Motamed, the operator of the phase, announced.

He said the produced sweet gas will be injected to the national network in autumn, Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the gas field, wrote in its official website on Friday.

Motamed further put the progress of developing the onshore part of phase 13 at 87 percent.

The project for development of phase 13 is aimed at daily extraction of 56 million cubic meters (mcm) of enriched gas from South Pars field. Once the operation is complete, the phase will yield 50 mcm of sweet gas, 75,000 barrels of gas condensate and 400 tons of sulfur per day in addition to one million tons of ethane and one million tons of propane and butane per annum.

South Pars is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

The huge offshore field, shared with Qatar, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.



The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

**Car production up 9.8% in 2.5 months**

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iranian carmakers manufactured 233,118 vehicles in the first 2.5 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 5) with 9.8 percent rise compared to the same period of time in the previous year, according to Amir-Hossein Qanati, the spokesman of Iran's Auto Policy-Making Council.

Qanati put the number of vehicles manufactured during the first 2.5 months of the past year at 212,355, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

He also said that 220,716 passenger cars have been manufactured in the first 2.5 months of this year, showing 13.2 percent growth from 195,074 passenger cars manufactured in the same time span last year.

Iran manufactured 1.3 million cars in the past calendar year (ended on March 20, 2017) and targets to push the figure up to 1.5 million cars by the end of this year, Mehr news agency reported in early April, quoting Deputy Industry Minister Mansour Moazzami.

Producing more than one million of

automobiles in 2016, Iran could rank first among the world countries regarding the growth in its car production, according to the report released by Organisation Internationale des Constructeurs d'Automobiles, commonly abbreviated OICA, (translated in English as the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers) in early March 2017.

**Iran offers Qatar use of its ports as blockade bites**

→ "We have never seen these actions anywhere else, even between enemies," he added.

He said Qatar would discuss accusations made against the country, but would not discuss shifting its foreign policy.

Donald Trump has called for talks to settle the worst diplomatic crisis in the Persian Gulf for decades. After initially lending his backing to Saudi Arabia's

clampdown, the U.S. president called Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, emir of Qatar, on Wednesday.

Trump offered "to help the parties resolve their differences, including through a meeting at the White House if necessary", according to a U.S. statement released on Wednesday night.

The dispute pits important U.S. allies against each other just as Trump is seeking to forge an Arab alliance to counter

Iran's influence in the region. Kuwait has been leading efforts to mediate between the rival parties.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Sabah, Kuwait's emir, visited Doha on Wednesday as part of his shuttle diplomacy, but did not present a list of demands to Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed said.

Adel al-Jubeir, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, said Persian Gulf states could settle the dispute themselves.

"We have not asked for mediation, we believe this issue can be dealt with among the states of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council," he told a news conference with his German counterpart during a visit to Berlin broadcast on Saudi state television.

Omar Saif Ghabash, the UAE's ambassador to Russia, told BBC radio on Thursday that Qatar had to choose between supporting extremism or its neighbors. (Source: Financial Times)

**Iran may link Chabahar port with Central Asian corridors**

The key Iranian port of Chabahar is not only being expanded as a gateway to Afghanistan but also being considered as an entry point to Central Asia following Hassan Rouhani's reelection as the Iranian president.

Tehran is considering a plan to link the strategically located Chabahar port with various intra Central Asia transport corridors. Chabahar currently connects India with Afghanistan through road and plans are on by Tehran to build rail link with Delhi's support.

The Rouhani government's plan to also link Chabahar with various Central Asian transport corridors will open up a second route for India's outreach to landlocked Central Asia apart from International North South Transportation Corridor (IN-

STC) that also passes through Iran.

India has been considering to link INSTC with various intra Central Asia connectivity corridors besides making Chabahar port another entry point for INSTC. Currently, the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas is the entry point for INSTC that will link India with Russia, Eurasia and Europe.

On Monday, Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj denounced misgivings regarding delay in India's role in expanding Chabahar port and asserted that work on the project has gathered momentum.

Rouhani is keen to boost all connectivity initiatives through the country.

This is a priority sector for Iran and India's role is vital in the connectivity initiatives. Chabahar will not only be gateway to

Afghanistan but the plan is to also make it a gateway to Central Asia," a top official of the Iranian government told ET.

The Chabahar port project was discussed during Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar's visit to Tehran last month. Tehran has offered Delhi a proposal to manage phase one of the port built by Iran even as the two sides are still negotiating terms and conditions of Delhi's role in expanding phase two of the port where the Modi government has announced to invest \$235 million.

ET has learnt that Tehran has offered Delhi management rights for two years for phase one of the port and such rights could be renewed by another decade.

India's allotment of \$235 million for phase two of Chabahar is divided into two

parts — \$150million Line of Credit (LoC) from the EXIM Bank for development of the port complex and \$85 million allotted later following contract between the two sides for the supply of equipment to develop two berths in the port complex.

A special purpose vehicle has been created by the Indian shipping ministry for development of phase two of the port. On the Iranian side, Ports and Management Organization is the nodal authority for implementing the project.

India has been given the rights to operate two berths and few terminals in this phase two of the port. India is eyeing thriving free trade zone in Chabahar to make the port viable, indicated a person familiar with the development. (Source: Times of India)

**Kuroda says Japan still a 'long way' from meeting inflation goal**

Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said the country had escaped from deflation but still had more progress to make before reaching its goal for 2 percent inflation.

"While the policy approach has steered Japan's economy in the right direction, our intellectual journey has not yet been completed," Kuroda said in speech at the University of Oxford on Thursday. "The rate of change in the consumer price index recently has been around 0 percent and there is still a long way to go until the price stability target of 2 percent is achieved."

Japan's economy grew at an annual rate of 1 percent in the first quarter, a government report showed Thursday. While gross domestic product expanded for a fifth straight quarter, the longest streak in a decade, inflation remains far away from the BOJ's 2 percent target.

He said that the main reason was inflation expectations have declined "and have continued to be subdued."

Kuroda has pledged to continue controlling Japan's bond yield curve by keeping a short-term rate on bank reserves at -0.1 percent and pinning the benchmark 10-year yield at around 0 percent. The yield on the 10-year note has been between 0 percent and 0.1 percent for the past three months.

Most of economists forecast no policy change from the BOJ in coming months, even with inflation hovering just above 0 percent, according to a Bloomberg survey. In fact, most expect the BOJ's next step to be tightening, given expectations for moderate improvement in inflation, and few tools left for further easing.

**Balance sheet**

Now in a fifth year of its unprecedented quantita-



tive easing, the BOJ has expanded its balance sheet to nearly the same size as Japan's economy. That is unnerving some lawmakers, as is the fact that an end to the stimulus is nowhere in sight because inflation remains weak.

The BOJ is contending with a growing debate about a possible exit among market participants, the media and some lawmakers. Kuroda has faced calls from lawmakers from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to explain how and when the central bank would exit its current easing program.

Officials realize it's unrealistic and not constructive to try to remain silent on the issue and the BOJ is considering how to communicate its thinking about handling a future exit from stimulus, according to people familiar with central bank's discussions.

The yen strengthened against the U.S. dollar and shares in Japanese banks and insurers surged after Bloomberg reported the central bank's deliberations on Thursday.

**Watching Yen**

"I continue to monitor exchange rate development and certainly could be concerned about, if the exchange rate deviated from what economists call the equilibrium range of exchange rate, substantially -- upward or downward," he told the audience during a question and answer session after the speech. "But we do not manage our monetary policy in order to stabilize the exchange rate."

Kuroda, who earned a masters degree in economics at Oxford in 1971, spoke as the U.K. election was under way. The result could strengthen the yen, as happened following the Brexit vote last year.

As of Thursday afternoon in Tokyo, the yen has weakened about 15 percent against the dollar since Kuroda's BOJ began its record easing in 2013, helping boost stock markets, corporate profits and household sentiment. Any reversal could make Kuroda's battle to eradicate Japan's "deflationary mindset" more difficult by also reducing inflationary pressures in the economy through lower import costs.

Speculation is rising about whether Kuroda might serve another term when his current one ends in April next year. He has declined to comment on whether he could be reappointed. Many private economists in Tokyo say there is a chance he will be. (Source: Bloomberg)

# Glut keeps oil prices in check as turmoil shakes the Middle East

Qatar and Saudi Arabia square off in a major diplomatic feud. Suicide bombers strike at the heart of the Iranian capital. Kurdistan moves toward independence, and war rages on in Syria and Yemen.

And in the oil market? Prices just kept sliding.

Only a few years ago, bad news from the Middle East would have triggered a frenzy of speculative buying in the oil market, sending prices higher. So far this week, Brent crude, the global benchmark, is down more than 4 percent despite crisis after crisis hitting the region.

The muted reaction is a sign of how years of oversupply have created a cushion of large oil stocks that limits price spikes. By some measures, the world is sitting on top of about 600 million barrels of extra crude inventories, enough to offset the whole production of Libya for two years.

"In the current environment where stocks are still high, the market needs an actual -- and large -- disruption rather than the risk of one," said Amrita Sen, chief oil analyst at consultant Energy Aspects Ltd. in London.

On top of the high stocks, OPEC now has 2.1 million barrels a day of spare production capacity, the most in four years, that it could use to offset any disruption, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. And non-OPEC countries such as Russia and Kazakhstan, which this year joined the producer group in cutting output to reduce the oil glut, could also reverse the curbs.

Finally, U.S. shale output could ramp up fairly quickly, too. In the past, the oil industry took years to react to any price rise, but now shale companies can bring wells into production in places such as Texas and Oklahoma in just a few weeks, acting as second line of defense against disruptions.

With plenty of cushioning available, oil investors are focusing on short-term production and demand, which continue to point to an oversupply. Official data shows that U.S. total petroleum inven-



tories last week rose 15.5 million barrels, the biggest weekly increase in nine years. The stockpile jump, which caught the market largely by surprise Wednesday, was more than enough to offset rising tension in the Middle East and drive down Brent prices to their lowest since November.

## ■ Powder keg

"You could be forgiven for wondering how on earth the oil market did not close higher yesterday," said Tamas Varga, an analyst at brokerage PVM Oil Associates Ltd. in London. "The Middle East is starting to look like a barrel that is filled with, not oil, but gunpowder that only needs a spark to go up in flames."

It won't comfort bulls that today's market has some parallels with that of summer 2014. Then as now, prices briefly rallied in response to a Middle East crisis when Islamic State captured the Iraqi city of Mosul in early June, only to

begin sliding when it became clear exports were unaffected. That was the start of a deeper sell-off which eventually saw prices lose 60 percent by the following January.

## ■ Family feud

The current crises appear unlikely to affect physical oil flows. The war-of-words between Saudi Arabia and Qatar has so far had no impact on crude and natural gas production, although it could complicate exports due to shipping restrictions. While Qatar is a large exporter of liquefied natural gas, it's a small crude producer, pumping 620,000 barrels a day, less than what the Bakken shale basin of North Dakota.

While the dispute could strain the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, of which both Saudi Arabia and Qatar are members, it's unlikely to affect policy. OPEC is used to dealing with family squabbles.

Nor are Wednesday's terrorist attacks in Tehran, hundreds of miles from the nation's oil fields, likely to slow exports. So far Islamic State, which claimed the attack, hasn't shown the capacity to target the Iranian oil industry, which is concentrated near the border with Iraq in the southwest of the country and on the Persian Gulf coast.

The independence referendum in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq, scheduled for late September, is also unlikely to disrupt oil production. As the poll is non-binding, it probably won't lead to conflict between Erbil, the Kurdish capital, and Baghdad.

In the past, incidents like these could have "sent oil prices through the roof," said PVM's Varga. "Not this time, which tells us that the oil market will only get support from bullish facts and not bullish expectations."

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Iraq seeks to triple refining capacity with slew of new projects

Iraq, the world's third-biggest crude exporter, plans to triple refining capacity by 2021 to shake off its reliance on refined-product imports.

Processing capacity will increase to 1.5 million barrels a day from just over 500,000 now, not including Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region, Deputy Oil Minister Fayyad Al-Nima said in an interview in Baghdad. The country spends more than \$2 billion a year importing gasoline and gasoil, he said.

Previous plans to expand refining have faced setbacks and delays, even outside the regions beset by militancy. Back in 2012, the government said Iraq would reach processing capacity of 760,000 barrels a day by the start of the following year. That goal was missed, and the crude-market rout that began in 2014 further squeezed government funds.

Planned plants include a second refinery in Basra, though the bidding deadline for the 300,000-barrel-



a-day facility has been deferred by three months as additional companies expressed interest, Al-Nima said. In Kirkuk, bidding has closed on a proposed 70,000-barrel refinery, and a decision will be an-

nounced this month. In Nasiriya, two Chinese companies are in talks on a 150,000-barrel facility. Iraq will also soon announce a tender to upgrade existing plants in Basra and Daura, Al-Nima said.

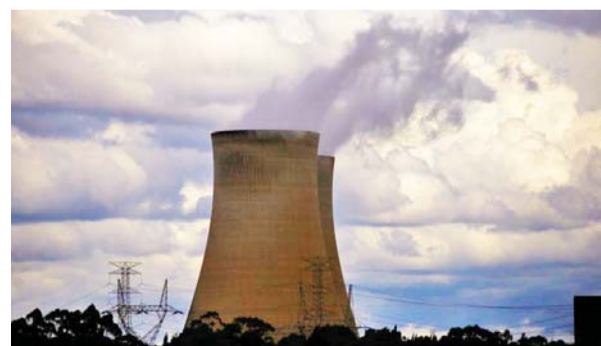
At Karbala, delays have hampered a project to build a 140,000-barrel-a-day refinery, contracted to Hyundai Engineering & Construction Co. The government is paying Hyundai in crude oil as it seeks \$2 billion in loans to cover the plant's funding shortfall.

The country is also looking to acquire processing capacity overseas, not only boosting its production of fuels but opening up markets for Iraqi crude. The government is in talks with China and Oman to invest in refineries and depots and plans similar discussions with Singapore and Indonesia, Al-Nima said.

"Iraq's output is increasing day by day and we need markets and foreign refineries and foreign depots," he said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Australian energy review calls for fuel-neutral clean energy target



Australia needs a clean energy target to cut carbon emissions, cap soaring power prices and keep the lights on, the nation's chief scientist said in a report on Friday, aiming to end a decade of political warfare over climate policy.

The highly anticipated blueprint, presented to federal and state leaders, is expected to drive a compromise on carbon and energy policy, urgently needed to curb power price volatility and end outages that have hurt manufacturers.

The energy security review was commissioned last October after tornadoes slammed transmission lines in South Australia, triggering a state-wide blackout that left homes in the dark for up to eight hours and crippled industry for nearly two weeks.

"The lack of a transparent, credible and enduring emissions reduction mechanism for the electricity sector is now the key threat to system reliability," the review said.

The energy crisis has crept up on Australia, despite its rich endowment of coal and gas, as states have promoted rooftop solar and wind power in the absence of stable carbon policy at a federal level over the past 10 years.

"More of the same is not an option, we need to aim higher," Chief Scientist Alan Finkel, the head of the review

panel, said in a statement.

Finkel called for the government to set a clean energy target, designed to encourage investment in "reliable generation", including coal with carbon capture and storage or gas.

It would also require all new generators to have "fast response" capabilities to deal with frequency fluctuations, which means variable sources like wind and solar farms would need to be teamed with sources like gas-fired power or energy storage.

The report said large generators should have to give three years' notice before closing to avoid shocks to the market.

"If we adopt a strategic approach, we will have fewer local and regional problems, and can ensure that consumers pay the lowest possible prices over the long term," Finkel said.

To help cut bills, consumers should be rewarded for cutting power use and for generating power from sources like rooftop solar, the report said.

Defying state bans on gas drilling and green groups' calls for no new gas-fired power, Finkel said gas is essential for providing reliable electricity, and governments should work with communities to encourage safe exploration and production of gas.

"For the short to medium-term the NEM (national electricity market) is likely to require higher levels of flexible, gas-fired generation to support (wind and solar)," the report said.

Urgent action is needed not just to stabilize the grid, but also to cut carbon emissions.

Based on the current energy mix and expected growth, Australia's emissions in 2030 are projected to be about 57 percent higher than its target of 290 million tons under the Paris climate accord, according to the nation's top research body.

(Source: Reuters)

## UAE reinstates total ban on Qatar-linked oil tanker movement

Just a day after Abu Dhabi was said to have removed the restrictions on Qatar operated, owned, or flagged tankers to call at UAE ports, the port authority backtracked and re-imposed the ban on all oil tankers with any connection to Qatar from stopping at UAE, creating the latest confusion surrounding crude oil loadings and co-loadings in the Middle East.

The latest circulars issued by Abu Dhabi Petroleum Ports Authority and state-held Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) say that there is "denial of entry into any of the Petroleum Ports, for all vessels arriving from, or destined to Qatar, regardless of its flag," Reuters reports on Thursday, citing the notices it has seen.

After, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya severed diplomatic ties with Qatar, accusing it of sponsoring terrorism and destabilizing the region, port authorities in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain barred Qatar-flag or owned vessels, as well as Qatar-bound or Qatar-origin tankers, from calling at their ports, thus making crude and oil product loadings in the Persian Gulf more complicated, and forcing large oil importers to change loading plans.

The reinstatement of UAE's total ban for any Qatar-bound or Qatar-originated tanker is likely to create further confusion among refiners and shipbrokers that have been wondering if they could continue their common practice of co-loading several grades of crude from several Middle Eastern producers, including Qatar, since the spat in the Middle East began. The impossibility to co-load Qatari grades from Qatari ports together with UAE grades from UAE ports could increase transportation costs and tanker fees, and potentially create logistical jams.

"ADNOC has officially confirmed that we cannot co-load to and from [Qatar]. So we need to find new vessels, then find co-loadings around the region."

According to Reuters' industry sources in Asia and the Middle East, co-loadings could continue on a case-by-case basis, despite the port ban. (Source: oilprice.com)

## Libya's Sharara oil field reopens after strike: National Oil Corp

Libya's major Sharara oil field has reopened after a workers' protest and should return to normal production within three days, the National Oil Corporation said in a statement early on Friday.

Sharara had been producing nearly 270,000 barrels per day (bpd) before employees went on strike on Wednesday over a lack of medical treatment for a colleague who died in a swimming pool accident at the field.

The announcement that production was restarting at Sharara followed an emergency meeting of the NOC board and Sharara's operating company, in which NOC Chairman Mustafa Sanalla ordered a review of ambulance services and an upgrading of medical provisions for employees, according to an earlier NOC statement.

He also met municipal and medical officials as well as civil society activists from the nearby city of Ubari, the NOC said.


Sharara was producing nearly a third of Libya's national output of 835,000 bpd earlier this week.

The southwestern field reopened in December after a two-year pipeline blockade was lifted, but there have been temporary shutdowns several times since then because of local protests.

The field is operated by the NOC in partnership with Repsol, Total, OVM and Statoil.

Libya is trying to boost production to 1.25 million bpd before the end of the year. The OPEC member produced more than 1.6 million bpd before Libya's 2011 revolution, but since then output has been crippled by protests, political divisions and armed conflict. (Source: Reuters)

(First Announcement)



**Z.K.P.P.M Co.**  
Zagros Kowsar  
Power plant  
Production &  
Management Co.

**Call for Prequalification of Contractors for the Construction of Steam Portion of Zagros-Kowsar Combined Cycle Power Plant in Kermanshah Province, Iran**

In order to convert the existing gas turbine power plant in Kermanshah into combined cycle power plant, Zagros Kowsar Power Plant Production and Management Company intends to award the construction of two steam units, each with the production capacity of at least 160MW along with all accessories, ancillaries and systems to the qualified contractor through tendering on the basis of EPCF (turnkey basis with the financing of 85%).

All necessary activities for the construction of project [including design, procurement, civil construction, erection, commissioning and financing of the project] shall be borne by the selected contractor.

The gas section of the power plant includes four gas units of V94.2-5 type each with the capacity of 162MW in ISO conditions which are about five years under operation within the framework of instructions of manufacturer. Payment of the contract amount is guaranteed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance (MEAF) after elapsing a nine-month break from PAC in 10 equal 6-month installments.

Interested applicants may refer to the following address from 16.03.1396 (June 6, 2017) to 24.03.1396 (June 14, 2017) by submission of introduction letter to Moshanir power Engineering Consultant as the project Engineer and obtain the prequalification documents:

Deputy of Managing Director for Power Generation & Renewable Energies, 4th Floor, No. 1, Shadi Alley, Opposite HOMA Hotel, Shahid Khoddami Ave., Above VANAK Sq., Tehran with the contact phone number: (0098-21) 88790938 OR log on to the website at: WWW.moshanir.co.ir

The deadline for the delivery of filled-in documents to the aforementioned address is on 10.04.1396 (July 1, 2017). The companies which receive tender documents via the website address of Moshanir, shall inform their tendency and willingness for participating in the tender to the Engineer of the project in written form latest by two days before the deadline set for the delivery of documents, otherwise they will not be evaluated. After the evaluation of prequalification of contractors, the Employer will embark on providing a shortlist of Bidders which afterwards, the qualified contractor will be selected through tendering procedure. Cost of advertisement shall be borne by the tender winner.

## 'I need loyalty. I expect loyalty'

By Donald Lambro

Former FBI director James Comey erased any doubt last week that President Trump asked him to halt a key part of his investigation into the Russian collusion scandal and insisted on his complete "loyalty."

In testimony before the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Comey produced a detailed recitation of what Trump told him in their meetings over the course of the past several months — supporting allegations that had been leaked to the news media and that the president has denounced as "fake news."

In a dramatic, nationally televised presentation, drawn from contemporaneous memorandums, complete with quotes from Trump, that he wrote immediately after their meetings, Comey made it clear that the president had attempted to interfere in the FBI's investigation, suggesting that his job hung in the balance if he didn't do what Trump wanted.



In a Feb. 14 Oval Office meeting, Trump wanted to talk about the investigation into his national security adviser, Michael Flynn, who had resigned the previous day, when he lied to Vice President Pence, saying he hadn't talked to Russian officials during the campaign.

After asking others at the meeting to leave, including Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Comey's boss, "The president began by saying Flynn hadn't done anything wrong in speaking with the Russians," the FBI chief said in written testimony released the day before Thursday's hearing.

"He is a good guy and has been through a lot," Trump said. "I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go I hope you can let this go."

"I had understood the president to be requesting that we drop any investigation of Flynn in connection with false statements about his conversations with the Russian ambassador in December," Comey said. Needless to say, Comey said, "I did not say I would 'let this go.'"

### FBI's role

Still, he added, "it was very concerning, given the FBI's role as an independent investigative agency."

At an earlier meeting on Jan. 27, Trump had invited Comey to a private dinner in the White House's Green Room, just the two of them. It was then that the president raised the issue of his job, asking "whether I wanted to stay on as FBI Director which I found strange."

Comey concluded that "the dinner was, at least in part, an effort to have me ask for my job and create some sort of patronage relationship. That concerned me greatly, given the FBI's traditionally independent status."

Comey told Trump "I loved my work and intended to stay and serve out my 10 year term as director."

"And then, because the set-up made me uneasy, I added that I was not 'reliable' in the way politicians use that word, but he could always count on me to tell him the truth."

Then a few moments later, Trump said, "I need loyalty, I expect loyalty," at which point Comey said, "I didn't move, speak, or change my facial expression in any way during the awkward silence that followed. We simply looked at each other in silence."

The conversation resumed, with Comey giving Trump a tutorial of sorts about the independence of the Department of Justice and especially the FBI, and the dangers of "undermining public trust in the institutions" of government "and their work."

But Trump wanted to hear none of that, and once again said, "I need loyalty." But Comey replied, "You will always get honesty from me."

To which Trump responded, "That's what I want, honest loyalty."

Comey wrote a detailed memo "immediately afterwards," about what was said at the dinner, and shared it with his senior leadership team.

But, as the investigation widened, the president wanted something more from Comey than just his loyalty, which he didn't get. And so he was fired.

During a March 30 phone call from the White House, Trump said, according to Comey's testimony, "a cloud" had settled over his presidency, making it difficult to move his agenda forward, and "that he hadn't done anything wrong and hoped I would find a way to get it out that we weren't investigating him."

Comey reminded Trump that he had already told him that, but he wanted the director himself to "get that out" to the news media. That of course wasn't Comey's job, so during an April 11 call from Trump, still looking for a way to promote that story line, the FBI director told him "the way to handle it was to have the White House Counsel call the acting deputy attorney general."

Three things are clear right now. Trump has interfered with the FBI's investigation, spurring talk about obstruction of justice. His agenda is firmly stalled in Congress. And the highly respected Gallup Poll had his job approval score at 39 percent at the end of May.

(Source: *The Washington Times*)

**Comey made it clear that the president had attempted to interfere in the FBI's investigation, suggesting that his job hung in the balance if he didn't do what Trump wanted.**

# Saudi Arabia stroked Trump's ego. Now he is doing their bidding with Qatar

The Saudis understood from the start that Trump craved flattery and respect. The kingdom's investment in wooing Trump is paying off

By Mohamad Bazzi

On Monday, Saudi Arabia and three of its allies cut off diplomatic and economic relations with Qatar, a tiny, energy-rich emirate in the Persian Gulf. The Saudis moved to punish and isolate Qatar for its support of Islamist groups (ISIL) and its refusal to go along with a Saudi-led campaign against Iran. By Tuesday, Donald Trump took to Twitter — and he made the crisis between two U.S. allies a lot worse.

In a series of morning tweets, Trump took credit for instigating Saudi Arabia and its allies to sever relations with Qatar and to impose a blockade, sealing the emirate's only border and cutting off air and sea travel.

He mentioned his visit to Saudi Arabia last month, where he called on a gathering of Arab and Muslim leaders to isolate Iran and to cut off funding for extremist groups. "During my recent trip to the Middle East I stated that there can no longer be funding of Radical Ideology," Trump wrote. "Leaders pointed to Qatar — look!"

Instead of offering to play peacemaker, as two of his top national security aides had done hours after the crisis erupted, Trump unequivocally sided with Saudi Arabia and its main ally, the United Arab Emirates.

Clearly, Saudi leaders are playing Trump, exploiting the grandiose reception they gave him last month after he decided to make the kingdom the first stop on his maiden foreign trip as president. By the end of his two-day visit, Trump had become Saudi Arabia's cheerleader and he aligned U.S. foreign policy with the kingdom's vision of the Middle East.

In a 21 May speech to nearly 50 Arab and Muslim leaders gathered in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, Trump framed the region's problems as solely due to Iranian aggression and terrorism by extremist groups (ISIL). "From Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen, Iran funds, arms, and trains terrorists, militias, and other extremist groups that spread destruction and chaos across the region," Trump said, echoing the harsh comments of Saudi leaders. "For decades, Iran has fueled the fires of sectarian conflict and terror."

### An extravagant welcome

The Saudis read Trump accurately from the time he took office — they understood that he craved flattery and respect. Arab leaders, especially the oil-rich monarchs, are used to flattery since they live with it every day. So the Saudis decided to give



Saudi King Salman presents President Donald Trump with the highest civilian honor.

**In a series of morning tweets, Trump took credit for instigating Saudi Arabia and its allies to sever relations with Qatar and to impose a blockade, sealing the emirate's only border and cutting off air and sea travel.**

Trump an extravagant welcome, the kind of deference he would never get at home.

The streets of Riyadh were filled with billboards of Trump and Saudi King Salman. The Ritz-Carlton hotel, where the president and his entourage stayed, projected a portrait of Trump onto its exterior, stretching for five floors. Most of all, Saudi leaders convinced Trump that they value and respect him far more than his predecessor, Barack Obama.

And the kingdom's investment in wooing Trump is paying off. It's not surprising that Trump would offer unqualified support to Saudi Arabia in its conflict with Iran, since the president and many of his advisers consider Iran the greatest threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East.

But with his criticism of Qatar, which is a longtime American ally and home to the largest U.S. military base in the region, Trump is telling the Saudis that he will side with them in virtually every regional con-

flict. In Trump's eyes, the Saudis can do no wrong.

Trump is also undermining members of his own administration, who have tried to stick to the traditional U.S. policy of avoiding publicly taking sides in the regional feuds among Arab allies in the Persian Gulf.

On Monday, hours after the Saudis announced their campaign to isolate Qatar, the U.S. secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, and the defense secretary Jim Mattis hinted that they would try to mediate between the two U.S. allies. "We certainly would encourage the parties to sit down together and address these differences," Tillerson said.

But Trump, with his usual bravado, torpedoed any attempt at the U.S. serving as an honest broker. "So good to see the Saudi Arabia visit with the King and 50 countries already paying off. They said they would take a hard line on funding," Trump

tweeted on Tuesday. He added: "Perhaps this will be the beginning of the end of the horror of terrorism!"

For years, Qatar has provided funds and support to the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and extremist groups in Syria, Libya and elsewhere. But other Arab monarchs, including Saudi Arabia, also have a record of supporting extremists.

Beyond the current crisis with Qatar, Trump's unequivocal support has emboldened a newly assertive Saudi Arabia. For decades, the kingdom pursued a largely behind-the-scenes foreign policy that benefited from booming oil prices. Saudi leaders exerted their power by funding proxies and friendly governments, while the kingdom avoided direct military intervention. But today, King Salman and his advisers are becoming more aggressive militarily, most notably by launching a war in Yemen in March 2015.

(Source: *The Guardian*)

## France takes a turn neither left nor right

A new president, Emmanuel Macron, has so far set a model for democracies in shaking up the old political order — if he can win a majority in coming legislative elections.

The French invented the meaning of left and right in politics. In the 18th century, commoners sat on the king's left while the aristocracy sat on his right. But after the election of Emmanuel Macron as president in May and his new party's expected victory in legislative elections this month, France may need to update those labels or dispense with them.

That could help other democracies stuck in polarized politics, especially the United States.

Macron, a former banker who once worked under a Socialist president, won handily on a promise of political renewal and centrist policies. So far he's been true to his word. His cabinet ministers reflect a range of views. His choice for Prime Minister, Édouard Philippe, is on the right but was a popular mayor in the left-leaning city of Le Havre in the Normandy region. And only 5 percent of



Macron's candidates for the coming election are former members of Parliament. Most are newcomers, including a female bullfighter and a renowned mathematician.

France was ripe to rip up the political rule book. Before the election, 85 percent of people said the country was heading in the wrong direction. Neither of the two

traditional parties was strong enough to make it to the final round of May's presidential contest. Macron's party (En Marche!, or On the Move) was founded only last year. Yet he won with two-thirds of the vote.

Now the French are agog over Macron and his "cross-party" vision. A new poll by INSEE shows the country's morale is at its highest in 10 years. And Macron has already renamed the party — which he calls a citizens' movement — to La République En Marche! His ministers have begun to clean up government and push power down to local levels. The French, says Macron, have chosen "a spirit of achievement over a spirit of division."

His plans for economic reform still face strong headwinds, especially from unions. But his main goal is to help the French "believe in themselves," he says. In an earlier book, "Révolution," he wrote that authority must not be imposed and that citizens must "remain masters of our own clocks, of our principles, and not abandon them..."

(Source: *The CSM*)

## What Britain's next government could look like after May loses the majority

By Rick Noack

British Prime Minister Theresa May needed to take 326 seats in Parliament to hold on to the majority, but with most votes counted, the Conservatives were projected to win only 319. An election once expected to lead to an almost certain victory for the incumbent prime minister, who called early elections herself, has turned into a major defeat for the Tories.

Here are some of the coalitions or arrangements that could result. Most scenarios are either unlikely or would be extremely fragile — possibly paving the way for another General Election.

### Labour and Liberal Democrats

The last time the Liberal Democrats entered a coalition with a much bigger party in 2010, it did not end well for them. Being forced into major concessions by the Tories, the Liberal Democrats lost much support among many of their core voters and never quite recovered.

It is nevertheless possible that the Liberal Democrats could form a minority coalition with the Labour Party that would, for instance, aim at a softer exit from the European Union. The odds for such a coalition are low, though. The

Liberal Democrats' former leader, Ming Campbell, indicated an unwillingness to form such an alliance, telling the BBC on Thursday night, "We've had our fingers burned by coalition."

### Labour and Scottish National Party (SNP)

Instead of forming an alliance with the coalition-skeptical Liberal Democrats, Labour could also join forces with the Scottish National Party to topple the Conservative Party.

In May, Scottish National Party leader Nicola Sturgeon said she preferred having Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn as prime minister. Although Sturgeon added that she did not consider Corbyn a credible choice, she told the BBC that in the case of a hung Parliament, "of course we would look to be part of a progressive alliance that pursued progressive policies." Corbyn, however, has rejected any suggestions that his party could form an alliance with the SNP.

### Labour and Scottish National Party and Liberal Democrats

Although it remains an unlikely scenario, it would probably be the preferred choice of many continental Europeans who still hope that Britain will make a U-turn in its decision to leave the EU. Together, the Labour Party, the SNP and the Liberal Democrats would have 307 seats in Parliament —

fewer than May's Tories will have.

What unites members of all three parties is a certain degree of skepticism that the decision to leave the EU was the right one. However, as a minority coalition, the three parties would still rely on the support of other, smaller parties.

### Minority government: Conservatives

Theoretically, May could also decide to try to continue to stay in power despite the loss of a majority. The Prime Minister will only be forced to resign if it becomes clear that she will not be able to obtain a majority through a coalition or loose alliances. However, her political strategy in recent months has alienated many of the parties she would have to rely on for parliamentary votes.

The Labour Party considers itself the main alternative to May's conservative vision for Britain, whereas the Liberal Democrats would like to see Britain remain part of the EU. The SNP remains frustrated by May's earlier announcement not to grant Scotland another independence referendum anytime soon.

One party to watch for, however, is Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, which has in the past indicated a possible willingness to support the Conservative Party in case of a hung Parliament. (Source: *The Washington Post*)

# Restoration, diversification and interconnection, pillars of Korean policy towards Iran

## INTERVIEW

By Maryam Khormaei

Mr. Kim, Seung-Ho the ambassador of South Korea to Iran hosted Maryam Khormaei of Tehran Times in his residency to discuss bilateral relations as well as international issues including two-way trade highly dependent on oil and Korean peninsula's critical situation.

Following is the full text of the interview:

**■ In his last year's visit to Iran, the Prime Minister of South Korea agreed to increase the annual trading volume between the two countries to \$18 billion. Now the question is how successful we were to hit the target and except for the oil, what sort of new commodities have you imported from Iran?**

If I want to start with the amount referred to the money first, I should say that our last year trading increased by 30%. But from January to March 2017, it increased by 60%. So I can say that our two-way trade has increased very rapidly and this is quite good news for both countries. The reason as to why this is good news is not only you sell more oil to us but Seoul sells more products to you.

I should say that South Korea has 3 basic strategies towards Iran. The first one is "restoration". Before the sanctions in 2011, our countries two-way trade was more than \$17 billion. But during the sanction period, it was reduced to one-third. So we have to restore the peak of trade to the former state.

The second strategy is that we have to "diversify our relations" not only in trade but also in cultural, social and political subjects. Even in trade, we need not to focus on oil, cars and cellular phones.

The third strategy is to "interconnect the relations between two countries". Trade in the concept of selling and buying is not sustainable enough. We can easily change our trade pattern.

In regard with the first strategy, I should say that restoration is already well underway. It is proved by the rapid increase of trade in last two years. But when it comes to talking about the "competition", we still have a far way to go.

The product portfolio from South Korea to Iran remains thin. Except from oil, there is not much to import from Iran. But after lifting the sanctions, our oil import from your country has increased by 200%.

At the same time, our concentration on the oil has increased. Now, 98% of our imports from your country is oil. So, we have to diversify our relations.

**■ Do you have any plan for this so-called diversification?**

We need a bilateral effort contribution. South Korea can't do it on its own. We need more Iranian side effort to penetrate into our market. Relying on oil and petrochemicals is not enough.

**■ In the shipbuilding industry, Iran before going under sanctions signed a deal worth of \$2.7 billion with Hyundai Heavy Industries. But once the sanctions were implied, Hyundai filed up an international claim for damage. How far did the claim go forward and what is the fate of the deal?**

I don't have specific information on this big deal. But at that time Iran was



**"Even if South Korea keeps its innocent behavior towards Northern neighbor, as long as the country keeps provoking us and breaching international rules, we have not many options to take."**

under international sanctions and South Korea is also a member of the UN. So, we had the obligation to respect the sanctions. In this regard, Hyundai Company could've breached the sanctions. That's why the company stopped the deal.

**■ The previous government of South Korea had a conservative approach towards the Northern neighbor but since Mr. Moon the new elected president took office, we have been hearing about the possibility of changing the course to a political solution which includes bilateral meeting with Mr. Kim if necessary. How bright is the future of the peninsula relying on dialogue rather than war?**

Well, to be frank it is not in our hands even though we changed our government and the new one is more willing to engage with North Korea in a more peaceful manner, the situation can't only be controlled by Seoul. Actually, all depends on how Pyongyang will react. So, even if South Korea keeps its innocent behavior towards Northern neighbor, as long as the country keeps provoking us and breaching international rules, we have not many options to take. Only two weeks have passed since the new president took office.

**■ How optimistic are you about a political solution?**

It all depends on North Korea. This is the only hope. At first Pyongyang needs to take a more peaceful attitude towards us; however, it has already shot two ballistic missiles in the last two weeks. We really need to have North Korea around the negotiation table but if the country keeps provoking and breaching the international rules, it will be difficult to show an innocent attitude. All depends on North Korea. So I sincerely hope that the country will change its behavior.

**■ Mr. Moon has been talking about thinking twice on THAAD. He has not discharged the possibility of**

**dooming the U.S. defense system. What are the reasons behind this hesitation after such a long desire to have it?**

I don't have specific information about this but what I know is that this system is necessary for South Korea to protect itself from the North Korean nuclear attack. At the same time, China is not that happy about THAAD. So, this question will be discussed between South Korea, China and the U.S. in order to seek the solution through peace and intensive dialogue.

**■ Except for montage automotive industry, do South Korea's car manufacturing companies have any plan for more cooperation with Iran in technology transfer? What's your plan for Iran's auto market?**

As far as I know, cooperation in automobile section has been expected very much. This year Kerman Motor already started to assemble and sell 2 passenger car models of Korean vehicles. Kerman Motor has the intention to increase two more new types within this year. I heard that the first of two models are very well received in the Iranian market and the company is now discussing if they can export the Korean cars to neighboring countries as the number of car sales exceed the number of what you need in the Iranian domestic market.

Within this course which includes importing components of Korean cars and assembling the final product here in Iran, I definitely think that there can be more technology transferring. But, if you ask whether the Korean companies have specific plans to set up their own factories here, I have no information as it is in the private companies' decision. Korean government can't impose on private companies to do this. But all depends on the promotion of the Korean cars in the Iranian market. If they are well received by Iranian costumers, then surely the private companies will put forward another

strategy.

**■ Last week, the TPP 11 (countries) made a decision to move forward without Trump's America. In regard with the possible rivalry between TPP and China's new Silk Road, what might be the final alternative of South Korea when it comes to joining either of them? In another word, how high is the possibility of joining TPP?**

First of all, TPP was closely negotiated between original members including the U.S. Before Donald Trump came to power in the U.S., there were two different opinions about TPP. One idea was that we had to join the treaty as an original member. But, the opponents would say "No" as negotiation is lasting too long, it is better to wait until it is finished among original members. Now with Trump's withdrawal from the treaty, we don't know if TPP will go forward as scheduled or it will collapse. This is a decision to be made by the original members.

As regard with "One Belt One Road" project, once it was launched by China, the countries which might be included were not specified. Anyway, South Korea doesn't have any intention to join Silk Road but as China is one of our major cooperative partners, we hope it will be successful.

One more thing I want to add is that from time to time, I hear almost without any exception from the Iranian friends "what do you think of Iran?". My reaction is "please don't ask". Iran is great enough, big enough, powerful enough. So don't be concerned of anybody's opinion. The U.S. does what it wants. Chinese do what they want and it is the same with France or any other country. They don't act in accordance with other people's opinion.

To me Iran is a very big and strong country. If I were an Iranian, I would never ask such a question.

## Fighting terrorism is at the top of the agenda at the SCO' summit

By Sophie Mangal

In the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, a meeting of the defense ministers of the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was held on June 7. At the meeting, the members of the delegations made a number of statements concerning both the situation in Syria and the fight international terrorism in general.

First of all, all the representatives agreed that Indian and Pakistani membership that will become true tomorrow will enhance SCO's security capabilities.

Referring to international problems, the SCO participants concurred that the terrorism in a short time turned into the biggest threat to the global security. At the same time, all the members of the delegations noticed that the situation is aggravating with every passing day by numerous local conflicts in the world and by inability of the Western countries to overcome differences, to form a common and united front against this evil and to work together to build a bastion against terrorism.

In this regard, the Syrian issue has become a key topic of the agenda during the meeting. The SCO-countries gave the highest priority to the question. A detailed briefing session was held for new Member States (India and Pakistan) on the common attitude of the participating countries to the key crisis in the Middle East. As it was noted at the meeting, it is in the Syrian Arab Republic the main forces of the ISIS are concentrated. It was also stated that the Syrian Arab army coordinating its activities in order to ensure the success operations undermined in the end the potential of the ISIS fighters and Syria has been "at the forefront of fighting international terrorism" for a long time.



Special attention was paid to the creation of de-escalation areas in Syria, which could contribute to ending the civil war and thus intensifying efforts to combat ISIS and Al-Nusra.

The representatives of SCO-Member countries also noticed that practical steps are being taken to implement the agreements reached at the moment. The priority tasks, namely ensuring the monitoring of all the commitments undertaken, as well as creating conditions for the restoration of the destroyed infrastructure were also highlighted.

The countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization agreed to provide support to each other in Syria and to exchange military experience in conducting counter-terrorism operations. Interaction within the SCO in the future was decided to focus on identifying and anticipating any terrorist activities.

**Member states will need to create joint effective managing tools to stop penetration of terrorism and radicalism into the SCO's area of responsibility.**

Inside Syria Media Center, experts reasonably assume that the Member states will need to create joint effective managing tools to stop penetration of terrorism and radicalism into the SCO's area of responsibility. A fair guess would be that the special attention would be paid to an operative exchange of the information available on the

activities of terrorist groups.

Such a summit is clearly useful for Syria from the point of view of practicality. People in Syria hope the talks will equip the SCO-members better to meet the challenges of terrorism. Syria needs support to be able to tackle the difficulties and to take the steps necessary for a just and lasting peace.

Summary

To be noted is that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic, and military organization which was founded in 1996 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. These countries, except Uzbekistan, had been members of the Shanghai Five, founded in 1996; after the inclusion of Uzbekistan in 2001, the members renamed the organization. On 10 July 2015, the SCO decided to admit India and Pakistan as full members. India and Pakistan signed the memorandum of obligations on 24 June 2016 at Tashkent, thereby starting the formal process of joining the SCO as the full members. Now in Astana the countries are going to become full members.

The meeting of the SCO-defense ministers takes place once a year and the heads of the military departments have the opportunity both to share their views on the events taking place in the world and to work out a common strategy. In addition, it is possible to hold bilateral meetings to discuss in detail the plans of military cooperation on the margins of the meeting.

## The Amnesty Decree at work for Syrian people' benefit

The number of the Syrian refugees from the territories controlled by the ISIS has increased at the checkpoints located to the north-eastern part of the Aleppo province.

In particular, a group of men of up to 40 people engaged the attention among the refugee stream at the checkpoint near Al Taiarah village, approximately 50 km to the north-east from Aleppo. Most of them answered the questions only in monosyllables. The men claimed they had never had a gun in their hand, but had dug trenches or loaded ammunition under the threat of being shot. "Jihadists forced us to cooperate with them, and in case of disobedience they threatened to cut out the whole family, they whipped to death those who refused to help them," one refugee states.

The representative of the Baath party in Aleppo, Yusef Rana, says that the increase in the number of refugees is primarily due to the extension of the amnesty-law signed by B. Assad up to the end of June. "Many of people decided to take this opportunity and start a new life," Y. Rana told. He noted that one of the main aims of the local authorities



is to make sure that as many people as possible could rectify, correct or improve their previous way of life.

**Bashar Assad issued a decree last July which is an effective way to avoid the fate of being killed or convicted for helping militants.**

**■ A refugee-woman saved herself from ISIS**

In the regional office of the Baath party were noted that the people incoming are registered and sent by the buses to the collection point. Men and women then are checked for several days, and if there is no evidence of their participation in the murders of servicemen and civilians, they are amnestied by a court decision.

To be mentioned is that Bashar Assad issued a decree on the amnesty of militants involved in military operations against government troops last July. The decision was prolonged several times. The decree is an effective way to avoid the fate of being killed or convicted for helping militants. Refugees, therefore, have a real chance to end the war and begin a peaceful life.

(Source: Inside Syria)

# Donald Trump is never to blame

By Frank Bruni

Poor Donald Trump, so late to the lesson that so many plutocrats before him learned: You can't find good help.

Jeff Sessions? What a bust. True, he was never the nimblest newt in the swamp and had all that racial muck in his past. But he mirrored his master's irreverence and atavism, with slighter dimensions and a Southern accent: Donald in a Dixie cup. Surely Sessions and his Justice Department could be expected to accomplish something as straightforward as keeping the Muslims at bay.

Hah. More than four months since the inauguration, there's meager, flickering hope for the travel ban that wasn't a travel ban until it became a travel ban again. The fault for that cannot possibly lie with its foundation of bigotry, its shoddy conception or the president's own sloppy and shifting characterizations of it over time. No, there must be a fall guy with less shimmering tresses. The buck stops anywhere but hair.

So does the pound, the euro and every last bit of spare change and pocket lint. If Trump is feuding with the London mayor, it's the mayor who should be abashed. If Trump is at odds with Angela Merkel, she must have something to apologize for. Never mind his baseless tweets and bound-

less pique. He's the American president, they're not, and global hegemony means never having to say you're sorry.

## Global hegemony

But back to the Potomac and his principal aides, unprincipled underlings and princeling of a son-in-law, each more incompetent than the next.

The buck stops with Sean Spicer, who kept wandering from the script like a toddler into traffic. All he had to do was stick to his lines: The president's proposals are the wisest. The president's ethics are the purest. The president's crowds are the biggest. The president's detractors fall into three camps: illegals, commies and Samantha Bee.

He couldn't manage that much, or rather that little, and so Sarah Huckabee Sanders is claiming ever more podium time. She won't last. No one will. The relevant sinkhole isn't the one that opened up just outside Mar-a-Loco last month. It's the one beneath the feet of anyone dippy, delusional or daring enough to think that Trumplandia is terrain on which to make a positive difference, let alone a career.

The buck stops with Jared Kushner, never mind that his grandiosity and shortcuts were emulations of dear old dad-in-law. He has lumbered onto investigators' radar and thus teetered ever so slightly from favor — that's Steve Bannon

chortling in the background — though he reportedly tasted Trump's rancor before, when he hid in Aspen during the health care debacle, skiing while Washington churned.

Where will the buck stop next? With the tiniest Trump, Barron? He has some nerve doing homework while tax reform is still being hammered out and infrastructure is just coming together.

## Trump deflecting blame

Trump's quickness to deflect blame, readiness to designate scapegoats, unpredictable tirades and stinginess with the loyalty that he demands from others aren't just character flaws. They're serious and quite possibly insurmountable obstacles to governing.

Those who serve him are forever fearful of being undercut, perpetually having to defend behavior from him that's indefensible, and demoralized as a result.

Consider Defense Secretary James Mattis, whose torments were summarized by James Hohmann this week in The Washington Post. How can the country get the best from him when he's getting the worst from Trump?

Many of the country's diplomats are in a funk, as my Times colleague Mark Landler just recounted, and the ludicrously large number of unfilled positions throughout the administration partly reflects the limited appeal of such a

gloomy club. There was never any overflow of top-tier applicants, given how many Republicans swore off Trump and how many others were spurned by him for not being obsequious enough.

But now that the terms of working for him — ridicule by tweet, potentially stratospheric legal bills — are clear, the pool of available talent is a puddle too shallow to keep a newt afloat. Mike Allen reported in Axios on Tuesday morning that the creation of Trump's "war room" — a battalion of lawyers and such who would do damage control during the Russia probe — is on hold, because he can't find the soldiers to staff it.

By many accounts, the atmosphere in the White House is one part high school cafeteria, two parts "Lord of the Flies." Aides who are jockeying for position and trying to safeguard their reputations ask operatives on the outside to whisper to the media that they're up while their rivals are down, and so we're subjected to a daily Dow Jones on the stock of various players, with special note of who has Oval Office "walk-in privileges."

I suspect that the Trump era will flip that phrase, and the people walking out of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue will be seen as — and be — the privileged ones.

(Source: The NYT)

# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

## Apartment

Apt in the best area in Farmanieh  
4<sup>th</sup> floor, 220 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., lobby,  
Full furn & unfurn, nice and cozy,  
Excellent view \$3500  
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Amazing Apt in Kamranieh  
170 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., club room with  
100 pp capacity, lobby cozy &  
beautiful, \$3000  
Ms.Sara 09128103207

Apt in Niavaran  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, 150 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., Fully  
furn, parking, nice & cozy, almost  
new, \$2300  
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

New/luxury Apt in Zafaranih  
3<sup>th</sup> floor, 105 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., Fully  
furn, lobby, Spj, quit & diplomatic  
Price negotiable  
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Several Apts in Garden  
Tower in Elahieh  
New, from 150 sq.m to 250 sq.m  
Apts, 3 Bdrs., garden, Spj,  
equipped kitchen, could be fully  
furn and new brand, Lobby,  
opposite to French school, good  
access to Sadr highway  
Reasonable Price  
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

## Villa

Palace in Tajrish/ Elahieh  
Duplex, 7000 sq.m land, 2200 sq.m  
built up, 8 Bdrs., renovated, green  
& unbelievable Garden, water fall,  
Spj, Parking, completely renovated,  
big saloon, \$30000 Suitable for  
Residency & Embassy  
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

amazing Villa in Kamranieh  
duplex, 750 sq.m, 8 Bdrs.,  
renovated, full furn, ceramic  
Floor, driver room, balcony,  
4Parking places \$15000  
Suitable for foreign Embassies  
Ms.Sara 09128103207

Luxury Villa in the North  
duplex, 1200 sq.m built up, 2000  
sq.m land, 5 Bdrs., big saloon,  
servant, indoor pool, Spj,  
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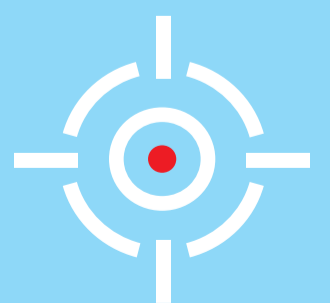
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# Should you eat three big meals or many mini-meals?

By Lisa Drayer

In the nutritional world, conventional wisdom suggests that the more often you eat, the more likely you are to burn off those calories and control hunger pangs. And so the notion of eating six or more "mini-meals" each day, just enough to fuel your body and tide you over until your next bites, has often been recommended as a more waistline-friendly dieting approach than eating three larger meals. But science evolves, and the answer to whether you should eat many mini-meals or three bigger meals is no longer a straightforward one.

"Years ago, we all believed that you needed to eat multiple times a day to keep your metabolism stoked. ... You had to keep feeding the fire and keep the furnace burning. But that theory goes back and forth, and newer research is showing that it really doesn't slow metabolism if you're not eating multiple times a day," said Martha McKittrick, a registered dietitian in New York City who has provided weight-loss counseling for over 20 years.

## Small frequent meals vs. fewer big meals

Many studies suggest that eating more frequently may offer benefits by decreasing hunger and food intake at subsequent meals. One study involving close to 2,700 women and men found that those who ate at least six times per day ate fewer calories, consumed healthier foods and had a lower body mass index than those who ate fewer than four times over a 24-hour period. Research has also shown that increased meal frequency has positive effects on cholesterol and insulin levels.

But while eating small frequent meals can discourage large swings in blood sugar, decrease hunger and prevent impulsive snacking throughout the day, other studies suggest that eating more often may not be optimal.

And despite the notion that eating more often means more opportunities to burn calories, thanks to the energy involved in digesting, absorbing and metabolizing food's nutrients, research suggests that doing so does not appear to significantly enhance metabolism or total calories burned.

"In the '80s, grazing was thought to be an optimal way of losing weight ... but human studies did not support this at all," said David Levitsky, a professor of nutrition and psychology at Cornell University who has researched the topic of meal frequency and its effects on calorie intake. "It was thought that if you ate more frequently, the amount of calories you retain would go down, and more calories would be burned. But controlled experiments in humans show that there is no metabolic advantage to eating 12 smaller meals versus eating three or four meals per day, with the same total number of calories."

Other experts agree. "Meal frequency does not affect metabolic rate and thus has no direct effect on weight loss," said Carla Wolper, a registered dietitian and nutrition consultant at the ColumbiaDoctors Executive Health



**While eating small frequent meals can discourage large swings in blood sugar, decrease hunger and prevent impulsive snacking throughout the day, other studies suggest that eating more often may not be optimal.**

assessment program who spent 25 years on the nutrition faculty at the New York Obesity Nutrition Research Center.

In fact, some research suggests that eating even fewer than three meals may be best in terms of controlling calories: In one study, when individuals skipped breakfast, they consumed about 400 fewer calories for the entire day compared to when they ate breakfast.

"If you decrease the number of occasions to eat, your total calorie intake goes down," said Levitsky, who authored the study. "People think if you skip breakfast, you will overeat later ... and that doesn't happen. Your intake goes up, but not nearly as much as the amount that you skipped."

## An eating pattern for every body

So should you give up on a diet plan of six or more mini-meals, spaced a few hours apart? Not necessarily. The optimal timing of eating may depend on various factors unique to each individual.

"Some folks are grazers by nature, so six small meals might be more in line with

their natural inclinations. Other folks eat by the clock, at 7 a.m., 12 p.m. and 6 p.m., for example. The real issue regarding temptation at mealtime is planning. If people have a great food plan, they will probably do well," Wolper said.

McKittrick agrees. "Some are grazers; some are meal-eaters. ... It's fine if they graze, but make sure calories are controlled so it's not an ongoing graze-fest."

## The case for small, frequent meals

While some may enjoy sitting down to three meals each day, others may find that it's just too much food at once.

"Some people don't have huge appetites. ... If they have a 600-calorie sandwich, they may have half at noon and eat the other half at 3 p.m.," McKittrick said. "Eating large meals may also make them tired ... so they're better off with small frequent feedings because it promotes more stable blood sugar and they get more energized."

One's daily routine may not allow for the opportunity to take a big lunch break

-- and so a grazing style of eating is a better fit.

For a new mom, eating three meals a day can be particularly challenging. "Lots of mothers spend so much time with their kids that they can't sit down and have a full lunch ... so eating more frequently better suits their lifestyle," McKittrick said.

Health issues may also dictate which style of eating is best. For example, people who have diabetes or hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) can feel shaky, tired and weak if they go too long without eating, so six small meals may be best. Those who have other health conditions including gastroparesis, irritable bowel syndrome and acid reflux may feel better by eating small meals spaced three or four hours apart. The same may be true for seniors.

"A lot of seniors can only have a piece of toast and an egg, and then they get full. As you get older, you just don't have as much of an appetite, and you feel full more quickly," McKittrick said.

## The case for three bigger meals

Experts say that eating more frequently may be problematic for those who have trouble with portion control or something known as stimulus-bound eating, when the sight of a specific food prompts you to eat it, which can lead to weight gain.

"The bulk of the evidence suggests that humans are opportunistic eaters ... and if we are given more chances to eat, the more we will eat," Levitsky said. "If people did nothing other than eliminate snacks, their total calorie intake will go down."

A 500-calorie smoothie, for example, will defeat the strategy's purpose. "If you want to eat small frequent meals, take a look at your calories and really divide them up. If you're on a 1,500-calorie diet, are you really having five 300-calorie mini-meals?" McKittrick asked.

An "all or nothing person" may be better off with three meals per day if a small snack quickly turns into a bigger one, as in the case of nuts. "Nuts are super healthy, but some people can't stop once they start eating nuts, and that can be a problem," McKittrick said.

The environment plays a role, too. If your office has a kitchen full of free snacks, it's a lot easier to go in and grab something like chips or cookies instead of planning your own healthy meals and bringing them in. Working from home, with constant access to the kitchen, can present similar challenges.

And then there are others who just don't want to be bothered with making eating an all-day affair. "Some just want to eat and get it done with, so they don't do well with small snacks. ... They're really busy, and they just don't have the time to deal with it, and so those people may be better off with three meals per day."

The bottom line is that either style of eating can offer health and weight-loss benefits. But what matters most is what will work for you.

"Maybe, down the line, we'll be able to test people to determine which eating frequency is optimal, but in the meantime, it's probably best to go by how you feel," McKittrick said.

(Source: CNN)

**Controlled experiments in humans show that there is no metabolic advantage to eating 12 smaller meals versus eating three or four meals per day, with the same total number of calories.**

# Italy's struggling economy has world's healthiest people

By Wei Lu and Vincent Del Giudice

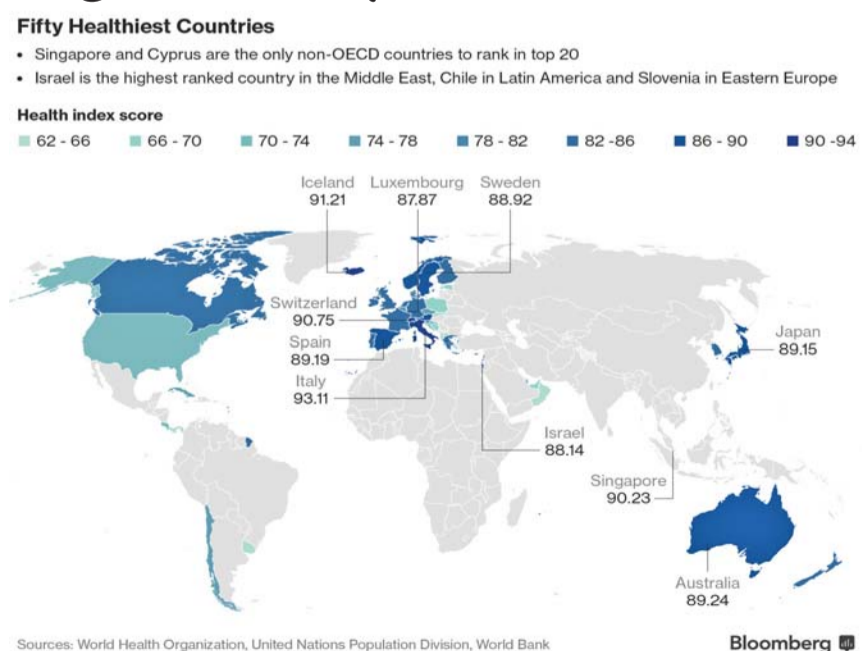
When it comes to living a long life, Italy is the place to be.

The high-heeled boot surrounded by five seas is ranked the healthiest country on Earth in the Bloomberg Global Health Index of 163 countries. A baby born in Italy can expect to live to be an octogenarian. But 2,800 miles south in Sierra Leone, the average newborn will die by 52.

While Italy is among the most developed countries, growth has stagnated for decades, almost 40 percent of its youngsters are out of jobs and it's saddled with one of the world's highest debt loads relative to the size of its economy. Yet Italians are in way better shape than Americans, Canadians and Brits, who all suffer from higher blood pressure and cholesterol and poorer mental health.

Italy also has "an excess of doctors," said Tom Kenyon, a physician and CEO of the global relief organization Project Hope. Case in point, one of the country's most watched and long-running television shows is called "A Doctor in the Family."

Then there is the diet, rich in vegetables and drizzled with extra



**Each country in the index was graded based on variables such as life expectancy, causes of death and health risks ranging from high blood pressure and tobacco use to malnutrition and the availability of clean water.**

(Source: bloomberg.com)

## Driving and dementia: Take away the keys?

By Hannah Newman

Caring for a person with dementia or Alzheimer's disease presents a range of challenges. Spouses, family members, and friends must deal with feelings of loss as the person they know seems to slip away. Supporting a loved one with basic activities of daily living can be time consuming and exhausting. And it is difficult to balance protecting the person you're caring for and preserving what independence remains.

One of the trickiest problems for caregivers to negotiate with people with dementia is driving. The consequences of a misstep behind the wheel can be deadly.

### Decisions about driving

Whether or not it is safe to drive can be complicated, particularly when the person is only mildly impaired. Some believe that driving privileges should not be taken away until a person is clearly an unsafe driver.

### But can you identify an unsafe driver before an accident occurs?

Driving requires amazing coordination — the eyes, brain, and muscles must process information and respond to it quickly. Driving skills may seem sufficient until an unexpected situation occurs when a person with dementia can panic or freeze with indecision.

One way to gauge the risk is to observe the person's general behavior. If friends and family see their loved one exhibit poor judgment, inattentiveness to what's going on around him or her, clumsiness, and slow or inappropriate reactions, then that person should not get behind the wheel.

### Taking away the keys

Ideally, a tactful and respectful approach will preserve the person's self-esteem while getting them off the road. Some people may agree to stop driving for other reasons — for instance, the car needs repair or the license or



registration has expired. You can also opt for a road test with a driver's rehabilitation specialist, who can offer an independent assessment of safety. People with Alzheimer's disease sometimes take seriously a written prescription from a physician that says, "Do not drive."

In some states, doctors have a legal duty to report unsafe drivers and drivers with certain medical problems to the state department of motor vehicles. If all else fails, you may need to seek advice from a lawyer or an official with the Department of Public Safety in your state. Procedures vary, but generally a driver's license can be suspended on the basis of a physician's written statement.

### Sidestep Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is characterized by progressive damage to nerve cells and their connections. The result is devastating and includes memory loss, impaired thinking, difficulties with verbal communication, and even personality changes. A person with Alzheimer's disease may live anywhere from two to 20 years after diagnosis. Those years are spent in an increasingly dependent state that exacts a staggering emotional, physical, and economic toll on families.

A number of factors influence the likelihood that you will develop Alzheimer's disease. Some of these you can't control, such as age, gender, and family history. But there are things you can do to help lower your risk. As it turns out, the mainstays of a healthy lifestyle — exercise, watching your weight, and eating right — appear to lower Alzheimer's risk.

### 5 steps to lower Alzheimer's risk

While there are no surefire ways to prevent Alzheimer's, by following the five steps below you may lower your risk for this disease — and enhance your overall health as well.

- Maintain a healthy weight. Cut back on calories and increase physical activity if you need to shed some pounds.
- Check your waistline. To accurately measure your waistline, use a tape measure around the narrowest portion of your waist (usually at the height of the navel and lowest rib). A National Institutes of Health panel recommends waist measurements of no more than 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men.
- Eat mindfully. Emphasize colorful, vitamin-packed vegetables and fruits; whole grains; protein sources such as fish, lean poultry, tofu, and beans and other legumes; plus healthy fats. Cut down on unnecessary calories from sweets, sodas, refined grains like white bread or white rice, unhealthy fats, fried and fast foods, and mindless snacking. Keep a close eye on portion sizes, too.
- Exercise regularly. This simple step does great things for your body. Regular physical activity helps control weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol. Moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise (walking, swimming, biking, rowing) can also help chip away total body fat and abdominal fat over time. Aim for 2 1/2 to 5 hours weekly of brisk walking (at 4 mph). Or try a vigorous exercise like jogging (at 6 mph) for half that time.
- Keep an eye on important health numbers. In addition to watching your weight and waistline, ask your doctor whether your cholesterol, triglycerides, blood pressure, and blood sugar are within healthy ranges. Exercise, weight loss if needed, and medications (if necessary) can help keep these numbers on target.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

**10 hot titles of IT world**

By Alireza Khorasani

Here are high rated IT titles in the world that reviewed by savvy tech users:

**1** 1- The OnePlus 5 is going to be unveiled on June 20th, with a launch two days afterward. Source code discovered on Amazon India's OnePlus 5 page seconded the notion that the phone will be powered by the Snapdragon 835 chipset, carrying an octa-core CPU and the Adreno 540 GPU. The source code also revealed that the latest version of the flagship killer will feature 8GB of RAM for lag-free and smooth multitasking as users switch from one active app to another. OnePlus 5 price could be €550 in Europe, \$550 in the US.

**2** 2- Only 9 countries will receive the HTC U11 with 6GB of RAM and 128GB of native storage. HTC has produced two different versions of its new flagship phone. The HTC U11 found in the U.S. at Sprint, or unlocked from HTC, features 4GB of RAM and 64GB of native storage. But another unlocked version of the U11 comes with 6GB of RAM and 128GB of native storage.

**3** 3- A survey taken by Branding Brand, a company that delivers websites and apps for big business, found that 26% of current iPhone owners in the states plan on buying the iPhone 8. 14% will purchase a model from the iPhone 7 series, and 12% plan on picking up an iPhone 6 series handset. 2% said that they plan on switching to an Android powered phone, and 1% expect to buy the Apple iPhone SE.

**4** 4- LG launched its mobile payment service in South Korea earlier this month, which will work with the company's flagship smartphone, the G6. However, in order to further expand the use of LG Pay, the South Korean handset maker has decided to launch two LG G6 derivative models, the G6 Pro and G6 Plus.

**5** 5- Chinese authorities arrest iPhone data thieves, who made millions selling user data. Apparently the business is running hot in China, as authorities in the province of Zhejiang reportedly arrested 22 suspects in May, who apparently stole and sold user data from an Apple database.

**6** 6- South Korea is, unsurprisingly, the country with the best quality LTE connectivity in the world, but its competition is catching up fast as well. The United States, for example, has the fourth-best nationwide coverage. This is thanks to a push from carriers which brought coverage to 86.5 percent, up from the previous report's 51.3 percent.

**7** 7- As reported by Korean-language publication News1, a Samsung official was quoted as saying: "We made every effort to install a display-integrated fingerprint sensor on Galaxy Note 8, but we decided not to install it on this strategic phone due to various technical limitations such as security."

**8** 8- It looks like Snapchat decided to sell its shares to the public at just the right time. The value of Snapchat parent Snap has declined by 26.5% since the shares peaked the day after the IPO. That was back on March 3rd. And last month, the company reported a net loss of \$2.2 billion for the first quarter, which dropped the stock to a valuation under \$20 billion.

**9** 9- Niantic has just revealed new information about what's coming for Pokemon GO in the next couple of weeks. Before going into details, it's worth mentioning the game celebrates two milestones: 750 million global downloads and one year since Pokemon GO was released in the App Store.

**10** 10- Samsung's next phablet flagship - Galaxy Note8 - has been the subject of a few rumors and leaks so far, revealing details like 6.3-inch Infinity Display, dual rear-camera setup, and Android 7.1.1. Now, a new rumor has surfaced revealing the chipset of the device. The rumor says the handset will be powered by the yet to be announced Snapdragon 836.

**Venture capitalist DST Global sees \$4 trillion of new internet firms by 2025**

A surge in online consumer spending globally in coming years will create \$4 trillion worth of new internet companies by the middle of the next decade, billionaire investor Yuri Milner, founder of venture capitalist DST Global, said.

Milner, an early backer of internet firms Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, Facebook Inc and Twitter Inc, expects the online proportion of global consumer spending to reach 15 percent by 2025 from 6 percent now. That means in eight years' time, the rest of the world will match the current online spending trend of China, he said.

"You only need to make some relatively conservative assumptions to come up with a significant number," Milner said at the D.Live Asia technology conference in Hong Kong.

"We only need to assume the whole world will catch up with China to come up with the number \$7 trillion worth of market cap (for internet companies). That means there will be an additional \$4 trillion created in that space," said Milner.

In China, DST Global invested in Xiaomi Inc along with private equity firm All-Stars Investment and Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC Pte Ltd. It expects the mobile phone maker to rebound after two years of slowing growth as sales at its branded stores expand, Milner said.

(Source: Reuters)

**EU could give police direct access to cloud data in wake of terror attacks**

By Samuel Gibbs

The European Union is seeking to make it easier for police and law enforcement agencies to retrieve electronic evidence from US tech firms, including directly from cloud storage.

In the wake of terrorists attacks across Europe, the European Commission is proposing new legislation to speed up the transfer of crucial data from companies such as Facebook and Google, even when it is stored in another EU member state – which is often a slow process.

The EC is set to propose three options that will form the basis of a future legislative proposal.

EU Justice Commissioner Vera Jourova said: "I am sure that now in the shadow of the recent terrorist attacks and increasing threats in Europe there will be more understanding among the ministers, even among those who come from countries where there has not been a terrorist attack."

EU justice ministers are to meet in Brussels on Thursday to discuss the EC's proposals, which will then form the basis of a motion put forward by the EU executive by early 2018.

Of the three EC proposals, the least intrusive option involves allowing law enforcement agencies in one-member state to ask an IT provider in another member state to turn over electronic evidence, without having to ask that member state first.

The second option would see the companies obliged to turn over data if requested by law enforcement agencies in other member countries.

The most intrusive option, allowing law enforcement agencies direct access to information in the cloud, is being suggested for situations where authorities do not know the location of the server hosting the data or there is a risk of the data being lost.

"This third option is kind of an emergency possibility which will require some additional safeguards protecting



European Commission

the privacy of people," Jourova said. "You simply cannot massively collect some digital data for some future use."

"My preference is to go for this as an extraordinary measure for extraordinary threats, for high gravity criminal offences such as terrorism and there I am in favor of enabling the use of personal data," Jourova said, adding that no decision has yet been taken.

The types of data that could fall within the scope of the law will be discussed on Thursday, from location or traffic data to personal communications, as well as safeguards such as requiring that law enforcement requests are necessary and proportionate.

Currently law enforcement agencies in Germany seeking data stored in Ireland – the location of many US tech firms' European headquarters, including Facebook's

– would have to rely on Irish authorities requesting the data from them, which is a slow and cumbersome process.

It is a fine line between speeding law enforcement efforts in moments of crisis and eroding user data privacy, with critics saying that maintaining user trust in the cloud is critical, particularly where that data could be seized. Direct access to user data would raise many questions over privacy and safeguards.

Microsoft recently won a high-profile battle against the US Department of Justice's request that it turn over emails stored on a server in Ireland in which the EC backed Microsoft saying that EU-held data should not be directly accessed by foreign authorities.

(Source: Guardian)

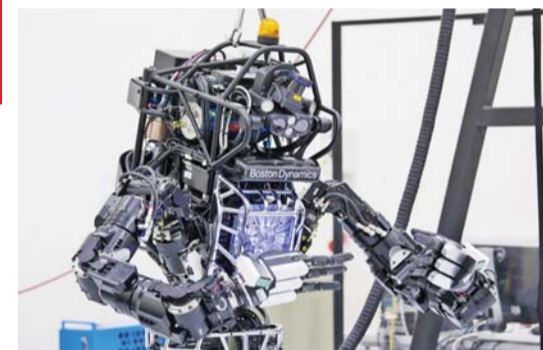
**Intel's not very happy about Qualcomm-powered Windows 10 PCs**



Intel has put Qualcomm on notice about recent news that Windows 10 PCs will run Snapdragon 835 chips with x86 emulation. "There have been reports that some companies may try to emulate Intel's proprietary x86 ISA without Intel's authorization," said chief lawyer Stephen Rodgers and Intel Labs Director Richard A. Uhlig in a blog post.

Microsoft is also fully behind the partnership, because its new strategy for Windows 10 S seems to depend on Qualcomm's participation. (Source: *hothardware*)

**Softbank buys Boston Dynamics from Google**



It's been over a year since we heard that Google's parent company Alphabet wanted to sell its robotics company Boston Dynamics, and now it has a buyer: Softbank. The Japanese company has been working on its own robots for years, including the helpful Pepper, and now they'll be under the same umbrella as Handle, Big Dog, Atlas, WildCat and all the rest.

(Source: *softbank*)

**Samsung's pen-equipped Notebook 9 Pro arrives in late June**



We were delighted by Samsung's lightweight Notebook 9 back at CES. The Pro version unveiled at Computex last week promised more power, a 2-in-1 configuration and, most importantly, the tech titan's proprietary built-in pressure-sensitive S Pen stylus.

Samsung announced that preorders on BestBuy.com open June 11th before it launches in stores on June 26th, starting at \$1100 13.3-inch model and \$1300 for the slightly souped-up 15-inch. (Source: *Samsung*)

**Even Republicans think Trump tweets too much**

If you spend all of your time on social media, you probably aren't devoting enough time and attention to doing the job you're paid to do. For the current leader of the free world, however, Twitter is a megaphone that he is loath to surrender. But, according to a poll conducted by Morning Consult and Politico, the presidential Twitter habit is too much even for people on his own side. The document says that 53 percent of Republicans and 51

percent of Trump voters now feel that the official "tweets too much."

It's not the first time that those on that side of the aisle have criticized the Trumpian addiction to 140-character missives. Majority leader Mitch McConnell has said, both publicly and privately, that he is "not a fan of the daily tweets." What's interesting, however, is that those numbers have been steadily increasing: when asked the same

question back in December, only 42 percent of Republicans expressed such fatigue.

There is also broader agreement that, in general, the tweeting is proving to be an unnecessary distraction from the business of government. Plus, it's also plunged the president into a potential mess, since lawyers believe that blocking users on the site may be a first amendment violation.

(Source: *Arstechnica*)

**Amazon opens Alexa voice control to all video streaming services**



Amazon just introduced its Video Skill API, which will allow developers to expand how Alexa lets users find content in their apps. With this tool, entertainment apps could let their customers find specific shows or movies, search genres or even change the channel with voice commands. As long as you have an Amazon Echo or other Alexa device, video apps taking advantage of the new function will be navigable by voice.

Some companies have already begun using this feature. Dish Network began rolling out the expanded voice control last month while UK-based YouView announced today that it would be using Video Skill API to incorporate the new functions.

Amazon told TechCrunch that it's now working with a number of other video providers to develop the new service.

(Source: *TechCrunch*)

**Step inside the history of fashion with VR**



Google Arts & Culture has brought us virtual museums featuring everything from dinosaurs to presidential history, and now they're debuting a new collection. Their latest project, We Wear Culture, covers the history of fashion over the course of three millennia and charts how our culture shapes our fashion choices -- and vice versa.

From virtual reality films to video to ultra high-resolution photography, Google has taken advantage of many different media to bring an interactive, one-of-a-kind museum to your computer or smartphone. Fashion fans can explore all manner of history; for example, how trades such as shoe making and jewelry making are passed down through generations.

You can access We Wear Culture on the web or through Google Arts & Culture's mobile apps on iOS and Android.

(Source: *google*)

**China cracks down on celebrity gossip social media accounts**



The fans of 60 gossip bloggers on China's social media platforms, including ones owned by Tencent and Baidu, will have to get their daily fix elsewhere. Chinese websites and tech titans have shuttered 60 accounts focusing on celebrity gossip after authorities told them in a meeting that they must take steps to keep those kinds of pages in check.

In addition, Chinese websites must also "actively propagate core socialist values, and create a healthier environment for the mainstream public opinion." While the 60 accounts the authorities shut down weren't exactly friendly online destinations -- gossip websites in China love to dig for and expose celebrity scandals -- the event demonstrates the fact that Chinese authorities have recently been keeping a closer eye on independent media.

(Source: *engadget*)

# Babies can recognize faces while in the womb, scientists find

Babies can recognize faces while still in the womb, new research suggests.

Incredible moving images of unborn infants before their birth, shows that they turn their heads towards shapes which resemble faces - with the position of eyes and nose picked out.

But when they see a random shape, they ignore it, scientists at Lancaster University have found.

The finding suggests that the instinct to recognize facial features develops before a baby has even seen its first face.

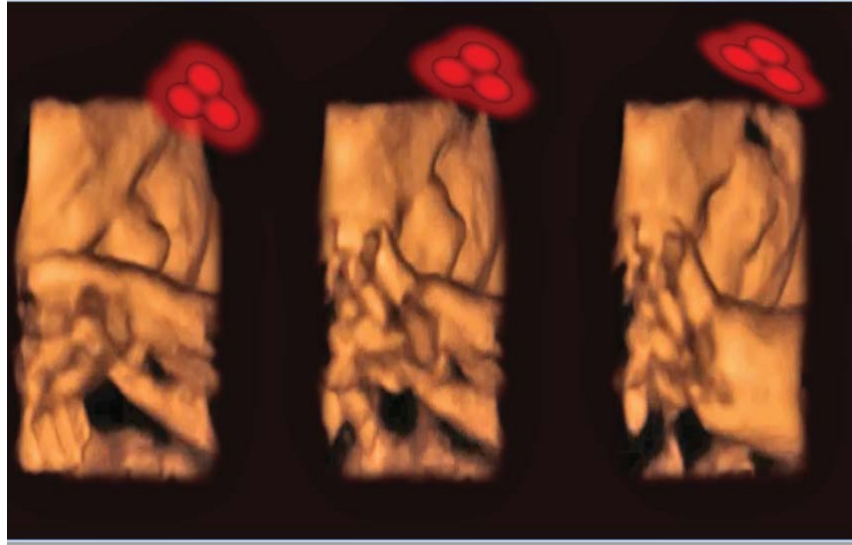
## ■ Baby's senses

It also shows that an unborn baby's senses are already well developed and parents should begin interacting with their child while it is still in the womb.

Professor Vincent Reid, a psychologist at Lancaster University who led the research: the "fetus in the third trimester actively seeks out information.

"In our study they had to move their head to keep looking at the face-like stimulus when we moved it away from them. So they are active participants in finding information from the environment. What this means is that other ways of interacting with the fetus can be considered.

The "fetus in the third trimester can hear very well. I would encourage expecting parents to read books out loud to each other. This can help with bonding



and could be beneficial."

The researchers shone dots of light arranged to look either like the eyes and mouth of a human face through the

uterus wall of 39 expectant mothers who were 34 weeks (8 months) pregnant.

Babies after birth are known to prefer looking at dots of light arranged in this shape.

**The scientists used computer modelling to see how the light would change as it passes through the mother's skin and abdomen so they could produce the same arrangement of light.**

## ■ Computer modelling

The scientists used computer modelling to see how the light would change as it passes through the mother's skin and abdomen so they could produce the same arrangement of light.

Their study, which is published in the journal *Current Biology*, showed that when this face-like image was projected through the uterus, the babies turned their heads to look at it.

When a similar arrangement of light that was used to make the face look upside down, and so harder to recognize as a face, the fetuses did not react.

Dr. Reid added: "We know from babies that they prefer to look at faces more than any other stimulus.

"We have now shown that the fetus can distinguish between different shapes, preferring to track face-like over non-face-like shapes.

The "newborn has very poor visual acuity so the fetus will have a similarly poor ability to focus. So whatever the fetus sees is likely to be blurry."

He said: "I think the second option is more likely. I believe that it is likely this bias to look at faces is triggered by exposure to patterned light in the womb and is due to prenatal visual experiences.

(Source: *The Telegraph*)

## NASA's Mars rover concept looks suspiciously like a Batmobile SUV

When automakers want the public to get excited about the future, they build concept cars.

Now NASA is proving that idea works not only for next year's sedans and SUVs, but for Mars exploration as well.

NASA's Mars Rover concept won't actually turn a wheel on the Red Planet, but its eye-catching design will get people's attention.

The vehicle will be displayed at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex to promote the complex's "Summer of Mars" program, according to a NASA blog post. The program was created to educate the public on NASA's Mars exploration efforts.

The Mars Rover concept was built by Parker Brothers Concepts, a Florida-based outfit that previously built a replica of the "Tumbler" Batmobile, which a Saudi team unsuccessfully tried to enter into the Gumball 3000 rally.

## ■ Six-wheeled Mars rover

The Tumbler seems to have influenced the design of

the six-wheeled Mars Rover, which looks decidedly more macho than real-life space vehicles.

According to NASA, the rover is electric, with power supplied by solar panels or a 700-volt battery.

It can split in the middle, allowing astronauts to use the front section for scouting missions, with the rear section serving as a laboratory.

NASA noted that this exact design does not represent what it actually plans to send to Mars, and no taxpayer money was used to fund the concept vehicle.

While it may be pure science fiction, the Mars Rover concept seems like the perfect tool for getting people interested in space exploration.

It will be displayed at the Kennedy Space Center for the next few weeks, before making a tour of the East Coast in July and August.

Meanwhile, NASA's next real Mars rover is set to land on the Red Planet in 2020. It will search the Martian soil



for signs of past microbial life, and collect samples for potential future return to Earth.

(Source: *Digital Trends*)

## Einstein's impossible hope finally achieved by scientists

Albert Einstein published his theory of relativity in 1915, following several preliminary papers. The proposition was a breakthrough for our conception of space and time.

The theory said that the speed of light in a vacuum is unaffected by the motion of all observers and that the laws of physics are the same for all observers not moving or accelerating.

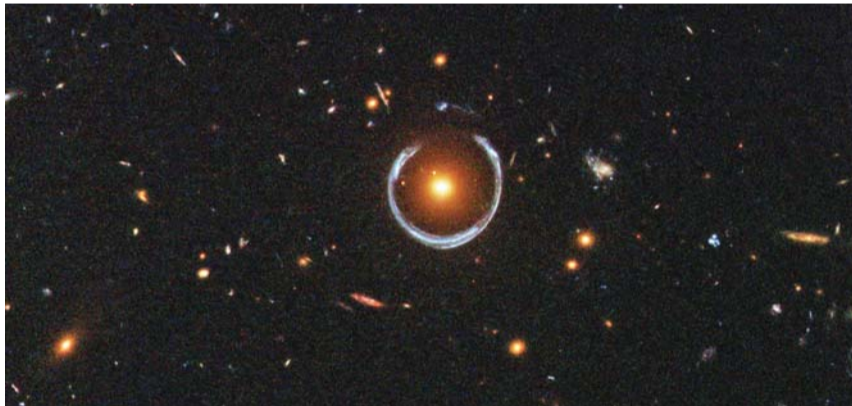
The theory was a huge breakthrough for our conception of space and time. It allowed for the prediction of black holes and the behavior of planets in orbit.

So much of how we think about the universe is governed by this theory. It tells us that when we try to measure how fast something is moving, that speed can only be determined in relation to another object's speed.

## ■ Speed of light

But the speed of light is different: It stays the same no matter how fast you are moving when you measure it. And — the bane of would-be star travelers — nothing can travel faster than the speed of light.

The rules behind this theory lead to



some interesting conclusions.

Notably, Einstein predicted that the light from one star would be bent by the gravity of another star, and that if we could see this happening, we could measure the mass of the star with bent light.

But Einstein didn't think the calculation could actually be made. In 1936, he wrote, "There is no hope of observing this phenomenon directly."

Now that impossible hope has been

achieved. Several researchers, including renowned physicist Mario Livio, have just measured the mass of a nearby white dwarf star using background starlight.

The report, published in *Science*, is a major breakthrough for physics and the confirmation of a prediction made more than 100 years ago.

Kailash Chandra Sahu, an astronomer with the Space Telescope Science Institute, and colleagues used the Hubble

Space Telescope to search among more than 5,000 stars for a precise and slight asymmetric alignment between two stars.

## ■ Asymmetrical Einstein's ring

This alignment, the researchers knew, would result in what is known as an "asymmetrical Einstein ring." In an Einstein ring, a circle of light forms by one star passing in front of another from our vantage point.

Finding it was the problem. Astronomers have found partial rings but never a perfectly formed one and never the exact asymmetry needed to calculate a star's mass. "It was like measuring the motion of a little firefly in front of a lightbulb from 1,500 miles away," Sahu said at a news conference.

But Sahu and colleagues managed to take advantage of the excellent angular resolution of the Hubble Space Telescope to search for the exact alignment they were seeking. White dwarf Stein 2051B (the sixth-nearest white dwarf to our sun), they realized, would be in just that position in March 2014.

(Source: *Newsweek*)

## Earliest fossils date our species back 100,000 years

How long has our species been around? New fossils from Morocco push the evidence back by about 100,000 years.

The bones, about 300,000 years old, were unearthed thousands of miles from the previous record-holder, found in fossil-rich eastern Africa.

The new discovery reveals people from an early stage of our species' evolution, with a mix of modern and more primitive traits.

"They are not just like us," said Jean-Jacques Hublin, one of the scientists reporting the find. But they had "basically the face you could meet on the train in New York."

## ■ Coupled with evidence

Coupled with other evidence, the Moroccan fossils suggest that Homo sapiens may have reached its modern-day form in more than one place within Africa, said Hublin, of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, and the College of France in Paris.

It's not clear just when or where Homo sapiens came on the scene in Africa. Hublin said he thinks an earlier stage of development preceded the one revealed by his team's discovery.

We evolved from predecessors who had differently shaped skulls and often heavier builds, but were otherwise much more like us than, say, the ape-men that



came before them. Our species lived at the same time as some related ones, like Neanderthals, but only we survive.

Hublin and others described the new findings in two papers released Wednesday by the journal *Nature*.

The discovery could help illuminate how our species evolved, Chris Stringer and Julia Galway-Witham of the Natural History Museum in London wrote in a *Nature* commentary.

The Moroccan specimens were found between 2007 and 2011 and include a skull, a jaw and teeth, along with

stone tools.

Combined with other bones that were found there decades ago but not correctly dated, the fossil collection represents at least five people, including young adults, an adolescent and a child of around 8 years old.

## ■ The brain shape

Analysis shows their brain shape was more elongated than what people have today.

"In the last 300,000 years, the main story is the change of the brain," Hublin said.

When these ancient people lived, the site in Morocco was a cave that might have served as a hunting camp, where people butchered and ate gazelles and other prey. They used fire and their tools were made of flint from about 25 miles (40 kilometers) away.

So where did the fully modern human body develop? The researchers say evidence suggests primitive forms of Homo sapiens had already widely spread throughout Africa by around 300,000 years ago.

The different populations may have exchanged beneficial genetic mutations and behaviors, gradually nudging each other toward a more modern form of the species, Hublin said. In this way, he said in an interview, modern Homo sapiens may have arisen in more than one place.

(Source: *AP*)

## This 99-million-year-old bird coexisted with dinosaurs

Ninety-nine million years ago, birds and dinosaurs ruled the earth. But what did those early birds look like? That's been hard to prove — until now. Thanks to an amazing fossil find, a bird encased in Cretaceous-era amber from Malaysia is giving researchers a new look at a mysterious species of birds that existed during the time of the dinosaurs.

"It's the first time we've seen a relatively complete individual in Burmese amber," Ryan McKellar, curator of invertebrate paleontology at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum and co-author of a paper that describes it, tells *Smithsonian.com*.

And what an individual. Though it's less than three inches long, the bird was preserved in stunning detail. Scientists scanned the specimen, then created a 3D reconstruction to learn more about the tiny bird. They describe their find in the journal *Gondwana Research*.

The 99-million-year-old bird's complete head, neck, part of one wing, and both feet were preserved, along with much of its skin, which helped the team map out the feathers and how they were attached to the tiny bird's body. Its feathers were more like dinosaurs' than modern birds'.

Don't get your hopes up: Unlike in *Jurassic Park*, this Cretaceous-era animal won't yield DNA that can be studied or cloned. "The DNA angle is pretty much dead at this point," laughs McKellar. But the team hopes that clues from the keratin inside the feathers could help reveal what color the bird was during its brief life.

(Source: *Smithsonian*)

## In major breakthrough, tiny Utah firm regenerates skin, hair in pigs

A small U.S. biotech has successfully regenerated skin and stimulated hair growth in pigs with burns and abrasions, paving the way for a scientific breakthrough that could lead to the regeneration of fully functional human skin.

Salt Lake City-based PolarityTE Inc's patented approach to tissue engineering is designed to use a patient's own healthy tissue to re-grow human skin for the treatment of burns and wounds.

Despite recent advances in reconstructive surgery, plastic surgeons cannot give burn victims what they require the most — their skin.

Current approaches to treat serious burns are "severely limited" in their effectiveness and in some cases, are rather expensive, PolarityTE's founder and CEO Denver Lough said in an interview.

Epical, a skin graft widely used in burn units that is sold by Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Vericel Corp, does not result in fully thick and functional skin — which is PolarityTE's objective.

PolarityTE conducted its pre-clinical study on wounded pigs at an animal facility in Utah. The use of therapy resulted in scar-less healing, growth of hair follicles, complete wound coverage and the progressive regeneration of all skin layers, the company said.

As pig skin is more complex and robust than human skin, successful swine data is typically seen as a precursor to effectiveness in human trials.

(Source: *Reuters*)

## After years of silence, we finally know more about the SR-71 Blackbird's successor

Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works recently divulged some information about the SR-72 program to build a successor to the iconic SR-71 Blackbird reconnaissance aircraft. The advanced aircraft development division of Lockheed Martin told *Aviation Week* that hypersonic technologies, including a combined cycle propulsion system that merges a supersonic jet engine with a rocket engine, have advanced to the point that work on the planned SR-72 can begin in earnest. On paper, the SR-72 will be a strike and reconnaissance aircraft capable of topping Mach 6.



"We've been saying hypersonics is two years away for the last 20 years, but all I can say is the technology is mature and we, along with DARPA and the services, are working hard to get that capability into the hands of our warfighters as soon as possible," Rob Weiss, Lockheed Martin's executive vice president and general manager for Skunk Works, told *Aviation Week*.

Now Skunk Works has confirmed that ground tests on a combined cycle engine with elements of a scramjet and rocket engine were conducted from 2013 to 2017.

Lockheed Martin partnered with Aerojet Rocketdyne to begin work modifying an off-the-shelf turbine to build a combined cycle engine back in 2006. Lockheed Martin optimistically plans to fly an FRV in the early 2020s. Following demonstrator flight testing, a full-scale twin-engine SR-72, about the same size as the SR-71, could achieve first flight before 2030.

The SR-72 program has been under the hood for years, and details are still tantalizingly lacking. In the 2020s, however, we could finally see what Skunk Works has been up to for the past two decades.

(Source: *Popular Mechanics*)

# Arg-e Bam: An epitome of Iranian architecture

Arg-e Bam, an ancient citadel located in Bam, a city in the Kerman Province in the south-eastern part of Iran, was built entirely out of adobe unbaked clay bricks, and it is often regarded as the largest structure built with this material in the world.

Bam and its Cultural Landscape was added to UNESCO's World Heritage list in 2004.

According to UNESCO, the origins of Bam can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC). Its heyday was from the 7th to 11th centuries, being at the crossroads of important trade routes and known for the production of silk and cotton garments.

The existence of life in the oasis was based on the underground irrigation canals, the qanats, of which Bam has preserved some of the earliest evidence in Iran. Arg-e Bam is the most representative example of a fortified medieval town built in vernacular technique using mud layers (Chineh).

Located on a hilltop, the citadel consisted of a series of three concentric walls made of mud brick and palm timbers, the outer wall of which enclosed the old city. According to the Britannica, Bam's highest point, the citadel proper, rose to about 60 meters above its base. The walls of the fortress, some 12 meter high, were once surrounded by a deep moat. The citadel was established during the Sassanid dynasty (224-651 ce); even as late as the beginning of the 19th century, it was the strongest fortified place in Iran, having been used most extensively during the Iranian dynastic disputes of the 18th and 19th centuries.

During that same period, the fortress fell into the hands of invading Afghan armies, and much of the population fled.

By the late 19th century the establishment of secure borders and a strong centralized state made such a military stronghold obsolete. The old city site was abandoned by the end of the century, though the fortress continued to be used as a military garrison until the 1930s.

Beginning in the 1950s, the Iranian government began to restore the fortress, but in 2003 the region around Bam was struck by a massive earthquake that killed more than 26,000 people and devastated the modern city, and the fortress itself was largely destroyed.



**PHOTO**

**Asghar Khamseh**  
Tehran Times photographer



During the Parthian period the fort was expanded and became a citadel. At the end of the Parthian period, Arg-e Bam was captured by Ardashir I, the founder of the Sassanid Empire and they constructed new fortifications and walls.



The Glorious big ancient city, as the largest structure built out of adobe unbaked clay bricks, is still breathtaking.



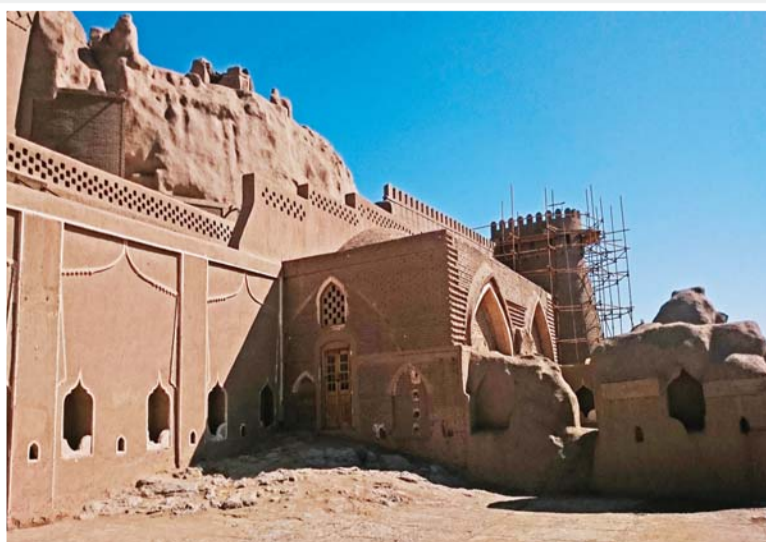
The 2003 earthquake destroyed lots of buildings in Arg-e Bam but part of them have been rebuilt and some parts are still under construction.



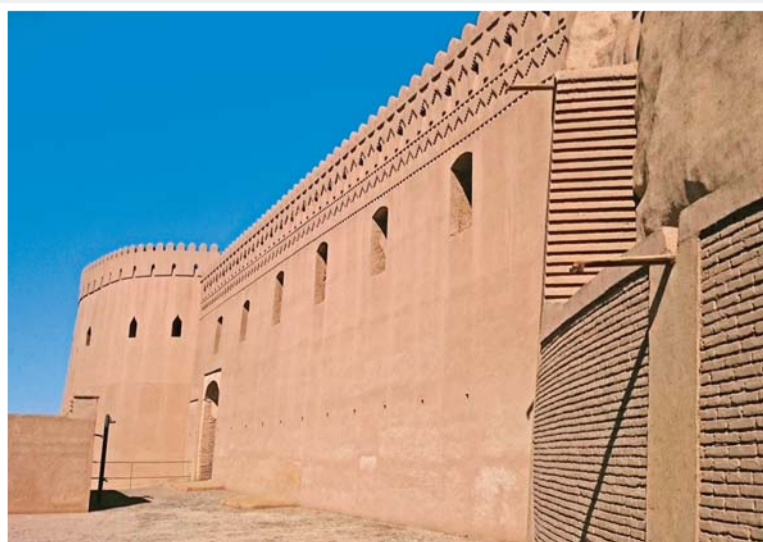
The citadel is just like a jewel in the heart of desert.



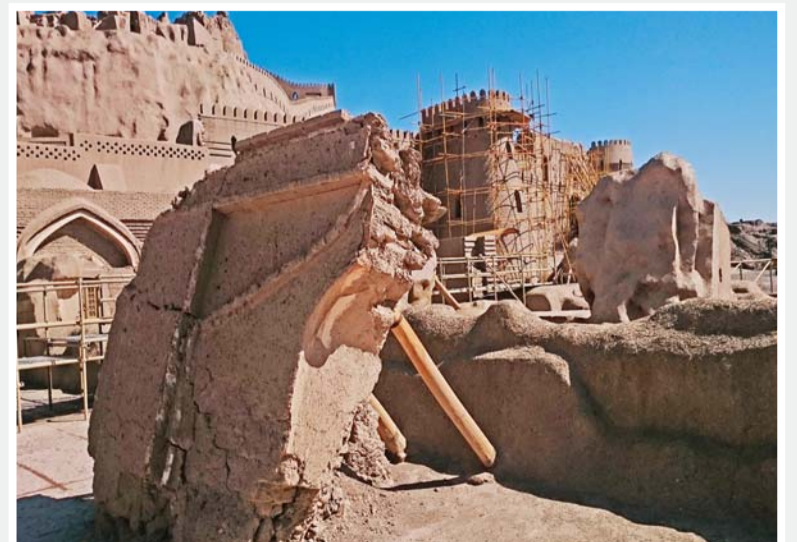
Despite the scaffolding and makeshift restoration on some parts, the fortified walls of Bam made of bricks are still fascinating.



Arg-e Bam covers an area of about 180,000 square meters



The ancient city of bam is a typical example of a walled city where life was continuing inside the walls and well-protected in the middle of deserts.



Some parts of the Arg-e Bam have been reconstructed for stability and to give people a better idea of how it looked

# Wounded May vows to stay as British PM; says Brexit will go on

**I→** May's snap election call was the second time that a Conservative gamble on the issue of Britain's relations with Europe backfired. Her predecessor, David Cameron, first asked British voters to decide in 2016 whether to leave the EU.

Cameron, gambling that Britons wouldn't want to sever their network of ties with the continent, had promised the Brexit referendum during a 2015 election campaign that gave Conservatives a surprise Parliamentary majority. When voters stunned him and Europe by voting to leave, he resigned, leaving May to deal with the mess.

The latest election shock is "yet another own goal" that will make "already complex negotiations even more complicated," said the European Parliament's top Brexit official, Guy Verhofstadt.

With 649 of 650 seats in the House of Commons declared, May's bruised Conservatives had 318 — short of the 326 they needed for an outright majority and well down from the 330 seats they had before May's roll of the electoral dice.

Rather than resign, May quickly grabbed the lifeline of an undefined alliance with the DUP (Democratic Unionist Party), which won 10 seats. But even that arrangement seemed shaky. After May went through the largely symbolic process of seeking the queen's approval for the new government, DUP leader Arlene Foster said the two parties were in discussions, but offered no details.

In May's camp, recriminations were immediate and stinging.

"This is a very bad moment for the Conservative Party, and we need to take stock," Conservative lawmaker Anna Soubry said. "Our leader needs to take stock as well."

The biggest winner was Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. Labour's increase in seats from 229 to 261 — with one seat



still undecided — confounded expectations that his left-wing views made him electorally toxic.

In a buoyant mood, Corbyn piled on pressure for May to resign, saying on Friday morning that people have had enough of austerity politics and cuts in public spending. He ruled out the potential for deals or pacts with other progressive parties in Parliament.

"The arguments the Conservative Party put forward in this election have lost, and we need to change," he said.

Initially blind-sided by May's snap

election call, and written off by many pollsters, Labour surged in the final weeks of the campaign. It drew strong support from young people, who appeared to have turned out to vote in bigger-than-expected numbers, lured by the promise of the elimination of tuition fees, the hope of better jobs and a chance to own property.

"Labour offered something positive," said Queen Mary University political scientist Tim Bale. "There were a lot of goodies in the manifesto."

The fast-moving events both flum-

moxed and fascinated voters.

"It's a bit of a mess," Peter Morgan, 35, said in London. "I was kind of hoping it would just go the way that the polls suggested it would and we could have a quiet life in Westminster but now it's going to be a bit of a mess."

Many predicted May would soon be gone. Steven Fielding, a professor of politics at the University of Nottingham, called her "a zombie prime minister."

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said the idea of a new independence referendum "is dead."

May, who went into the election with a reputation for quiet competence, was criticized for a lackluster campaigning style and for a plan to force elderly people to pay more for their care, a proposal her opponents dubbed the "dementia tax." As the polls suggested a tightening race, pollsters spoke less often of a landslide and raised the possibility that May's majority would be eroded.

Then, attacks in Manchester and London that killed a total of 30 people brought the campaign to a halt — twice. They sent a wave of anxiety through Britain and forced May to defend the government's record on fighting terrorism. Corbyn accused the Conservatives of undermining Britain's security by cutting the number of police on the streets.

Eight people were killed near London Bridge on Saturday when three men drove a van into pedestrians and then stabbed revelers in an area filled with bars and restaurants. Two weeks earlier, a suicide bomber killed 22 people as they were leaving an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester.

But if the election proved one thing, it is that voters in Britain were prepared to be as angry, echoing the undercurrents of elections elsewhere.

(Source: AP)

**May, was criticized for a lackluster campaigning style and for a plan to force elderly people to pay more for their care, a proposal her opponents dubbed the "dementia tax."**

## Al-Sauds doing what Saddam did to Kuwait: Saudi Arabia expert 'The world must not allow Saudi Arabia to bully Qatar with U.S. support,' George Washington University professor says

**I→** But for the others, Bahrain has become a part of Saudi Arabia. They have lost their independence and they do as they are told by Saudi Arabia in order to receive a share of oil revenues and other financial support. Egypt and Sisi are totally dependent on Saudi Arabia financially. The UAE has in recent years followed Saudi lead for protection. And Yemen's discredited ruler is in the pocket of the Al-Sauds. But what is significant is that Kuwait, Oman and Jordan have not followed. I do not believe that Oman will join the Saudi camp. But Jordan may eventually join if it sees it in its financial interest to do so. Kuwait will have a tough time resisting the Saudi call as the Al-Sauds claim and remind Kuwait that it was their support that was key in the liberation of Kuwait.

But why this has happened now is to me what we have to look at. Trump has emboldened the Al-Sauds. They believe they have BOUGHT Trump. They are clever that way. They are used to buying support and they know how to do it. Trump has seen their wealth and their lavish palaces and lifestyle and he is looking forward to doing more business for his family company in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. I am sure that Trump's sons and son-in-law believe that they will do much business in the region. I am afraid that the Saudis will engineer a coup in Qatar. If they take over Qatar, they get rid of a pesky country and they solve all of their financial problems, very much as Saddam Hussein hoped to do by taking over Kuwait.

This is what frightens me. Trump would do nothing and the balance in the Persian Gulf will be destroyed. Iran has to be aware of this.

**How far will the recent crisis go and should we expect Qatar to turn its back on Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood?**

A: As you know, the Al-Sauds have no legitimacy at all. They always refer to Mecca and Medina and Islam for legitimacy. At the same time, they have seen religion as the biggest danger to their absolute rule.

If there were a religious challenge to them, then they would be totally naked. So they have wanted the Muslim Brotherhood (and for that matter any other credible Muslim movement) to be totally extinguished, as they believe it poses a threat to their rule.



On the other hand, Qatari rulers do not see the threat from the Brotherhood. They believe that there must be more political freedom and change in the region. I don't believe that Qatar will turn its back on Hamas and the Brotherhood right away. They will not give Saudi Arabia any excuse for a military operation against them. But even if Qatar turns its back on them, the question is whether Saudi Arabia will move on or will it exact a pound of flesh from Qatar or worse insist on total subservience to Al-Saud rule? I believe that with Trump in the White House, the Al-Sauds will see this as their best opportunity to get rid of the Al-Thani and control Qatar and its natural gas. They blabber lies that Trump loves to hear—that it is all a fight against terrorists and that Qatar is supporting terrorists. All the while, the country that has financially supported terrorists is Saudi Arabia.

There is a UK government report that was commissioned two years ago on sources of financial support for terrorists and it was supposed to be publicly released but it has not been. I am sure they do not want to release it because it will confirm what most people believe—

**I am afraid that the Saudis will engineer a coup in Qatar. If they take over Qatar, they get rid of a pesky country and they solve all of their financial problems, very much as Saddam Hussein hoped to do by taking over Kuwait.**

that Saudi Arabia is the financial backer of ISIS. There is a real danger of a Saudi takeover of Qatar. I cannot stress this enough.

**Should we expect an effort by Saudi Arabia to organize a coup plot in Qatar if the country does not live up to the expectations of Riyadh?**

A: Yes, absolutely. I think that they will organize a coup through a small group of Qataris and pretend that they had nothing to do with it! It will be a very amateurish job, but it is likely!

**What approach should Iran take in order to protect its national interests?**

A: Iran must be very firm. Iran must right away and publicly declare (both the Supreme Leader and President Rouhani) loud and clear that it will not stand for any aggression of any kind towards Qatar. An attack or any covert operation in Qatar will be seen as an act of war and Iran will come to the defense of Qatar with everything at its disposal. Iran will honor its defense cooperation agreement and cannot stand by as Saudi Arabia with support of the United States bullies another country in the region. If Iran does not stand firm, it will endanger its own future.

**President Trump most recently tweeted that his trip to Saudi Arabia has already paid off as Qatar has been put on notice and isolated not to support terrorists.**

A: Well this shows how little President Trump knows and either how incompetent or scared are his advisors. Qatar is not the country that has financed and produced terrorists. The facts are clear. It is Saudi Arabia. But the Al-Sauds have made business deals with Mr. Trump and the United States and they couch their agenda in something that Mr. Trump could embrace. They accuse Hamas as a source of terrorism because the U.S. State Department brands Hamas as a terrorist organization with no evidence at all. And then they state that Qatar supports Hamas. So Qatar must be a supporter of terrorism. Such transparent nonsense! Israel wants the U.S. to isolate Hamas for its own agenda. The U.S. endorses Israeli wishes and then out of nowhere Qatar is labelled as a supporter of terrorism! Then Saudi Arabia labels Iran as a supporter of terrorism. So all of a sudden what Saudi Arabia does is interpreted as a helpful in the fight against terrorism. And Trump, as is his habit, takes credit for fighting terrorism. And that his trip to Saudi Arabia has already paid off. It is all so bizarre. But no one should forget, it is Saudi Arabia that has contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to mosques and madrassas to infuse radicalism and extremism into young Muslims. Saudi citizens have contributed the money to sustain Al-Qaeda and ISIS. And the reason is simple. The Al-Sauds have no legitimacy and their only claim is to have extremist religious support. The world must not allow Saudi Arabia to bully Qatar with U.S. support. Iran must stand up and state its unequivocal support for Qatar, even if it means fighting with Qatar against aggressors. If Iran does this, it will prevent the takeover of Qatar and will be on the right side of history!

**Why is Saudi Arabia acting so now?**

A: Saudi Arabia is doing what Saddam Hussein did to Kuwait but with one very important difference. The Al-Sauds want to take over Qatar with U.S. support. And as long as Trump is in the White House, they feel they have U.S. support. If Saudi Arabia takes over Qatar, it will solve its financial difficulties and get rid of what it considers as a difficult neighbor! This is all very dangerous!

## Tehran terrorist attacks risk unleashing all-out war between Iran and Saudi Arabia

### And President Trump's backhanded condolences and hypocrisy aren't helping

**I→** After the election, however, he sharply changed his tune, praising the U.S.-Saudi "strategic partnership" and making Iran the focus of his anti-terrorism rhetoric.

This move was underscored at a recent summit in Riyadh, where Trump shifted U.S. regional policy towards total alignment with Saudi Arabia, decisively breaking away from the previous U.S. administration's policy of diplomatic engagement with Iran and attempts to ameliorate Saudi-Iranian tensions. Trump's change of heart on Saudi Arabia occurred amid a massive Saudi-linked lobbying campaign in Washington ? which in part reportedly relied on hiring former Trump advisers and spending around \$70,000 at the Trump International Hotel ? as well as a \$110 billion arms deal.

Interestingly, while the target of Trump's furor in Riyadh was Iran, as the Qatar crisis developed, Trump once again brazenly contradicted what he had said just weeks earlier. Even though Trump made no mention of Qatar in his Riyadh speech and even met with the Qatari emir while in Saudi, he tweeted the following about terrorism after Saudi Arabia and its allies cut ties with Qatar this week.

The world simply cannot afford for Trump to continuously play with the word "terrorism" and regularly shift America's policies based on his personal whims and interests. The United States needs to take serious action in fighting terrorism. Further, Trump's relentless quest to implement his Muslim ban, which includes Iran and other Muslim-majority countries, and his attacks on London Mayor Sadiq Khan following violent acts in the United Kingdom, only serve to alienate Muslims and in turn fuel the fear terrorists thrive on.

The reality is that the Tehran attacks highlight the common threat faced by nations across the world from groups such as ISIS. Whether in San Bernardino, London, Paris, Baghdad, Kabul or the heart of Iran, innocent people everywhere are in the same boat in the face of this barbarity. Iran, seemingly unbeknownst to Trump, has since its 1979 revolution been a chief victim of both terrorism and state violence. In the decade after the revolution, it was wracked by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran and attacks by groups such as the notorious Mujahideen-e Khalq, or MEK, which has been responsible for the killing of thousands of Iranian civilians, as well as senior officials and public figures, and was once labeled a terror group by America.

This week, Tehran has become the unlikely victim of ISIS terror. But for the last few years, it has been leading from the ground the fight against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The same cannot be said of Saudi Arabia.

After his recent re-election, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani noted how Saudi Arabia provided Saddam Hussein with some \$97 billion during the Iran-Iraq War. Saudi Prince Turki al-Faisal, a former head of Saudi intelligence, has admitted to meeting a few times with Sept. 11 attack mastermind Osama bin Laden in the 1980s and delivered the keynote address at an MEK gathering during which he praised the group and emphatically supported its objective of toppling the Iranian government. Prominent U.S. analysts have also commented on the Saudi government connection to Wahhabi terrorist groups such as ISIS, as have numerous U.S. officials and media figures. "Almost every terrorist attack in the West has had some connection to Saudi Arabia. Virtually none has been linked to Iran," Fareed Zakaria, host of CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS," wrote in a recent Washington Post column.

Even though the attacks in Tehran came after a contentious Iranian presidential campaign, they will serve to unify the Iranian people and make them more resilient in the face of terror. In fact, Iran's Revolutionary Guards have already stated they "will never allow the blood of innocents to be spilt without revenge" and asserted the U.S. and Saudi Arabia were "involved" in the attack.

But Iran and Saudi Arabia must be careful not to fall into the trap of all-out confrontation. Iran has long been ready for dialogue with Saudi Arabia, with both President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Javad Zarif making numerous overtures since 2013. It would be best if that route were taken before sectarian conflict rises to a new level, proxy wars in Yemen and Syria get worse and ISIS decides to strike again to make up for its blows in Syria and Iraq. But Iran needs support.

Terrorism knows no borders. Collective cooperation is necessary to eradicate it, and this must begin with the West viewing Iran as a partner in the fight, not an enemy. The West must seriously confront the material and ideological sources that enable terrorist groups like ISIS to emerge. This will require the Trump administration to refrain from encouraging Saudi Arabia's zero-sum mentality towards Iran and giving Saudi leaders carte blanche to further stoke instability in the region. Instead, the president must have tough conversations with Saudi officials and other allies about Riyadh's role in the facilitation of terrorism.

Donald Trump now has the option to help de-escalate tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran before they spiral out of control. But to accomplish this, he will need to balance America's relations with regional powers, namely by establishing channels of dialogue with Iran, and incentivize them to move towards cooperation. And he'll need to pressure Saudi Arabia to diplomatically engage Iran. The ball is in his court.

## Raonic parts ways with coach Krajicek

Milos Raonic and coach Richard Krajicek have decided to part ways after less than six months working together, the Canadian said in the wake of his exit from the French Open.



The world number six did not win a title under the former Wimbledon champion, who was appointed in December, and progressed to the final in two of nine tournaments.

Raonic lost to Pablo Carreno Busta in the fourth round at Roland Garros on Sunday.

"My coach, Richard Krajicek, and I have decided to part ways. This decision has been a mutual one," Raonic said on his official Twitter account.

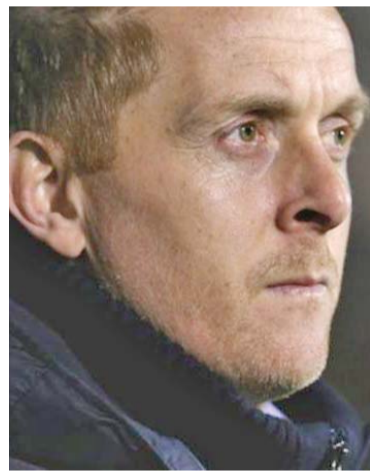
"I would like to thank Richard for his help with my game, his dedication and professionalism. I wish him all the best."

Raonic, who has continued to work with long-time coach Riccardo Piatti, will aim to get his season back on track at the Aegon Championships in Birmingham, later this month.

(Source: Reuters)

## Middlesbrough offer manager's job to former Leeds United boss

Former Leeds United boss Garry Monk has been offered the Middlesbrough manager's job by chairman Steve Gibson.



After several candidates were interviewed, BBC Sport understands Monk is Boro's preferred candidate.

Monk, 38, left Leeds on 25 May after being unable to "reach an agreement" with new owner Andrea Radrizzani.

He managed Swansea City in the Premier League between 2014 and 2015 before guiding Leeds to a seventh-placed finish in the Championship last season.

Middlesbrough finished 19th and were relegated from the Premier League after winning just five of their 38 games under previous bosses Aitor Karanka and Steve Agnew.

Agnew took over from Karanka on 16 March on a temporary basis and could not prevent Boro going down.

Monk, who was appointed on a one-year rolling contract at Leeds in June 2016, had been expected to sign a new deal after Radrizzani gained full control of the club from Massimo Cellino.

However, Monk left saying he was unable to "agree a suitable way for us all to move forward together".

(Source: BBC)

## Not so fast young man, Bolt cautions De Grasse

Usain Bolt has cautioned Canadian young gun Andre De Grasse to temper his expectations of dethroning him at the world championships in London in August.



The 30-year-old Jamaican will run his final race on home soil at the Racers Grand Prix this weekend before hanging up his spikes after the London meet.

De Grasse, who chased Bolt home for silver in the 200 metres and bronze in the 100m at the Rio Olympics last year, is widely tipped to be one of the athletes bidding to fill the void left by the sprint king's retirement.

"Over the years I've always tried to be diplomatic about how I answered a lot of questions, but what bothers me the most when athletes are coming up through the ranks and they get to a certain level, they always want to beat me, I don't know why?" Bolt told reporters in Kingston on Thursday.

De Grasse, 22, said this week he intends to beat Bolt before the world record holder in both 100 and 200m brings down the curtain on his glittering career.

Bolt, who will only run the shorter sprint in the British capital, has not been beaten in an individual sprint at a major championship for a decade.

He has won the sprint double at the last three Olympics and three of the last four world championships, the one exception being when he false started in the 100m at Daegu in 2011.

"I always tell my younger athletes at Racers track club, listen, 'when you're climbing a ladder, you have to take your time and work your way up to the top', so all I have to say to De Grasse is take your time and climb his way to the top," Bolt said.

"That's all I have to say about that."

(Source: Reuters)

# No action from FIFA over Saudi minute's silence snub

Saudi Arabia's national team will face no sanction from FIFA for failing to respect a minute's silence for the victims of the London attacks before the start of a World Cup qualifier in Australia, soccer's global governing body said on Friday.

The Saudi Arabia Football Federation earlier "unreservedly" apologized for the incident, which a former Australian government minister said showed "a disgraceful lack of respect" for the victims of the London attack.

"After reviewing the match report and images of the said match, we can confirm that there are no grounds to take disciplinary action in relation to the matter you mention," FIFA said in a statement.

Eight people were killed and 50 injured after three militants drove into pedestrians on London Bridge last Saturday, then attacked revelers nearby with knives. Two of the dead were Australian.

Football Federation Australia (FFA) said it had "sought agreement" from the Saudis and the Asian Football Confederation to hold the minute's silence to honor the victims ahead of the match at Adelaide Oval late on Thursday.

The Australia team duly lined up in the center circle and linked arms but all but one of the Saudi players dispersed around the pitch and continued to jog and stretch.

"Both the AFC and the Saudi team agreed that the minute of silence could be held," an FFA spokesman said.

"The FFA was further advised by Saudi team officials that this tradition was not in keeping with Saudi culture and they would move to their side of the field and respect our custom whilst taking their own positions on the field."

The incident prompted a social media storm, coming as it did at a time when



Australians were still mourning victims of recent attacks.

In addition to the Australians who died in London, a deadly siege in Melbourne on Tuesday that Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull called "an act of terrorism" claimed one victim, while an Australian schoolgirl was one of more than a dozen killed in a Baghdad car bomb blast last week.

Anthony Albanese, a front bench spokesman for the opposition Labor Party, said the incident was "bloody disgraceful".

"There is no excuse here. This isn't about culture, this is about a lack of re-

spect," he told Channel 9.

"I'm so angry about this."

The governing body of Saudi soccer later issued a statement saying it "deeply" regretted the incident.

"The players did not intend any disrespect to the memories of the victims or to cause upset to their families, friends or any individual affected by the atrocity," it added.

"The Saudi Arabian Football Federation condemns all acts of terrorism and extremism and extends its sincerest condolences to the families of all the victims and to the government and people of the United Kingdom."

Prime Minister Turnbull said on Friday that he had not seen video of the incident but thought everybody should condemn "terrorism".

"The whole world, the whole free world, is united in condemnation of that terrorist attack and terrorism generally," he told reporters in Tasmania.

Australia won the match 3-2 to move level on 16 points in Group B with the second-placed Saudis and leaders Japan, who have a game in hand, with two rounds to play.

The top two teams win a place at the World Cup finals in Russia next year.

(Source: Reuters)

## Bayern Munich name Willy Sagnol as Carlo Ancelotti's assistant

Former Bayern Munich right-back Willy Sagnol is Carlo Ancelotti's new assistant, the Bundesliga champions announced on Friday.

Sagnol, 40, became a firm fans' favourite during nine years at the club, during which time he won the Bundesliga five times and the DFB Pokal four times as well as the Champions League and the Club World Cup.

The former France international, who left his position as head coach at Bordeaux in March 2016, has signed a two-year deal with Bayern.

Sagnol, who played for the club between 2000 and 2009, said: "I'm pleased to return to Munich with my family. It is a great honour, Carlo Ancelotti, one of the best and most experienced coaches in world football chose me. I'm happy to work alongside him on his team."

Sagnol speaks excellent German and has a working knowledge of English, Spanish and Italian. Ancelotti's son, Davide, will continue his duties in an assistant coaching role.

Commenting on the appointment,



Ancelotti said: "After losing two of my assistants, firstly Paul Clement and then Hermann Gerland, from my training staff, I expressed the desire to sign a replacement for the coming season."

The Italian added that he specifically wanted a former Bayern player who already had experience as a head coach to assist him.

"Both apply to Willy Sagnol. I'm looking forward to working with him," he said.

(Source: Soccernet)

## Hull appoint former Russia boss Leonid Slutsky as head coach

Hull have appointed former Russia and CSKA Moscow manager Leonid Slutsky as their new head coach.

Slutsky, 46, will arrive next week, the club confirmed ahead of the 2017-18 Championship campaign.

"I am delighted to become the head coach of Hull City and I am very much looking forward to the challenge of guiding the club back to the Premier League," Slutsky, who led Russia at Euro 2016, told the club's official website.

"I already know that this is an important club with a big and loyal fanbase, I've had a good feeling about it ever since meeting the Allam family and I can't wait to get started next week."

Having appointed the three-time Russian Premier League winner, Hull announced they will make further coaching appointments soon.

Vice chairman Ehab Allam added: "I am delighted to welcome Leonid as our new head coach. After a thorough recruitment process, Leonid's attention



to detail, thoughts on playing style and his ambition made him the stand-out candidate.

"The club has made plans for pre-season training and friendlies, with some exciting fixtures to be announced next week, and squad planning with Leonid is already underway. Leonid has enjoyed success at both club and international level and I am excited about his plans for guiding us back towards the Premier League."

(Source: Soccernet)

## Alonso: McLaren driver could leave if the team are not competitive

Fernando Alonso has indicated he will leave McLaren-Honda at the end of the year if he does not see signs they can be competitive by September.

The two-time world champion is out of contract at the end of this season.

"We have to win," he said. "If we are winning before September, when I will make a decision, I will stay."

When pointed out this was unlikely, he said: "I joined this project to win the title. If you are not in a competitive position, maybe you change project."

However, the Spaniard said he had not yet started to think seriously about his future.

"Until I sit down with myself in September, I cannot say for sure," Alonso said.



Alonso joined McLaren at the start of 2015, when they began their relationship with engine partner Hon-

da. But the team have been uncompetitive for all three years, largely because of a lack of performance from the Honda engine, and that is causing tension within the team.

McLaren executive director Zak Brown said on Wednesday that he had "serious concerns" about Honda, which he said appeared "lost".

He added that the McLaren-Honda relationship was nearing "a fork in the road" and that McLaren were "not going to go into another year like this, in hope".

Alonso said: "We all want to win and Zak's comments about Honda is what you would expect him to say. He wants to win, he wants McLaren to win and things have to change."

(Source: BBC)

## Sanchez focused on Chile and Confederations Cup

Arsenal forward Alexis Sanchez says his full focus is on helping Chile win the Confederations Cup and not on deciding which club he will play for in the future, amid reports that Bayern Munich are attempting to make him their highest-paid player.

Sanchez, 28, has been the subject of much transfer speculation in recent

months with the Daily Mirror claiming Bayern are willing to pay him £350,000 a week to join and the Daily Telegraph adding they are prepared to offer Arsenal £40 million for his services. Chelsea and Manchester City are also reportedly interested in purchasing the Chile international this summer.

When asked if he will extend his cur-

rent deal with Arsenal, which ends in June 2018, Sanchez told AS Chile: "That is something that my agent is looking into. Right now, I'm focused on the [Confederations] Cup."

Sanchez, who arrived at the Emirates Stadium in the summer of 2014 in a £31.7m transfer from Barcelona, was Arsenal's top scorer last season in the Pre-

mier League with 24 goals. He also set up 10 more in 38 league appearances, with 36 coming as a starter.

Sanchez joined Chile's national team on Thursday in Moscow and was the centre of attention during their training session. He could feature in Friday's international friendly against Russia.

(Source: Soccernet)

# Past experience paying dividends for Iran star Jahanbakhsh

Tehran: When the Islamic Republic of Iran appeared at the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, Alireza Jahanbakhsh was just 20 years old, but the midfielder's development for both club and country was well underway.

Jahanbakhsh came off the bench in all three of his side's Group F games but a scoreless draw with Nigeria was followed by a last-gasp 1-0 defeat to Argentina and a 3-1 loss to Bosnia and Herzegovina as Team Melli exited at the first hurdle.

The experience, though, proved invaluable for the forward, who has since gone on to become one of the leading lights in a side that is now only a home win against Uzbekistan on Monday away from qualifying for the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018.

"It was unbelievably great, I went to the World Cup and I was the youngest player in the Iran squad," recalled AZ Alkmaar player Jahanbakhsh, who joined Dutch Eredivisie outfit NEC prior to the Brazil tournament when he was just 19-years-old.

Jahanbakhsh on development in Holland  
"I was really happy to be there because I could learn a lot and see what the big players did against Argentina. I was looking at their movement and all the things they were doing so I could bring it to my game.

"It was a great experience to play at the World Cup after training for six months with the national team, it couldn't be better than that as it was an opportunity to show my skills and potential."

Almost three years on since making their fourth appearance at the global showpiece, Iran stand on the brink of advancing to successive FIFA World Cups for the first time in their history.

Four points ahead of Korea Republic at the top of Group A and five ahead of Monday's opponents with three games to play, Team Melli will secure their place at next year's tournament if they claim all three points in front of a packed Azadi Stadium.

And, under the stewardship of long-term coach Carlos Queiroz, Jahanbakhsh is keen to point out the influence the Portuguese has had on a squad that is looking to lead their country to a fifth FIFA World Cup.

"He plays the main role in our team and his experience is unbelievably good," said Jahanbakhsh.

"When you see the results we have got in the last couple of games, of course all the people in Iran are happy with him. The players also have a really good relationship with him and he makes things easy for us.

"These are the things that make him different from other coaches; we are very happy to work for him and hopefully we will keep him for a longer time."

After starting his senior career with Parseh Tehran, Jahanbakhsh was spotted early and signed for NEC in the



summer of 2013, a year after leading his country to the last eight of the 2012 AFC U-19 Championship in China, a tournament where he starred alongside Russia-based forward Sardar Azmoun.

Two successful seasons with NEC followed before, amid reported interest from clubs across Europe, the midfielder opted to stay in the Netherlands and joined AZ Alkmaar.

Four years on since making the move to Europe, Jahanbakhsh is integral for both club and country in a career that is undoubtedly on an upward trajectory.

"Holland is a country where you can grow up as a footballer," noted Jahanbakhsh. "The focus they have on the players and the way they work with the players, especially young talented ones, is unbelievably good.

"They have everything to help you achieve your goals, so when I got the offer from NEC I didn't think, I just moved there and tried to integrate myself into the country and culture.

"Two years ago I moved to AZ Alkmaar. It's such a good club, always in the top four or five in Holland, so for developing as a young player it's great.

"When you have goals and you have people around who help you to achieve your ambitions that makes you

really happy."

Jahanbakhsh has played in six of Iran's seven qualifying games to date, scoring the second in a 2-0 victory over Qatar last September, as his country have remained unbeaten and yet to concede.

And while goals have been hard to come by – Team Melli have scored just six in seven games – the threat up-front is undeniable with Persepolis hitman Mehdi Taremi and Rostov's Azmoun, who moved to Europe just a few months before Jahanbakhsh.

"I've known him for five or six years, we played together for the under-19s and have always been good friends, close friends," he added.

"We are always chilling together, having fun with the national team. We grew up together as players and the last few years we have been in the first team of the national team.

"He's been doing very well; he moved to Russia and has scored important goals for his club, even in the UEFA Champions League.

"We have a really young squad with a combination of experienced players and that is what makes the Iranian national team and why we are one of the strongest in Asia." (Source: AFC)

## Esteghlal complete signing of teenager Mehdi Ghaedi



**S P O R T S** Mehdi Ghaedi joined Iranian giant Esteghlal football team on Thursday.

The 18-year-old midfielder has joined Esteghlal from Iranjavan Bushehr on a three-year contract.

The details of the fee contract have not been revealed.

If Esteghlal sell Ghaedi to a Europe-

an club, Iranjavan will get some percentage of transfer fees.

Ghaedi was a member of Iran U-20 football team in the World Cup in South Korea.

He had been reportedly linked with a move to Persepolis and Saipa football teams.

Ghaedi, dubbed the 'Iranian Neymar', is Esteghlal's first signing in the summer.

## Siamak Nemati joins Persepolis football team



**S P O R T S** Persepolis football team have completed the signing of Siamak Nemati as the team's third signing of the summer.

The 23-year-old midfielder has joined the Iranian giant on a two-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Nemati will likely replace Soroush Rafiei, who has reached an agreement

with Qatari club Al-Khor.

Nemati started his career with Saipa youth team in 2006 and joined Persepolis youth team after two years.

Nemati joined Steel Azin senior team in 2011 before joining Paykan three years later.

Persepolis has already completed the signing of Godwin Mensha and Shoja Khalilzadeh.

## Messi leads minute's silence for London terror attack victims

Brazil and Argentina players have held a minutes silence in Australia as they paid tribute to the eight people who tragically lost their lives in the London terror attack last weekend.

Lionel Messi was among the players who showed their respects at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of 95,000 fans.

There were also a number of Premier League players involved as Liverpool star Philippe Coutinho, Manchester City trio Gabriel Jesus, Fernandinho and Nicolas Otamendi, Manchester United keeper Romero and Chelsea defender David Luiz were all named in the starting line-ups.



The atmosphere was electric around the stadium but you could not hear a pin drop when the referee blew his whistle for the minutes silence to get underway.

It proved to be an emotional tribute as two Australians - Sara Zelenak and Kirsty Boden were sadly named among the eight people who lost their lives.

The two teams have travelled to Melbourne to play in this prestigious friendly but both countries were determined to show their respects over the tragic events that took place in London Bridge.

(Source: Mirror)

## Rodriguez aiming to return AC Milan to Champions League

Ricardo Rodriguez says that new club AC Milan belong in the Champions League after joining them from Wolfsburg.

Rodriguez, 24, became Milan's third summer signing on Thursday following the previous arrivals at the San Siro of Mateo Musacchio and Franck Kessie.

The Switzerland international signed a four-year contract and has laid out his plans to help the club return to their glory days.

"I saw Milanello [training facilities] and the club's museum today and I was so impressed," Rodriguez told Milan TV.

"We need to do well in the league and get back into the Champions League -- we will do everything to get there. I watched this club as I grew up and they are a truly great club, and we want to get back to the very top.

"I love this shirt and I'm delighted to

be here to play for this club. [Franco] Baresi is a true legend and an amazing player, but I didn't only admire him and [Gennaro Gattuso], I also went crazy about Ronaldinho, [Paolo] Maldini and many others.

(Source: Soccer.net)

## Carlos Queiroz: Our game is not over yet

Iranian national football team's coach Carlos Queiroz posted a message on Facebook, saying their game is not over yet.

Iran will host Uzbekistan on June 12 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Team Melli leads Group A with 17 points from seven games to date, followed by South Korea and Uzbekistan with 13 and 12 points respectively.

Iran will book its berth in the 2018 World Cup with a draw against Uzbekistan.

"In football or in life we have always a Score Board that defines our situation. For our Team, the score board is clear: we lead our group, we have no defeats and conceded no goals. However, we are not yet in the place we want! We are not in the place we would like to be. It is true that we are better than what we used to, but our Score Board, today, only increases our responsibility. Now, our standards and demands are higher!" Queiroz wrote.

"This is important to say because our game is not over yet. In fact, we have 3 more 90 minute parts to play, in order to succeed and reach our dreams.

"Again. In football and in life, success comes with no cheap price! We all have to work harder than ever, we all have to do something more extra. We have to make something different, because in the end, that is the only way if we want to make the difference.

"If we want to succeed, there is one price to pay! Again, victories never come cheap. In this moment, only full sacrifice will take Team Melli to the place we all dream. All for Team Melli!" the Portuguese added.



## Iran's Soroush Rafiei reaches agreement with Al-Khor

Iranian free-agent midfielder Soroush Rafiei reached an initial agreement with Al-Khor Sports Club of Qatar.

Rafiei joined Persepolis in January on a six-month contract and played 14 matches for the Iranian giant, scoring four goals.

The 27-year-old attacking midfielder will sign a contract with Al-Khor on Thursday, Qatari newspaper Al-Watan wrote.

According to the newspaper, Rafiei shone for Persepolis in the AFC Champions League.

Soroush Rafiei has made five appearances for the Iranian national football team.

Persepolis has signed a two-year contract with Paykan midfielder Siamak Nemati.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Abdollah Veisi returns to Esteghlal Khuzestan

Abdollah Veisi has been named as new head coach of Iran's Esteghlal Khuzestan football team.

The 46-year-old coach has penned a one-year contract with Esteghlal Khuzestan.

He became head coach of Esteghlal Khuzestan in 2013 and led the Ahvaz based team to 12th position in his first season, three points above relegation zone.

In the second season, Veisi finished the season in the 14th position with Esteghlal Khuzestan, placed them in relegation play-off in which they faced Mes Kerman. Esteghlal Khuzestan won the play-off 3-0 on aggregate.

In 2015-16 Iran Professional League season, Esteghlal Kuuzestan won the title under guidance of Veisi.

In May 2016, Veisi was named as new Sepahan head coach with signing a four-year contract but was sacked in March 2017 following a series of poor results.

Now, he has returned to his former club who finished in 7th place in the last season.

Veisi replaced Sirous Pourmousavi who has been appointed as Foolad Khuzestan coach.

(Source: Tasnim)

## US Para athlete Park banned for 21 months

US track and field Para athlete Peter Park has been banned by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) for 21 months after accepting an anti-doping rule violation.

It comes after the 39-year-old failed to obtain a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) for a banned substance he had taken as part of a prescribed medication.

Park had declared he was using the anabolic agent during a doping control session at the New York City Marathon on 4 November 2016, and subsequently tested positive for the substance on 22 November.

While USADA accepted the positive test was caused by the medication he was prescribed, the World Anti-Doping Code requires all athletes to obtain a TUE before using a banned substance, something which Park did not do.

Park's 21-month period of ineligibility began on 4 November 2016, the date he declared the use of an anabolic agent. In addition, Park has been disqualified from all competitive results obtained on and subsequent to 4 November 2016, including forfeiture of any medals, points and prizes.

(Source: Paralympic)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



"Inversion" named best at Iranian Film Festival in Zurich

TEHRAN — Iranian director Behnam Behzadi's film "Inversion" was picked as best film at the 3rd Iranian Film Festival in Zurich, Switzerland, the organizers announced on Wednesday. Starring Ali Mossafa and Sahar Dowlatshahi, "Inversion" is about three siblings, and masterfully features Tehran's air pollution.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

A collection of paintings by Yasamin Khorsandi is on display in an exhibition at Mah Gallery. The exhibit will be running until June 20 at the gallery that can be found at 26 Golestan Blvd., off Africa Ave.

An exhibition of paintings by Sara Qazi-Asadollahi is currently underway at Vista Gallery. The exhibition titled "Left in Time" runs until June 19 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

Seyhun Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mehdi Sahabi. The exhibition will continue until June 21 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 11, 4th St, Vozara Ave.

Paintings by Nasrin Najafi are on display in an exhibition at Aria Gallery. The exhibit named "Maze" runs until June 19 at the gallery located at 10 Zarrin Alley, near Beheshti St, Vali-e Asr Ave.

Hepta Gallery is displaying a collection of paintings by Taraneh Mosaddeq in an exhibition that will be running until June 21. The gallery is located at 3 Nikushahr Dead End, Iranshahr St, Karim Khan Ave.

Paintings by Farideh Lashai, Sasan Nasiri, Maryam Salur, Mostafa Dashti, Hossein Maher and eight other artists are on display in an exhibition at E1 Gallery. The exhibit named "Borderlessness" will run until June 23 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebbeh St, off Mahdiah St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.

Calligraphic painting

An exhibition of calligraphic paintings by Behzad Jamaati-Sumarini is underway at Sohrah Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Horuk" will run until June 20 at the gallery located at 142 Somayyeh St.

Phil Collins postpones London concerts after gashing head

LONDON (Reuters) — British pop singer Phil Collins has canceled two London concerts due to take place this week after gashing his head in a fall at his hotel, his concert promoter said. Collins, 66, slipped while going to the toilet on Wednesday night and hit his head on a chair, according to the promoter, Live Nation. It said a "severe gash" close to his eye had been stitched, and that he was recovering well but would be kept in hospital under observation for 24 hours. "Phil sends his sincere apologies and thanks to fans. He has had a fantastic week at his first shows in 10 years, cannot thank people enough for their warm reaction and is excited to return," the statement said. Two concerts at London's Royal Albert Hall, announced last October and was due to take place on Thursday and Friday, have been rescheduled for Nov. 26 and 27.

Iranian films on peace to screen in Hiroshima, Tokyo

TEHRAN — A number of Iranian movies will go on screen in Hiroshima and Tokyo, on the sidelines of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony.

The ceremony is held annually on August 6 to commemorate the anniversary of the tragedy of the U.S. atomic attack on the Japanese city.

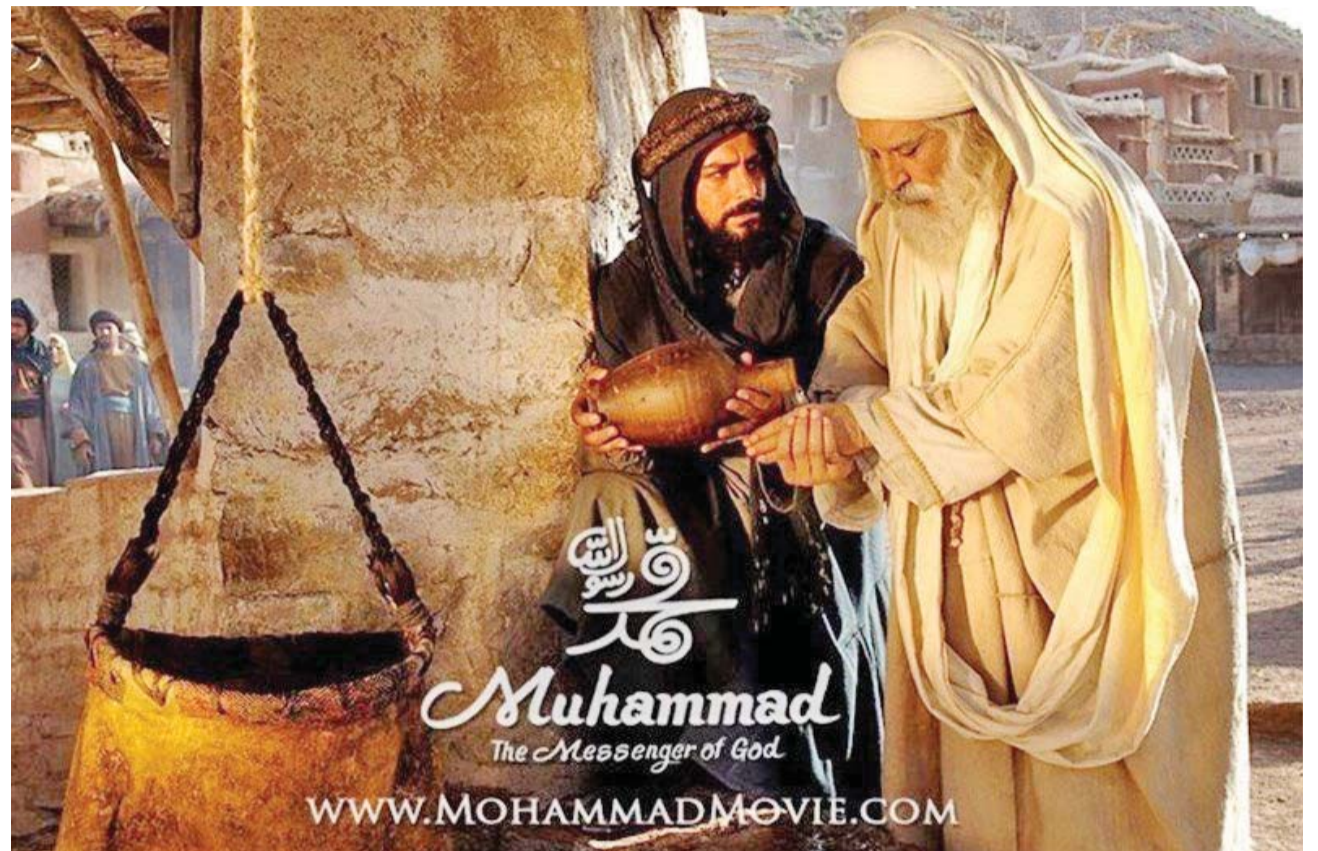
The films will be screened in Hiroshima on August 6 and 7, and later Tokyo will be the host on August 8 and 9, Iran's Cultural Office in Tokyo announced in a press release published on Friday.

"Mazar-i-Sharif" (Abdolhassan Barzideh), "Muhammad (S), the Messenger of God" (Majid Majidi), "Taj Mahal" (Danesh Egbashavi) and "Lizard" (Kamal Tabrizi) are among the movies to be screened.

"Lizard" actor Parviz Parastui is also expected to attend the program.

Shizuko Tsuya, the head of MOCT Association of Hiroshima, has called the screening program a good opportunity to introduce Iranian movies to the interested Japanese fans.

Tsuya, who founded MOCT in 1994 to provide medical services overseas, also believes that the program can help put a spotlight on Iranian victims of several violent attacks in which Iraq used chemical weapons during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.



A poster for "Muhammad (S), the Messenger of God"

Romanian festival pays tribute to Abbas Kiarostami

TEHRAN — The Transilvania International Film Festival (TIFF) commemorated the legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami by screening his film "Take Me Home" and "76 Minutes and 15 Seconds with Abbas Kiarostami".

In his "Take Me Home", Kiarostami takes his camera to Southern Italy and shows the viewers a beautiful and playful video of alleys and stairs there.

"76 Minutes and 15 Seconds with Abbas Kiarostami" is a montage film made by Iranian filmmaker Kiarostami's close friend Seifollah Samadian.

The title of the film refers to the duration of Kiarostami's life, 76 years and 15 days, and shows a picture of Kiarostami as a filmmaker, photographer, poet, graphic designer, video artist and even a carpenter.

Moreover, the festival is screening two Iranian movies, "Simulation" (Abed Abest), competing in the main section of the festival, and "Immortality" (Mehdi



A scene from "76 Minutes and 15 Seconds with Abbas Kiarostami"

Fard-Qaderi) in the No Limit section.

"Simulation" is about three bored young men who decide to pay a visit to an older man they only know vaguely, but the old man turns a gun on them as he thinks they've come to burgle him.

"Immortality", which is a one-shot feature film, tells the story of several persons who have to spend a rainy night together on a train.

The festival opened on June 2 in the Romanian city of Cluj-Napoca and will be running until June 11.

Extremism opposite pole to art: Rouhani

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani stated that extremism is the opposite pole to art and culture.

He made the remarks in his meeting with a group of Iranian artists, cineastes and writers on Wednesday night after Tehran was subjected to two violent attacks perpetrated by Daesh (ISIS) terrorists.

"Terrorism is the opposite pole to art and culture, and its language is violence and bullets," Rouhani said.

"Terrorism has targeted the humanity and the civilization of a nation that has been a victim of terror since the victory of the revolution, and since then has always struggled against terrorism and even has saved other great nations from terrorism, so it's natural that the nation should pay the price for its resistance today," he added.

He also expressed his thanks to



President Hassan Rouhani attends a meeting with a group of Iranian artists, cineastes and writers at his office in Tehran on June 7, 2017. (President.ir)

artists for their active participation in the latest presidential election and said, "Art teaches us how to talk to God and our fellow human beings despite our differences of race, language and nationality."

He called the Islam the religion of art and added, "Science and art have no limit and we feel dynamism and vigor with art."

The meeting came to an end with speeches by a number of the artists.

Rockefeller art collection to be auctioned benefiting charities

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Works of art, furniture and decorative objects from the collection of the late David Rockefeller, the billionaire banker and philanthropist who was the last surviving grandchild of Standard Oil founder John D. Rockefeller, will be sold at auction next year, Christie's said on Wednesday.

Rockefeller died in March aged 101. Some 2,000 items will hit the auction block in a series of sales slated for spring of 2018, and proceeds will benefit a dozen charities in accordance with his pledge to direct the majority of his wealth to cultural, educational, medical and environmental causes.

"We are proud to fulfill my father's wish to share with the world the art and objects he and my mother collected over a lifetime together and use them as means to continue the long legacy of Rockefeller family philanthropy first established by John D. Rockefeller," David Rockefeller Jr. said in a statement.

Rockefeller, former head of Chase Manhattan Corp, was patriarch of one of the most famous and influential American



David Rockefeller arrives at the funeral service for New York socialite and philanthropist Brooke Astor at St. Thomas Church in New York, August 17, 2007. (Reuters/Jeff Zelvevansky/File Photo)

families. He was a noted collector along with his wife, Peggy, who pre-deceased him.

In 2007, a Mark Rothko painting he bought in 1960 for

less than \$10,000 was auctioned for more than \$72 million. Many other works in their world-class collection were handed down over generations.

The collection comprises impressionist, post-impressionist and modern works of art, as well as American paintings, English and European furniture, Asian art, European ceramics and Chinese porcelain, silver, and American decorative arts and furniture.

Beneficiaries of the proceeds include Harvard University, the Museum of Modern Art, the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Farmland Trust, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Mount Desert Land and Garden Preserve.

For years Rockefeller served as chairman for Rockefeller University, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Americas Society/Council of the Americas and The Museum of Modern Art.

Highlights from the sales will go on public exhibition in Europe, Asia and the United States in advance of the sales, which will be held at Christie's headquarters in Rockefeller Center.

Iranian shorts to go on screen at Palm Springs festival



"Retouch"

TEHRAN — Two Iranian films will go on screen at the 23rd Palm Springs International ShortFest, which will be held in the U.S. city from June 20 to 26.

"Retouch" by Kaveh Mazaheri and "Lunch Time" by Alireza Qasemi will compete with over 300 movies from around the world.

"Retouch" is about a young woman whose husband is trapped under a barbell during a workout, but she declines to save him and, consequently, he dies.

"Lunch Time" tells the story of a 16-year-old girl, who deals with the harsh bureaucracy to fulfill her responsibility of having to identify the body of her mother.

Musicians voice solidarity with victims of Tehran terrorist attacks



Members of Kaliveh perform a concert at Mexico's National Museum of Cultures.

TEHRAN — The Kaliveh Music Group and vocalist Alireza Qorbani's ensemble announced on Thursday that they would cancel their concerts scheduled for this weekend in solidarity with the victims of Wednesday's terrorist attacks in Tehran.

Qorbani was scheduled to perform songs from his latest album "Forugh" at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Thursday and

Friday and Kaliveh was to give a concert at a Mexico City university on Friday.

Kaliveh gave several performances of Iranian music at Mexico's National Museum of Cultures last week.

Many Iranian celebrities, including pop star Reza Sadeghi, wrote messages of condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attacks on social networks.