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Austria to open €1 b credit line for Iran



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Iranian Industry Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh (L) met Austria's Federal Minister of Finance Hans Jörg Schelling (R) on Sunday in Tehran.

Araqchi: Senate move hampers successful implementation of nuclear deal

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Sunday that the U.S. Senate's move to impose new sanctions on Iran will scupper a successful implementation of the July 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"We believe that approval of such a bill is contradictory to the principle of goodwill and successful implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," noted Araqchi who served as a leading negotiator in drafting the nuclear deal with great powers and the European Union.

On June 7, Senate voted to proceed with a bill that would sanction Iran over its ballistic missile activity, its alleged human rights violation and claims of support for terrorist organizations. It came just hours after the Iranian capital suffered a deadly terrorist attack.

Araqchi said the Senate action is "shameful" and shows "confusion" on the part of the U.S. toward the Middle East. He added the U.S. Senate's allegation of Iran's support for terrorism is "farical" and "shameful".

In a series of Twitter messages in late May, former Secretary of State John Kerry urged the U.S. senators not to move ahead with legislation saying "this is not the moment for a new Iran bill".

"This is a time to tread carefully," Kerry advised the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"We need to consider the implications of confrontation without conversation," tweeted Kerry who was President Barack Obama's chief nuclear negotiator with Iran.

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Military chief pledges 'unforgettable lesson' to terrorists after Tehran attack

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The head of the Iranian armed forces pledged a "new, unforgettable" blow to terrorists and their backers, warning them not to "even nurture and repeat the mistake" in their minds.

"Iran's security forces will give new, unforgettable lessons to terrorists and their regional and trans-regional backers," Major General Mohammad Baqeri said in a statement on Sunday.

Baqeri made the comments days after ISIS-linked terrorists launched a twin assault on Iran's Parliament and the mausoleum of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini on Wednesday.

The attacks left 17 people dead and some 56 more injured, marking the first such attack by the Islamic State on Iranian soil.

"We warn those who participated in the Saudis' recent sword dance as well as those who seek to hatch plots and anti-security scenarios against the Islamic Republic to learn from the fate of the June 7 terrorists and to avoid even nurturing and repeating the mistake in their mind," the senior commander underscored.

"Sword dance" was a reference to the recent visit by U.S. President Donald Trump to Saudi Arabia, during which he performed a traditional dance with Saudi princes with swords in their hands.

Baqeri also pointed the finger of suspicion toward what he called "the ominous U.S.-Israeli regime-Al Saud triangle" for the Tehran attacks, emphasizing that "blind terror acts and disgusting fireworks" will not tremble Iran's adamant fight against terrorism.

On Wednesday, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed the twin attacks as mere "fireworks" that would not weaken the country's fight against terrorism.

"These fireworks have no effect on Iran. They will soon be eliminated ... They are too small to affect the will of the Iranian nation and its officials," the Leader stated. **->2**

UN Ocean Conference wraps up with actions to restore ocean health, protect marine life

The first-ever United Nations summit on oceans wrapped up on Friday 9 June with a global agreement to reverse the decline of the ocean's health, and more than 1,300 pledged actions for protecting the blue.

"The bar has been raised on global consciousness and awareness of the problem in the oceans," the President of the UN General Assembly, Peter Thomson, told journalists in New York.

Mr. Thomson, whose native Fiji co-sponsored the event along with Sweden, said the organizers got what they wanted from the conference: "I'm 100 per cent satisfied with the results of this conference. Our aim was high. Our aim was to start the reversal of the cycle."

The Ocean Conference ends Friday with the adoption by consensus of a 14-point Call for Action where the participating Heads of State and Government and senior representatives "affirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use our oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development."

Speaking alongside Mr. Thomson, the Secretary-General of The Ocean Conference, Wu Hongbo, said the negotiated document lists specific measures "to galvanize global commitment and partnerships" for the oceans.

The main points from the political document and this week's discussions will be

part of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the UN's central body for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015. The HLPF is scheduled to meet next month in New York.

In addition to the political Call for Action, participants — who also included thousands of civil society representatives, academics, artists, financial institutions and other practitioners and activists — pledged actions to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. This is the goal of SDG14. **->13**



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Iftar show in Tehran streets

A large number of people come together every iftar in the fasting month of Ramadan in Tehran streets.

Iftar is one of the religious observances of Ramadan, and is often done as a community, with people gathering to break their fast together.

In Iran, a select of foods is cooked to break the fast at Maghrib time (just after sunset) and is summarily followed by a proper Persian meal.

Leader asks literati to satirize sword dance of modern ignorance

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has asked Iranian literati to satirize the ceremonial sword dance of U.S. President Donald Trump and White House officials in Saudi Arabia as he called it "the sword dance of modern ignorance."

Speaking at his annual meeting with Iranian poets and literary figures on Saturday night, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Today, issues like the sword dance of jahiliyyah [ignorance], in addition to ethnic jahiliyyah or the election of Saudi Arabia to the UN women's rights commission, well deserve to be satirized."

Trump, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross took part in a ceremonial sword dance in Saudi Arabia during their recent visit to the country.

In other part of his speech, the Leader said, "The tree of poetry in our country has great potential to flourish and great efforts should be made to find new subjects and terms to convey new concepts."

A number of poets recited their latest works at the end of the meeting.

The Leader receives literati and poets every year on the birthday of Imam Hassan (AS), which falls every year on the 15th of Ramadan.

Scholar urges Iran to launch 'Ramadan diplomatic offensive' in Qatar row

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — A professor of global thought and comparative philosophies says he thinks it is "essential" for Iran to launch a "Ramadan diplomatic offensive" to lessen the effects of the blockade on Qatar by Saudi Arabia and some other Persian Gulf Arab states and to "signal to Qatar full humanitarian and diplomatic support".

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Arshin Adib-Moghaddam says "regional states need to learn that they can't secure their national interests in exclusion of each other."

Following is the text of the inter-

view with Adib-Moghaddam, chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies:

■ What are the real reasons behind the decision of some Arab states to cut ties with Qatar? What approach should Iran take in order to protect its national interests?

A: I see the crisis between the Persian Gulf states as a political farce, with major strategic implications for the region in general and Iran in particular. There have been repeated quarrels between Saudi Arabia and Qatar over Al-Jazeera. **->2**

U.S.-led coalition appears to be using white phosphorus in Syria, Iraq

Newly released videos appear to show U.S.-led coalition bombers using white phosphorus-loaded munitions in densely-populated areas in Syria and Iraq.

White phosphorus is an incendiary and toxic chemical substance. The munitions filled with the substance create a thick white cloud when they explode. Upon contact with flesh, the substance can maim and kill by burning to the bone. Human rights groups warn against the use of the substance.

Raqqaq is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS), a group of citizen journalists who document abuses in the Daesh stronghold of Raqqa, posted footage online showing the signature spread of airburst white phosphorus — probably from M825 series 155-millimeter artillery rounds — while exploding over the Syrian city's eastern part.

Similar videos were also published online, appearing to show the use of white phosphorus bombs by the U.S.-led coalition warplanes in the Iraqi city of Mosul as well. Mary Wareham, the advocacy director at Human Rights Watch's arms division, said the organization was trying to determine the veracity of the videos.

U.S. Army Colonel Ryan Dillon, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition, said he would not confirm the use of the munitions but claimed that the US military employed it in "accordance with the law of armed conflict" and that white phosphorus rounds were "used for screening, obscuring, and marking in a way that fully considers the possible incidental effects on civilians and civilian structures." "The coalition takes all reasonable precautions to minimize the risk of incidental injury to non-combatants and damage to civilian structures," he claimed.

Last month, the Pentagon posted photographs taken in March of U.S. Marines using white phosphorus munitions in Syria.

The U.S. and its allies have been bombarding what they say are ISIL (Daesh) positions inside Syria and Iraq since 2014. The coalition has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of eliminating Daesh.

(Source: Press TV)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Six terror suspects arrested in Iran's Kordestan

POLITICS TEHRAN — Six terror suspects affiliated with the perpetrators of the June 7 terrorist attacks in the capital Tehran have been arrested in the western province of Kordestan, the provincial prosecutor told IRNA on Sunday.

Ali Akbar Garousi said some other terror suspects have also been identified and are expected to be arrested soon.

Two terrorist attacks on the late Imam Khomeini's mausoleum and Iran's Majlis left 17 dead and 54 wounded.



Iranian warships move toward Oman

POLITICS TEHRAN — Two Iranian warships set sail for Oman and the high seas on Sunday.

The 47th flotilla of Iranian warships, comprised of Alborz destroyer and Bushehr logistic vessel, embarked on the voyage on Sunday afternoon, Press TV reported.

They left southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas for Oman and then for the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.



Iran's parliament vows 'serious' response to U.S. Senate bill

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's parliament is to deliver a "serious" and "clear" response to the U.S. Senate which voted on June 7 to advance a bill that would impose new sanctions on Iran, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani announced on Sunday.

Larijani ordered the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee to "immediately" draw up a counter plan and submit it to the legislature, ILNA reported.



Nothing remaining of Daesh team in Iran: intelligence minister

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's minister of intelligence told the Majlis on Sunday that a terrorist team affiliated with Daesh which carried out two attacks in Tehran last Wednesday has been completely wiped out.

"No remnant of the Daesh team has been left in the country," Mahmoud Alavi said, according to MP Akbar Ranjbarzadeh who was briefing Tasnim of Alavi's session with lawmakers.

Ranjbarzadeh quoted Alavi as having said the team included Iranian operatives who had been trained by Daesh abroad.



Larijani in favor of amending council election law

POLITICS TEHRAN — Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani favors amending the council election law, MP Mohammad Mahmoudi Shahneshin said on Sunday.

Shahneshin, who served as head of the council election monitoring body in the Majlis this year, said an amendment is being prepared and will go to the Majlis floor in the near future, ICANA reported.

The lawmaker also said that efforts are being made to create a permanent secretariat to oversee council elections.



Majlis Social Committee chairman elected

POLITICS TEHRAN — The members of the Social Committee of the Majlis on Sunday elected Abdolreza Azizi as the head of the committee.

He garnered 11 votes to come first, while Mohammad Reza Badamchi and Masoud Rezaee became first and second deputies with 9 and 8 votes respectively, Fars reported.

Also, Zahra Saei received 13 votes to become the committee's spokeswoman. Ruhollah Babaei was elected as the committee's first secretary with 11 votes, while Nahid Tajeddin became second secretary with 9 votes.

Iran says has killed mastermind of Tehran terror attacks

POLITICS TEHRAN — Just three days after a deadly assault in the capital Tehran, Iran said its security forces killed on Saturday the mastermind of the attacks outside Iran, the intelligence minister said in a live program.

"The mastermind and main commander of terrorist attacks on the Majlis and mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini was killed today by the security forces," Mahmoud Alavi said.

"The main commander was in border areas, but exited the country after the terrorists were killed (in Tehran)," Alavi added.

"He was killed in collaboration with other intelligence services," Alavi further explained.

Alavi gave no details on "other intelligence services" and where the mastermind was killed.

The attacks on Iran's parliament and the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's founder, left 17 people dead and 56 injured, causing the country to ratchet up security measures all across the country.

The Islamic State, also called Daesh, took credit for the suicide bombings and gun attacks, the first such attack on



Iranian Intelligence Minister says "The mastermind and main commander of terrorist attacks on the parliament and mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini was killed today by the security forces."

Iranian soil by the group. All five attackers were killed.

Following the raids, the terrorist group

released a video through its Amaq news agency, showing the Tehran terror attack from inside the Iranian parliament building.

Back in April, the group put out a 36-minute video in Persian language, threatening to attack Iran.

The footage also condemned the Islamic Republic as an un-Islamic establishment modeled on western-styled governance.

On Friday, intelligence authorities announced the arrest of 41 suspects in connection with the Tehran attacks in their hideouts across the country.

Alavi said that during the last month the Intelligence Ministry had identified and crushed "a terrorist team" almost every day but had not publicized it to avoid spreading fear among the public.

Also, officials said more suspects have been arrested around Tehran, and the car the attackers had used on Wednesday has been discovered in the city center.

Over the past two years, security forces have thwarted upwards of 100 terrorist plots, according to Alavi.

In June 2016, Iran said it has thwarted what it described as "one of the biggest plots" by terror groups targeting Tehran and other major Iranian cities.

Iran has been helping the governments in neighboring Iraq and Syria in fight against Daesh, which considers Shiites to be apostates.

Top Austrian, Iranian officials hold talks, push for closer ties

POLITICS TEHRAN — Austrian Finance Minister Hans Jorg Schelling and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held talks in Tehran on Sunday as the sides expressed interest to expand ties.

Zarif said Iran has established stronger banking ties with Austria in comparison to other European countries.

There have been good advances in relations between the two countries especially after the historic agreement over the Iranian nuclear program, Zarif explained.

The nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, was brokered

in Vienna, the Austrian capital, on July 14, 2015 between Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany and the European Union. The landmark deal, which entails the termination of economic and financial sanctions against Iran in return for a curb on Tehran's nuclear work, went into effect in January 2016.

■ **'Collective cooperation' needed to fight terrorism**

Elsewhere, Iran's chief diplomat said Takfiri terrorism is a threat against all countries in the Middle East region, renewing Tehran's call that a "collective cooperation" is required to counter the scourge of terrorism.

For his part, Schelling expressed regret over

Wednesday's terrorist attacks in Tehran and said that terrorism is source of concern for the entire world.

In two simultaneous terrorist attacks on the administrative building of Iran's Majlis and the shrine of Imam Khomeini in Tehran, 17 people were killed and 52 injured. Daesh claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The Austrian minister said the extremist groups' actions have nothing to do with religions.

Schelling who had visited Tehran with an accompanying team said that his visit to Iran was aimed at deepening relations, especially in economic area.

During Schelling's visit to Iran Austria allocated a credit line of €1 billion for a major steel production project in southern Iran.

Military chief pledges 'unforgettable lesson' to terrorists after Tehran attack

➔ Other Iranian authorities implicitly rapped Saudi Arabia for the attacks, launched just hours after Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir said Iran must be punished for its interference in the region, what Iran flatly reject.

In a tweet which appeared to refer to the

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

Also, in a statement, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps said Saudi Arabia was behind the attacks.

"This terrorist attack happened only a week after the meeting between the U.S. president (Donald Trump) and the (Saudi) backward leaders who support terrorists. The fact that Islamic State has claimed responsibility proves that they were involved in the brutal attack," read

the statement.

"Let there be no doubt that we will take revenge for today's attacks in Tehran, on terrorists, their affiliates and their supporters," promised Brigadier General Hossein Salami, the deputy head of the IRGC.

Scholar urges Iran to launch 'Ramadan diplomatic offensive' in Qatar row

Immensely successful Qatar has aroused the enmity of Saudi Arabia like a 'jealous diva', Arshin Adib-Moghaddam says

➔ now one of the most successful news networks in the world (something that Press TV never managed to replicate). After the Arab Spring, Qatar and Saudi Arabia fell out over the support of Qatar to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the generous airtime that Al-Jazeera gave to the movements for democracy all over the Arab world. Obviously, Saudi Arabia has also been critical about Iran's relations with Qatar, but the real question is why Qatar is singled out and not Oman which has even closer ties to Iran? One of the reasons is the competition of the two royal families. Qatar is immensely successful. In repeated trips to the country, I have witnessed the success in terms of culture, education and business. Qatar acts like a huge contemporary beit al-hikmah for many Arab and regional intellectuals. It boasts a huge academic infrastructure which provides a deep, scholarly informed source of knowledge that Qataris can tap into. All of these features have allowed Qatar to considerably punch above its weight. The Saudis have none of these achievements and there is a good deal of envy about the influence that Qatar has on a global scale. Saudi Arabia acts like a jealous diva, that is left behind by history. In Yemen, in Syria, in Lebanon and in Iraq, Saudi Arabia is entirely marginal to mainstream politics. In Egypt the country is supporting a military autocracy that Egyptians rejected during the Arab Spring. The people of the region have proved repeatedly that the new yardstick for politics is democracy, pluralism, human rights and social equality. Any state that does not adhere to those standards will be washed away by the currents of history. I have discussed this in my "On the Arab revolts and the Iranian revolution" which was published by Bloomsbury a couple of years ago. The book sets out the mechanisms of power and resistance with reference to the recent events in the region.

Moreover, I just came back from giving a policy speech at the 2017 Doha Forum where I set out a vision for peace in the Persian Gulf. There was real

"In Yemen, in Syria, in Lebanon and in Iraq, Saudi Arabia is entirely marginal to mainstream politics."



"The people of the region have proved repeatedly that the new yardstick for politics is democracy, pluralism, human rights and social equality. Any state that does not adhere to those standards will be washed away by the currents of history."

concern and suspicion towards Iranian designs for the region, some of it mixed with paranoia, which, nonetheless, need to be addressed through diplomatic means.

The Saudi decision to boycott Qatar was precipitated by the vote of confidence given to King Salman by Donald Trump whose administration is geopolitically incompetent, as I have mentioned several times in the global media. It is framed by a policy of bullying and a neo-imperial language that is meant to inflate the importance of Trump as an important global actor at a time when he may be impeached in the United States because of alleged Russian meddling in Trump's favour during the election. I am in no doubt that history will judge him even worse than George W. Bush who has almost entirely vanished from the public eye for a reason. Trump is already seen as the most illiterate

and damaging President in the history of the United States. Everyone who knows me is aware that I don't usually use such explicit language when it comes to world events. But the fact is that the Trump administration is on the wrong side of history. The biggest irony in this farce is that the "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" is spearheading a boycott of a fellow Muslim nation during Ramadan. This decision to boycott Qatar questions the ability of the Saudi royal family to act as a force for peace amongst Muslim nations which is linked to their sovereignty over Mecca and Medina. Saudi Arabia has the duty to forge closer Muslim relations. This is linked to their claim to manage the haj for the ummah.

I think it is essential for Iran to launch a "Ramadan diplomatic offensive" to mitigate the repercussions of the conflict and to signal to Qatar full humanitarian and diplomatic support. In particular, Iran needs to liaise closer with Turkey which administers an important military base in Qatar. At the same time, I have always argued for close trans-Gulf relations that include Saudi Arabia. As I mentioned in my speech in Doha: In the 1970s, Iran and Saudi Arabia followed a modus vivendi in their relations, despite of Iran's interventions in the Arab world, the Shah's pro-Israeli policies, his support of Kurdish separatists in Northern Iraq with the help of the CIA and the Mossad, his attempt to annex Bahrain and his antagonism towards Nassir's Egypt. Regional states need to learn that they can't secure their national interests in exclusion of each other. Even Saudi Arabia and Iran share a common fate, if they want it or not. They are conjoined by geography, culture and religion. Any instability in one country will have detrimental effects on the other. We need ideas for peace, strategies of cooperation, theories of reconciliation. What about a Muslim Peace Studies Institute with a joint headquarter in Doha and Kish, for instance? ➔13

"Trump is already seen as the most illiterate and damaging President in the history of the United States."

Macron aims to consolidate power as France elects parliament

French voters cast their ballots on Sunday in the first round of a parliamentary election expected to give centrist President Emmanuel Macron the strong majority needed to carry out the far-reaching economic and social reforms he promises.

The vote to elect the lower house's 577 members comes a month after Macron, a 39-year-old former banker with little political experience, defied the odds to win the presidency of the euro zone's second-largest economy.

If, as polls project, Macron and his fledgling party win a commanding majority in next week's second round, it will be another blow for the mainstream parties on the right and left which failed to get a candidate into the presidential run-off.

"We want a big majority to be able to act and transform France over the next five years," Mounir Mahjoubi, a tech entrepreneur running under Macron's Republic On The Move (LREM) banner told Reuters as he canvassed support in his northern Paris constituency ahead of the vote.

Opinion polls forecast LREM and its center-right Modem allies will win at least 30 percent of votes on Sunday.

The conservative The Republicans party and its allies trail with about 20 percent, ahead of the far-right National Front on about 17 percent.

Such an outcome would transform into a landslide majority in the second round, the opinion polls show.

"I think voters are pretty mobilized behind LREM," said Georges Garion, a 64-year-old company manager, before voting began in Paris. "We're seeing a kind of majority cohesion, it's democracy at work."

While predicting the outcome can be tricky with 7,882 candidates vying for parliament's seats, even LREM's rivals have been saying they expect Macron to secure a majority.

Their strategy has been to urge voters to make sure the opposition will be big enough to have some clout in parliament. "We shouldn't have a monopolistic party," former prime minister Bernard



Cazeneuve, a Socialist, told Reuters.

Macron overhaul

The survival of the Socialist Party, which ruled France for the past five years but is forecast to get just 15 to 30 seats, is at stake, as is the unity of The Republicans. Some key figures from both parties have rallied behind Macron.

The National Front, reeling from a worse than expected score for chief Marine Le Pen in the presidential election, could miss its target to get enough lawmakers to form a parliamentary group. It is expected though to improve on the two deputies it had in the previous legislature.

In a country with unemployment hovering near 10 percent and at risk of breaking its public deficit commitments, Macron was elected president in May

on pledges to overhaul labor rules to make hiring and firing easier, cut corporate tax and invest billions in areas including job training and renewable energy.

Macron also promised to clean up French politics after a string of scandals - a vow already tested by conflict of interest allegations against his former campaign chief Richard Ferrand, as well as reports that centrist ally Francois Bayrou's MoDem party used EU cash to fund Paris staff jobs.

"I thought about voting for Macron but I didn't," said pensioner Jacqueline Laurent after casting her ballot in the eastern town of Annecy, close to the Swiss border.

"With Ferrand and Bayrou we could see them falling back into the same old

ways, so that was that. I changed my mind."

Polling stations close at 1800 (1600 GMT) in smaller cities and two hours later in Paris and other big cities. Results will come in slowly, alongside pollsters' estimates of the results.

Very few lawmakers are expected to be elected directly in the first round. To win, a candidate needs more than half of the votes cast and they must account for at least a quarter of the registered voters.

With many fresh faces among the candidates, a political landscape divided among many forces from the far-left to the far-right, and abstention predicted to be at over 40 percent, that is unlikely to happen in many constituencies.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S., Turkey discuss Qatar row, Syria on phone call Saudi 'blocking' of Qatari pilgrims in Mecca condemned

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu discussed developments in Syria and in the row between Qatar and its fellow Arab states on a phone call, Turkish foreign ministry sources said.

The call, held at Tillerson's request, came after Tillerson on Friday urged Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states to ease their blockade of Qatar, saying it was causing unintended humanitarian consequences and affecting the U.S.-led fight against ISIL.

No further details of the call were immediately available.

Referring to Tillerson's comments on the blockade, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said in a speech at a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner in Istanbul: "I say it should be lifted completely."

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt severed relations with Qatar on Monday, accusing it of supporting militants and their adversary Iran - allegations Qatar says are baseless. Several countries followed suit.

Erdogan vowed to keep supporting Qatar after his rapid approval of legislation on deploying Turkish troops there. On Saturday, he told Bahrain's foreign minister that the dispute should be resolved by the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Erdogan on Thursday also approved an accord between Turkey and Qatar on military training cooperation. Both bills were drawn up before the dispute between Qatar and others erupted. Turkey has also pledged to provide food and water supplies to Qatar.

Turkey has maintained good relations with Qatar as well as several of its Persian Gulf Arab neighbors. Turkey and Qatar have both provided support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and backed rebels fighting to overthrow Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Turkey and fellow NATO member the United States have also been at loggerheads regarding U.S. support



the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia in the fight against ISIL in Syria. Turkey views the YPG as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged a three-decade-long insurgency on its soil.

The United States said last week it had started supplying arms to the YPG for an assault on the Syrian town of Raqqa, deepening Turkey's anger. The YPG's role in the Raqqa campaign has strained ties between the United States and Turkey, which fears growing Kurdish ascendancy along its border.

Persian Gulf nations may let some Qataris stay amid diplomatic rift

Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates signaled Sunday they may allow some Qataris to stay in their countries amid a diplomatic rift with the Persian Gulf Arab nation.

Qatar meanwhile pledged those nations' citizens will have "complete freedom" to stay in the energy-rich country.

The three Persian Gulf nations cut ties to Qatar on June 5 over its alleged support of militants and ties to Iran and ordered all Qataris out within 14 days, while calling their own citizens back. That's created chaos across the Sunni Persian Gulf nations, whose citizens regularly intermarry and conduct

business across countries sharing long historic and cultural bonds.

Early Sunday, the three countries all issued statements urging mixed nationality families to call their respective interior ministries, which would take into consideration the "humanitarian circumstances" of their situation.

For its part, Qatar issued an overnight statement saying residents living in the country from nations that severed ties would have "complete freedom" to stay despite the "hostile and tendentious campaigns" now targeting it.

"The state of Qatar, in accordance to its firm beliefs and principles, works on avoiding political conflicts with states and governments when dealing with their people," the ministry said. "Those residents have the complete freedom in staying in the state of Qatar in accordance with the laws and regulations adopted by the state."

Condemnation

Meanwhile, Saudi authorities have prevented Qatari nationals from entering the Grand Mosque in Mecca, marking a sharp escalation in the Persian Gulf diplomatic crisis, Doha-based Al Sharq newspaper has reported.

Qatar's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) received complaints from Qatari citizens that pil-

grims from Qatar were barred from entering the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, the paper said on Saturday.

Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri, the NHRC head, called the incident a flagrant violation of the right to practice religious rites as permitted by human rights conventions, the paper said.

The NHRC denounced the incident, considering the step a violation of the right to perform religious rituals guaranteed by human rights conventions, Al Sharq added.

It should be noted that Saudi authorities do not normally question people entering the Grand Mosque on their ethnicity or sectarian affiliation.

The claims come a few days after the UAE and Bahrain criminalized "sympathy" for Qatar on social media.

The UAE said offenders would be punished with a jail term of up to 15 years, and a \$136,000 fine. Bahrain declared it punishable by imprisonment of up to five years.

Since the diplomatic row erupted, slogans against and in support of Qatar have been among the top topics discussed on Twitter in Arabic, which is a hugely popular medium of expression in the Arab world, particularly in Saudi Arabia.

Protesters hold rally outside Saudi embassy in Ankara

Meanwhile, Protesters have rallied in front of the Saudi embassy in Ankara to denounce the kingdom's sudden rupture of diplomatic relations with Qatar.

The protesters on Saturday held up banners depicting U.S. President Donald Trump and leaders of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, in which they were seen placing their hands on a globe during a ceremony last month.

The banners referred to the controversial opening of the so-called Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology in Riyadh during Trump's visit which culminated in the U.S. signing of a \$110 billion of arms deal with Saudi Arabia.

(Source: agencies)

Qatari FM: For Arabs, Hamas is a resistance movement

The Arab nations view Hamas as a "legitimate resistance movement" and not a "terrorist organization as viewed by the U.S.," Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani has said.

In an interview with Russia Today during a visit he paid to Moscow, the Qatari foreign minister rejected accusations that Qatar was supporting Hamas.

"The U.S. views Hamas as a terror organization. But to the rest of the Arab nations, it is a legitimate resistance movement. We do not support Hamas, we support the Palestinian people," he said.

Hamas is the Palestinian group that has governed Gaza since 2007. The small strip of land, home to nearly two million Palestinians, has been under a crippling Israeli blockade for a decade.

On Wednesday, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir said Qatar must end its support for Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood before ties with other Arab Persian Gulf states could be restored.

Jubeir added that Qatar was undermining the Palestinian Authority and Egypt in its support of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.

"We don't think this is good. Qatar has to stop these policies so that it can contribute to stability in the Middle East," he said.

Qatar's foreign minister, however, added that the country's stance was in line with other Persian Gulf states.

"Hamas' presence in Qatar doesn't mean there's support for Hamas in Qatar which cooperates with the Palestinian Authority. Hamas' presence is a political representation of the Hamas movement."

Qatar's foreign minister told Al Jazeera on Thursday that the presence of Hamas' leaders in Qatar's capital Doha was "coordinated with the U.S." and aimed at facilitating Palestinian unity.

"Hamas' presence [in Doha] is coordinated with the U.S. and the countries in the region, and it's part of our effort to mediate between the Palestinian factions to reach reconciliation."

Hamas, meanwhile, said it was "shocked" by Saudi Arabia's call on Qatar to stop supporting the group.

Jubeir's remarks "constitute a shock for our Palestinian people and the Arab and Islamic nations", according to a Hamas statement released on Wednesday.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed relations with Qatar on Monday, accusing it of supporting "extremists" and Iran - charges Qatar calls "baseless."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Trump state visit to Britain delayed over protest fears

U.S. President Donald Trump's planned state visit to Britain has been postponed after he told Prime Minister Theresa May in a phone conversation he did not want to come until the public supported his visit.

Citing an unnamed adviser at May's Downing Street office who was in the room at the time, the Guardian reported on its website that the conversation between the two leaders took place in recent weeks.

Downing Street spokesmen were not immediately available to comment.

(Source: Guardian)

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi freed from prison in Zintan

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of slain Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, has been released from prison, according to fighters who control the facility.

A statement from the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Battalion, a militia which controls Zintan, a mountainous region southwest of the capital Tripoli, said Saif al-Islam was released late on Saturday.

"The armed group has issued a statement on its Facebook page saying that it has recently released Saif al-Islam Gaddafi upon request from the House of Representatives (HoR), the parliament that is based in the eastern city of Tobruk," Al Jazeera's Mahmoud Abdelwahed, reporting from the capital, Tripoli, said.

Since Gaddafi's four-decade rule ended in 2011, Libya has struggled to establish basic institutions and rule of law.

The Tobruk-based HoR is one of the three rival administrations in Libya - the others being the UN-backed government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli, which has struggled to exert its authority, and the self-declared National Salvation Government, also in the capital.

HoR, which does not recognize the other two governments' leadership, is backed by renegade General Khalifa Haftar.

"We understand that a couple of days ago, a deputy justice minister of the government affiliated to the Tobruk-based parliament visited Saif al-Islam Gaddafi in the jail in Zintan and demanded his immediate release," said Abdelwahed.

"There has been no official comment from the GNA, and the news of the release of Saif al-Islam Gaddafi might add more fuel to the fire, [worsening] the chaotic political and security situation in the country," he added.

The most prominent of Gaddafi's sons, Saif al-Islam, 44, was captured in Zintan in November 2011 as he was fleeing to neighboring Niger after opposition fighters seized Tripoli.

He was sentenced to death in July 2015 by a court in Tripoli in a mass trial of former Gaddafi government officials.

He is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The commander of the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Battalion, Ajmi al-Atiri, was set to release a video statement explaining the details of the release.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Copper cathode output exceeds 26,000 tons in 2 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's copper cathode output has exceeded 26,000 tons during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 21, 2017), IRNA reported on Sunday.

Based on the report, the figure fell near 12 percent compared to the same period last year.

Iran has put the annual production of 450,000 tons of copper cathode on the agenda by the end of its outlook plan for the calendar year of 1404 (ends on March 20, 2026).

Qatar banks can survive Persian Gulf, foreign funds withdrawal, S&P says

Qatari banks are strong enough to survive the pullout of all Persian Gulf money and then some, according to S&P Global Ratings.

SPGR ran two hypothetical scenarios of capital flight, and concluded that Qatar's lenders could survive the withdrawal of all Persian Gulf deposits plus a quarter of the remaining foreign funds the banks keep.



Deposits and other funding sources from PGCC countries represent about 8 percent of total liabilities of Qatari lenders or \$20 billion, S&P said after examining the 2016 positions of the four biggest banks in Qatar. In the worst case, only two unidentified lenders would have to dip into their investment securities portfolio, it concluded.

"We believe the recent developments might result in an outflow of external funding for Qatari banks over the next few months, depending on how the situation evolves," S&P Global Ratings said. In both scenarios, "the results show the rated Qatari banks to be in a decent position, on a stand-alone basis, to face a significant reduction of external funding."

Capital flight has been a looming potential danger since Saudi Arabia and its allies began tightening the noose on Qatar on June 5. The kingdom, along with the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain, cut diplomatic relations and imposed a land, sea and air blockade. Qatar, the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas, denies the charges and says the Saudis aspire to dominate the region.

So far there have been no orders to withdraw money from Qatari banks, but the Saudi central bank has ordered banks not to increase their exposure to Qatari clients. It has also told banks licensed in the kingdom not to process payments denominated in Qatari riyals, people familiar with the matter said last week.

The U.A.E.'s central bank asked local lenders to do enhanced customer due diligence for any accounts they hold in six Qatari banks, state-run WAM news agency reported Sunday.

Despite the resilience that S&P's tests showed, "the situation remains very fluid" and could evolve in different directions, in part depending on how long the spat lasts and whether other countries join the sanctions, it said.

Qatar banks' net external debt totaled about \$50 billion at the end of April, the company said. The average tenor of these funds is "relatively short," expiring in less than one year, with a "significant portion coming from Europe and Asia," it said.

S&P last week lowered Qatar's long-term rating by one level to AA-, the fourth-highest investment grade, and put it on negative watch. Qatari stocks have dropped 5.3 percent since June 5, and the index was down 2.25 percent as of 11:41 a.m. in Doha.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Airbus may look beyond UK unless Brexit demands met

Airbus could move production of new aircraft models out of Britain if the European plane-maker's "non-negotiable" demands over the free movement of people and trade tariffs are not delivered in upcoming Brexit talks, the Sunday Times reported.

Britain is due to begin negotiations with the rest of the European Union about the terms of its departure in nine days time, despite Prime Minister Theresa May being weakened by losing her majority in Thursday's election.

Fabrice Bregier, chief operating officer of Airbus, said a deal must allow its staff from all over the world to enter Britain easily, ensure that parts are exempt from trade tariffs and ensure certain regulatory standards are maintained.

Otherwise, he said, Britain would risk losing Airbus production in the future. "For new productions, it's very easy to have a new plant somewhere in the world. We would have plenty of offers to do that," Bregier said, according to the newspaper.

"We want to stay in the UK — provided the conditions to work in an integrated organization are met."

May might be forced to reassess her Brexit priorities after being weakened by the election. She has previously said she wants Britain to withdraw from Europe's custom union as well as its single market. She has also said no deal would be better than a bad deal, implying she could accept tariffs on imports and exports.

Airbus Chief Executive Tom Enders said on Thursday that a "hard Brexit" where trade tariffs between the UK and European Union were imposed could potentially impact the competitiveness of the firm's activities in Britain.

Airbus employs over 10,000 people across two plants in Britain, according to the company's website.

(Source: New York Times)

Tehran, Vienna seek deeper economic ties

Austria to open €1b credit line for Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Finance Minister Ali Tayyebnia and Industry Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh in separate meetings with Austria's Federal Minister of Finance Hans Jörg Schelling on Saturday and Sunday sought avenues for increasing economic and banking ties between the two countries.

During his meeting with Tayyebnia at the place of Iran's Ministry of Finance on Saturday evening, Schelling announced that Austria's Oberbank will grant €1 billion for financing investment projects in Iran, IRNA reported.

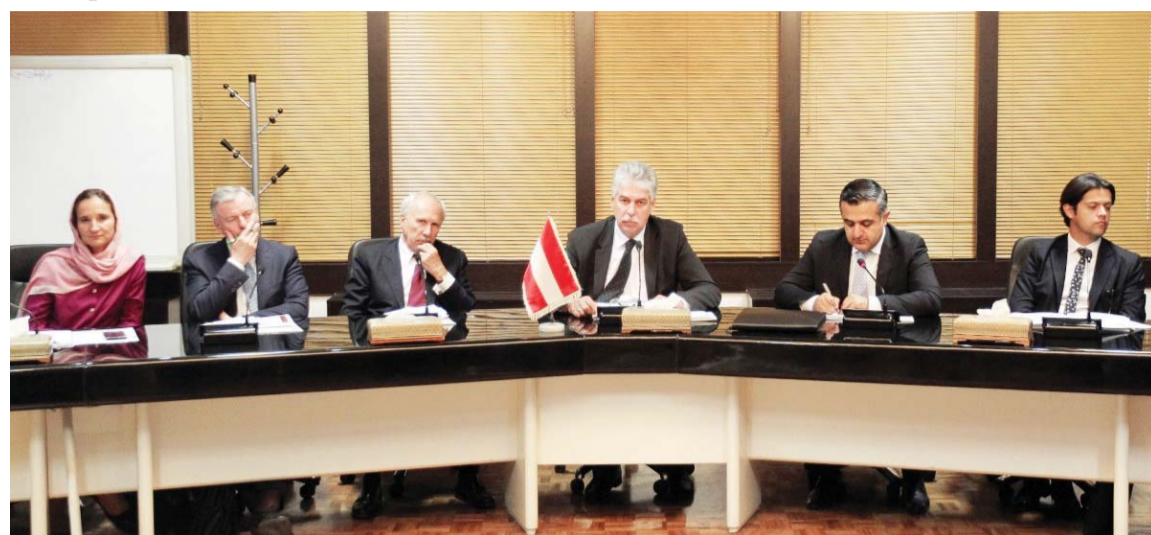
The two sides underscored the vitality of improving banking ties and in particular brokerage relations.

The two ministers also accorded on signing a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) in future as well as developing customs cooperation under EU regulations.

After the held meeting, as Tasnim news agency reported, the Governor of Central Bank of Austria (Oesterreichische Nationalbank) Ewald Nowotny told reporters in a news conference that after the visit paid by the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) to Austria, last year, the two countries have been enjoying warm mutual banking ties.

He added that an account was opened in Oesterreichische Nationalbank for Iran's CBI last year and as agreed during the Saturday meeting between the two ministers an Austrian bank will resume operation in Iran in near future.

Iran-Austria trade currently stands at \$400 million and the figure is planned to reach \$5 billion in future, Mehr news agency quoted Tayyebnia as saying.



"There is a long way to hit the set target, but regarding the available capacities, I believe that the trade volume will reach \$5 billion within three next years," he added.

In a Sunday meeting between Schelling and Nematzadeh at the place of Iran's Ministry of Industry, both ministers underlined the importance of enhancing mutual economic ties, Shata news agency reported.

Expressing content about the growth of economic partnership between the two sides as of implementation

of Iran's nuclear deal in January 2016, Nematzadeh said that despite existing impediments on the way of boosting ties, we hope that we can improve our common ties in various fields such as scientific, technical, trade, and investment.

The Austrian minister, for his turn, referred to the mutual cooperation background between Iran and Austria and voiced tendency for resuming all-out ties. He also highlighted the significance of forming a joint economic committee between the two sides.

Iran exports food products to Doha amid Qatar blockade

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran has sent five cargoes of food products to Qatar in recent days and one more will be sent soon, Tasnim reported on Sunday.

According to Iran Air spokesman Shahrokh Nooshabadi the cargos each weighing 90 tons contained perishable products.

"We will continue sending such cargos while there is still request from the Qatari side," the official said.

Three ships loaded with 350 tons of fruit and vegetables were also set to leave an Iranian port for Qatar, the Tasnim news agency quoted a local of-

ficial as saying. The port of Dayyer is Iran's closest port to Qatar.

In the biggest diplomatic crisis in the region in years, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, plus Egypt and Yemen, last Monday announced they were cutting all ties with Qatar, accusing it of supporting extremism.

The Islamic republic has also opened its airspace to about 100 more Qatari flights a day, after Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates banned Qatari planes from their airspace.

The new flights have increased Iranian air traffic by 17 percent.

Tehran, Damascus discuss broadening banking ties

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and his Syrian counterpart and his accompanying delegation discussed expansion of bilateral banking ties in Tehran on Sunday, Mehr news agency reported.

Underscoring that common banking ties between Iran and Syria should be developed via using national currencies, CBI governor Valiollah Seif said that barriers on the way to boost banking ties have been recognized and will be removed in near future.

The Syrian bank governor Duraid Durgham, for his part, said that regard-



ing the held joint meeting between banking officials of the two countries and the current relations between Iran and Syria, common banking partnership should be improved.

He called for both countries' banks to support economic projects in each of the countries.

Foreign investment in Iran rose 63% in 2016: UNCTAD

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Attracting \$3.372 billion worth of foreign investment in 2016, Iran has registered a 63 percent rise in this regard, IRNA reported on Sunday.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)'s latest report called World Investment Report 2017, Iran

has been among successful countries in terms of signing investment agreements in 2016.

The report also said Iran's highest rate of foreign investment attraction goes back to 2012 when the country recorded \$4.662 billion of foreign investment. The figure though fell significantly in the next few years due to the sanctions imposed

on the country's economy.

In 2015, the total value of foreign investment in the country stood at \$2.05 billion, the lowest rate in the last six years.

Based on the report, signing a total of 37 international investment agreements (IIA) in 2016, Iran ranked third among the world's top economies in terms of

the number of signed IIAs.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body.

UNCTAD is the principal organ of the United Nations General Assembly dealing with trade, investment, and development issues.



ONE-STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to **purchase 60,000 M/Ts 10 pct M/L** raw cane sugar, through single stage international tender.

All of qualified companies and suppliers that are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from Thursday June 13, 2017 until Saturday July 01, 2017 from the secretary of Tenders Committee, located on the 4th Floor, No. 12, Jahad Square, Tehran, Iran along with an official letter of introduction.

The bid participants are required to submit their stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest on Tuesday August 01, 2017 (during working hours) to the secretary of Tenders Committee located on the 4th Floor. Meanwhile, the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on Wednesday, dated August 02, 2017 at 11:00 AM, with the presence of bidder's representatives in our Purchasing Committee (9th Floor, No. 12, Jahad Square, Tehran, Iran).

Bid Bond: The bid bond worth **EUR 481,490** in cash or bank guarantee with three months validity and extendible for another three months.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, YOU MAY REFER TO OUR WEBSITE: WWW.GTC-PORTAL.COM OR CONTACT US BY PHONE NO. **0098 21 88957477** (Foreign Trade Department)



ONE-STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to **purchase 30,000 M/Ts 10 pct M/L** crude degummed soybean oil, through single stage international tender.

All of qualified companies and suppliers that are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from Thursday June 13, 2017 until Saturday July 01, 2017 from the secretary of Tenders Committee, located on the 4th Floor, No. 12, Jahad Square, Tehran, Iran along with an official letter of introduction.

The bid participants are required to submit their stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest on Tuesday August 01, 2017 (during working hours) to the secretary of Tenders Committee located on the 4th Floor. Meanwhile, the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on Wednesday, dated August 02, 2017 at 9:00 AM, with the presence of bidder's representatives in our Purchasing Committee (9th Floor, No. 12, Jahad Square, Tehran, Iran).

Bid Bond: The bid bond worth **EUR 447,750** in cash or bank guarantee with three months validity and extendible for another three months.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, YOU MAY REFER TO OUR WEBSITE: WWW.GTC-PORTAL.COM OR CONTACT US BY PHONE NO. **0098 21 88957477** (Foreign Trade Department)

Russia sees oil market balancing in first quarter as prices slip

A deal among oil-producing countries to curb production and balance an over-supplied market will achieve its objective in the first quarter of next year, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said, after prices slipped on news of a build-up in U.S. inventories.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and other crude producers including Russia agreed on May 25 to extend the deal, which they reached last year, until the end of the first quarter. Prices slumped on the news that they would not cut any deeper and fell further on June 7 as U.S. stockpiles unexpectedly grew. Benchmark Brent crude closed at \$48.15 a barrel on Friday.

The agreement is working and crude inventories are decreasingly gradually at a global level, Novak said Sunday in Astana, a day after meeting his Saudi counterpart Khalid Al-Falih. Demand will recover in the first quarter, reducing stockpiles, and Russia is committed to doing everything to balance the market, he said.

OPEC's biggest producer Saudi Arabia also weighed in on Saturday, as Al-Falih said the market would stabilize in the next few months. There is no need for producers to cut more than they're doing already, Al-Falih said, according to the Interfax news agency.

(Source: Bloomberg)



Saudi's Falih sees no need to alter oil-cuts deal, Interfax says

Saudi Arabia doesn't see any need for changes to the oil-cuts deal agreed on by OPEC and its allies last month in Vienna, Oil Minister Khalid Al-Falih said, according to Interfax.

Additional production curbs aren't necessary, Al-Falih said Saturday in Astana, Kazakhstan, according to the news service. The oil market will stabilize in the next few months, he said.

Although members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners agreed May 25 to extend their oil-cuts agreement for nine months, crude prices have since slid as rising supplies show the difficulty in clearing the global glut. Prices have continued to slip even amid turmoil in the Middle East, the world's largest producing region.



The recent price decline doesn't warrant a reaction, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said Saturday, according to Interfax. There's no need for an extraordinary OPEC/non-OPEC meeting, he insisted after meeting with Al-Falih and his Kazakh counterpart Kanat Bozumbayev in Astana, according to the news service.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Russia, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan committed to OPEC deal

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said Saturday he had discussed the current situation on the oil market during the meeting with his counterparts from Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan.

As part of the meeting, Novak, Khalid Falih and Kanat Bozumbayev reiterated their commitment to the oil production cuts deal of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC states.

"We have discussed the current situation, we have once again confirmed the commitment... to the agreement. We will work together on the market regulation," Novak told journalists.

There is no need for reacting on any events occurring around OPEC countries, since the oil output cut deal was being implemented in line with



the plan, Novak added.

In November 2016, the OPEC member states signed an agreement in Vienna limiting oil production by 1.2 million barrels per day. On December 10, 11 non-OPEC countries decided to jointly cut oil output by 558,000 barrels per day, with Russia cutting its output by 300,000 barrels per day for six months from January 2017.

(Source: Sputnik)

Oil pipelines to be inspected by robots

The robots are coming to oil and gas. This message is something we've been hearing a lot lately, what with autonomous trucks, piloted by Canada's Suncor, to automated drilling rigs, robots that collect seismic survey data, and even self-sufficient, remotely operated entirely submerged oil production platforms. And that list is likely to grow in the future.

Besides all these major robotic applications for the oil and gas industry, there are also robots that can conduct pipeline inspections from the inside. An array of four such robots will later this year be used to inspect a 40-year branch of the Trans-Alaska pipeline system at the Valdez terminal.

The robots were developed by a Russia-based company, Diakont, which says that its pipeline crawlers—Remotely Operated Diagnostic Inspection System or RODIS crawlers—supply highly accurate data and they do it in real time, which helps with timely decision-making. From a single access point, the company says, its robots can examine up to 1,800 feet of pipes with diameters ranging between 8 and 55 inches.

Alaska Dispatch News reporter Alex DeMarban writes that the four robots, all with human names, by the way, will use lasers and a technology similar to ultrasound to check a 350-foot underground pipeline section for signs of corrosion. The pipeline branch feeds crude from the Trans-Alaska pipeline to storage tanks at Valdez.

This is not the first time robots will be used for internal pipeline inspection, replacing the so-called smart pigs, or pipeline inspection gauges, that rely on magnetic sensors to detect corrosion and cracks. However, the smart pigs are quite long and cannot be used to inspect branches off the main pipeline.

DeMarban quotes a spokeswoman for the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. as saying that in the last few years, the likes of Alice, Dee, Fiona, and Gary have been deployed to several underground branches of the Trans-Alaska pipeline that were never before inspected internally because of the impossibility of access for the smart pigs. All the robots need is a clean pipe, flushed with hot water and detergent or diesel fuel.

The robots have retractable legs that allow them to basically circle the diameter of the pipeline, go into vertical sections and turn other corners. They are not wireless, however – they are connected to their operator by a cord via which the data they receive from their surroundings is transmitted. And here's one fun fact from Diakont's U.S. management: the three robots with female names got them because they are a bit smarter than the "male" one. They can crawl through changing diameters mid-pipe, the company's director of pipeline services Brian Carlson told DeMarban.

Diakont says that its robots can be used for all sorts of pipelines, including offshore ones – an application that should have a bright future in light of all the worries around underwater oil and gas pipelines. A robot inspection could quench these worries—albeit temporarily—much better than a company statement full of verbal assurances.

Could all these robots one day combine into an almost completely automated supply chain? It's not impossible. Automated rigs will drill the wells, extraction will also be automatic and so will field maintenance. How soon this will happen, however, is another question.

(Source: oilprice.com)

U.S. aims to dethrone Qatar with LNG war



The total capacity of the U.S.' six under-construction projects is estimated at 57.55 million tons, and when all planned terminals are operational, the total LNG export capacity of the country is expected to exceed 300 million tons.

It is anticipated that the U.S.' targeting of Asian and Latin American markets through its planned projects will displace Qatar from its position as the world's LNG leader.

Currently, Australia is the second largest LNG seller worldwide. The country, which has a total export capacity of 32.8 million tons of LNG, has five terminals under construction and eight planned terminal projects.

The total capacity of the planned investments is 63.8 million tons, and when combined with the current capacity, Australia could surpass Qatar in the mid-term.

Russia, which is the global leading seller of natural gas, sells the most pipelined gas and is also trying to adapt to the dominant LNG trend in energy markets.

The current capacity of Russia's active LNG terminal Sakhalin II amounts to 9.6 million tons. The country makes the most LNG sales to Japan through this terminal. It is also constructing the Yamal LNG terminal with a current capacity of 16.5 million tons, and plans three more LNG terminals, namely Vladivostok (15 million tons), Baltic LNG (10 million tons) and Sakhalin LNG terminal (5 million tons).

The Yamal LNG is expected to be operational by 2018.

While the construction of the China-backed Yamal LNG terminal is ongoing, the combined capacity of the other three projects with Yamal will reach 46.5 million tons in the mid-term.

Russia's Novatek holds a 50.1 percent share in the Yamal LNG project while Total and China's CNPC each hold a 20 percent stake while the Chinese Silk Road Fund has a 9.9 percent share interest.

Due to international sanctions, Iran was unable to realize its previously planned LNG terminal projects, but it now wants to have a share in the LNG market.

Currently, Iran does not have an operational LNG terminal, but previously the country had plans for four LNG terminals. Due to the sanctions, the construction of the Iran LNG terminal was suspended.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zangeneh invited the French giant Total to invest in LNG in late April.

In the meantime, Qatar is pursuing business alliance opportunities with Iran in the natural gas field.

(Source: Daily Sabah)

The U.S. is expected to 'dethrone' Qatar, the biggest global LNG exporter, with its 30 planned LNG terminals and with six more under construction.

According to official figures from the International Gas Union and the International Group of Liquefied Natural Gas Importers, Qatar exported 77 million tons of LNG in 2016.

While sales to the Asian region accounted for more than 60 percent of Qatar's total LNG exports, the country's top export destinations were Japan, South Korea, India, the UK and China. Qatar exported 14.5 million tons of LNG to Japan, 12.3 million to South Korea, 8.8 million to India, 9.3 million to the UK and around 5 million tons to China.

The U.S. appears to be the strongest challenger to Qatar's LNG leadership in the near term, with annual LNG exports in 2015 totaling 330 thousand tons.

The U.S. aims to take a more active role in Asia in the mid-term with plans to invest in LNG terminals, with anticipated completion dates between 2018 and 2024.

The country currently has two active terminals set for LNG exports - the Kenai LNG terminal with a capacity of 1.5 million tons, which in 2016 did not export LNG. The second is the Sabine Pass LNG terminal, which is actively exporting LNG. Exports of around 2.9 million tons of LNG were made through the Sabine Pass in 2016. Further plans are afoot to have additional capacity of 13.5 million tons.

Other LNG terminals under construction are Freeport (15.3 million tons), Cameron (12 million tons), Covepoint (5.25 million tons), Elba Island (2.5 million tons) and Corpus Christi (9 million tons).



N.I.O.C
1396.1079



National Iranian Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First publish/second publish)
one-stage(compressed)

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	SUBJECT OF TENDER	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
5327	186,420,000	3,728,300,000	p/f mi " swaco " centrifuge model:cd500	1487378	Tender No.:PF/05-96/015 Indent No.: 9245351	1

Brief description of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address Pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase some oil well crown block sheave from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender (semi-pressed) upon following terms and conditions:
A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (j) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender documents. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.
B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, 510,000 Rials should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.
Receiving of documents:
Tenderers must obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN
Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and receive tender documents from foreign procurement department in due date will be known as tenderer from tender committee.
C) Delivery of envelopes of bids and call quality evaluating:
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including bank guarantees (A), financial offer(C) and stamped and signed of tender documents (B) along with qualification worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 40 days from last day of document received deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1st Floor, Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN.
Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.
D) Tender Guarantee:
Type of guarantee:
A) Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activities licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to National Iranian Drilling Company.
Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR
Foreign Procurement Dept
National Iranian Drilling Company
تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۳/۲۱ نوبت دوم ۹۶/۳/۲۲

What is fuelling ISIL's wave of Ramadan violence?

By Jason Burke

The end of Ramadan is always eagerly anticipated. This year, for security officials in the Islamic world and the west, it cannot come fast enough.

Even before the start of the Muslim holy month two weeks ago, attacks claimed by Islamic State (ISIL) were bringing death and destruction. On 22 May, a suicide bomber outside a pop concert in Manchester killed 22 people. The bloodiest attack in the UK for 12 years, it marked only the beginning of a wave of violence stretching across half the planet.



A Philippine soldier fighting Isis in the city of Marawi last week.

Since then, gunmen in Egypt have opened fire on a convoy of Coptic Christian pilgrims. In Nigeria, the ISIL affiliate Boko Haram launched an attack on a regional capital in the country's north-east. In the Philippines, the government fought hundreds of gunmen linked to ISIL to regain control of a city. In Baghdad, ISIL terrorists bombed families queuing for ice cream. In Kabul a truck bomb blamed on ISIL killed

150. Three men killed eight people and injured more than 50 in the center of London using a van and knives. Twelve died in a startling attack in Iran. In Australia and in Paris, there have been lone attackers claiming to be ISIL members.

An upsurge of violence

The intensity and scope of this onslaught surprised analysts and officials. Ramadan was favored by ISIL to launch attacks long before the group surged to global prominence. But since the group's capture of swaths of territory in the core of the Middle East and its declaration of a new caliphate in 2014, the holy month has always seen an upsurge of violence.

This year, however, there is an added factor fuelling the strikes, experts say.

"ISIL wants to survive as an organization. It does not want to disappear when it loses territory ... Top of the list of its strengths is external operations, so it needs to keep that going to attract donations, recruits and keep up the brand strength," said Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, a Washington-based analyst.

ISIL has denied that the current wave of attacks in the UK and Europe is linked to the series of military defeats it has suffered in its Middle Eastern strongholds over the last 18 months, saying it will recapture "every inch of territory lost" over the coming years.

The group has lost most of the towns it once held in Iraq and much of the city of Mosul. In Syria, an offensive against its headquarters in the provincial capital of Raqqa is under way.

In the most recent issue of its online magazine, Rumiya (Rome), ISIL said losing territory was "nothing new" and would lead only to "ISIL regrouping ... [and] rekindling the flames of war".

The group has previously said it was forced "into the desert" between 2006 and 2011 but overcame the setback.

Many analysts believe recent victories over the group in Iraq and Syria may not be decisive.

Jean-Pierre Filiu, professor of Middle East studies at Sciences Po in Paris, said any supposed victory might be "pyrrhic" as there was "no credible Arab Sunni partner fighting alongside Kurdish and Shia forces which could control the ground with the support of local communities once it is taken".

Total defeat

"ISIL is very far from total defeat ... Only two-thirds of Mosul is liberated. The battle for Raqqa will be long and dirty. And even afterwards it is a delusion that ISIL will be eliminated," Filiu said.

Many experts foresee ISIL retaining scattered bases in Iraq and Syria from which it could launch – or at least organize and inspire – further terrorist attacks on the west, as well as violence across the Islamic world.

"The losses would limit capacity, but [terrorist planners] don't need to control the territory, they just need a safe haven and there is no shortage of places in the world where they can find them," said Gartenstein-Ross.

One powerful dynamic is the continuing rivalry with al-Qaida, the veteran group responsible for the 9/11 attacks. The recent bombing in Iran was motivated by sectarian hatred but also by a desire to further distinguish ISIL from al-Qaida, which has never attacked the Shia-majority state.

Al-Qaida has consolidated a powerful presence in the Sahel, Yemen and Syria in recent years and recently called for so-called "lone wolf" attacks in the west. Its affiliate in Somalia has launched a series of attacks on local security forces in recent weeks.

ISIL devoted much of the most recent edition of Rumiya to east Asia.

"We have all focused on ISIL because of the territorial gain ... [But] Al-Qaida is still there ... And more generally, this sort of ideology is still attractive and very effective ... it has been growing for two decades at least and is still on the up in the Arab world, in Africa and in Asia," said Richard Barrett, former head of counter-terrorism for MI6.

Intensity and scope of onslaught has surprised many, but ISIL has long favored launching attacks over holy month.

(Source: The Guardian)

How Trump's ME trip could make Saudi compensate families of 9/11 victims

By Andrew Buncombe

Jim Kreindler was in his law firm's offices in New York's midtown when the attackers struck on 9/11.

Since then, he has dedicated thousands of hours and millions of dollars trying to secure what he considers justice for the families of those who were killed – an admission, or else a court decision, that officials from Saudi Arabia provided material support to the 19 al-Qaeda hijackers.

Earlier this year, Kreindler filed a suit against Saudi Arabia on behalf of the families of 850 individuals who were killed and 1,500 who were injured. "9/11 could not have happened without Saudi Arabia's support for al-Qaeda," he said.

First foreign trip

Last month, Donald Trump visited the kingdom during his first foreign trip as president, where he agreed a \$100bn arms deal.

Saudi Arabia has always denied that it was involved in the attacks that left almost 3,000 dead. But Kreindler now believes Trump's engagement with Riyadh has created a situation whereby Saudi Arabia may be tempted to settle.

"I believe this engagement helps," he said, seated at his desk, looking out over Manhattan. "If they are going to make billions of dollars out of infrastructure deals and the Royal family is preserved, maybe some wise person is going to say 'we have to get out of this 9/11 mess'. Because it's not going away."

The issue is hugely controversial. The filing of the lawsuit against Saudi Arabia was only possible after the passing earlier this year of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA) – a piece of legislation that allows Americans to sue foreign states in U.S. courts. Barack Obama had opposed the law, but the Senate overturned his veto of the legislation. (Trump, by contrast, strongly supported the bill.)

Saudi Arabia had spent millions of dollars lobbying against the law, and is now trying to have it modified. It was recently revealed that a Washington lobbying firm, Qorvis MSLGROUP, had paid scores of U.S. military veterans to protest against the legislation, claiming



Saudi Arabia had spent millions of dollars lobbying against the law (JASTA), and is now trying to have it modified.

that it could threaten U.S. service personnel by making them vulnerable to retaliatory lawsuits by foreign governments.

The veterans were sent on all-paid four day trips to Washington DC, without

being told that Saudi Arabia was picking up the tab. When they found out, most were horrified.

"I joined the Marine Corps as a direct result of 9/11, so to be wired and by the very people I joined to fight

against, that was sickening," Timothy Cord, who served as a Marine sergeant in Iraq, told the New York Post.

The suit, which was filed in federal court in the Southern District of New York and will be heard U.S. District Judge George Daniels, seeks unspecified monetary damages.

It claims that Saudi Arabia supported al-Qaeda in four critical ways. Firstly, it names several Saudi charities that were "alter egos of the government" and ran terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. It says the Saudi Arabia directly funded Osama Bin Laden's terror group, and supported it by providing the hijackers with passports.

Finally, it identifies Saudi officials in the U.S. who worked with the hijackers in the 18 months leading up to the attacks, "providing them with money, cover, advice, contacts, transportation, assistance with language and U.S. culture, identification, access to pilot training and other material support and resources".

A source of radical

Saudi Arabia has long existed as a source of radical, extremist – something that both the U.S. and UK have been happy to exploit, or either look the other way, when it has suited them.

Yet it has retained its own lawyers in the U.S., as it has sought to defend itself and deny involvement in the attacks. Two years ago, lawyer Michael Kellogg told a court that plaintiffs seeking damages had failed to produce "admissible, concrete, competent evidence" that Saudi Arabia was involved.

Asked to comment on the lawsuit filed following the passage of JASTA, Kellogg said: "Sorry. But I don't speak about pending cases."

Kreindler said Saudi Arabia had until 1 August to file a motion to dismiss his firm's lawsuit. His response to that is due on 1 October. He believes that if all goes to plan, the case could begin in either December, or January of next year.

"We have tones of evidence. Most of it is based on things the government has said – either the U.S. government, or else other governments, such as the Germans," he said. "I'm an optimist."

(Source: Independent)

After rushing to Qatar's aid, Turkey may have to rethink its Mideast ties

Fehim Tastekin

The only firm opposition to the "Let's Teach Qatar a Lesson" operation currently underway in the Middle East is coming from Turkey. Even U.S. President Donald Trump initially loudly applauded the campaign led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – though he has since taken a more conciliatory tone.

The Turkish government, which had drafted a plan some time ago to send troops to Qatar to firm up a Sunni front against Iran, fast-tracked legislation needed to send troops abroad.

Turkish-Arab relations are passing through erratic times. Everyone was wondering what position Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would take in the Qatari crisis. Erdogan had won the hearts and minds of the Persian Gulf emirs and kings earlier this year by declaring the need to "prevent the Persian nationalist expansion." Many observers thought he would take a pragmatic approach to avoid losing favor with many other countries just to please Qatar. Erdogan's widely publicized but futile telephone diplomacy to solve the crisis was interpreted as a desperate attempt to avoid having to choose between Qatar and Saudi Arabia and its allies. But at the end of the day, Ankara decided to interpret the actions against Qatar as if they had been taken against Turkey.

Erdogan said there are other motives behind what is being done to Qatar, but he wasn't specific.

It didn't take Ankara long to reach the conclusion that, after Qatar, Turkey is the likely next target. After all, just like Qatar, Turkey had become a staunch guardian of the Muslim Brotherhood and was in full harmony with Qatar in the proxy war raging in Syria. All the reasons cited by the Saudi king and the U.S. president to declare Qatar a "supporter of terror" could easily be applied to Turkey. Full support of the sanctions against Qatar from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who had toppled the Muslim Brotherhood in his country, no doubt played a key role in Erdogan's lining up with Qatar.

A critical step

Turkey felt compelled to take a critical step, convinced that the developments were not confined only to Qatar. Turkey, which had earlier decided to build a base in Qatar, fast-tracked through the parliament this week two accords approving deployment of Turkish soldiers in that country and to train the Qatari gendarmerie. According to the first accord, which will be valid for 10 years and can be extended for five-year periods, there will be a Qatar-Turkey Tactical Division Headquarters to be commanded by a Qatari major general, assisted by a Turkish brigadier general. Some 500-600 soldiers will be based at the headquarters. Currently there are



Turkey's misguided actions in the Syrian crisis poisoned and complicated relations with Arab and Islamic worlds.

95 Turkish military personnel in Qatar. An explosives demolition team with 25-30 members will also be going. The second accord will enable Turkey to train about 4,000 Qatari gendarmerie personnel.

Opposition parties in Turkey's parliament called for Turkey to remain neutral in the Arab world dispute, but their demands didn't prevent the ruling Justice and Development Party from passing the accords. In arguing the case, Ozturk Yilmaz, deputy chairman of the main opposition group, the Republican People's Party, said: "We know that some countries want to topple the emir and replace him with a new ruler. Who will our force confront? If [Qatar wants] to use those troops to preserve the Qatari ruling family, shall we be supporting that objective? Will we be involved in internal security operations of Qatar? Please don't subject Turkey to this nasty nonsense."

Filiz Kerestecioglu of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) accused the government of trying to drag the country into a quagmire to find new markets for the defense industry. HDP deputy Chairman Mithat Sancar warned that Turkey might soon be accused of cooperating with terrorists.

According to sources close to the Ankara government, although Saudi King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud had developed close relations with Ankara, Qatar has a special, distinct place in Erdogan's heart and Turkey sees Qatar as its most important ally in the Persian Gulf.

Turkey's government has yet come up with a satisfactory explanation of what its troops will be doing in Qatar, apart from noting that, after all, Turkey has gendarmerie cooperation accords with 18 countries.

Turkey's misguided actions

There have been several striking examples of Turkey's earlier attempts to assist with crises in the Arab world, all of which backfired. Turkey almost intervened to protect King Faisal II of Iraq against the uprising by Gen. Abd al-Karim Qasim in 1958. Turkey almost ended up in Lebanon in 1958 upon invitation of President Camille Chamoun. Of course there is no need to elaborate here on how Turkey's misguided actions in the Syrian crisis poisoned and complicated relations with Arab and Islamic worlds.

After openly taking sides with Qatar in the current crisis, Turkey might have to reshuffle its cards in regional relations. Against its best interests, it might have to warm up relations with Iran, just as Qatar is doing. Isn't this why Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif immediately showed up June 7 in Ankara, saying he needed to consult with Turkey because of dangerous developments in the region?

When Turkey-Qatar military cooperation first appeared on the countries' agendas, pro-government news outlets in Turkey were regularly citing the threat from Iran. In April 2016, when then-Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was signing the military accords with Qatar at Doha, Turkish media interpreted Turkey's setting up a base in Qatar as balancing the increasing influence of Iran. For those commentators, the Turkish base reflected a Sunni security alliance among Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

At that time, state-owned TRT Avaz TV did not mince words declaring Iran as the target. "Turkey and Qatar have taken positions very similar in Middle East crises. Their stances in assisting the opposition in Syria are the same. They took similar positions vis-a-vis the crises in Iraq and Yemen. This Sunni alliance is particularly important for Qatar. Sunni rule in Doha is uncomfortable, with the U.S. melting the ice with Shiite Iran. Qatar doesn't see the American forces on its land as a militarily adequate deterrent. Qatar is trying to close the gap by opting for cooperation with Turkey," the statement said.

History has repeatedly shown that Turkey's interventionist moves in the Arab world have always poisoned Turkish-Arab relations. We are, of course, aware that since the July 15 coup attempt, Ankara is engulfed by rumors of foreign forces plotting further coups. This is enough to explain Ankara's actions regarding Qatar today.

(Source: Al Monitor)

French auto giants keen on stronger presence in Iran

By Maryam Azish

The Iranian car manufacturers have managed to turn the threats posed by sanctions into the opportunities. Although some had predicted that the automobile industry in Iran would die after the sanctions, it did not.

The conditions after the 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have created a tangible competitive atmosphere in the country.

Recently a large number of foreign companies have once again lined up to enter the country's 80-million-strong market, with the French car producer Peugeot and Renault as usual ranking at the vanguard of the queue.

Ahead of other interested European companies, who mull to begin a new round of visits to Tehran for holding negotiations with Iranian companies and ink contracts with them, the French ones have already stepped forward to start cooperation with their Iranian counterparts.

The two French auto giants have voiced their keenness to make investment in automobile lucrative business in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Although following the signing of the nuclear deal a number of contracts were signed between Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) and Saipa Group from Iran and their French counterparts Peugeot and Renault, respectively, it appears that France's automobile industry does not regard these deals as sufficient, seeking to expand cooperation with Iranian auto manufacturers, Ifnews wrote.

Iran Khodro Company cooperation with France's Peugeot dates back to more than two decades ago and seven different Peugeot models accounted for about 64 percent of the total of 542,000 passenger cars and pickups produced by IKCO in 2007. IKCO and Iran's second-largest car company, Saipa, produce Logan in a joint venture with France's Renault.

The French auto maker's officials have expressed reluctance to witness the recurrence of the same experience they had in their former partnership with Iran and, thus, this time, intend to display greater sensitivity over issues such as

controlling the quality of the cars as well as after-sales services to have a different presence in Iran.

Supply chain

In Feb 2017, Iran's RISECO and MECAPLAST of France signed a joint venture in a situation that 30-percent exports condition will be implemented for a spare part contract.

Speaking in the ceremony to sign the contract, Chairman of RISECO Board of Directors Hamidreza Samadi said that MECAPLAST is one the biggest spare parts suppliers of France.

Samadi pointed to thirty-percent exports of products, saying this condition has been set by Iran's request since 'our activities are not supposed to be restricted to Iran's borders but beyond the borders'.

Iranian ambassador to France Ali

Ahani also referred to producing highly standardized car parts in Iran as one the advantages of the recent contract.

In the meantime, The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MECAPLAST Pierre Boulet pointed to the suitable and considerable infrastructures of Iran spare parts industry, saying that during the last years MECAPLAST products were exported to Iran through establishing cooperation with Renault and Peugeot.

"After lifting sanctions and the implementation of Iran nuclear deal also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), we are trying to make Iran as one of MECAPLAST's exports hub," he said.

Long-lasting ties

On Jan 2017, French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault in a conference in Tehran which he was attending in accom-

"France has been committed to defend JCPOA," Ayrault said adding that his country was among the first ones to re-establish ties with Iran after the deal.



pany of his Iranian counterpart Zarif said respecting the JCPOA has been of high importance for France and it has been committed to defend it.

"France has been committed to defend JCPOA," Ayrault said adding that his country was among the first ones to re-establish ties with Iran after the deal.

He continued "bilateral ties particularly in field of economy is beneficiary for both Paris and Tehran and France has never acted so fast in working with any other country."

Elsewhere in his speech, French official underlined that Paris is seeking long-lasting ties with Tehran in energy and transport sectors.

Ayrault also noted Iran's "well-known higher education" and expressed France's will to expand academic ties further while recalling that 17 MoUs have been signed before in this regard.

"Peugeot and Renault have resumed their activities in Iran and the first Airbus has been delivered; Total also has sealed oil purchase deal with Iran; I hope all other contracts get into action as fast," he said.

Ayrault reaffirmed the bright future of Tehran-Paris ties and urged both sides to try the best to ease the financial issues; "France has been active in issuing export guarantees for Iran and this is an indication of trust we have in Iran; Iran also has to remove its financial obstacles for foreign investors to enter the market."

Strategic agreement

In September 2017, the Industrial Development & Renovation Organization

of Iran (IDRO) and Renault have signed a strategic agreement in Paris to create a new joint venture.

The agreement which would allow Renault to strengthen its presence and accelerate its growth in Iran, was signed on the sidelines of the Paris Motor Show between Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh, Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, and Carlos Ghosn, Chairman and CEO of Renault.

The French automotive group will be the majority shareholder. In 2015, Renault sales to Iran increased by 56.1% over 2014 to a total of 51,500 vehicles and a market share of 4.8%.

The first vehicles to be produced in the plant will be the Symbol and the Duster, beginning in 2018.

"With 2 million vehicles planned for 2020, the potential of the Iranian car market is undeniable. This agreement confirms our strategic choices made in Iran and opens a new era allowing Renault to hold a privileged position in the country," said the CEO of Renault.

The joint venture will, on the one hand, include an engineering and purchasing center which will support the local suppliers, as well as a plant with an initial production capacity of 150,000 vehicles a year, which will be added to Renault's current capacity of 200,000 vehicles.

Under the agreement, the group will, for the very first time, develop its own distribution network with sales and after-sales services in line with Renault brand standards.

Punishing Qatar

By Dr. Binoy Kampmark

Are we in need of distractions? The political masters obviously think so. There have been hackings, cuttings, slayings and crushing events. As battles continue raging in Syria and northern Iraq, European cities face the next round of urban slayings.

As that was taking place, eyes in the western media were taken off brewing troubles among the Gulf States. Eager pots have been calling kettles the most unspeakable things. (Not so much black as crispy charred.) No one would have been surprised by calling out that tenured terrorist state known as Saudi Arabia for its various actions in Yemen and its own vicious brand of fundamentalism advertised globally.

Yet it was Saudi Arabia, along with Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Yemen and Libya insisting that Qatar was the destabilising influence in the region. (The others were naturally innocent of that.) All land, air and sea traffic would be halted with the state, while diplomatic missions would be removed. Qatari citizens would also be given their marching orders, having to leave within 14 days.

Disagreements between Doha and Riyadh are far from new. Being eager practitioners of censorship and media control, Riyadh has shown little time for such bold media efforts as Al-Jazeera. Bristling at what it has deemed negative coverage, officials in Riyadh have repeatedly insisted that Qatar be rebuked for backing its own horses in the Islamist struggle, much of this borne by the rumblings of the Arab Spring.

The Islamic Brotherhood is top of that list, and what is not surprising by looking at the list of states intent on strangling Qatar is that they have taken a dim view about the populist aspirations of the Muslim Brotherhood.

In Egypt, an elected head of state from the organisation was deposed in a coup that re-established the primacy of the military. Qatar's backing of Mohamed Morsi's short stint at the helm was well and truly noted. In a measure of placation, Qatar closed down Al Jazeera Mubashir Misr; its twenty-four hour news channel in Cairo. Since then, spats have grown in number. Ambassadors have been sporadically recalled. In September 2002, Saudi Arabia did so over what it regarded as unfavourable coverage of a Saudi plan which entailed normalising ties with Israel in exchange for a peace deal with the Palestinians.

In 2014, the three Persian Gulf States intent on punishing Qatar also withdrew their ambassadors citing the usual grounds of interference in internal affairs and "jeopardizing regional security". Those concerns have not changed, and

the move of severing ties and effectively shutting off Qatar is a measure of how dissatisfied the other state have been towards Doha's efforts.

More recently, Qatar's efforts to secure the release of a group of falcons, among them members of the royal family, captured by a Tehran-backed Shia group in Iraq, drew attention from Abu Dhabi and Riyadh. The intended ransom could well have run into a billion dollars.

The isolating move has triggered obvious consequences. Qatar has become a place of strategic importance for various powers. The U.S., for one, has its largest airbase in the Middle East located in the state.

Nor has the provocative move gone unnoticed by others who have thrown their weight behind Doha. The Turkish parliament has passed legislation drafted in May permitting the deployment of troops to the country's military base in Qatar. In 2015, Turkey's ambassador to Doha, Ahmet Demirok, forecast an eventual troop number of 3,000.

Then comes that important matter of aviation. Qatar's flag carrier, Qatar Airways, has had to re-route flights over Turkey, Iran and Oman, given the forced closure of airspace to their planes. On Tuesday, 70 flights were grounded.

Other airline carriers will be delighted by the move, given the relentless rise and appropriation of key routes of travel from Europe to Asia and Australasia by the Middle Eastern carriers. The gesture of isolating Qatar is looking, at best, one of economic self-harm, affecting such carriers as Bahrain's Gulf Air, Dubai's Emirates, Saudi Arabia's Saudia and Abu Dhabi's Etihad Airways.

The demands this time for resolving this monumental tiff are bound to be even steeper than they were in 2014. Sultan Sououd Al-Qassemi makes his own hazard at a set of guesses, and it involves a conventional, authoritarian ploy: muzzle media coverage, entailing the "shuttering of the Al Jazeera TV Network before any mediation can take place" (Newsweek, June 5).

That will just be the beginning. The main course will feature the expulsion of Hamas figures and affiliates, along with such undesirables as Islamist writer Yasser Al-Za'atra and Azmi Bishara. For dessert, the Egyptians will wish for a cessation of any pro-Morsi coverage, while the entire collective will push for shackles to be placed on charitable organizations.

Such demands are what is conventionally called unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of another state, but the despots of the Gulf are bound to miss that irony. What Qatar is accused of will not only be matched but surpassed.

(Source: Global Research)



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National Iranian
Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First publish/second publish) one-stage(compressed)

TENDER GUARANTEE	ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	SUBJECT OF TENDER	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
7310	250,000,000	p/f "OILWELL" CROWN BLOCK MOUNTED ON LEE C MOORE DERRICK REF:OIL WELL SUPPLY CO	1478347	Tender No.:PF/05-96/016 Indent No.: 9545044	1

Brief description of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address Pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahwaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase some oil well crown block sheave from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender (compressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (j) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender documents. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, 510,000 Rials should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.

Receiving of documents:
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN
Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and receive tender documents from foreign procurement department in due date will be known as tenderer from tender committee.

C) Delivery of envelopes of bids and call quality evaluating:
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including bank guarantees (A), financial offer(C) and stamped and signed of tender documents (B) along with qualification worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 40 days from last day of document received deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor, Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN.
Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.

D) Tender Guarantee:
Type of guarantee:
A)Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activities licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to National Iranian Drilling Company.
Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.

More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR
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تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۳/۲۱ نوبت دوم ۹۶/۳/۲۲

Wrecking the ship of state

By Paul Krugman

After Donald Trump's surprise election victory, many people on the right and even in the center tried to make the case that he wouldn't really be that bad. Every time he showed a hint of self-restraint — even if it amounted to nothing more than reading his lines without ad-libbing and laying off Twitter for a day or two — pundits rushed to declare that he had just "become president."

But can we now admit that he really is as bad as — or worse than — his harshest critics predicted he would be? And it's not just his contempt for the rule of law, which came through so clearly in the James Comey testimony: As the legal scholar Jeffrey Toobin says, if this isn't obstruction of justice, what is? There's also the way Trump's character, his combination of petty vindictiveness with sheer laziness, leaves him clearly not up to doing the job.

And that's a huge problem. Think, for a minute, of just how much damage this man has done on multiple fronts in just five months.

Take health care. It's still unclear whether Republicans will ever be able to pass a replacement for Obamacare (although it is clear that if they do, it will take coverage away from tens of

millions). But whatever happens on the legislative front, there are big problems developing in the insurance markets as we speak: companies pulling out, leaving some parts of the country unserved, or asking for large increases in premiums.

■ Obamacare an unworkable system

Why? It's not, whatever Republicans may say, because Obamacare is an unworkable system; insurance markets were clearly stabilizing last fall. Instead, as insurers themselves have been explaining, the problem is the uncertainty created by Trump and company, especially the failure to make clear whether crucial subsidies will be maintained. In North Carolina, for example, Blue Cross Blue Shield has filed for a 23 percent rise in premiums, but declared that it would have asked for only 9 percent if it were sure that cost-sharing subsidies would continue.

So why hasn't it received that assurance? Is it because Trump believes his own assertions that he can cause Obamacare to collapse, then get voters to blame Democrats? Or is it because he's too busy rage-tweeting and golfing to deal with the issue? It's hard to tell, but either way, it's no way to make policy.

Or take the remarkable decision to take Saudi Arabia's side in its dispute with Qatar, a small nation that houses a huge U.S.

military base. There are no good guys in this quarrel, but every reason for the U.S. to stay out of the middle.

So what was Trump doing? There's no hint of a strategic vision; some sources suggest that he may not even have known about the large U.S. base in Qatar and its crucial role.

The most likely explanation of his actions, which have provoked a crisis in the region (and pushed Qatar into the arms of Iran) is that the Saudis flattered him — the Ritz-Carlton projected a five-story image of his face on the side of its Riyadh property — and their lobbyists spent large sums at the Trump Washington hotel.

Normally, we would consider it ridiculous to suggest that an American president could be so ignorant of crucial issues, and be led to take dangerous foreign policy moves with such crude inducements. But can we believe this about a man who can't accept the truth about the size of his inauguration crowds, who boasts about his election victory in the most inappropriate circumstances? Yes.

■ Central principle of NATO

And consider his refusal to endorse the central principle of NATO, the obligation to come to our allies' defense — a refusal that came as a shock and surprise to his own foreign policy team. What was that about? Nobody knows, but it's

worth considering that Trump apparently ranted to European Union leaders about the difficulty of setting up golf courses in their nations. So maybe it was sheer petulance.

Trump is neither up to the job of being president nor willing to step aside and let others do the work right. And this is already starting to have real consequences, from disrupted health coverage to ruined alliances to lost credibility on the world stage.

But, you say, stocks are up, so how bad can it be? And it's true that while Wall Street has lost some of its initial enthusiasm for Trumponomics — the dollar is back down to pre-election levels — investors and businesses don't seem to be pricing in the risk of really disastrous policy.

That risk is, however, all too real — and one suspects that the big money, which tends to equate wealth with virtue, will be the last to realize just how big that risk really is. The American presidency is, in many ways, sort of an elected monarchy, in which a temperamentally and intellectually unqualified leader can do immense damage.

That's what's happening now. And we're barely one-tenth of the way through Trump's first term. The worst, almost surely, is yet to come.

(Source: The NYT)

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How looking at a building can trigger headaches, seizures

By Arnold J. Wilkins

It's three o'clock -- you're at work, struggling to focus during the afternoon lull. You gaze out of your office window, hoping for some relief, but instead you feel a headache coming on.

Flat gray concrete lines the streets, while windows form repetitive glassy intervals in stark brick walls. With monotonous straight lines as far as the eye can see, there's nowhere pleasant to rest your gaze. It may seem a superficial problem, but our research has found that looking at urban landscapes may actually give you a headache.

Over tens of thousands of years, the human brain evolved to effectively process scenes from the natural world. But the urban jungle poses a greater challenge for the brain, because of the repetitive patterns it contains. Mathematician Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier showed that we can think of scenes as being made up of striped patterns, of different sizes, orientations and positions, all added together. These patterns are called Fourier components.

In nature, as a general rule, components with low spatial frequency (large stripes) have a high contrast and components with high frequency (small stripes) have a lower contrast. We can call this simple relationship between spatial frequency and contrast a "rule of nature". Put simply, scenes from nature have stripes that tend to cancel each other out, so that when added together no stripes appear in the image.

Hurts to look at

But this is not the case with scenes from the urban environment. Urban scenes break the rule of nature: they tend to feature regular, repetitive patterns, due to the common use of design features such as windows, staircases and railings. Regular patterns of this kind are rarely found in nature.

Striped patterns can cause seizures and headaches in much the same way as flicker does. So stripes on door mats, carpets and shirts can be a problem for people who are light-sensitive.

This has been documented since the 1980s. What is new is that we have now shown that there is also a problem from more complex images that are not obviously striped but contain regular stripes within their mathematical makeup, such as regularly spaced features of buildings.

We have also shown that the discomfort is felt by most people, not just those who are light-sensitive. And the discomfort is accompanied by changes in brain oxygenation.

We came to these conclusions by measuring the efficiency with which the brain processes images of natural and urban scenes. There are two ways of measuring efficiency: the first is to build simple computer models of the way that nerve cells compute what we see.

One model was built by Paul Hibbard (University of Essex) and Louise O'Hare (University of Lincoln), and another at the University of St Andrews by Olivier Penacchio and colleagues. Both models show that when the brain processes images that depart from the rule of nature, the activity of the nerve cells is increased, and becomes less sparsely distributed. In other words, such images take more effort for the brain to process.

How would engineers build the Golden Gate Bridge today?



It may seem a superficial problem, but our research has found that looking at urban landscapes may actually give you a headache.

For our own research, Olivier and I designed a computer program that measures how well images adhere to the rule of nature. After running the program, we found that departure from the rule of nature predicts how uncomfortable people find it to look at any given image -- whether it's an image of a building or a work of art.

We then analyzed images of apartment buildings, and found that over the last 100 years, the design of buildings has been departing further and further from the rule of nature; more and more stripes appear decade by decade, making the buildings less and less comfortable to look at.

Oxygen joy

Another way to measure the efficiency of the brain's visual processes is to measure the amount of oxygen used by the visual part of the brain, located at the back of the head. When the brain uses oxygen, it changes colour. We can track these changes by shining infrared light onto the scalp, and measuring the scattered light which bounces back off the brain and through the skull.

Typically, oxygen usage is greater when people look at uncomfortable images, such as urban scenes.

We found that the rule of nature not only predicts the levels of discomfort suggested by computer models, it also predicts how much

oxygen is used by the brain. That is, our brains use more oxygen when we look at scenes which depart from the rule. Since headaches tend to be associated with excess oxygen usage, this may explain why some designs give us headaches.

People who get migraines are particularly susceptible to the discomfort from repetitive patterns; these patterns increase the use of oxygen (which in those who suffer migraines is already abnormally high). The patterns can give rise to a headache, possibly as a result. Indeed, some individuals with migraine cannot function in certain modern offices, because the patterns bring on a headache every time they enter the building.

Trump Tower, the skyscraper and the future of urban development

Perhaps it's time for the rule of nature to be incorporated into the software that is used to design buildings and offices. Or interior designers can vary the wall designs, blinds and carpets they install, to avoid adding more stripes indoors.

Of course, some repetitive patterns are an unavoidable result of modular construction. But many stripes are there quite unnecessarily, simply as design features -- to catch the eye. Unfortunately, they may end up hitting the head, too.

(Source: CNN)

Striped patterns can cause seizures and headaches in much the same way as flicker does. So stripes on door mats, carpets and shirts can be a problem for people who are light-sensitive.

The one word that can instantly change your mood

By Susie Moore

Late last year I bought a \$6 latte (since when did coffee get so freakin' expensive?) from a hipster hangout, where I went to feel cool and write. When I went to take a sip after finishing a satisfying sentence, I was surprised to discover that I'd already finished it.

My fancy \$6 coffee was gone. And I didn't even remember tasting it.

In that moment—while on yet another deadline—it struck me that I've been busy for so long that when I'm doing stuff (including fun stuff!), I'm not sure I'm actually enjoying it. I'm not "in it" somehow.

It gave me a niggling feeling that I'm not having the full experience of my life as I'm living it. The tragedy wasn't the evaporated, expensive drink (although that did leave me bewildered). It was life passing me by while I'm in my head and out of my body somehow. And I know I'm not alone.

I decided I needed something simple and easy to jolt me into the present, while, like everybody else, I'm just trying to make it through the week. It was a word: pleasure.

How much pleasure do you allow yourself to experience? Here are three simple ways to dial it up, pronto:

1. Have a trigger.

Next time you buy a coffee, a salad, a fro-yo—can the very activity itself trigger you into presence? Can the very ritual of it remind you to pause, just for a second, consider the word pleasure, and dig



Pleasure—kicks a mundane day into living color.

in mindfully to actually enjoy the dang thing?

2. Set reminders.

This might be annoying to some people, but I have an alarm that I set at random times of day that pops up when I least expect it with my one word: PLEASURE. Yesterday I was walking in the rain, and it popped up. I took a deep inhale, looked around, and noticed how much cleaner the city feels after a rainfall. I also remembered how pleasant the smell of rain can be, if you take a proper

whiff. Even running an errand in a shower can spark pleasure if you allow it!

Another time, I was with my friends at a restaurant. I was on my phone (like most people). Then PLEASURE popped up. I looked up and truly saw my friends' faces. One of them was laughing. In that moment, it was like I was seeing life in high-def. I put my phone down and dove into the guacamole and conversation.

3. Tune into your senses.

Many of us spend a good chunk of change on our furniture, threads, and

accessories. When was the last time you really felt them?

For example, do you:

- Feel the luxurious thread count of your sheets and cotton pajamas, or just fall into bed in a daze? Once you consider it—what's better than your cozy, inviting bed at the end of the day?

- Savor the softness of your scarf as it wraps around you and completes your look, or grab it while hollering, "Hold the elevator!?"

- Taste your pasta and your drink, or shovel it in while catching up on the *Handmaids Tale*? No wonder it's so easy to overeat!

- Enjoy the scent and texture of applying your hand cream or whack a blob on your palm and toss the tube in your bag? Most hand creams smell divine—we just never sniff them outside of the store we purchase them from on the first day.

- Actually absorb the vibes emanating from your Spotify shuffle or skip, skip, skip until you land on a satisfactory song? Then skip, skip, skip again? Are you actually listening? Chill out and let the playlist surprise you!

Coming back to one word—pleasure—kicks a mundane day into living color. Whether I'm submitting my column, preparing my breakfast, petting my dog, calling my sister, or even sitting on the subway, listening to the hum of the carriage, I remember "pleasure, pleasure, pleasure," and it all feels a little more delicious somehow. (Source: greatist.com)

How to treat chest wrinkles

By Rachel Nall

While the thin skin of the face is often the first place to show wrinkles, unfortunately, it is not always the last. The skin of the chest can experience deep wrinkling that makes wearing a button-down shirt or décolleté-bearing dress a cosmetic concern. Like facial wrinkles, chest wrinkling can occur due to the breakdown of collagen and elastic fibers, sun exposure and repeated wrinkling, which can be due to sleeping on your chest or side. Treatments are available to reduce your chest wrinkling.

Step 1

Apply a topical wrinkle treatment cream to the chest daily. Wrinkle-fighting ingredients include retinol, alpha hydroxy acids, kinetin or copper peptides, according to MayoClinic.com. These ingredients are available over-the-counter. However, prescription wrinkle treatment creams are available that contain stronger concentrations of wrinkle-fighting ingredients.

Step 2

Change your sleeping position by sleeping on your back. Sleeping on the stomach and side can cause your skin to fold, creating wrinkling. While it can take some time to adjust to a different sleeping position, attaching a tennis ball to the front of your night clothing can prevent you from rolling to your stomach.

Step 3

Drink plenty of water to keep the skin moisturized and in good condition. Water keeps the skin plump and temporarily reduces the appearance of wrinkles.

Step 4

Undergo a chemical peel to remove dead and wrinkled skin cells. Chemical peels involve the application of skin-peeling chemicals to remove dead skin cells and encourage the growth of new skin cells. Talk to your physician or aesthetician about the best chemical peel type for your skin.

Step 5

Undergo a laser treatment to remove the outer layer of skin and stimulate collagen growth in the dermis, the layer of skin underneath the outermost layer of skin. Advances in skin treatment mean recovery following laser treatment can be minimal. Laser treatments may require several follow-up sessions in order to prove effective.

Tips

- Apply a sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 15 or higher to your chest and neck daily in order to protect your skin against further chest wrinkling. Even when your skin is not exposed, the sun's rays can penetrate some clothing making constant protection necessary to prevent sun-related wrinkling.

- Dark spots known as age spots can accompany chest wrinkling. To treat this condition, apply a hydroquinone-containing cream. Hydroquinone blocks the production of brown pigments in your body, reducing the appearance of age spots. Prescription hydroquinone creams

Things you'll need

- Wrinkle treatment cream

(Source: strongbody.com)

The dangers of wrapping your stomach with plastic wrap

By Angela Joseph

Society's preoccupation with weight loss has led to the rise of many quick-fix products and methods to lose weight. One of these is the body wrap, which is touted by some spas as a means of permanently losing weight. The body wrap is supposed to aid weight loss through the application of plastic wrap dipped in an herbal substance. This causes sweating, which is supposed to detoxify your body and help you lose weight.

The dangers of excessive sweating

Sweating too much can lead to dehydration which is dangerous as the sweat does not dry, but stays on the body, raising body temperature possibly to unsafe levels. Profuse sweating also leads to changes in blood chemistry, reducing blood volume and sending less oxygen to the cells. Weakness, dizziness, confusion, coma and even death can result because of excessive fluid loss. If you are having a body wrap at a spa, your attendant may not be qualified to deal with any of these reactions.

Dangers of products involved

The dangers of wrapping your stomach in plastic are not limited to sweating alone. Cling wrap used for wrapping the stomach is made from Polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which has been described as one of the most dangerous consumer products. It leaches harmful substances which have been linked to negative effects on the liver, spleen, kidneys, bone formation and body weight. PVC is also linked to cancer. Some wraps are dipped in mineral products, some of which may contain aluminum, which is linked to Alzheimer's. In addition, you may be allergic to some of the ingredients used in the wrap.

Other considerations when considering a body wrap

Plastic wraps do not help you burn fat. All you lose is water weight, which comes right back when you rehydrate your body. You must also consider the cost factor. Some businesses that perform body wraps claim that you can have as many as four a day, others claim that once a week is fine. Prices vary; however, the average price of a body wrap in the spa is \$159, and you need at least one treatment per week. If you decide to do it at home, there are kits that range from \$80 to \$200.

Body wrap safety

Most people who report satisfaction with the results of the body wrap also go on to say that they eat a sensible diet and work out four or five times a week. Therefore, if it is necessary to diet and exercise in order to achieve your weight loss goals, why not spend that money on a gym membership, which will guarantee results, and avoid the dangers that come from having toxic plastic substances enter your skin and bloodstream? If you are diabetic, suffer from high blood pressure, are pregnant or have any medical condition, consult your doctor before using any form of body wrap.

(Source: livestrong.com)

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** Business Chat for iMessage available on the developer preview for iOS 11. Business Chat for iMessage allows customers and companies to communicate using chat. The platform lets customers purchase a product, track shipments and more.
- 2** Moto X4 with dual camera and 3,800 mAh battery could be announced on June 30. Moto X4, which is expected to be a mid-range Android smartphone that will cost around \$325.
- 3** New Xiaomi Mi Notebook Air 13.3 leaks with 7th gen Intel CPU, new GPU and a fingerprint reader. The model seems to be another hardware refresh on the original 2016 ultrabook, rather than the eagerly-anticipated second generation product.
- 4** Microsoft Edge, working with Cortana, may soon be able to unearth lower prices on shopping websites. The pilot feature being rolled out for the Windows 10 Creators Update will initially deliver price checks for 14 business including Amazon, Walmart, and Home Depot.
- 5** The HTC U11 is now also available from Sprint in the US. A quick look at the device's listing on the carrier's website reveals a \$696 price tag. Alternatively, you can also pay zero down followed by 24 monthly payments of \$29 each. Color options include black and blue. The handset (unlocked model) is already available from Amazon, which has it listed for \$649.

6 It's confirmed! Nokia 6, 5, and 3 arriving in India on June 13. While there's no official information on the India pricing of the phones, a new rumor says the Nokia 6 will carry a price tag of INR 15,990 (around \$250), while the Nokia 5 and 3 will set you back INR 12,990 (around \$200) and INR 9,990 (around \$155), respectively.

7 The Xbox One S will be \$50 cheaper. Microsoft has clarified the news including Xbox One bundles, including a 500GB model with Battlefield 1 and a 1TB model with Forza Horizon 3. The new deal means all 500GB bundles are \$249 this week and all 1TB bundles are \$299 this week.

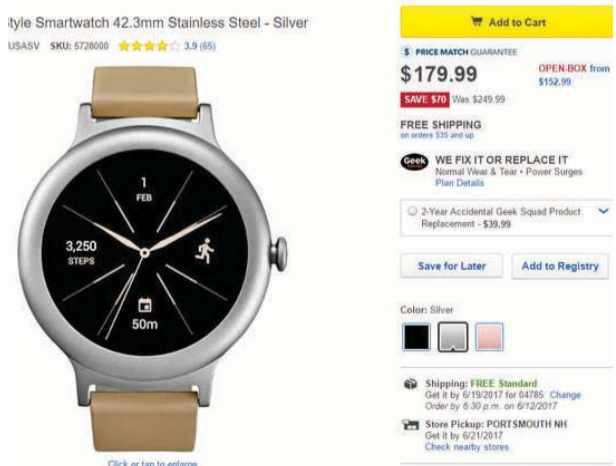
8 Australia's sandstone monolith Uluru is an immensely sacred place to the local Anangu people, and somewhere many people have dreamed of visiting one day. Now Uluru is available on Google Street View, offering the internet an up-close look at the ochre, rust, wild plum, and charcoal hues of the rock, which measures 348 metres (1,142 ft) high, and has a circumference of 9.4 kilometres (5.8 mi).

9 The original Samsung Galaxy J7 could receive Android 7.0 Nougat update soon. Verizon rolling out Android 7.0 Nougat for Samsung Galaxy Tab S2.

10 Sony Xperia L1 makes its debut in Europe, priced to sell for €199. The smartphone is powered by a 1.45GHz quad-core MediaTek MT6737T processor, 2GB RAM and 16GB of expandable storage.

LG Watch Style on sale for just \$179.99

One of the first two Google smartwatches, the LG Watch Style is now on sale in the United States. Built by LG, the Watch Style and Watch Sport are the first smartwatches to ship with Android Wear 2.0 on board. The cheapest of the two, LG Watch Style is usually available for purchase for \$249, but Amazon and Best Buy have a better deal on the smartwatch.



For a limited time, customers will be able to save \$70 (28%) when they purchase the LG Watch Style on Amazon or Best Buy. The smartwatch is available in three color options: Titanium, Rose Gold and Silver. Also, both U.S. retailers offer free shipping all across the country, so you'll only have to pay \$179.99 – the price of the smartwatch. Keep in mind that the LG Watch Style does not feature 4G LTE support, unlike its more expensive brother, the LG Watch Sport. So, in case you need 4G LTE, the latter can be had for \$249.99 with a 2-year contract or \$349.99 outright. (Source: phonearena)

Will autonomous vehicles solve traffic safety inequality?

By Sefi Keller

Last year 40,000 people died in traffic crashes in the United States. That devastating figure hasn't been distributed equally across all sectors of the population. Low-income areas were disproportionately affected by the traffic cash epidemic. How much so? Two times worse! According to research conducted by Governing Magazine in 2014, high-income areas had 5 traffic crash fatalities per 100,000 people, while the proportion for low-income areas was 10.4.

The correlation between socio-economic status and traffic crash fatalities is well documented. In the United States, High GDP per capita of a state is correlated to lower traffic crash fatalities in that state.

Research in California from 2009 even found that income is much more strongly correlated to traffic crashes than age. In OECD countries as well, a correlation was found between economic conditions (such as high income per capita) and high traffic safety levels. And research in China from 2010 found that, once a province reached a GDP per capita of about \$1,500, traffic fatalities began to decline. Even in Iran we can find evidence of a correlation between economic status and traffic crash fatalities.

What drives this inequality of traffic crash fatalities? Correlation is, of course, easier to demonstrate than causation,



but there are some possible explanations. Some point to the fact that people with low incomes tend to drive less and walk more, therefore being more vulnerable as pedestrians.

A 2009 report found that 45 percent of traffic fatalities that occur in low-income countries are among pedestrians, compared to only 18 percent in high-income countries.

Another explanation concerns the quality of the vehicles driven in low-income areas. These tend to be older and not equipped with modern life-saving safety technology such as rear cameras

and lane-keeping systems. So, as autonomous vehicles take the place of manually-driven cars, should we expect traffic safety inequality to change as well? Currently, the cost to own and operate a car is 57 cents per mile (according to AAA).

Will autonomous vehicles be more affordable? Some people think so (Barclays and Deloitte), while others disagree (Ford). As AVs gain greater market penetration it is likely that the price of what is now considered "a safe modern car" will decrease significantly. That by itself might help to lower traffic

fatalities in low-income areas (assuming manual driving isn't banned altogether), but it won't solve inequality as long as AVs are safer and costlier.

Having said that, AVs might help create equitable roads in an indirect way. Just as trees create the valuable resource of oxygen as a by-product of their very existence, AVs will create resources for everyone, not just their owners. Each autonomous vehicle that operates on the road creates, as a by-product, immense amounts of information that is incredibly useful for traffic safety analysis.

For example, AVs are expected to generate about 4TB of data per day; compare that to the 20GB per year that current city road sensors generate. Therefore, AVs might help cities to better identify the unique traffic characteristics of low income areas.

Cities should keep that in mind when they choose the first couple of roads to allocate to autonomous driving pilots. The precious safety data will only be generated in areas where AVs are allowed to drive.

To be sure, lowering traffic fatalities in an equitable way can't be done with a "one size fits all" policy.

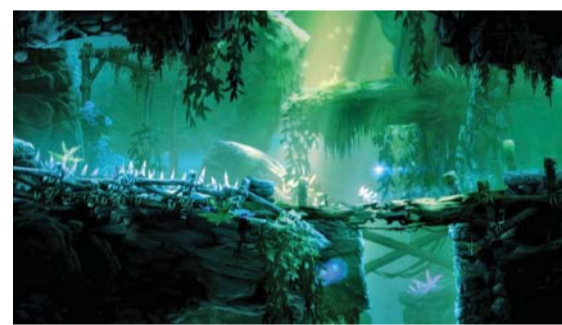
Municipalities will need to drill deeper into the typical patterns of traffic crashes in their communities and take appropriate preventative measures in each one. (Source: Venturebeat)

Most gaming jobs are in arts and design

Artists and designers are taking the majority of gaming-related jobs, according to LinkedIn.

The professional social site released a study on its users discovering the most popular jobs in the gaming industry. It gathered info from the 771,000 gaming professionals (which counts anyone that has at least on gaming-related skill listed on their profile) that use LinkedIn. Of them, most of them work in the arts and design spaces in gaming, with 29 percent of the 771,000 working in those fields.

Engineering was No. 2 with 16 percent. Operations takes the No. 3 spot with 8 percent. So, if you're working toward a degree in the arts and your parents or friends ask you how you expect to find a job after college, you can point them to the gaming industry.



Companies use artists and designers for preproduction, helping to establish the look and feel of a game, its characters, and its worlds through drawings, paintings, and

more. Artists also help create the assets used in the final game.

Software engineer, meanwhile, is the most common job title for gaming professionals on LinkedIn. Over 30,000 of the 771,000 have that title. Owner is at the No. 2 spot, just under 20,000. Chief executive officer is No. 3. While most companies only have one CEO, many claim that title for their own small, independent studios.

Oddly, a non-gaming firm has hired the most people with gaming-related skills on LinkedIn. That would be Moving Picture Company (MPC), a visual effects company with studios across the world, including New York City, Montreal, Shanghai, and Paris. Microsoft follows at second, while Ubisoft is in third. (Source: LinkedIn)

The Switch version of 'FIFA 18' doesn't have a story mode



If you were wondering how Switch versions of conventional sports games would compare to their PS4 and Xbox One counterparts, you just got your answer. EA has detailed the Switch edition of FIFA 18, and it's evident that you're getting a full-fledged console title... with a notable exception.

You'll get modes like FIFA Ultimate Team, a career mode and women's soccer, but there's no mention of a story mode -- sorry, you can't follow Alex Hunter's story while you're on the bus.

EA hasn't explained the absence at this point, but it's likely for technical reasons. The Switch version uses the older Ignite game engine (originally used for previous-gen consoles like the PS3), while the games with story modes use the newer Frostbite engine. As much as the Switch can do, it's still a mobile tablet with limitations.

As it stands, this still promises to be miles above other portable footie games in terms of quality.

The Switch version won't be delayed, either, as it's arriving on September 29th like the other FIFA 18 releases (Source: EA)

Google reveals when it'll stop supporting Pixel and Nexus phones



Wondering when you should upgrade your Nexus or Pixel? Google has updated its support page to reflect when it will no longer offer telephone and online support for the devices, and you can use that info to make a decision.

Based on the info Google listed on its support page, it's staying true to its word. The Pixel and the Pixel XL, which were released in 2016, will get the latest Android updates until October 2018. They'll get security updates until October 2019, the same month Google will stop providing customer service for them.

Mountain View will also stop supporting the Huawei-made Nexus 6P and the LG-made 5X in September 2018, a year after they stop getting new OS updates.

If you still own a Nexus 6 or a 9, you'll only get security updates until October this year -- after that, you can't call or chat with Google anymore in case you encounter issues with your device. (SOURCE: 9to5Google)

2017 Apple iPhone units might lag compared to rival handsets



It would appear as though Apple's 2017 iPhones are going to have connectivity speeds lagging behind competing handsets. While iPhone rivals will be able to run at a download speed of as much as one gigabit per second, an issue that Apple is having now with its modem suppliers could very well have a negative impact on the iPhone later this year. Qualcomm can sell to Apple right now a modem that will support 1 Gb/sec data speeds. While Intel is working on a modem with similar capabilities, it won't be ready for the next iPhone models, which are expected to be unveiled in September.

There are a couple of reasons why Apple doesn't want to use Qualcomm only to provide this chip. One, Apple has always sourced components from two or more suppliers to keep the flow of parts coming in case one source cannot deliver for any reason. Relying on a single source could result in the hold up of iPhone production which is why Apple traditionally eschews a single source arrangement for its products. In addition, it allows Apple to play one supplier against the other when it comes to pricing. (Source: bloomberg)

Redesigned Skype 8.0 now available for Android

Microsoft's new Skype 8.0 app is now available on the Google Play Store. The app is currently only available on Android.

Skype 8.0 features a brand new UI courtesy of a complete rebuild of the app. There are new colors, animations and shapes everywhere and it really doesn't look anything like the old app.

The main screen has three tabs, with the main one in the center being where all your chats reside. The one on the left is called Highlights, which is basically a rip-off of Stories feature from Snapchat. Here you can share your activities during your day and all the photos and videos you upload here appear as a highlights reel for



your friends to see.

Capture tab on the right is yet another Snapchat rip-off. You can take a picture here and send to your contacts or add it to your Highlights reel. The editing tools available here, including drawing or adding stickers is straight out of Snapchat with nearly identical design.

The rest of the functionality seems similar to the previous app except for a cards UI that shows these floating cards on screen but so far all we have seen it do is show app tutorials.

The new version is rolling out on Android today and on iPhone in the coming weeks. Windows and Mac will be getting the update in the coming months. (Source: Skype)

Italy beat Uruguay on penalties to finish third

Italy finished in third place at the FIFA U-20 World Cup Korea Republic 2017 after beating Uruguay 4-1 on penalties following a goalless draw.

Both teams struggled to take control of the game in the first half. Uruguay relied on a couple of counter-attacks and set-pieces from Rodrigo Amaral, who captained the team.



Uruguay took 24 attempts to Italy's six by the end of regulation time, but their finishing was not quite sharp enough and Italy goalkeeper Alessandro Plizzari, who was standing in for the regular Andrea Zaccagno, was up to every challenge.

The match finished goalless after 90 minutes, so the third place spot on the podium had to be decided by a penalty shoot-out.

The Italians were superior from the spot and thanks to Plizzari, who saved penalties from Amaral and Juan Boselli, they secured a place on the podium in third place.

(Source: FIFA)

Sharapova out of Wimbledon after injury setback

Maria Sharapova will miss Wimbledon and the entirety of the grass-court season after a scan revealed her thigh injury was more problematic than first thought.

The five-time Grand Slam winner was due to play at the Aegon Classic in Birmingham and at Wimbledon qualifying in Roehampton but revealed she would now be out of action until the end of July.

Her skipping of the grass-court season will also prove problematic in entering the US Open as she will require a wildcard from the USTA if she's to feature in the main draw.

Should tournament directors not offer her a wildcard, she will have to go through qualifying, as she was scheduled to do for Wimbledon but that would be another setback in what's already been a difficult year.

French Open officials refused to offer her a wildcard and her ranking was too low to go through qualifying, which meant she missed all the action at Roland Garros.

She is currently ranked at world No. 178 having seen her ranking fall outside the top-500 after she testing positive for melatonin at the 2016 Australian Open.

Sharapova wrote on Facebook: 'After an additional scan, the muscle tear that I sustained in Rome will unfortunately not allow me to compete in the grass court tournaments I was scheduled to play.'

'I look forward to meeting you there next year.'

'I will continue to work on my recovery and my next scheduled tournament is in Stanford.'

(Source: Metro)

Low unhappy with Germany fans over Werner treatment

Germany coach Joachim Low has voiced his dismay at the hostile attitude shown toward RB Leipzig attacker Timo Werner during Saturday's 7-0 win over San Marino.

Werner came off the bench 10 minutes after half-time to replace Lars Stindl in this weekend's World Cup qualifier and was jeered and whistled by his own fans throughout his substitute cameo.

The 21-year-old has been an unpopular figure among German football fans ever since diving to win a penalty for Leipzig in the 2-1 home win over Schalke in December 2016.

Low was not impressed with the German fans' behavior and has urged them to change their attitude toward the young attacker.

'There was a dive once, he made a mistake, and he admitted he was wrong,' Low told Bild.

'But we are talking about a very young player here.'

'Someone who plays for the national team, is only at the start of his career and who has scored 21 goals in one season in the Bundesliga should not be jeered and whistled. That is simply not okay.'

Werner himself, meanwhile, believes he is being treated different than other players because he plays for hugely unpopular Leipzig.

'I do not know what all the fuss is about,' Werner added.

'We have seen people dive for years. People are making a big thing out of it just because I play for RB Leipzig.'

(Source: Soccerway)



England defeat Venezuela to win 2017 U-20 World Cup



England won their biggest international title since 1966 by beating Venezuela 1-0 in the Under-20 World Cup final.

It was England's first appearance in the final of a global tournament since their World Cup victory 51 years ago.

Everton forward Dominic Calvert-Lewin's first-half goal was enough for victory thanks to Newcastle goalkeeper Freddie Woodman's second-half

penalty save.

Woodman denied Adalberto Penaranda from the spot after the Malaga forward was fouled by Kyle Walker-Peters.

With 17 minutes to play, the referee pointed to the spot to signal a penalty before immediately referring to the video assistant referee.

The decision stood - there was the slightest of contacts - but Newcastle

keeper Woodman's strong palm kept out Penaranda's effort.

In the first half Ronaldo Lucena hit the post with an audacious long-range free-kick that had Woodman well beaten, while Tottenham midfielder Josh Onomah saw a powerful effort strike the underside of the Venezuela bar after the break.

After the match, England forward Dominic Solanke, due to join Liverpool

from Chelsea on 1 July, was awarded the Golden Ball given to the player of the tournament. Previous winners of the award include Diego Maradona, Lionel Messi, Luis Figo, Paul Pogba and Sergio Aguero.

Woodman was awarded the Golden Glove, given to best goalkeeper of the tournament.

(Source: BBC)

Jelena Ostapenko to take French Open glory in her stride

Jelena Ostapenko is confident she can take the attention in her stride as she targets more grand slam success at Wimbledon.

The 20-year-old produced one of the most remarkable tennis stories in recent years by becoming the first unseeded player in the Open era to win the French Open title.

Having arrived in Paris as the little-known world number 47 from Latvia, Ostapenko leaves as the world number 12 and with her career earnings almost tripled.

The final against Simona Halep was shown on a big screen in the centre of Riga and Ostapenko can expect plenty of fuss when she makes a brief trip back on Monday.

'I think when I go back home there will be a lot of attention and this is really nice because I made history for my country,' said said.

'Of course now I probably will have more pressure but I'm going to try to deal with that. I think it's going to be a little bit difficult but I chose to be a tennis player, that's my career, so I should be fine with that.'

Next on the agenda for Ostapenko is the Aegon Classic in Birmingham, although it is a sign of just what an outsider she was that she is not yet even in the field.

With the rankings cut-off several weeks ago, Ostapenko is currently still one out, although a wildcard will surely be made available for her if she wants it.

Ostapenko has more pedigree on grass than clay having won the Wimbledon junior title three years



ago and rates the surface as her favourite.

It was not always like that.

Recalling her first experience of grass aged 15, Ostapenko said: 'When I first played on it I didn't like it at all. I didn't really understand how to play on grass and I was like, 'How can people play on grass? It's made for soccer'.

'But in the next couple of years I understood how to play, how to move and then I really liked it.'

Ostapenko stunned observers and opponents alike with her utterly fearless game at Roland Garros - smacking 299 winners in seven matches.

Her confidence comes both from youth and the knowledge that, when she is on form, very few players can live with her.

Ostapenko has been coached throughout her career by her mother Jelena Jakovleva, adding former world number 16 Anabel Medina Garrigues to her team a month ago.

(Source: BT Sport)

Roberto Carlos responds to doping scandal claims

Former Real Madrid and Brazil legend Roberto Carlos has responded to claims he took performance-enhancing drugs, insisting he has never met the doctor cited in the doping controversy.

Sportmail reported that a German documentary alleged he was one of at least two Brazilian international footballers who took banned performance enhancing drugs around the 2002 World Cup in Japan and Korea, a tournament Brazil won.

But Carlos has moved in a bid to clear his name by vehemently denying any wrong-doing, and pointed to his record of having passed several drug tests at the nine clubs he played for over a 20-year period.

'I vehemently repudiate the irresponsible accusations made by ARD and reaffirm that I have never pulled any stunt that would let me take advantage of my colleagues,' he said in a statement reported by Globoesporte.

'The report cites the name of a doctor, whom I have never met in my life, and my lawyers are already working to refute the charges in court and publicly try them before a judge.'

During a long investigation into doping in Brazilian sport, led by the acclaimed journalist Hajo Seppelt, undercover reporters obtained substances including steroids and EPO from a doctor, Julio Cesar Alves, who has claimed to provide doping substances to dozens of Brazilian stars across multiple sports for more than a decade.

Runner Eliane Pereira, who has represented her country, told Seppelt she had been given doping products since the age of 17 by Alves.

Marco Aurelio Klein, who was until re-



cently the head of Brazil's anti-doping organisation, told Seppelt that a dossier of sportsman's statements about their visits to Dr Alves had been handed to prosecutors in 2015.

Among paperwork compiled as part of a potential case against Dr Alves was a claim that Roberto Carlos, who won the Champions League three times with Real among many trophies in his career, visited Dr Alves in July 2002, within weeks of the World Cup.

Filed by undercover reporters pretending to want drugs for performance-enhancing reasons, Dr Alves told them: 'I treated Roberto Carlos. The national player. He came to me at the early age of 15. He was a lanky boy. I developed his thighs. It was me who made Roberto Carlos's thighs into what they are today.'

The documentary, 'Doping top secret: Brazil's dirty game', also included Dr Alves making claims that he continues to work with a wide range of sportsmen, including cyclists from Spain, Belgium and Germany, and footballers from around the world, including in Europe.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Nervous Bolt wins final 100 meters race on home soil

An emotional Usain Bolt recovered from a moderate start to win his final 100 meters sprint on home soil, clocking 10.03 seconds at the 2nd Racers Grand Prix in Kingston on Saturday.

The multiple Olympic and world gold medalist, who will retire after August's world championships in London, confessed to being a nervous wreck before running his last race on Jamaican soil.

'The run, it was just ok. I must say it was ok. I don't think I've ever been that nervous running a 100m,' Bolt said after a lap of honor before a packed stadium, including International Association of Athletics Federations President Sebastian Coe and the top brass of Jamaican politics including Prime Minister Andrew Holness.

'I think that was possibly one of my worst race. My execution was poor, my start was poor as always. I think in the last bit I lost it a little.'

'But I didn't expect anything spectacular... my first race since January when I ran a 150m and some relays in Australia so I just wanted to stay injury free, put on a show for the crowd and shown them I'm thankful for



the support over the years.

'Just the atmosphere and the people, the support they came out and give me tonight, it was really nerve racking. I never expected this, I knew it was going to be Big, the stadium was ram packed so thank you guys for coming out and supporting me.'

Running from lane five, Bolt took control of the race

before the halfway mark and pulled away to the delight of more than 30,000 spectators.

'It's Big to see everybody that turned out. It shows that what I've done for the sport is a big deal to them and they really appreciate it,' said the 30-year-old.

'So thank you and it was my honor to put the sport of track and field at the top and to continue to dominate. I'll try my best even when I've hung up my spikes, to really continue to push track and field in anyway possible.'

The double sprint world record holder, who has amassed eight Olympic golds and 13 world championship medals, will make his final bow in August in the British capital, where he will only run the shorter sprint despite having a wildcard for the 200m.

'It will definitely just be the 100. I know a lot of people really want to see me run it (200m) but the 100m will be the one cause I know people really want to see that also,' Bolt said.

'I'm just going there to do my best and to come through victorious as always.'

(Source: Reuters)

Fans are our 12th man against Uzbekistan: Carlos Queiroz

S P O R T S Iran national football team coach Carlos Queiroz calls for fans to pack out Azadi Stadium for 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifier against Uzbekistan.

Team Melli will host Uzbekistan on Monday at the Azadi Stadium and a win will see team advance to the World Cup.

Iran stand on the brink of advancing to successive FIFA World Cups for the first time in their history.

"Uzbekistan are strong and we need to our fans as Iran's 12th man. If we want to reach our standards we've planned we need to concentrate 90 minutes and show a good performance. Team Melli have to be strong both in attack and defense," Queiroz said in the pre-match news conference.

"Our best player in the match against Uzbekistan is our fans. All teams need the fans and we will have an easier work with them," the former Real Madrid coach added.

Unbeaten in seven qualifying games, Iran have been in dominant form in Group A, having yet to concede a goal on the Road to Russia.

"In football you can't achieve anything without hard work. We will see our match as a World Cup final. I am sure we will get a good result on Monday," he added.

"Iran have not qualified for the World Cup yet and after the final whistle we can talk about that. We know that Uzbekistan are candidate to finish the campaign as the first or second team. The match against Uzbekistan is our most important game in the competition," Queiroz concluded.



Werder Bremen Alexander Nouri comes to Tehran



S P O R T S Werder Bremen Alexander Nouri has traveled to Tehran, capital of Iran on Sunday.

The 37-year-old Iranian-German coach will attend Iran and Uzbekistan match in the 2018 World Cup qualifier on Monday.

The match will take place in Tehran's Azadi Stadium and a victory would see Iran qualify for the 2018 World Cup with two remaining matches.

Alexander Nouri is a retired Iranian-German footballer and current coach of Werder Bremen. He played professionally for 14 years with Werder Bremen, Seattle Sounders, Uerdingen 05, VfL Osnabrück, Holstein Kiel and VfB Oldenburg.

According to Iranian media, Werder Bremen club's officials have also traveled to Tehran to sign a bilateral cooperation with Iranian football club Saipa.

Iran lose to Canada in U-23 World Wheelchair Basketball Championship



S P O R T S Iran lost to Canada 68-59 in the third day of competition at the 2017 Men's U-23 World Championship on Sunday.

Ben Moronchuk paced the Canadian attack with a game-high 38 points and 12 rebounds for a double double while Liam Hickey contributed the game's only triple double with 14 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists.

Iran's Mojtaba Kamali countered

with 23 points and Ali Karimi Kerdabadi secured a double double with 13 points and 11 assists.

Iran started the campaign with a 72-68 win over Australia and lost to Turkey 71-53 in Day 2.

The Iranian wheelchair basketball team will face Brazil on Tuesday.

The U-23 World Wheelchair Basketball Championship will take place from June 8 to 16 in Toronto, Ontario Canada.

Montazeri believes Iranian success due to years of hard work

Tehran: Pejman Montazeri believes the Islamic Republic of Iran's dominant form in Group A of the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 qualifiers is down to years of hard work as Team Melli stand on the brink of advancing to the global showpiece.

Carlos Queiroz's side sit four points clear at the top of the standings after claiming five wins and two draws from their seven qualifying games with a defence that has still yet to be breached.

Iran now welcome Uzbekistan to Azadi Stadium on Monday needing a win to qualify for a second successive FIFA World Cup for the first time in their history.

"During the past four or five years we worked very hard and we had a bunch of young guys who are now mature enough and we think we have reached the goal we were looking for," said Montazeri.

"The team is ready and we are strong defensively and play very compact. I think we reached the goal we wanted to achieve five years ago."

The Qatar-based defender played all three games at the FIFA World Cup in Brazil in 2014 as Iran claimed one point from three games and exited at the first hurdle.

But the points tally does not tell the whole story as



the Asian powerhouse came within seconds of holding Argentina to a scoreless draw only for Lionel Messi to pop up with a stoppage-time winner.

Aside from a quarter-final exit to Iraq in the AFC Asian Cup Australia 2015, IR Iran have gone from strength to strength since and, should they progress to Russia, will head to the tournament with high hopes.

"Concerning the last World Cup, one of the best memories was coming back to Iran and people being so happy with how we performed," added Montazeri.

"If we can qualify for this World Cup, people will now be expecting us to get through the group stage, so reaching the second round would be our main goal.

"But it's better to talk about this once we qualify because we still haven't and we have one of our most important games of the past seven or eight years, so we are only focusing on this."

Uzbekistan arrive in Tehran in third place in Group A with eyes firmly fixed on catching second-place Korea Republic, who stand a point above them in an automatic qualification spot.

And the hosts will be wary of Monday's visitors after the Central Asians came away with all three points following a 1-0 win in the 2014 qualification campaign almost five years ago.

"We know it will probably be one of the most difficult games we have had," said Montazeri, whose side defeated Uzbekistan 1-0 in Tashkent earlier in the campaign.

"We know them very well and have analysed them for two weeks so we know it's going to be a tough game. But everyone is focused and we hope to get the result we need."

(Source: AFC)

Mahrez waits on Barcelona after receiving Arsenal offer

LEICESTER winger Riyad Mahrez is waiting on an offer from Barcelona, according to reports in Spain.

Mahrez has been linked with a big-money move from the King Power this summer after Leicester failed to secure European football for next season.

The Algeria international has made it clear he wants to join a top club, with Leicester wanting at least £35million to consider selling their prize asset.

Premier League duo Arsenal and Chelsea are both said to be interested, while Barcelona are also reportedly fond of the winger.

And according to Spanish outlet

SPORT, Arsenal have already made an offer for Mahrez in an effort to win the race for his signature.

But the 26-year-old is reportedly waiting for Barcelona to make their move as the Nou Camp is his preferred destination.

SPORT claim his agent has spoken with Barca officials, but the Catalan giants are reportedly focused on signing a new right-back and a midfielder this summer.

Barca are also unwilling to meet Leicester's £35m valuation and are said to prefer either re-signing Everton winger Gerard Deulofeu or renewing their interest in Borussia Dortmund's

Ousmane Dembele.

Mahrez, who cost the Foxes just £400,000 in 2014, revealed last month that he intends to leave Leicester this summer.

His statement said: "I've always enjoyed a good relationship with the chairman and everyone at the club, and I hope I have been able to repay the faith shown to me by my performances and commitment on the pitch during my time here.

"I've had the four best seasons of my career at Leicester and have loved every moment. I feel immense pride to have been a part of what we have achieved during my time at the club,



culminating in becoming Premier League champions.

"The relationship I share with the club and our amazing fans is something I will treasure forever and I truly hope they will understand and respect my decision.

(Source: Express)

Iran to secure place at 2018 World Cup with win over Uzbekistan

Group A leader Iran will host third-placed Uzbekistan at Azadi Stadium on Monday knowing a win will see the team advances to a second successive FIFA World Cup.

Unbeaten in seven qualifying games, Iran have been in dominant form in Group A, having yet to concede a goal on the Road to Russia and boasting an attacking line-up featuring the likes of Sardar Azmoun and Mehdi Taremi.



The White Wolves of Uzbekistan are in familiar territory in third place in the standings, but a shock away victory would see the team remains in firm contention for a top-two finish with two games remaining.

Carlos Queiroz's team is ready for the match with a 2-0 friendly win over Montenegro thanks to a brace from Azmoun.

Uzbekistan also defeated Thailand 2-0 in a friendly in Tashkent last week with goals from Temurkhodja Abduhalikov and Sardor Rashidov, who will both hope to help their team become the first side to unlock the Iranian defence.

(Source: AFC)

Iran is one of world's best volleyball countries, Serbia captain says

Serbia volleyball captain Marko Podrascanin says that Iran is one of the best volleyball countries in the world and the Iranian fans love the sport.

Serbia defeated Iran 3-1 (20 - 25, 23 - 25, 25 - 16, 16 - 25) in Pool D1 in the full-packed Azadi Hall.

"Thanks to the crowd in Iran. Iran is one of the best volleyball country in the world and the crowd love volleyball here. They are really a great team. They have great players, great staff. I wish all the best for them in the World League and Asian championship," Podrascanin said.

"I am very happy for this victory. It was our best game in the World League for this summer. We played a good match especially in the first two sets. And after the third set, we had a good reaction in the fourth set getting together for victory," he added.

(Source: FIVB)

Djeparov believes Uzbekistan could defeat Iran in Tehran

Server Djeparov has set his sights on winning the remaining three FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 qualifiers as Uzbekistan prepare to face Group A leaders Iran on Monday.

The Uzbeks go into the tie in third place, just a point behind second-placed Korea Republic, but against an unbeaten Iran side who will advance to the tournament in Russia should they secure all three points at Azadi Stadium.

"I think everything is very simple, we need to win the remaining three games so we won't be in the play-offs and will go straight to the World Cup," said the two-time AFC Player of the Year.

"[Being 34] is a big motivation for me to get to the World Cup but it's not just for me, it's for the people of Uzbekistan. People have been dreaming of the World Cup for a long time and we need to realize these dreams."

"We have been very strong for the last eight years, especially in the previous qualification campaign - that was the strongest generation I have ever played with," said Djeparov.

"We were doing well, but we were one goal away from qualifying for the World Cup, which was very disappointing.

"After the game when we heard Korea had lost their game [to Iran] and thought about all the chances we missed, I was very upset. I didn't want to play football anymore, I was thinking about quitting and didn't even want to watch any games."

The strong side Djeparov refers to was in fact the last to win a FIFA World Cup qualifying game against Iran in Tehran, where Ulugbek Bakayev's goal secured a 1-0 victory in November 2012.

Team Melli went on to recover from that defeat and win their remaining three games to advance to Brazil and have not looked back since.

Five wins and two draws in the current campaign has left Carlos Queiroz's team on the brink of qualification for a second successive World Cup, yet Djeparov remains optimistic ahead of Monday's clash.

"Yes, this gives us confidence that we can beat any team, even in the away matches," added Djeparov.

"We believe we have a chance to beat the strongest team in our group and that's the confidence we received from that game."

(Source: AFC)



