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## Sculptor Parviz Tanavoli to realize his "Lions" dream

By Manijeh Rezapoor

**TEHRAN** — Prominent sculptor Parviz Tanavoli, best known for his sculpture series "Heech", will display his collection "Lions" at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, making his dream of 50 years come true.

About 150 artworks created by the artist with the central theme of the lion, beside his private collection of lion-themed works, as well as lion-themed ancient artifacts of Iran borrowed from different Iranian museums will go on display in the exhibition "Parviz Tanavoli and the Lions of Iran" opening on July 3.

"I am very happy to hold this

exhibit. This has been one of my dreams over the past 50 years. Since the time I became familiar with lions (in my culture), I have been constantly doing studies and research about lions," Tanavoli said in a press conference held at the museum on Monday.

"We have two ancient symbols in our culture: one is the lion and the other is the cedar tree. These two are eternal symbols of Iran, and I have not found any ancient culture like Iran to have had such permanent symbols, and this makes this exhibit unique in the world," Tanavoli said. **→16**

## Eni, NIOC to ink oil, gas MOUs today

ECONOMY

**TEHRAN** — Representatives of the Italian oil major Eni will arrive in Tehran today to ink two memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

Based on the MOUs, Eni will conduct development studies on the phase 3 of Darkhovin oil field in south-west Iran as well as Kish gas field in the Persian Gulf, Tasnim news agency reported.

The Italian company is to hand in its proposed master development plan (MDP) to NIOC after a six-month period. In August 2011, NIOC and a con-

sortium of Iranian companies signed a \$1.6 billion deal to develop the third phase of the Darkhovin oilfield but due to the West imposed sanctions on Iran the project didn't witness any progress as planned.

The project was aimed to produce 71,000 barrels of crude oil on a daily basis.

The Darkhovin oilfield's in-place oil reserve is estimated at over five billion barrels.

Development plan of the Kish gas field started in 2007. The field holds around 66 trillion cubic feet of in-situ gas and 514 million barrels of condensate.

## Sovereign investors tweak portfolios for environmental risk

Some sovereign investors are reducing their exposure to fossil fuels or seeking clean alternatives to protect their portfolios from rising environmental risk.

Norway's \$900 billion sovereign wealth fund (SWF) -- itself financed by oil sales -- and the New Zealand Super Fund (NZSF) are among those adjusting investments in anticipation of tougher environmental rules or damage from the impact of global warming.

UN scientists say greenhouse gases are the main cause of warming and while the U.S. administration has questioned the science, many countries are introducing rules to cut emissions.

Norway's SWF, the world's largest, is divesting from companies that derive more than 30 percent of their turnover or activity from coal, a major source of greenhouse gases.

The NZSF said last year it would set a target by the end of June to reduce its carbon footprint.

France's SWF Caisse des Depots (CDC) is also aiming to reduce the carbon footprint of its equity portfolio by 20 percent by 2020, and is exiting companies that derive more than 20 percent of revenue from coal.

Investors have committed to divesting some \$5 trillion from fossil fuel companies, according to Arabella Advisors, with pension funds leading the way.

In June, Swedish pension fund, AP7 sold its investments in six energy-related companies it says violate the 2015 Paris Agreement, which aims to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius and has pushed environmental risk up the agenda.

That is despite U.S. President Donald Trump's decision last month to take the United States out of the agreement, which attracted international condemnation.

A 2016 study by the London School of Economics and others put value at risk at \$2.5 trillion in a 'business as usual' emissions scenario of 2.5 degrees Celsius of warming by 2100.

(Source: Reuters)

## Russia starts producing equipment for Bushehr nuclear plant

POLITICS

**Valery Limarenko**, the president of JSC NIAEP-holding Company of JSC Atomstroyexport (JSC ASE), said on Monday that Russia has started production of equipment necessary for the construction of new reactors at the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran.

"The contracts for the production of a melt localization device, the so-called core catcher, for the second and third NPP reactors have already been signed. Moreover, the manufacturer has already started to produce

this complex equipment," Sputnik quoted Limarenko as saying at the IXth International Forum ATOMEXPO 2017.

He added that contracts on deliveries of equipment for machinery rooms were also signed.

Limarenko also said that the issue of purchasing the Bushehr nuclear power plant's steam generators and the automation systems of technological process control is also on the agenda.

"This is a difficult and detailed work, which involves a large number of Atomstroyexport

specialists, the main purpose of which is to supply the equipment in time. Such approach will allow reducing the period of construction, as the equipment will be delivered directly to the installation area," he said.

Tehran transferred to Russia the first tranche to finance the building of the second stage of the Bushehr plant in December 2016.

According to Russia's state-owned nuclear corporation Rosatom, construction and installation works under Bushehr-2 project began on March 14, 2017.

## Russia to treat U.S. jets in Syria as 'targets'

Russia has said it will treat U.S. warplanes operating in parts of Syria where its air forces are present as "targets" amid a diplomatic row caused by the downing of a Syrian jet.

The country's defence ministry said the change in position would apply to all aircraft, including those operating as part of the U.S.-backed coalition.

It will also suspend a hotline between Russia and the U.S. set up to prevent mid-air collisions.

The ministry said in a statement: "All kinds of airborne vehicles, including aircraft and UAVs of the international coalition detected to the west of the Euphrates River will be tracked by the Russian SAM systems as air targets."

The warning followed after a U.S. F-18 Super Hornet shot down a Syrian army SU-22 jet on Sunday in the countryside southwest of Raqqa - the first such downing of a Syrian

jet by the U.S. since the start of the country's civil war in 2011.

Washington said the jet had dropped bombs near U.S.-backed forces but Damascus said the plane was downed while flying a mission against Isis militants.

Russia's Defence Ministry said the suspension of its communication channel with the Americans would begin immediately.

The U.S. did not use its communication channel with Russia ahead of the downing of the Syrian government warplane, the ministry was quoted as saying, accusing the U.S. of a "deliberate failure to make good on its commitments" under the de-confliction deal.

"The shooting down of a Syrian Air Force jet in Syria's airspace is a cynical violation of Syria's sovereignty," the ministry said.

"The U.S. repeated combat operations under the guise of 'combating terrorism' against the legitimate armed forces of a

UN member-country are a flagrant violation of international law and an actual military aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic."

Russia, which has been providing air cover for Syria's President, Bashar al-Assad, since 2015, has an agreement with the US aimed at preventing incidents involving either country's warplanes engaged in operations in Syria.

Downing the jet was akin to "helping the terrorists that the U.S. is fighting against", Sergei Ryabkov, Russia's deputy foreign minister, said.

"In accordance with rules of engagement and in collective self-defence of Coalition partnered forces, it was immediately shot down by a US F/A-18E Super Hornet," a statement released by US Central Command on Sunday said.

(Source: Independent)



## UK protesters mark Quds Day in London

Scores of protesters have taken to the streets of London to mark the International Quds Day in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The demonstration was held on the last Sunday of the holy month of Ramadan and saw people marching down Regent Street before gathering at the junction with Oxford Street.

The protesters chanted "Free Palestine" and carried signs that read "Boycott Israel", "Freedom for Palestine" and "Zionism = racism."

## Iraqi PM's visit to Iran will open new chapter in ties: ambassador

POLITICS

**TEHRAN** — Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad, Iraj Masjedi, said on Monday that the upcoming visit by Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to Tehran will help open a new chapter in economic relations between the two neighboring countries.

The Iraqi prime minister kicked off his regional tour on Monday by first visiting Saudi Arabia. He will then tour Iran and Kuwait respectively.

The ambassador said that Al-Abadi's visit will take place in line with the exchange of visits between the two sides' officials and delegations. The Iraqi prime minister will confer with Iran's high-ranking officials on issues of mutual interest and regional developments as well, he said.

The ambassador also said Iraq plays a significant role in regional developments and everyone is aware of Baghdad's role in fighting terrorism.

During his visits to Riyadh and Tehran the Iraqi prime minister is widely expected to discuss the rising tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Saudi Arabia has toughened its language against Iran since the conclusion of the nuclear deal between Tehran and great powers.

In remarks in May, the Saudi crown prince and defense minister ruled out the possibility of any talks with Iran and claimed that Iran wants to take over the holy sites in the Saudi kingdom.

Iran has been a vocal critic of the Saudi-led war on Yemen and criticized the country for suppressing the pro-democracy movement in Bahrain. Tehran also considers Saudi Arabia as the ideological driver of extremist groups in and around the world.

The visits by the Iraq prime minister also comes as Saudi Arabia has been leading a blockade of Qatar, a move unprecedented in the Arab world since Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Analysts say since U.S. President Donald Trump visited Riyadh last month the Saudi kingdom has become more aggressive toward its neighbors.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran is global missile power: top general

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The chief of staff of the **d e s k** armed forces has said Iran is one of the world's major missile powers, noting the hegemonic powers cannot confront the Islamic Republic.

Major General Mohammad Baqeri on Monday highlighted the weakness of domineering powers in the face of Iran and said they are not capable of confronting the country, the YJC reported.

He added Iran is in permanent competition with domineering powers in various areas, including the missile field.

The remarks by the top general came one day after Iran fired six medium-range missiles at ISIS positions in Syria.



Admiral: Iran-China drill aimed to ensure regional security

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Navy Commander **d e s k** Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari told reporters on Sunday that the recent naval exercise between the Islamic Republic and China was aimed at ensuring the security at the northern Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

A Chinese flotilla of warships berthed at Iran's waters in the Persian Gulf for four-days and conducted a joint war game with the Iranian naval forces on the last day of their stay.



IRGC kills Ansar al-Furqan ringleader

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The IRGC Ground Force **d e s k** has killed the leader of the terrorist Ansar al-Furqan group in the southeastern province of Sistan-Balouchestan.

In a recent anti-terror operation in Qasr Qand heights in Sistan-Balouchestan, the IRGC forces killed Jalil Qan-barzahi, Fars reported.

In the clashes between Ansar al-Furqan militants and IRGC forces in the district over the past few days, a number of the members of the terrorist group were killed, the news agency further reported.



Foreign Ministry condoles with Portugal over lethal blaze

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ministry of Foreign **d e s k** Affairs spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Monday expressed deep sorrow over a recent deadly blaze in Portugal and condoled with the families of the victims.

At least 62 people were killed and dozens wounded in huge forest fires in central Portugal. Many of the victims died in their cars as they tried to flee the flames.

Portugal's Prime Minister António Costa described the blaze as "the greatest tragedy we have seen in recent years in terms of forest fires."



Iran is main regional player: Spanish envoy

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Spanish ambassador **d e s k** to Tehran has called Iran the main player in the West Asia region and said the nuclear deal is key to the success of the Iranian foreign diplomacy.

Speaking to IRNA, Eduardo López Busquets said that commitment of all sides to the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is the basis for expansion of ties.

"Once the JCPOA was reached, the main obstacle for the deepening of relations between Iran and the EU and its member states was eliminated," the minister said, according to a translation of his remarks.



IRGC fully quenches terror gang in southeastern Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — IRGC forces have **d e s k** fully destroyed a terrorist team in southeastern Iran, the IRGC Ground Force chief announced on Sunday.

On Thursday the IRGC killed a number of the terrorist group in the town of Qasr-e Qand, Sistan-Baluchestan province, but some succeeded to flee.

"A terrorist team, which we had hunted down a few days ago in the town of Qasr-e Qand, was completely dismantled today after the killing of five more of its elements," Mohammad Pakpour said, Fars reported.

He said the terrorists were members of Ansar al-Furqan group.

# Leader: Iranian nation will slap U.S. in the face

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Supreme **d e s k** Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Sunday that the Iranian nation will "slap" U.S. authorities in the face, responding to U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson who said on Wednesday that Washington's policy toward Iran is driven by relying on regime change in the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks while hosting for iftar (fast breaking) a number of families whose sons or fathers have been martyred in the fight against terrorists in Syria and Iraq as well as those whose family members have been martyred while guarding national borders against terrorists and hooligans.

"Since the victory of the Revolution, U.S. statesmen have always sought to change the establishment of the Islamic Republic but they won't manage to slap the Iranian nation, but it is the Iranian nation who will slap them," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

Tillerson, speaking on Wednesday in a hearing on the 2018 State Department budget before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said, "Our policy towards Iran is to push back on this hegemony, contain



their ability to develop obviously nuclear weapons, and to work toward support of those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition of that government. Those elements are there, certainly as we know."

The Leader also branded the remarks by U.S. officials as "gibberish," noting "the

uttering of gibberish by the U.S. president is not a new issue because the Islamic establishment has faced various plots since its inception but the ill-wishers of the Iranian nation have not succeeded to do a damn thing."

He further lambasted Washington for failing to know the Iranian nation,

## Iran fires missiles at ISIS in Syria for Tehran attacks

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Late on Sunday Iran's **d e s k** Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps fired six missiles into eastern Syria, targeting Islamic State strongholds in retaliation for the recent ISIS-claimed terrorist attacks in Tehran.

The national TV showed footages of missile attacks launched from western Iran.

"In the operation, code-named Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Destiny), the Guards launched six medium-range ballistic missiles at various targets in ranges between 650km to 700km," Tasnim news agency quoted IRGC spokesman Ramazan Sharif as saying on Monday.

Targeting "headquarters and gathering centers of Takfiri terrorists" in the Deir al Zour region of eastern Syria, the missiles passed through the Iraqi airspace.

"The missiles were launched in coordination with Syria," the IRGC official said.

The IRGC launched the missiles from western provinces of Kermanshah and Kurdistan, home to Sunni Kurdish populations.

"The missile launches from the two Sunni-majority provinces at headquarters of Daesh terrorists carry the message of unity of all Iranians in the face of terrorists," Sharif added.

The missiles successfully hit the targets, Sharif said. The missile operation "is just a very small part of the capability of Iran's punitive force against the terrorists and enemies," Sharif further noted.

Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the IRGC aerospace unit, hailed the missile raids, saying any more evil act against Iran will result in "costly consequences".



"Our enemies should know that Tehran is not London or Paris," Hajizadeh stated, a reference to the European capitals coming under numerous terrorist attacks over the past years.

Iran vowed quick revenge after ISIS suicide bombers and gunmen stormed the parliament and the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini on June 7, killing 18 and injuring at least 56.

In a statement released after the attacks, the IRGC vowed avenge, saying, "The spilling of any pure blood

**IRGC spokesman says the missile operation "is just a very small part of the capability of Iran's punitive force against the terrorists and enemies."**

## Syria notified of missile operation, Iran says

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Irani- **d e s k** an Foreign Ministry said on Monday that the Syrian government was "informed" of the missile attacks at Islamic State strongholds in eastern Syria.

Late on Sunday, Iran fired missiles at Islamic State targets in Syria in retaliation for the jihadists' deadly attacks in Tehran on June 7.

"Having informed the legitimate Syrian government (of the missile attacks), fatal blows were dealt to terrorist groups and their headquarters in Deir al Zour," ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi told ISNA.

"The missile strikes at strongholds and headquarters of takfiri terrorists were simply a "soft slap" and a warning to awaken those who have failed so far to understand the realities of the region and their boundaries," the Foreign Ministry official remarked.

"As we have said many times, we feel free to defend our security and stability, and will do our utmost to contain terrorism, insecurity and instability," he added.

■ **Missiles target ISIS suicide car bomb sites**

Six surface-to-surface missiles were launched on Sunday from western bases in Iran at command centers, logistic sites and suicide car bomb factories in Syria's eastern Deir al Zour area, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Monday.

The missile strikes are Iran's first direct military move in the region since the Iraqi invasion of the country in 1980, and the strongest signal to regional archrivals, mainly Saudi Arabia, which has sought to test Iran's patience.

■ **Iran calls for 'genuine' fight against terrorism**

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also

renewed Tehran's push for the World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE), calling on all countries to join hands in the "genuine fight" against terrorism.

In December 2013, the General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to approve President Rouhani's WAVE proposal, which called on all nations across the globe to denounce violence and extremism.

Backing the missile operation, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted: "Iran's missile capability protects its citizens in lawful self-defense & advances common global fight to eradicate ISIS and extremist terror."

The attacks come after the June 7 twist assault at Iran's parliament and the mausoleum of the founder of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah Khomeini which killed 18 people and injured 56.

Islamic State took credit for the attacks.

emphasizing "these inexperienced individuals yet to know the Iranian nation and officials, and when they receive a slap in the face, they will then find out what law and order is."

Ayatollah Khamenei was referring to the current U.S. administration under "novice and inexperienced" Donald Trump, who has shown a very hostile face toward Iran.

"Do not look at the bluster of this guy who has just come [to office as president] in America," the Leader said, according to Press TV.

The Leader likened Trump administration officials to "nascent hooligans who scare people by brandishing their knives until somebody punches them in the mouth."

The Leader further accused enemies of the Islamic Republic of seeking to rob the nation of its sublime values such as "martyrdom, jihad, patience, and the resistance of the families of the martyred."

"These concepts and values are the main factors of preserving the Islamic Republic and its might" he underscored.

The Leader added, "Everyone, whether the enemies, sincere allies and friends whose hearts throb at times, should know that the Islamic Republic is standing firm and with absolute power."

will not go unanswered."

Also, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, head of the Iranian armed forces, pledged "unforgettable lessons" to terrorists and their backers after the Tehran assault.

Former IRGC chief Mohsen Rezaei tweeted, "This was just the beginning of the revenge. Harsher slap is underway".

Rezaei also called the missile attacks "the message of Iran's authority" to "the supporters of terrorism."

Earlier, Iran had implicitly suggested that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, its chief regional foe, had insinuated the terrorist attacks in Tehran.

The operation comes just days after the U.S. Senate passed the Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act by an overwhelming margin, a new sanctions legislation which targets Iran's ballistic missile program and applies sanctions against the IRGC.

The attack also sends a clear warning signal to Saudi Arabia which has been trying for some time to test Iran's patience.

"Saudi Arabia and other countries supporting terrorism should know that the Islamic Republic jokes with no one," senior MP Alaedin Boroujerdi said on Monday.

"We have entered a new phase of fighting terrorists in the region," added Boroujerdi, chairman of the parliamentary national security and foreign policy committee.

Mohammadreza Aref, the leader of the pro-reform Hope faction, praised the missile attacks on ISIS strongholds, saying it was a "response to ill-wishers of the Islamic Iran".

Iran indirectly pointed the finger of suspicion at Saudi Arabia and the U.S.

The IRGC announced the missile strike was conducted in retaliation for the ISIS raids in Tehran, saying "Tehran is not London or Paris."

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

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

It remain to be seen how Tehran's military action will influence the Astana peace talks, an initiative taken by Russia, Turkey and Iran to bring a peaceful end to the Syrian crisis.

## Zarif calls on Arab states to avoid tension

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister **d e s k** Mohammad Javad Zarif, who was on tour of North Africa, has expressed concerns over the conflicts among Arab countries, calling on them to avoid tension.

"The Crisis that has occurred in the Persian Gulf region is a source of concern for us. Since the start of the crisis, we have called on all sides to avoid exacerbation of tension and solve problems through dialogue," ISNA quoted Zarif saying on Monday.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have broken off ties and imposed sanctions on Qatar, accusing it of supporting Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Zarif who started a two-day tour of North Africa on Sunday visited Algeria, Mauritania and Tunisia.

On Sunday he met with Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal and Abdelkader Messahel, the Algerian



foreign minister.

During a joint press conference with Messahel, Zarif said that Iran and Algeria share common views on the necessity of international cooperation in fighting terrorism and solution of the crises through dialogue.

For his part, Messahel said sovereignty of the

countries should be respected. He added problems between the countries should be solved without foreign interference.

The Iranian foreign minister also held separate meetings with Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz and Ahmed Ould Teguedi, the country's foreign minister, on Sunday. Zarif left Mauritania for Tunisia on Monday.

Hossein Jaber Ansari, the deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs, said the North Africa tour "falls within the Islamic Republic of Iran's unwavering policy in relations with Arab countries".

He said during the fasting month of Ramadan consolidating "brotherly and friendly relations between countries" are put on agenda.

Jaber Ansari who was accompanying Zarif told ISNA that during the visits the sides held talks on "new developments in the region".



# Iraq forces push into Mosul Old City, warn ISIL 'surrender or die'

Iraqi government forces have pushed deeper in Mosul's militant-held district of Old City as they are battling to purge ISIL (Daesh) militants out of their last bastion in the country's second largest city, warning civilians to stay inside and telling extremists to "surrender or die."

Staff Major General Maan al-Saadi, a top commander in the elite Counter Terrorism Service, said Iraqi forces advanced into the Old City at 6:00 a.m. local time (0300 GMT) on Monday, and took control of new areas in the Faruq neighborhood.

He added that Daesh Takfiris are putting up fierce resistance in the wake of the Iraqi army's territorial gains.

"Daesh resistance has been fierce. They have blocked every entrance, planted IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and booby-trapped houses our forces might be near. Penetrating was very difficult. Today the fighting is face to face," Saadi pointed out.

Taking back the Old City of Mosul, a densely populated warren of narrow alleyways on the western side of Mosul, is crucial to recapturing the whole of the former Daesh stronghold in Iraq.

The United Nations says around 150,000 civilians are trapped in the neighborhood along with hundreds of Daesh militants.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said on June 16 that members of the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group are holding more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians as human shields in the Old City of western Mosul.

The presiding UNHCR representative in Iraq, Bruno Geddo, told reporters in the Swiss city of Geneva that Daesh snipers try to kill anyone trying to leave the area, stressing that the small number of civilians who manage to escape are "deeply traumatized."

Meanwhile, Iraqi forces have stationed their four-wheel drive Humvee military light trucks near Grand al-Nuri Mosque, where purported Daesh ringleader Ibrahim al-Samarrai aka Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi gave his famous speech on the formation of the terror group back in June 2014, and mounted speakers facing Mosul's Old City.

The loudspeakers blared "You have only this choice: surrender or die" to Daesh militants. They also addressed civilians in the Old City, saying Iraqi forces "are about to end your suf-



fering."

The development came after Iraqi forces dropped nearly 500,000 leaflets over Mosul late last night, stating that government forces "have started attacking from all directions."

The leaflets asked civilians to "stay away from open places and... take any opportunity that arises during the fighting" to escape.

International aid group Save the Children says some 50,000 children are trapped in the Old City of Mosul.

"They are running out of food and water, and face violence wherever they turn," Ana Locsin, Iraq Country Director at the charity, said.

She added, "The impact of artillery and explosive weapons is likely to get even more deadly and indiscriminate, putting

vulnerable children at greatest risk."

Iraqi army soldiers and volunteer fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units, commonly known by their Arabic name, Hashd al-Sha'abi, have made sweeping gains against Takfiri Daesh elements since launching the Mosul operation on October 17, 2016.

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

An estimated 862,000 people have been displaced from Mosul ever since the battle to retake the city began nine months ago. A total of 195,000 civilians have also returned, mainly to the liberated areas of eastern Mosul.

(Source: agencies)

## Real victory will be in 5 years, says Macron camp after election win

President Emmanuel Macron's government on Monday promised to reshape France's political landscape after winning the commanding parliamentary majority he sought to push through far-reaching pro-growth reforms.

Macron's centrist Republic on the Move (LREM) party and its center-right Modem ally won 350 out of 577 lower house seats in Sunday's election, which marked a record low turnout for a parliamentary ballot in the postwar Fifth Republic.

Government spokesman Christophe Castaner said the high abstention rate -- more than 50 percent of voters stayed at home -- was a failure for the governing class and highlighted the need for a new politics.

"The real victory wasn't last night, it will be in five years' time when we have really changed things," Castaner told RTL radio.

He also said dissent would not be tolerated among the dozens elected on the Macron party ticket, including many newcomers such as 24-year-old law school graduate Typhanie Degois.

"Being a member of parliament for Republic on the Move is a commitment to Emmanuel Macron's presidential program. It's about loyalty," he said, adding that the previous Socialist government was dogged by dissenters pursuing personal goals.

Though lower than forecast by pollsters, Macron's majority swept aside France's main traditional parties, humiliating the Socialists and conservative The Republicans party that had alternated in power for decades.

"Victory for the Center" read the headline of the left-leaning Liberation newspaper. Financial paper Les Echos' banner read "The Successful Gamble."



Prime Minister Edouard Philippe and his government were set to resign later in the day or on Tuesday and form a new cabinet, which spokesman Castaner said he believed would again be led by Philippe.

Investors welcomed Macron's win, with the gap between French and German bond yields holding near its tightest level in seven months.

"After the reforms, which we expect Macron to implement, France could turn into the strongest of all major economies in Europe in the next decade, outclassing a Germany that is resting on its laurels and a UK that (through Brexit) is impairing its long-term growth prospects," said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at German bank Berenberg.

### ■ Budget constraints

Macron wants to move quickly on re-

laxing labor regulations before overhauling France's unwieldy pension system next year.

During the presidential campaign he also promised to cut corporate tax to 25 percent from 33 percent and make a 50 billion public investment in energy, vocational training and transport infrastructure.

But he will need to be mindful of a budget deficit that the Bank of France forecasts will once again breach the EU cap of 3 percent of national income this year.

"It is in France's interests, its political credibility, its economic credibility, to conform with its obligations," Pierre Moscovici, the EU's French commissioner for economic and financial affairs told TV channel Public Senat.

Sunday's high abstention rate means Macron will also have to tread carefully with

reforms in a country with muscular trade unions and a history of street protests that have forced many a government to dilute new legislation.

But with his wins in last month's presidential election and Sunday's parliament vote, he has routed the old political class.

France's youngest leader since Napoleon and having never before held elected office, Macron has seized on the growing resentment towards a political elite perceived as out of touch, and on public frustration at its failure to create jobs and spur stronger growth.

In winning the presidency in May, he filled a political vacuum created by disarray within the Socialist Party and the Republicans, with Sunday night capping a sequence of events that looked improbable a year ago.

The Republicans and their conservative allies will form the largest opposition bloc in parliament with 131 seats, while the far-right National Front won eight. The Socialist Party and allies won just 44, their lowest in decades.

"The collapse of the Socialist Party is beyond doubt. The president of the Republic has all the powers," Jean-Christophe Cambadelis said late on Sunday after announcing he would step down as party chief.

National Front leader Marine Le Pen promised her party would remain a source of strong opposition alongside other bigger parties, saying: "Don't write us off so fast."

Sunday's election saw a record number of women - 223 versus a previous high of 155 - voted into parliament, due largely to Macron's decision to field a gender-balanced candidate list.

(Source: Reuters)

## Britain, EU start historic Brexit talks

Britain and the European Union began their first formal Brexit negotiations Monday, under pressure to seal a deal amid disarray in London over whether to go for a hard or soft divorce.

At stake is not just Britain's future but also Europe's post-war political order and its place in the world which could be fatally undermined without an agreement by the March 2019 deadline.

The EU's chief negotiator, France's Michel Barnier, welcomed his counterpart David Davis with a handshake and smiles for the press in the European Commission's landmark headquarters in central Brussels flanked by the EU and British flags.

"Today we are launching negotiations on the orderly withdrawal of the UK from the EU," said Barnier, a former European commissioner and French foreign minister.

Their first task must be to "tackle the uncertainties caused by Brexit," he said, citing the rights of EU citizens in Britain and the possible impact on the open border between Northern Ireland and the republic.

"I hope that today we can identify priorities and a timetable to allow me to report to (EU leaders) later this week (that) we had a constructive opening of negotiations."

Davis, a prominent tough-talking figure in the "Leave" campaign, sounded a positive note too, saying "there is more that unites us than divides us."

"In testing times like these we are reminded of the values and resolve we share with our closest allies in Europe," he said, referring to the latest reported terror attack overnight in London and the loss of lives in forest fires in Portugal.

Davis said the talks would be carried out in "a positive and constructive tone," with Britain looking to forge a "strong and special partnership for the future."

- May's future in question -

Last year's Brexit vote came as a profound shock to Brussels against a backdrop of rising anti-EU sentiment, with many -- including now US President Donald Trump -- predicting the bloc's eventual break-up.

May officially triggered the two-year Brexit process in March when she was riding high in the opinion polls.



She then announced -- despite having ruled it out repeatedly -- that she would seek a fresh mandate to give her the authority to push through a Brexit deal, or even walk away without one if need be.

But instead she lost her parliamentary majority, putting that hard-line approach and her political future in doubt after the disastrous June 8 election.

Britain appears to have given in on the EU's insistence that the negotiations first focus on three key divorce issues, before moving onto the future EU-UK relationship and a possible trade deal.

Those issues are Britain's exit bill, estimated by Brussels at around 100 billion euros (\$112 billion), the rights of three million EU nationals living in Britain and one million Britons on the continent, and the status of the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

"Sitting down for a first formal negotiation round is something in and of itself," an EU source told AFP.

After the initial shock of last year's Brexit vote, the bloc at 27 appears to have steadied in recent months and got a real boost with the election of new French President Emmanuel Macron in May.

Macron, a committed pro-EU leader and ally of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, easily won French legislative elections on Sunday, cementing his power base.

- 'Rebuild trust' -

Worried by immigration and loss of sovereignty, Britain voted last year to end its four-decades-old membership of the 28-country bloc -- the first state ever to do so.

An increasingly concerned EU has been pushing London to hurry up, with time running out for a deal and three months already gone since May triggered the two-year Article 50 EU exit process.

Monday's talks however are likely to focus on the practical details of timings for the coming months, with the big, divisive issues left aside for now, officials said.

May herself will also have a chance to update the other 27 EU leaders on her Brexit plans at a summit in Brussels on Thursday.

"The best way we can spend this week is to rebuild trust," rather than tackle the big difficult issues right at the start, another European source said.

Many in Brussels fear that London has no real strategy, with May under pressure at home, still trying to close a deal with a conservative Northern Ireland party to stay in power, and facing criticism for her handling of the aftermath of a devastating tower block fire.

Finance minister Philip Hammond confirmed Sunday that it was still the plan to quit not only the EU but the customs union and single market as well.

But he warned that "we need to get there via a slope, not via a cliff edge."

Barnier has warned that the negotiations must be wrapped up by October 2018 to allow time for all parties to ratify a final accord by March 2019.

(Source: AP)

## Driver held after van hits Muslims near London mosque

### Mosque attacker: 'I want to kill all Muslims'

Muslims leaving a London mosque just after midnight on Monday were helping an unwell elderly man when a van deliberately targeted them, eyewitnesses said, driven by an attacker who shouted: "I want to kill all Muslims".

The van swerved towards the people outside the Finsbury Park Mosque in north London just as they began to assist the man,

who had collapsed.

"He turned left into the alleyway, and he just drove at people," eyewitness Abdiqadir Warra told AFP.

"Some of them he took a few metres. A man was inside in the van, I saw with my eye, and the old man was also on the ground, and I see some people were also injured.

Some of them were very bad."

Locals then pounced on the driver and pinned him down while waiting for the police to arrive.

"The man, he tried to escape... but they caught the driver," Warra said.

Eyewitness Khalid Amin told BBC television that the van turned deliberately left and "just hit the people."

One man was trapped under the van and people tried to lift up the vehicle to free him. Amin said that when people seized the driver, "he was shouting: 'All Muslims, I want to kill all Muslims.' Literally, he said that. Word by word."

Police said that one man had been arrested at the scene and that no further suspects had been identified.

Another eyewitness, who gave his name as Athman, told AFP: "People were screaming: 'It's a terrorist attack, it's an attack, this guy attacked us', and I had to run back and tried to save people who were still alive and giving

water, helping the police.

"While he was in the police van he was waving for victory, he was very happy.

"He chose the time and he chose the place and he chose his target. So, it's the holy month of Ramadan.

"The time, he was planning for it, the target, he was planning for it, and the place -- outside a mosque."

Mohammed Kozbar, chairman of the Finsbury Park Mosque, called for Prime Minister Theresa May's government to take action.

The incident came after two terror attacks in London in the past three months involving vehicles ploughing into crowds of people, as well as the suicide bombing attack at a Manchester pop concert in May.

"People now have a big question about safety in London after all these terrorist attacks, and we want to assure them that they are safe, and that's why we want to work with the police," Kozbar said.

(Source: AFP)

I am deeply and thoroughly sad to inform you that my father and mentor in life  
**Dr Mohammad-Ali Amini**, passed away in Paris, Saturday June 17<sup>th</sup>, at the age of 90.  
His funerals will be held in the village of Marsanne (France), Friday June 23<sup>rd</sup>.  
**François Manoutchehr Amini**



## Almaty to host Iran's exclusive expo in early Oct.

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Kazakhstan's Almaty is to host **d e s k** an Islamic Republic of Iran's exclusive exhibition on October 5-8, according to the official website of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO).

The exhibition is supposed to be held focusing on exposition of Iranian products in various sectors such as constructional materials, oil, gas and petrochemicals, mines and mining machinery, food products and horticulture.

Almaty, Kazakhstan's largest metropolis, served as the country's capital until 1997 and remains Kazakhstan's trading and cultural hub.

## Boeing launches new jet as Macron opens Paris show

Boeing unveiled a new member of its best-selling 737 aircraft range, injecting new life into a faltering civil aviation market as French President Emmanuel Macron flew in to open the Paris Airshow on Monday.

After years of booming orders, driven by rising air travel and more fuel-efficient planes, passenger jet makers are bracing for a slowdown in demand while they focus on meeting tight delivery schedules and ambitious production targets.



But Boeing generated a fresh burst of activity at the world's biggest air show by launching the 737 MAX 10 to plug a gap in its portfolio at the top end of the market for single-aisle jets following runaway sales of European rival Airbus' A321neo.

The U.S. plane maker said it had more than 240 orders and commitments from at least 10 customers for the new plane, which can carry up to 230 people in a single-class configuration.

"The MAX 10 is going to add more value for customers and more energy to the marketplace," Boeing Chief Executive Dennis Muilenburg said at a presentation ceremony.

(Source: Reuters)

## Fiat Chrysler denies report it has decided to pull Chrysler brand from Japan

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles denied it had decided to pull the plug on the Chrysler brand in Japan, after local media reported it was planning to stop selling the U.S. cars in the country as early as next year following years of poor sales.



"Although FCA Japan has already announced its intention to concentrate its resources on the Jeep brand ahead, no decisions have been made regarding (the) Chrysler brand," the automaker said in a statement on Monday.

The Nikkei business daily reported that the European-U.S. automaker, which also sells the Jeep, Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Abarth brands in Japan, was close to deciding to throw in the towel on the Chrysler brand, which posted sales of

less than 300 vehicles in 2016, having fallen steadily since around 2000.

Sales of the brand in Japan have shrunk to roughly one-tenth of what they were a decade ago.

At the moment, FCA sells only one Chrysler model in Japan, the full-sized 300s luxury sedan, which is sold at the company's Jeep dealerships.

(Source: Reuters)

## GE sees Middle East as land of opportunity

Boston-based General Electric Co. is looking at opportunities to invest in transportation in the Middle East and Africa after signing a \$575 million railway deal in Egypt, and expects growth in all sectors there.

The company is interested in railway opportunities in Turkey and Algeria as well as the next phase of Egypt's transport expansion, GE Vice Chairman John Rice said in a phone interview from Cairo. GE has tenders under discussion in several countries. It signed a letter of intent with Egypt on Saturday to supply 100 Light Evolution Series locomotives to be used for either passengers or freight, making it GE's biggest deal with the Egyptian National Railways.

"Demand for infrastructure continues unabated, the region is shifting to renewables, which is becoming more and more important, and health care is significant," said Rice, who is also president and chief executive of GE Global Growth Organization. "We see tremendous opportunities for growth and we don't expect that to change."

GE's investments in the Middle East range from aviation to transport to health care and oil and gas. Orders from the Middle East increased at double-digit rates in recent years to \$15 billion in 2016. GE expects annual total order growth from the region of 5 percent to 10 percent over the next three to five years and double-digit expansion this year in its international business outside the US, Rice said.

(Source: bostonglobe.com)

# Fishery output to rise 200,000 tons by 2021

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's annual output of **d e s k** fishery will be increased by 200,000 tons by the end of the country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021), Mohammad Pourkazemi, the chairman of Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute, said on Monday.

He also announced that 400,000 tons will be added to the annual output by the end of Iran's 1404 (March 2025-March 2026) Outlook Plan, IRIB reported.

Producing one million tons of different types of fisheries per annum, Iran accounts for one percent of the world's fishery production, Pourkazemi mentioned.

More than \$900 million of fisheries and fish products was exported from Iran during the past Iranian calendar year (which ended on March 20), according to Hassan Salehi, the head of Iran's Fisheries Organization.

As he further explained during the said period Iran exported above \$412 million of fisheries and over \$500 million of fish products.

At the present time, Iran produces 1.07 million tons of fisheries per annum, Salehi added.

The country plans to increase the value of its fishery exports up to \$450-\$500 million by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018), Mehr news agency quotes Salehi as saying in early May.

After the implementation of nuclear deal with world powers in January 2016, Iranian government has focused on development of domestic fishery industry to attract foreign investments and increase the country's share of the international market, Salehi had stated in early February.



## Turkish lira back in favor as economy improves

After dropping to an all-time low amid economic worries, terrorist threats and political worries at the start of the year, recent stability and signs of an economic improvement have seen it reverse all of its losses for the year.

Now, with its emerging markets peers facing political tensions and macroeconomic issues of their own, Turkey is becoming the favored spot for yield-hungry traders looking to take advantage of its high interest rates.

Although the Lira is still one of the worst-performing EM currencies for 2017 so far, it has strengthened more than five percent since April's constitutional referendum.

Although the country still faces serious challenges, both political and economic, the outlook has been improving. Economic growth in the first quarter comfortably beat forecasts, confidence has picked up to its strongest level in 18 months, and inflation has started to come down from the eight-year high it hit earlier in the



year.

Turkey's central bank began tightening policy last year in a bid to stop lira weakness from driving up import costs and, though it isn't expected to hike rates any further, any cuts are expected to be gradual.

Compared to the record low interest rates on offer in much of the rest of Europe, therefore, Turkey's benchmark rate of 8 percent has made it an increasingly attractive destination for the carry trade – when investors borrow money where rates are low to fund investments in countries with higher returns.

(Source: Financial Times)

## Over 50 global retailers to enter India in 6 months

More than 50 midrange global retailers are planning to enter India within the next six months, according to data compiled by Franchise India that has tied up with them for their launches, with their eye mostly on smaller, untapped markets within the country.

Brands such as Korres, Migato, Evisu, Wallstreet English, Pasta Mania, Lush Addiction, Melting Pot, Yogurt Lab and Monnalisa, many from the U.S. and Singapore, will invest about \$300500 million — all told to open roughly 3,000 stores, triggered by the country's expanding economy, booming consumption, urbanizing population and growing middle class.

The first retail wave happened a decade ago when bigger retailers and brands entered India," said Gaurav Marya, chairman of Franchise India Holdings, a retail solutions provider that is helping these 53 brands find partners and get regulatory clearances. "Now, it's the turn of small and mid-sized brands as they look to cash in on the open retail policy



and huge gap in the market for branded products." Of the incoming brands, 18 are in food and beverage space followed by 13 each in apparel and lifestyle products and education products.

Earlier this month, India replaced China as the most promising retail market in the world, according to an AT Kearney report. As retailers struggle in their home markets, India could be the next bright spot for the industry, especially since the government has allowed 100% foreign ownership in business to business (B2B) e-commerce businesses and for retailers that sell food products manufactured in India.

(Source: Economic Times)

## Concerns rising over S. Korean government's intervention in private sector

It has been pointed out that the Moon Jae-in government is intervening to a considerable extent in the private sector of the economy. At present, the South Korean government is intervening in pricing, employment and so on by, for example, trying to turn temporary workers into permanent workers, raise the minimum hourly wage to 10,000 won and remove merit-based salaries.

The Ministry of Strategy & Finance of South Korea held a meeting on June 16 and decided to allow public institutions to adopt merit-based salaries only when they want to and allow those that already adopted the pay system to cancel their adoption if they want to. In the public sector of the country, the pay system was introduced one year ago by the Park Geun-hye administration and institutions refusing to accept it have been subject to disadvantages.

The institutions are not particularly welcoming the new measure as such a sudden and frequent change in policy is likely to lead to a significant confusion. These days,



The public-sector trade union people are arguing the abolition of the performance-based annual salary system at the front of Seoul Government Complex building on May 17, 2017.

they are racking their brains over how to provide regular employment for their temporary workers as this is the very issue the President mentioned upon taking office. "We also agree that more decent jobs

should be created, but the conversion is something that cannot be done overnight," said one of them.

A similar situation is happening concerning the minimum hourly wage, too.

## Japan needs to stick with fiscal, monetary stimulus: IMF

**TOKYO (Reuters)** — The International Monetary Fund urged Japan to avoid withdrawing fiscal policy stimulus and said monetary policy should be loosened further if risks to the economy materialize, warning of weak consumption that remains vulnerable to external shocks.

While the BOJ should maintain its ultra-loose policy, it should do so by focusing on capping long-term interest rates under its yield curve control policy, the IMF said.

To clarify that stance and enhance communication of its policy, the central bank should "phase out" a loose pledge to keep increasing its government bond holdings at an annual pace of 80 trillion yen (\$995.8 billion), it said.

"The BOJ should carefully calibrate its yield curve policy, if downside risks materialize, to provide additional monetary easing," the IMF said in its annual Article 4 evaluation of Japan's economy.

IMF Deputy Managing Director David Lipton told reporters that the BOJ's new monetary policy framework

was already showing some success by bringing down market volatility and stabilizing the bond yield curve.

"We're comfortable with the stance of (BOJ) monetary policy.

Recent changes to the monetary policy ... (are) the right, useful approach," Lipton told a news conference.

"What's important is the maintenance of the approach that has been laid out and accompanying it with structural and fiscal agenda," he said.

The IMF also called on Japan to keep its near-term fiscal stance neutral and avoid withdrawing stimulus in 2018.

To balance the need to sustain economic growth and achieve medium-term fiscal consolidation, Japan should gradually increase the consumption tax until it reaches at least 15 percent and start the process "as soon as possible," it said.

"The expiration of fiscal support in 2018 under current policies together with a smaller expansion in foreign

demand would reduce growth to less than half of that in 2017," the IMF said in its annual Article 4 evaluation of Japan's economy.

"Without additional spending, the fiscal stance could become contractionary in 2018-20 due also to the scheduled consumption tax hike in October 2019." The nation's sales tax is now at 8 per cent. The government has pledged to raise it to 10 per cent in October 2019.

Japan also needs to move faster on reforms to increase productivity, diversify the labor market and increase corporate investment, the IMF said.

Under a new policy framework adopted last year, the BOJ now targets interest rates rather than the pace of money printing.

But it left a loose pledge to buy government bonds so its holdings increase at an annual pace of 80 trillion yen, partly to appease advocates of aggressive asset purchases in the BOJ's nine-member board.



# Oil prices dip on further rise in U.S. drilling, demand slowdown

Oil prices dipped on Monday, weighed down by a continuing expansion in U.S. drilling that has helped to maintain high global supplies despite an OPEC-led initiative to cut production to tighten the market.

Signs of faltering demand have also prompted weakening sentiment, dropping prices to levels comparable to when the output cuts were first announced late last year.

Brent crude futures were down 18 cents, or 0.4 percent, at \$47.19 per barrel at 0659 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were down 20 cents, or 0.5 percent, at \$44.54 per barrel.

Prices for both benchmarks are down by around 14 percent since late May, when producers led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) extended their pledge to cut production by 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) by an extra nine months until the end of the first quarter of 2018.

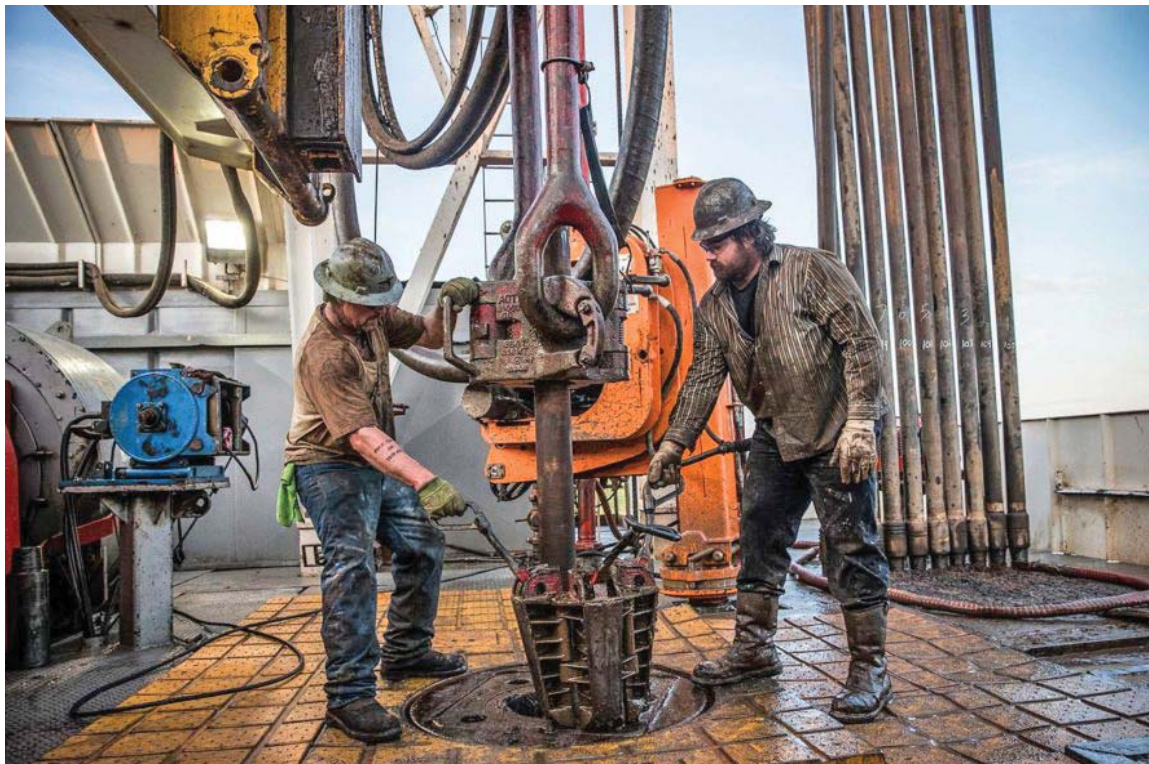
Traders said the main factor driving prices lower was a steady rise in U.S. production undermining the OPEC-led effort.

"The U.S. oil rig count continued to rise, up by 6 last week," Goldman Sachs said late on Friday.

"That's 22 weeks in a row that oil rigs have been added, a record run," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at futures brokerage AxiTrader.

U.S. producers have added 431 oil rigs since a trough on May 27, 2016, Goldman said. If the rig count holds at current levels, the bank added, U.S. oil production would increase by 770,000 bpd between the fourth quarter of last year and the same quarter this year in the Permian, Eagle Ford, Bakken and Niobrara shale oil fields.

Supplies from OPEC and other countries participating in the output cuts, including top producer Russia, also remain high as some countries have not fully complied with their pledges.



There are also indicators that demand growth in Asia, the world's biggest oil-consuming region, is stalling.

Japan's customs-cleared crude oil imports fell 13.5 percent in May from the same month a year earlier, to 2.83 million bpd, the Ministry of Finance said on Monday.

India, which recently overtook Japan as Asia's second-biggest oil importer, took in 4.2 percent less crude

oil in May than it did a year ago.

In China, which is challenging the United States as the world's biggest importer, oil demand growth has been slowing for some time, albeit from record levels, and analysts expect growth to slow further in coming months.

"Reducing the glut of oil will be challenging," ANZ bank said on Monday.

(Source: Reuters)

## Oil market fundamentals heading in the right direction: Saudi's Falih

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said the oil market is heading in the right direction, but still needs time to rebalance, the London-based newspaper Asharq al-Awsat reported on Monday.

"In my opinion, market fundamentals are going in the right direction, but in light of the large surplus in stockpiles over the past years, the cut needs time to take effect," he told the newspaper in an interview.

"Current expectations indicate the market to rebalance in the fourth quarter of this year taking into account an increase in shale oil production," he said.

Falih said there was a relatively big draw of around 50 million barrels from floating storage facilities and a drop in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development onshore storage of 65 million barrels compared to July last year. "The market often tends to ignore these criteria and focused on the drop in U.S. inventories that came below expectations."

In May, The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and some non-OPEC producers agreed to prolong its accord to curb output by 1.2 million bpd until March 2018.

Compliance in April and May was above 100 percent, he said.

OPEC-members Nigeria and Lib-



ya were exempted from supply cuts because unrest had curbed their output.

Al-Falih said he expects Libya's production levels to return to normal levels.

"It is inappropriate to pressurize Libya to slowdown the pace of the recovery of its production," he was quoted as saying.

He said that production levels in Libya and Nigeria is within the range determined when OPEC decided to cut output for the first time since 2008 in Algeria.

"They shouldn't be considered a threat to the initiative."

Output rose by 336,000 barrels per day (bpd) in May to 32.14 million barrels per day (bpd) led by a rebound in Nigeria and Libya, OPEC said last week in its monthly report.

(Source: Reuters)

## As cost plunges, solar power is ready to surpass coal

Solar power is among the easiest ways for individuals to hop on the clean energy generation train. There are many incentives afforded to homeowners who are looking to make the switch to solar power. Even more, it is only getting cheaper to produce, install, and operate this technology. And with the advent of Tesla's solar power generating roofing tiles, the process is getting a welcome aesthetic upgrade on top of all of the fantastic vertical integration their technology provides.

This boom is going to continue pushing solar power to the forefront of clean energy initiatives, as the cost of solar energy is expected to drop 66 percent by 2040. Furthermore, a report from Bloomberg states that in just four years' time, solar power will finally be cheaper than coal "almost everywhere." The report also claims that by 2040, up to 20 percent of Brazil's power will be generated by the sun, and Germany will be at 15 percent.

The economic benefit of switching from coal to solar power will spur even greater growth — as coal supporters will no longer be able to deny the cost saving potential of renewable energy. Thankfully, the rest of the world will also benefit from a significant decrease



in the amount of fossil fuels being burned, a major contributor to climate change.

The report, generated by Bloomberg New Energy Finance, states that greenhouse gas emissions will peak in 2026. But thanks to the clean energy revolution, these levels will be 4 percent lower in 2040 than they were last year — the reigning hottest year on record.

With the decline of fossil fuels, we may likely also start seeing the decline of large utility systems. Tesla is a pioneer in this area with its vertical integration of solar panels and solar power storage systems. Their technology is already being used to decrease regional demand on fossil fuel burning plants in Southern California.

(Source: Futurism)

## Déjà vu: shale to kill oil prices once again

The U.S. shale industry is in danger of killing of the very rally that it had hoped to take advantage of.

Shale production is up more than 700,000 bpd since bottoming out in September 2016, rising steadily to 9.33 million barrels per day (mb/d) in June, according to the latest weekly estimates from the EIA. The International Energy Agency says that U.S. oil production could end 2017 up 920,000 barrels per day (bpd) from a year earlier. Most analysts expect the production gains to continue into next year — the IEA says shale could grow by another 780,000 bpd.

Those figures, if they came to pass, would likely prevent any rally in oil prices. But the industry might not get that far because they could push down prices this year, which could potentially choke off their ambitious production plans.

"The growth outlooks proposed by many oily E&Ps appear tenuous at best and not resilient to prolonged weak oil prices," Mizuho Securities USA analysts Timothy Rezvan and James Lizzul wrote in a research note. Many shale companies are already in the middle of their drilling campaigns, which could mean that a certain amount of growth is already locked in. But they could suspend future growth plans if prices continue to fall.

Bloomberg reported that the Bakken would see a lot of wells fall below profitability with WTI at \$45 per barrel. Less attractive parts of the Eagle Ford and the Niobrara also become less viable. The SCOOP play in Oklahoma and parts of the Permian start to come un-

der serious pressure at \$40 per barrel. "The Permian keeps going," James Williams, president of WTRG Economics, told Bloomberg. "It doesn't collapse, but I don't think at \$40 it grows." UBS AG analysts said that \$45 oil "slows most U.S. shale plays."

There are other problems for U.S. shale. Although shale drillers have boasted about declining breakeven prices and cost savings, drilling productivity is starting to decline. Drilling costs are actually on the rise again because the market for oilfield services (rigs, equipment and fracking crews) is growing tighter. Shale companies also gambled earlier this year on higher prices, declining to secure hedges for their 2018 production at the same volume as they have in the past. That leaves many companies exposed to lower prices, a situation that could ultimately force them to throttle back on drilling.

Those problems are running headlong into a market that looks like it is once again oversupplied. The futures market has made a dramatic shift towards contango in recent weeks, a situation in which near-term contracts trade at a discount to deliveries further off. A contango reflects concerns about near-term oversupply. The contango is especially concerning given that OPEC's best hope was to induce backwardation into the futures market. Backwardation is the opposite of contango, a downward sloping curve that has crude for immediate delivery trading at a premium. That would allow inventories to drain because it would become costly to buy and store crude.

The market is now at the steepest contango since November. It might not be a coincidence then that oil traders are once again turning to floating storage. Reuters reports that a growing number of old oil tankers have been contracted out to store oil in Southeast Asia. The contango allows traders to pay for storage and sell their oil at a higher price at a later date. "Too much unsold oil is headed to Asia," Oystein Berentsen, managing director for oil trading company Strong Petroleum, said in a Reuters interview.

Contango, backwardation and floating storage may sound like a bunch of arcane industry jargon, but the basic point is that oil is getting stored on tankers because there is too much of it on the market at the moment.

In short, there are growing signs that the oil market is still woefully oversupplied. Ultimately, that could put a damper on U.S. shale. Reuters says that eight prominent hedge funds have recently cut their investments in ten top shale companies, reducing their exposure by \$400 million. The reason seems to be growing concerns that oil prices will tank because of too much drilling. The moves by the hedge funds are even more eye-opening because they pared back their positions in companies that are drilling in the Permian, the most attractive shale basin in the country.

If the margins in the Permian are no longer looking that great, then the shale boom could really be in trouble.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Rosneft discovers possible largest-ever oil deposit on arctic sea shelf

Rosneft experts while drilling a prospecting well on the shelf of the Khatanga Bay of the Laptev Sea found that the core is saturated with oil.

Russian Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment Sergei Donskoi said that the oil fields discovered by the state-owned energy company Rosneft in the Laptev Sea could be the biggest on the shelf.

Earlier on Sunday, Rosneft released a statement that as a result of the drilling at the Khatanga license block, the company believes it has found sizable new oil fields offshore in the Eastern Arctic.

"My sincere congratulations to my colleagues! We can already speak about a significant inflow of oil, and thus, about a unique discovery of what's likely to be the biggest oil field on the shelf," Donskoi posted on his official Facebook page.

The license to develop the Khatanga site was received by Rosneft in November 2015. In early April 2017 the company began drilling the well called "Central Olginskaya-1."

The license area is located in the Khatangsky Bay of the Laptev Sea in the north of Krasnoyarsk Territory.

At 17,217 square kilometers, the site is vast. In total, Rosneft owns 28 licensed sites on the Arctic shelf with total resources of 34 billion tons of oil equivalent.

Since 2012, Rosneft's investments in the development of the Arctic shelf have amounted to about 100 billion rubles. The company plans to increase the volume of investments for these purposes to 250 billion rubles between now and 2021.

(Source: Sputnik)

## Mexico oil sector accidents raise doubts about deep water exploration

As Mexico opens its energy market to more private investment, the country's drive to exploit untapped deepwater oil riches has raised safety concerns due to mounting accidents that have blotted the country's safety record.

The biggest Mexican oil refinery Salina Cruz has been offline since a fire broke out at the coastal facility on Wednesday following a tropical storm, the latest in a string of mishaps.

Violent summer storms have visited Mexico for years, but the country has very little experience in deep water drilling, a risky activity still marked by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon well blow out in the northern Gulf of Mexico that killed 11 people and pumped 5 million barrels of oil into the sea. That disaster prompted a rethink of safety measures in the United States.

As a result, U.S. operators now have on permanent standby a so-called capping stack that ultimately sealed the well, while third-party inspectors verify deepwater project safety.

Mexico, which awarded its first eight deepwater projects in a December auction, so far has none of these safeguards.

Industry executives and regulators say there is still time to ensure adequate protections are in place.

The first wells will be drilled as soon as 2019 and a second round of deep water blocks is due to be auctioned in December.

Carlos de Regules, head of Mexico's oil safety regulator ASEA, said companies beginning deepwater operations, like France's Total and China National Offshore Oil Corporation, already have clear rules to follow.

"The operators have to show they can react, contain and deal with the possibility of an out-of-control well," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

## Chinese state oil giants take petrol price battle to the pumps

Chinese state oil giants Sinopec and PetroChina are waging war at the nation's gas pumps, slashing prices at unprecedented rates in an effort to reclaim sales lost to private local and foreign rivals in the \$440 billion retail fuel market.

The rare price war kicked off in late March as reported first quarter retail sales had slid to a three-year low. Spurred by a glut of fuel, Sinopec started offering hefty discounts in response to ad-hoc but frequent promotions by independent petrol station operators.

PetroChina swiftly joined in, triggering a ferocious battle against independents and international firms including Shell and BP, said three state oil sources involved in retail fuel marketing.

The heavy discounting is now spreading from the most heavily oversupplied provinces in China's north, squeezing fat retail profit margins in the world's No. 2 fuel market.

The battle is proving a boon for China's drivers.

In the gritty northern coal town of Luliang, taxi and delivery drivers were queued up at a Sinopec outlet after it slashed pump prices by 1.4 yuan (\$0.21) per liter, or nearly a quarter, one recent weekend.

Nearby gas stations run by PetroChina and local private operator Taihua each offered the same discount, promoting the bargain prices with eye-catching red banners, free car washes, and credits in pre-paid petrol cards.

Sinopec spokesman Lu Dapeng said price cutting was «the most common approach in market competition». He didn't elaborate.

Such basement prices are rare for Sinopec, officially known as China Petroleum & Chemical Corp (600028.SS), and PetroChina, the listed subsidiary of China National Petroleum Corporation.

In late March, both were selling high grade fuel at a discount of just 0.20-0.40 yuan per liter.

Price battles were rare before 2013 as rigid government price controls capped margins. As recently as 2010, gas stations rationed diesel fuel as shortage hit.

(Source: Reuters)



## Why is the U.S. killing so many civilians in Syria and Iraq?

By Micah Zenko

Two weeks ago, the American military finally acknowledged what nongovernmental monitoring groups had claimed for months: The United States-led coalition fighting the Islamic State [ISIL] since August 2014 has been killing Iraqi and Syrian civilians at astounding rates in the four months since President Trump assumed office. The result has been a “staggering loss of civilian life,” as the head of the United Nations’ independent Commission of Inquiry into the Syrian civil war said last week.



“At least 484 civilians have been unintentionally killed by coalition strikes,” the United States Central Command, or Centcom, the military command responsible for the Middle East, said in a June 2 statement. Four months earlier, Centcom had said at least 199 civilians had been killed up to that point in the bombing campaign. Estimates by independent monitors are much higher. Airwars, a watchdog group, says coalition airstrikes have killed nearly 4,000 civilians.

### ■ Tragic mistakes

The civilian death toll has risen mainly because the battle has moved deeper into major cities. But even as the civilian death toll ticks upward, the American military has relaxed oversight, investigation and accountability on civilian casualties. Finding out the reasons for these tragic mistakes, seeing what can be learned from them and enforcing the American military’s own standards could save thousands of lives.

Trump has given the military “total authorization” to decide how, and how much, force will be used, authority that was more closely held by the Obama White House. But Secretary of Defense James Mattis insisted on May 28 that the rules of engagement have not changed. “There is no relaxation of our intention to protect the innocent,” he said.

One reason for the huge increase in noncombatant deaths is that the United States is dropping more bombs — a more than 20 percent increase from the last four months of the Obama presidency to the first four under Trump.

Also, more strikes have occurred in populated areas, like Mosul, the Islamic State’s last stronghold in Iraq. A 500-pound bomb aimed at two snipers there detonated stored explosives, which collapsed a building and killed 105 Iraqi civilians on March 17, according to Centcom. Since the Islamic State is using residential buildings as command posts, storage depots and fighting positions, noncombatant deaths are more likely.

### ■ Troubling factors

Yet far more troubling factors have emerged. Even as the American military has accelerated its bombing, there is no independent assessment of the intelligence used to identify targets. Brig. Gen. Richard Coe, who investigated a mistaken attack on a Syrian military convoy in September, acknowledged that there was no “red team” to critique the decision-making process, a common approach in many commands. “Each person is expected to do that on their own,” General Coe said, “and then, in the process, funnel up the pros and cons to decision makers.” Individuals immersed in identifying enemy targets cannot simultaneously evaluate their own judgments.

Until June 13, the American military had only two people investigating Iraqi and Syrian civilian casualties full time. There now are seven full-time investigators, still a meager commitment given that around 10,000 troops are stationed in Qatar at the command’s headquarters for the air war. A dozen people investigated such claims at the height of the Afghanistan surge in 2011. If the military were concerned about civilian deaths, more investigators with training and experience in targeting would be assigned to those teams.

There is also no longer any public accountability. On May 26, an American military press officer confirmed that the Pentagon will no longer acknowledge when its own aircraft are responsible for civilian casualty incidents; rather they will be hidden under the umbrella of the “coalition.” The United States military has been responsible for 95 percent of airstrikes in Syria and 68 percent in Iraq. Centcom should own up to its own actions rather than dispersing responsibility.

Congress has shown little interest in identifying the root causes of civilian deaths, holding commanders or lower-level officers accountable, or ensuring that the lessons learned from mistaken strikes are integrated into future operations. Congress could exercise its oversight role by mandating Pentagon reporting about what steps it has taken to mitigate civilian harm, funding additional awareness training for American and other coalition officers, and holding public hearings with senior civilian and military officials.

Since the air war began some 22,000 airstrikes ago, military officials have repeatedly claimed that they “do everything possible” to protect civilians. Making good on that promise is not only the right thing to do — it is also strategically vital to the longer-term effectiveness of the fight against terrorism.

(Source: The NYT)

# Abbas eyes Merkel as Plan B if Trump fails on Mideast peace

By Uri Savir

A senior Palestinian minister close to President Mahmoud Abbas told Al-Monitor that the Palestinian leadership is ready to seriously engage with the Trump administration on moving ahead with plans for a regional deal for Palestinian-Israeli peace. The senior PLO official said on condition of anonymity, “We are showing great flexibility, as directed by President Abbas, on the phrasing of the condition to freeze settlement construction — restraining it to the existing built areas of settlements.”

He added, “We are not rigid on the outlines for opening a regional peace conference. Abbas is ready to start serious permanent status negotiations with [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu and his team, beginning with borders and security — where both sides will have to show their respective maps — and with a parallel process of normalizing Arab states’ relations with Israel.”

The minister acknowledged that it is the Palestinian leadership’s decision to give President Donald Trump, as the leader of the free world, the chance to seriously intervene with his strong negotiation skills in favor of a two-state solution. As part of this strategy, Abbas is fully coordinating with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Jordanian King Abdullah II and Saudi King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud. According to Palestinian sources, a special Abbas envoy visited Riyadh last week, in the midst of the crisis with Qatar, to coordinate positions and the insertion of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative into the negotiation process. “Our proactive strategy is producing positive dividends in terms of Trump’s adviser’s more positive attitude to Ramallah, and in terms of Netanyahu’s being increasingly on the defensive,” the minister said.

### ■ Fallback position

The minister believes there are chances for a renewal of the peace process under the auspices of Trump. Yet, given Trump’s domestic troubles and Netanyahu’s positions, he believes Ramallah must have a fallback position in the diplomatic realm. “Unlike many others in the international community, the Palestinian president has not given up on Donald Trump,” he said. “But should Trump disappoint, like others in the international community, we have decided to opt for German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in conjunction with French President Emmanuel Macron, to take the lead in preventing a deadlock in the peace process.” He grinned when he said, “As in Leonard Cohen’s famous song: ‘First we



**Merkel is concerned that the U.S. administration will not produce a viable diplomatic process, and that Trump’s aims in the region are mainly related to American business interests in the Persian Gulf and to an anti-terror perception.**

take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.”

The minister said Ramallah is in close contact with German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel regarding Berlin’s taking more of a lead role on a two-state solution. A senior official in the German Foreign Office told Al-Monitor that Merkel is now ready to play a more active and independent role on Middle East policy. The source said German goals in the region are to be part of a Western-Arab coalition against terrorism, to uphold the Iran deal and to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process based on a two-state solution.

Germany has traditionally been reluctant to play a role in the Israeli-Palestinian issue given the country’s special relations with Israel. Yet Merkel is concerned that the U.S. administration will not produce a viable diplomatic process, and that Trump’s aims in the region are mainly related to American business interests

in the Persian Gulf and to an anti-terror perception.

The German source emphasized that Germany does not want in any way to predetermine permanent status issues. It is strongly opposed to Israeli settlement policy and wants to strengthen Abbas’ posture. According to the official with direct access to Merkel, the chancellor is ready to create a regional economic framework in favor of a two-state solution. The idea raised in German policy planning circles is to propose an “EU Marshall Plan” for Israel and the Palestinian Authority in close cooperation with the Arab League.

Such a plan would offer several incentives for a two-state solution. For instance, it could offer upgrading nonmember status within the EU on trade and scientific cooperation. It could also propose EU economic assistance such as institution-building to the Palestinian state in the making, and German security assistance

to Israel. Additional incentives could be normalization programs between the Arab states and Israel; a greater role for NATO in the anti-terror struggle and the monitoring of the security arrangements for the two-state solution; and the establishment of a regional development bank for the sake of achieving regional economic cooperation.

The German Marshall Fund of the United States, headed by former White House official Karen Donfried, is also engaged in these plans. A senior Israeli Foreign Ministry official told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity that Israel will categorically oppose any European or German role in the peace process. The Israeli official said, “We will work only with the Trump administration, and we have the U.S. president’s commitment to prevent any European, French or German initiatives on the regional peace process.”

(Source: Al Monitor)

## Large parliamentary majority leaves Macron holding all the cards

Emmanuel Macron’s outsider bid to dynamite traditional French party politics appears to have paid off in record time. His fledgling centrist movement and its allies were on course to win a clear parliament majority as results were being counted in the legislative elections on Sunday night.

Just over a year after Macron founded a political movement intended to be “neither right nor left,” he has succeeded in seriously limiting the traditional left and right parties of government.

But now that Macron’s centrist grouping has an absolute majority, the stakes could not be higher for the new president and all the cards are in his hands. He has promised a new honest and irreproachable political class, to streamline the state and to loosen strict labor laws in favor of flexibility for businesses, which he has argued will transform the labor market and reduce unemployment. Expectations are high and there is nowhere for him to hide.

The historic low turnout in the election — around 43% — casts a shadow over the results. A year ago when Macron announced he would run for president, he said he would “end the divorce between the people and those in charge”. On Sunday, voter abstention was particularly high in working class and low-income areas and among young people, raising more questions about France’s social divide.

### ■ First challenges

One of the new parliament’s first challenges will be a vote on powers that would enable Macron use executive decrees to push through changes to employment rules and conditions this autumn.

Macron’s plans to loosen labor laws — including potentially setting minimum and maximum compensation awards in unfair dismissal cases — are contentious. The previous Socialist government forced through labor changes by decree last year after street protests led by the leftwing CGT union. Macron’s Prime Minister, Édouard Philippe, has said the new government will go further to rapidly “modernize” labor laws. Philippe argued that overhauling France’s social model of welfare protections was “essential and urgent”. There will be delicate negotiations with trade unions first.

“There has never been such a paradox between



**President has seriously limited traditional left and right parties as high abstention rate casts shadow.**

a high concentration of power and strong tensions and expectations in terms of changes,” Laurent Berger, head of France largest trade union, the CFDT, told the weekly Journal du Dimanche.

A key question is what sort of opposition Macron will face, and who will lead it. In the new parliament, opposition will not come from one single force but will be spread between several fractured parties. The French right, although it will get the second most seats, will have a small presence and many of its MPs are likely to break off and support Macron. Likewise, several of the few Socialists still in parliament will back Macron’s proposed new labor laws.

### ■ Frontal opposition

The hard-left Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s political movement, France Unbowed, will have a parliamentary group intent on providing what it calls “frontal

opposition”. Marine Le Pen will be vocal but will not have enough members of parliament to form her own far-right group.

France’s upper house, the Senate, currently led by the right, could play a vocal role. Certain regional politicians, such as Xavier Bertrand in northern France, will also try to position themselves as opposition forces.

“The debate must always happen in parliament, otherwise it ends up in the street,” the rightwing senate leader Gérard Larcher said recently, suggesting that demonstrators with placards could take over from opposition politicians.

It is too early to say whether Macron’s labor law changes will spark a street protest movement. The pressure is on the government’s negotiation process with trade unions over the coming weeks.

(Source: The Guardian)



# Rohingyas fall victim to UN's corporate-dominated agenda

## INTERVIEW

By Hamid R. Gholamzadeh

When a year ago, in June 2016, the United Nations bowed to pressures of Saudi Arabia to remove the kingdom from the list of countries killing children due to the Saudi-led war against Yemen, a disastrous reality was unveiled; everyone witnessed that the international body is not abiding by its own principles and acts in several cases in accordance to political ties and pressures and is being bribed by financial supports.

Now a recent leak of an internal document from the UN about its mission in Myanmar has shed light on the reasons why the UN is not taking proper measures regarding the situation of Rohingyas in the Southeast Asian country. To know more about the UN conflict and situation of Rohingyas, we have talked to Shahid Bolsen who is chief strategist of the #WeAreAllRohingyaNow Campaign which seeks justice for Rohingyas.

■ **A leaked internal document from the UN shows differences among US people in Myanmar where Rohingya Muslims are under pressure; what is it all about?**

The leaked UN documents revealed that there is a great deal of internal dispute at the United Nations regarding their approach to the Rohingya genocide. This is to be expected. There is a clash between the genuine humanitarian goals of the UN and its increasingly corporate-dominated agendas; the emphasis on development investment as a solution to Myanmar's problems has inevitably crippled the UN's will to take any meaningful action to halt the gross human rights abuses being committed by the regime because they fear doing so would jeopardize potential business contracts and investment projects being sought by multinational corporations. This is essentially what the leaked documents exposed.

■ **How do you evaluate UN forces' performance in protecting Rohingyas?**

Again, there is a contrast between words, actions, and indeed, results. One of the most important things the UN did was to pass a non-binding resolution calling for the restoration of Rohingya citizenship; but nothing whatsoever has been done to implement this resolution, because, of course, it is non-binding, and not even eligible for implementation.

In fact, the UN's almost cyclical condemnations of atrocities, commissioning reports, carrying out investigations, and so forth, has become an instrument for perpetuating the crisis. They are permissive condemnations. In other words; the Myanmar military and the regime understand at this point that the UN's response to atrocities will be reliably toothless, but by condemning the ethnic cleansing in Rakhine, and by ordering investigations and reports, the UN appears to be intervening while it is in fact doing nothing. This appearance of involvement becomes a delaying

mechanism for any actual intervention or action. So in reality, on a practical level, the condemnations function as support for the regime, not for the Rohingyas.

■ **While a terrorist attack in the west draws all attentions of the media and public opinion and politicians in condemning it, massive killings and brutal pressures on Rohingyas in Myanmar is faced with silence which more seems to be a boycott. If so, who would benefit from this silence?**

Terrorist attacks should be condemned, wherever they are committed. Western media unsurprisingly cares more about incidents in the West. The response to any crisis, conflict, or humanitarian disaster is always going to be determined according to its impact on business interests; based on this, the crisis will either be ignored, perpetuated, resolved, or escalated.

It has to be understood that the strife in Rakhine, the persecution of the Rohingya, is part of an overall management strategy by the central government, by the military and Burmese elites, to maintain power. They are the ones with whom international investors are dealing; they are their partners; so they have a stake in preserving the ruling order in Myanmar, by any means necessary.

The central government's real problem is the Rakhine, not the Rohingya. The Rakhine are an ethnic minority living in a resource-rich, and strategically important state, who have a history of secessionist ambitions. They are oppressed, exploited, and impoverished, and if they rose against the government, it would be a lethal blow to the Burmese. As long as their resentment and hostility are directed against the helpless Rohingya, the regime



is secure. Internal conflict in Rakhine state, therefore, is useful to everyone who matters.

■ **what countries are supporting and giving the green light to the government in Myanmar in its policy toward Rohingya Muslims?**

Well, of course the major supporter of the regime is China. But the US has prioritized improving its relationship with both the regime, and especially the military, precisely to try to offset Chinese influence.



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What is more significant to look at is which foreign companies are investing in Myanmar. This will reveal the true position of any country's government on the issue. For example, the Norwegian telecom company Telenor is a major investor in Myanmar, and it is itself majority state-owned. Furthermore, some of these corporations are themselves larger than states, and really need to be treated as global powers on par with countries. That is why the #WeAreAllRohingyaNow Campaign has decided to focus on reaching out to multinational companies rather than the conventional approach of

■ **Suu Kyi was strongly supported by the West and the UN when she was under arrest before coming to power as an icon of democracy and freedom; now, the same person comes to power and we see genocide of Rohingyas. Why is she doing so and do the supporters still support her?**

She has disappointed many people, and she has lost a lot of international support, there are even calls for her to return her Nobel Peace Prize. It is not for me to speculate about why she is doing what she is doing, nor does it really matter. The fact is she has become part of the apparatus for perpetuating the crimes against humanity taking place in Rakhine state against the Rohingya. She may or may not have her own rationales for why she is doing this, but that is what she is doing.

■ **Can you tell us more about #Black4Rohingya campaign? Where and how it began and what the campaign seeks and who has joined it?**

This is an initiative started by South African lawyer and activist Shabnam Mayet a few years ago. The idea is to build and express solidarity with the Rohingya by having participants wear black for one day, and post pictures of themselves on social media. This can both let governments, business leaders, and others see that there is widespread international, popular sentiment in support of the Rohingya, and to let the Rohingya themselves see that they have this kind of support globally.

It is an important initiative, and we were proud to participate in it. Getting a diverse group of people from every corner of the globe to unite upon a single, simultaneous action is truly inspiring, and offers us just a hint of what can be done when we build real solidarity on any issue.

## Stepping up the pressure

By James M. Dorsey

Saudi Arabia, in a first move to pressure mostly Muslim states to join its campaign against Qatar, has persuaded six sub-Saharan African nations with threats of reduced financial aid and restricted quotas for the haj, the annual pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, to follow its lead in taking punitive steps against Qatar.

The Saudi effort in Africa suggests that the kingdom is seeking to tighten the screws on Qatar more than a week into a Saudi and UAE-led diplomatic and economic boycott that has failed to persuade the tiny Persian Gulf state to bow to demands that it halt its support for Takfiris and militants and curb, if not shutter, Qatar-funded media outlets, including Al Jazeera.

Saudi efforts, however, despite the actions of the six countries – Senegal, Chad, Niger, Comoros, Mauritius, and Djibouti – are proving to be only partially successful. Of the six states, only Mauritius severed its diplomatic ties with Qatar. Senegal, Chad, Niger and the Comoros restricted themselves to recalling their ambassadors from Doha while Djibouti, like Jordan, simply reduced the level of its diplomatic relations.

The six countries joined six other economically dependent nations, including Bahrain, Egypt, the Maldives, Mauritania, and the Saudi-UAE backed internationally recognized government of Libya that controls only part of the country, who had already followed the Saudi-UAE lead in breaking off diplomatic relations with Qatar.

Most Muslim states hope to avoid being sucked into the Persian Gulf crisis. Countries like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan and Somalia have so far rejected Saudi overtures and instead called for dialogue between Qatar and its detractors. Similarly, Nigeria, the black African nation with the largest Muslim population has so far remained silent on the crisis.

Elsewhere in the Muslim world, Pakistan insisted that it remained neutral in the dispute. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif accompanied by senior ministers and military commanders, joined on a visit to Riyadh the chorus of calls for a quick resolution to the crisis that have so far fallen on deaf ears.

Somalia, a strategically located, war-torn nation in the Horn of Africa, has emerged amid the mixed response to the Saudi and UAE effort as something of a mystery. Somalia has main-

tained neutrality despite the fact that Dubai-owned P&O Ports signed in April a \$336 million, 30-year agreement to develop and manage a multi-purpose port in Bosaso in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland. The self-declared republic of Somaliland agreed weeks later to allow the UAE to establish a military base in the port of Berbera and signed a \$442 million deal with P&O to turn the port into a world-class training hub.

Somali media moreover reported that President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed had rejected a Saudi offer of \$80 million in return for his government breaking off diplomatic relations with Qatar. Somali planning, investment and economic development minister Jamal Mohamed Hassan announced nonetheless this week that Saudi Arabia had agreed to increase Somalia's haj quota by 25 percent. Somalia's strategic importance to the Persian Gulf in commercial as well as military terms would seem to be the only logical explanation for it being rewarded despite refusing to join the Saudi-UAE campaign.

The mixed response to the Saudi effort to rally the Muslim world raises questions about the degree to which the kingdom can call in chips on the back of four decades of massive global investment in religious, educational, and political activities. Saudi difficulty in leveraging its soft power investments was evident already in 2015 when the Pakistani parliament rejected a request by the kingdom for troops to be sent to Yemen in support of its ill-fated military invasion of that country.

Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia's use of its management of the haj, one of the five pillars of Islam, could have significant consequences for the Muslim world, particularly Asian countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia that are home to the world's largest Muslim populations and have large migrant labour communities in the kingdom.

Curtailling the number of nationals allowed to make the pilgrimage risks sparking a domestic backlash, particularly among more conservative segments of society. A threat to expel migrant workers as the kingdom did in the past when it disagreed with Yemeni policies could have serious economic consequences.

In a twist of irony, however, alleged machinations of the kingdom's closest ally, the United Arab Emirates, to thwart any expression of political Islam, may have created in Turkey

lobbying governments.

■ **Will a change in UN team in Myanmar make any improvements in the performance and support for the Muslims or the problems are at higher levels and in policies?**

Any new UN team will continue to fulfill their institutional role within the framework of the UN strategy on Myanmar. And it is entirely possible that part of their role is to eventually be dismissed and replaced.

the potentially greatest obstacle to the two Persian Gulf states' ploy to impose their will on Qatar.

Turkey, which has backed Qatar in its dispute with Saudi Arabia and the UAE and is sending up to 3,000 troops to the Persian Gulf state, has suggested that the UAE funded last year's failed coup aimed at overthrowing Islamist President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a watershed event in modern Turkish history.

Mr. Erdogan on Tuesday denounced the isolation of Qatar as "inhumane and against Islamic values", and said the methods used against the Persian Gulf state were unacceptable, and analogous to a "death penalty."

Daily Sabah, a newspaper with close ties to the government of Mr. Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), as well as anonymous Turkish foreign ministry sources accused the UAE of having pumped \$3 billion into the failed coup that the president blames on Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish imam who lives in exile in the United States.

Yeni Safak columnist Mehmet Acet quoted Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu as saying in a recent speech that "we know that a country provided \$3 billion in financial support for the coup attempt in Turkey and exerted efforts to topple the government in illegal ways. On top of that, it is a Muslim country." Mr. Acet said the minister identified the country as the UAE in a subsequent conversation.

Mr. Erdogan has, in the wake of the coup, arrested tens of thousands of his critics; dismissed up to 140,000 people from jobs in the judiciary, the military, law enforcement, civil service and education sector; declared a pro-longed state of emergency; and used the failed takeover to introduce a presidential system of government in which he has far-reaching powers.

Qatar-backed Middle East Eye reported barely two weeks after the failed coup that the UAE had used Mohammed Dahlan, a UAE-supported former Palestinian security chief with ambitions to succeed Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas, to funnel funds to Mr. Gulen.

While there is no independent confirmation of the allegations against the UAE, what is clear is that Mr. Gulen with his projection of a liberal and tolerant interpretation of Islam would fit the country's efforts to create an alternative, anti-Salafi, anti-Islamist and anti-Muslim Brotherhood religious authority.

## Washington's war crimes in Syria

By Bill Van Auken

The United States government is guilty of war crimes. This is the stark conclusion reached by the independent international commission of inquiry established by the United Nations in 2011 to investigate human rights violations stemming from the protracted U.S.-backed war for regime change in Syria.

The Pentagon's relentless bombing campaign in and around the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, the so-called "capital" of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), has inflicted a "staggering loss of civilian life," while forcing over 160,000 civilians to flee their homes, Paulo Pinheiro, chairman of the UN's commission of inquiry, said on Wednesday.

U.S. warplanes have dropped tens of thousands of munitions on Raqqa and the surrounding area, killing and maiming thousands of Syrian men, women and children. U.S. Marines units, which have steadily swelled the ground forces illegally deployed on Syrian soil, have unleashed further lethal firepower, firing 155mm howitzers into crowded urban neighborhoods and flying Apache attack helicopters to provide close air support to the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces. This proxy force of Washington is dominated by the Kurdish YPG militia and "advised" by U.S. Special Operations troops.

The bloody siege of Raqqa is unfolding even as the Pentagon is carrying out a similar slaughter, begun last October, in Mosul, an Iraqi city 232 miles to the east that once boasted a population of over 2 million. Most of Mosul has been pulverized by U.S. bombs, rockets and shells. Thousands have been killed and wounded, while many remain still buried under the rubble.

The scope of the war crimes being carried out by the Pentagon comes more sharply into focus with the verified reports that U.S. artillery units are firing white phosphorus shells into both Raqqa and Mosul. These incendiary chemical weapons, banned under international law for use in populated areas, ignite human flesh on contact, burning it to the bone, while those who breathe the gases released by the shells suffocate and burn from the inside out. The horrific wounds caused by these weapons reopen when exposed to air. White phosphorus is used to strike terror among those under attack.

Another murderous weapon being employed against the populations of Raqqa and Mosul is the MGM-140B rocket. Fired from a mobile rocket launcher, the weapon detonates in midair, scattering some 274 anti-personnel grenades, each of which is capable of killing anyone within a 15-meter radius.

Last month, U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis told the media that the Pentagon was adopting "annihilation tactics" in its anti-ISIS campaign, adding, "Civilian casualties are a fact of life in this sort of situation." Mattis, a recently retired Marine general whom the military nicknamed "Mad Dog," knows whereof he speaks. In 2004, he led the two murderous sieges of Fallujah that claimed the lives of thousands of Iraqis, and, as in the latest U.S. atrocities, made use of white phosphorus shells against a civilian population.

The U.S. military interventions in Iraq and Syria are not aimed at "annihilating" ISIS, itself the product of the 2003 U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, followed by Washington's utilization of Islamist fighters as proxy ground forces in the regime-change wars in both Libya and Syria. While Raqqa has been surrounded by U.S.-backed forces from the north, east and west, an escape route for ISIS fighters has been opened up to the southeast in order to funnel them into the province of Deir al-Zour, so they can fight the Syrian army there. Similarly, large numbers of ISIS fighters were allowed to flee Mosul, crossing the border into Syria for the same purpose.

Washington's strategic objectives in Iraq and Syria are not those of "fighting terrorism," but rather consolidating U.S. hegemony over the oil-rich Middle East and preparing for war against the principal obstacles to this objective, Iran and Russia. For U.S. imperialism, undisputed control over both the Persian Gulf and Central Asia would provide the means to cut off energy supplies to its global rival, China.

These predatory aims are the source of war crimes, and not only in Iraq and Syria. In Yemen, Washington is backing a near-genocidal war led by the Saudi monarchy with the objective of weakening Iran's influence in the Persian Gulf. During his visit to Riyadh last month, President Donald Trump announced a \$110 billion arms deal with the kingdom, which will, in the first instance, replenish the bombs and missiles it is raining on the population of the most impoverished nation in the Arab world.

This arms package follows similar deals signed by the Obama administration, which also supplied the Saudis with logistical and intelligence aid for the Yemen war, including mid-air refueling for its warplanes and U.S. naval backing for a blockade that is starving the population and denying it medical supplies. In addition to killing 12,000 people outright, the US-Saudi war has left at least 7 million Yemenis on the brink of famine, while cholera is threatening to kill thousands more. Save the Children reports that, on average, one Yemeni child is contracting the disease every 35 seconds.

Meanwhile, Washington is preparing to once again escalate the protracted slaughter in Afghanistan. U.S. officials reported June 13 that Trump has authorized Mattis to set troop levels in the country, which the U.S. has occupied since 2001. Thousands more soldiers are expected to be deployed, with the aim of carrying out the "annihilation tactics" favored by the defense secretary. A taste of what is to come was seen Monday when U.S. troops whose convoy hit a roadside bomb opened fire indiscriminately on civilians, killing a brick kiln laborer and his two sons, ages eight and 10.

As these atrocities play out across an ever-expanding global battlefield, what is striking is the absence of any organized opposition to U.S. war crimes. The continuous wars are not even a subject of debate in Congress and are supported by both Democrats and Republicans. The media, a faithful propaganda arm of the Pentagon and the CIA, has shown a complete disinterest in U.S. war crimes, paying attention only when allegations are made against Russia or the Syrian government.

Moreover, while masses of working people in the U.S. and around the world are opposed to war, the pseudo-left groups that got their start in the middle class antiwar protests of the 1960s and 1970s have abandoned even verbal opposition to U.S. military aggression. Reflecting the interests of privileged middle-class layers, groups like the International Socialist Organization in the U.S., the Left Party in Germany and the New Anti-capitalist Party in France have articulated the politics of this new constituency for imperialism, justifying neo-colonial interventions in the name of "human rights" and portraying CIA regime-change operations as in Libya and Syria as "revolutions."

The emergence of a genuine antiwar movement is today a matter of life and death, as the war crimes being carried out by Washington across the globe threaten to coalesce into a global conflict involving the major nuclear powers. Such a movement can be built only in the fight to mobilize the working class independently on the basis of a socialist program to put an end to capitalism, the source of war.

(Source: wsws.org)



# Is radicalism possible today?

By David Brooks

Are you feeling radical? Do you think that the status quo is fundamentally broken and we have to start thinking about radical change? If so, I'd like to go back a century so that we might learn how radicalism is done.

The years around 1917 were a great period of radical ferment. Folks at The New Republic magazine were cham-

pioning progressivism, which would transform how the economy is regulated and how democracy works. At The Masses, left-wing activists were fomenting a global socialist revolution. Outside the White House radical suffragists were protesting for the right to vote and creating modern feminism.

People in those days had one thing we have in abundance: an urge to rebel against the current reality — in

their case against the brutalities of industrialization, the rigidities of Victorianism, the stale formulas of academic thinking.

But they also had a whole series of mechanisms they thought they could use to implement change. If you were searching for a new consciousness, there was a neighborhood to go to: Greenwich Village. If you were searching for a dissident lifestyle, there was one — Bohemianism, with its

artistic rejection of commercial life.

People had faith in small magazines as the best lever to change the culture and the world. People had faith in the state, in central planning as an effective tool to reorganize the economy and liberate the oppressed. Radicals had faith in the working class, to ally with the intellectuals and form a common movement against concentrated wealth. ➔13

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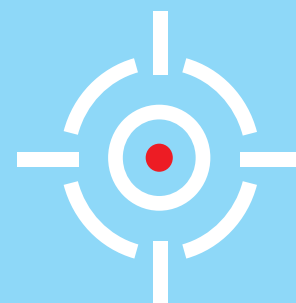
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# Eating fried potatoes linked to higher risk of death, study says



By Susan Scutti

How your spuds are cooked is key to your health. People who eat fried potatoes two or more times a week double their risk of an early death compared to those who avoid them, a recent study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found. Eating potatoes that have not been fried was not linked to a similar early mortality risk, the researchers noted.

"Fried potatoes consumption is increasing worldwide," warned Dr. Nicola Veronese, lead author of the study and a scientist at the National Research Council in Padova, Italy.

In 2014, Americans consumed 112.1 pounds of potatoes per person, according to the National Potato Council. Of that total, 33.5 pounds were fresh potatoes, the remaining 78.5 pounds were processed. According to the US Department of Agriculture, the majority of processed potatoes Americans eat are French fries.

■ Trans fats in fried potatoes

Veronese and his colleagues have been tracking 4,440 people aged 45 to 79 over a period of eight years to study osteoarthritis. This research team decided to momentarily set aside the main issue of osteoarthritis and look at participants' consumption of potatoes.

Even though most of us may have assumed that fried potatoes could be unhealthy for us, there is "very limited" scientific data on this issue, Veronese explained in an email.

So the researchers divided study participants into subgroups based on how frequently they ate potatoes each week. Over the eight years, a total of 236 of the participants died. Analyzing the data for each group, Veronese and his team found that those who ate fried potatoes two to three times each week doubled their chance of dying early compared to those who ate no fried potatoes.

## Trans fat has been shown to raise the "bad," or LDL, cholesterol in the blood, which can lead to cardiovascular disease.

French fries, potato chips, hash browns -- and any other preparation requiring a fryer -- are all included under the umbrella of "fried potatoes," Veronese explained.

Age or sex of participants did not influence the result, but the data showed men were more likely than women and younger participants were more likely than older participants to enjoy the fried food.

The study is observational, meaning the researchers simply tracked the behavior of a group of people and found an association between one behavior -- eating fried potatoes -- and another factor -- early death. Because it is an observational study, Veronese and his co-authors note it cannot be said that eating fried potatoes directly causes an early mortality -- it would require more research to draw such a firm conclusion.

"Even if it is an observational study, we believe that the cooking oil, rich in trans-fat, is an important factor in explaining mortality in those eating more potatoes," said Veronese. Trans fat has been shown to raise the "bad," or LDL, cholesterol in the blood, which can lead to cardiovascular disease.

Yet, he also added that "other important factors," including obesity, a sedentary

lifestyle and use of high quantities of salt might also play a role in the early death of those eating two or more portions of fried potatoes each week.

National Potato Council CEO John Keeling said the "study isn't relevant to the general population" since the data was collected for an osteoarthritis study and includes only patients with arthritis. "Potatoes are inherently a very healthy vegetable," said Keeling in an email. He said a medium-sized potato is 110 calories, has no fat, no sodium, no cholesterol, and provides nearly a third of the daily vitamin C requirement with more potassium than a banana.

"How the potato is prepared will impact the calorie, fat and sodium content," said Keeling, however the basic nutrients remain "no matter how it is prepared."

Based on the data in the study, Keeling said, "it is very much a stretch to brand fried potatoes, or any other form of potato, as unhealthy."

Susanna Larsson, an associate professor at the Institute of Environmental Medicine, Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden, noted that the new study provides "no evidence" that potato consumption in and of itself may increase the risk of an early

death. Larsson was not involved in the new study. Instead, it may be the "other factors" suggested by Veronese himself.

"Fried potato consumption may be an indicator of a less healthy (Western) dietary pattern which is associated with increased mortality," said Larsson, who also conducted a study of potato consumption. Her study did not find an increased risk of cardiovascular disease linked to eating potatoes.

■ Understanding acrylamide

The potential danger when eating fried starchy foods, such as French fries, is acrylamide, said Stephanie Schiff, a registered dietitian at Northwell Health's Huntington Hospital in Huntington, New York. Schiff was not involved in the study.

Acrylamide is "a chemical produced when starchy foods such as potatoes are fried, roasted or baked at a high temperature," explained Schiff in an email. The browning process is actually a reaction that produces this chemical one shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals and considered toxic to humans, said Schiff. Acrylamide is also a potential cause of cancer, she said.

"You can reduce your intake of acrylamide by boiling or steaming starchy foods, rather than frying them," said Schiff. "If you do fry foods, do it quickly."

She also suggested you "go lighter" since "the darker the food, the more acrylamide it may contain."

Finally, Schiff said that potatoes should not be stored in the refrigerator because this could lead to producing more acrylamide when the potatoes are later cooked.

"Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables for a healthier alternative," said Schiff.

Veronese said he hopes his new study will suggest to everyone that consuming fried potatoes "could be an important risk factor for mortality. Thus, their consumption should be strongly limited."

(Source: CNN)

## The potential danger when eating fried starchy foods, such as French fries, is acrylamide, a chemical produced when starchy foods such as potatoes are fried, roasted or baked at a high temperature, the browning process is actually a reaction that produces this chemical one shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals and considered toxic to humans.

# Biking to work linked to reduced risk of heart disease, cancer, and early death

By Beverly Merz

Harvard Medical School (HMS) has a bicycle-friendly campus. Faculty, staff, and students who commute by bike can park their wheels in secured cages, wash off road grime in showers, buy new helmets at a discount, and receive a monthly reimbursement for bike maintenance costs. HMS encourages bicycle commuting not just to relieve parking congestion and foster cleaner air, but also because observational studies have suggested that cycling, like other forms of exercise, is good for us.

A recent study suggests that bicycle commuting, like recreational cycling, is not only associated with a lower risk of serious disease, but with a longer life as well. For that study, researchers from the University of Glasgow followed more than 263,450 commuters in England, Scotland, and Wales for an average of five years. The group was composed of 52% women and 48% men ages 40 through 69.

The researchers divided the participants into five groups based on how they got to and from work on a typical day — walking, cycling, riding in a car or on public transportation, mixed walking (a combination of walking and riding), and mixed cycling (cycling and riding). They found that compared with riding to work, bike commuting was associated with a lower risk of being diagnosed with cardiovascular disease or cancer, or dying of any cause during the five-year period. Walking was associated with a lower risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

■ The benefits of biking outweigh the risks

"The benefits of regular physical activity are well documented, but there have been concerns that traffic crashes may negate the benefits from commuting by bicycle," says Dr. Walter Willett, professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health,



and a bicycle commuter himself. "This study is important because it confirms, with a much larger sample size, previous findings from other countries. Moreover, it shows that the benefits strongly outweigh the risks."

The study also provides some assurance to cyclists in the US, where biking conditions are similar to those in the United Kingdom and less friendly than in many European countries. For example, in the Netherlands the bicycle is the major mode of transportation for more than a third of the population, who have access to separated cycle tracks, networks of bicycle paths, and ample dedicated bike

## Cycling prevents about 6,500 deaths each year in the Netherlands and is responsible for adding six months to the life expectancy of the average Dutch person.

parking, and where traffic laws give them the right of way over cars, trucks, and buses. A 2015 analysis conducted by researchers at the University of Utrecht determined that cycling prevents about 6,500 deaths each year in the Netherlands and is responsible for adding six months to the life expectancy of the average Dutch person.

■ Joining the bike commute

If you're thinking of biking to work, the following can help to make your commute safer.

- Protect yourself. Wear a properly fitted helmet and clothing that is appropriate for the weather. Wear reflective gear at night and in cloudy weather.

- Maintain your bike. Make sure your bike fits you and that it is fit for road conditions. Mount a white light on the front of your bike and a red light on the back for night cycling.

- Learn and follow the rules of the road. Most states require bicyclists to follow the same rules as drivers of other vehicles. You can find the rules of the road for most states here.

- Communicate with those who share the road with you. Make eye contact and use hand signals to indicate what you're about to do. The simplest gestures, like extending your right or left arm out to signal a turn, can avert a collision.

■ If your commute is too risky to bike

If you'd like to bike, but are intimidated by the traffic along your route, let your city and state governments know that you want safe and convenient bike paths and secure parking. "Our investments in transportation should be rebalanced to promote active commuting, especially safer bicycle facilities. This would be far more cost effective and environmentally friendly than much of what we spend in medical care," Dr. Willett says.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

## When should you take your thyroid medication?

By Mary Shomon

Standard guidelines recommend that you take your thyroid pill first thing in the morning, on an empty stomach, and wait at least an hour before eating or drinking coffee. You should also wait at least three to four hours before taking any supplements that contain iron or calcium.

But are the standard guidelines for everyone? Here are some factors to consider.

First, discuss with your doctor what she/he thinks is the best time to take your medication.

Keep in mind, however, that studies have shown that the key with thyroid medication is taking it consistently. That means that you should take it around the same time each day, and in the same way, for example, without food, or several hours apart from eating.

Second, if you have a busy morning, and a tendency to forget your thyroid medication, or need to eat or drink coffee right away, talk with your physician about switching to taking your thyroid medication at bedtime. Research reported in the journal Clinical Endocrinology found that taking the same dose of levothyroxine at bedtime, as compared to first thing in the morning, might be better for some patients.

A small pilot study (described in Should You Take Your Thyroid Medication at Night?) was prompted by observations that some patients had improved thyroid hormone profiles after they switched from taking their levothyroxine in the morning to bedtime.

The purpose was to look at the impact on thyroid hormone profiles by changing the time levothyroxine was taken from early morning to bedtime. They also evaluated the impact of this change on the circadian rhythm of TSH and thyroid hormones and thyroid hormone metabolism.

The small study was fairly conclusive in its findings.

Researchers reported that taking medication at bedtime, rather than the morning, results in "higher thyroid hormone concentrations and lower TSH concentrations." TSH decreased and Free T4 levels rose in all patients by changing thyroxine ingestion from early morning to bedtime and T3 levels rose in all but one subject. And TSH decreased irrespective of the starting TSH levels, suggesting better absorption of the thyroid medication when taken in the evening. Interestingly, the researchers found that the circadian TSH rhythm, the typical daily fluctuations of TSH that occur during a 24-hour period, did not vary.

The researchers suggested several explanations for the results:

- Even when waiting at least 30 minutes to eat, breakfast may be interfering with the intestinal absorption of thyroid medication
- "Bowel motility is slower at night," which means that it takes longer for the levothyroxine tablet to transit through the intestinal system, resulting in longer exposure to the intestinal wall, and therefore, better absorption of the medication.
- The conversion process of T4 to T3 may be more effective in the evening. The researchers said these results were "striking" and have "important consequences for the millions of patients who take l-thyroxine daily"

The researchers have suggested that given the results of this pilot study, a large double-blinded randomized study will need to be performed to confirm their results.

■ Should you take your medication at bedtime?

Taking medication at bedtime instead of in the morning could have major implications for many thyroid patients.

- First, it's easier, as you don't have to worry about when to eat breakfast.
- Second, you can drink coffee as soon as you get up (which is surprisingly important to many Americans!)
- Third, it's easier to avoid interactions with medications, high-fiber foods, and supplements like calcium and iron that interfere with thyroid medication absorption.
- Fourth, it might offer some improvement in symptoms if you are not getting optimal absorption by taking your thyroid medication during the morning.

While this was a small study, it confirms what many patients anecdotally have been reporting for years: they feel better if they take their thyroid medication in the evening, rather than the morning.

■ What about T3 drugs?

Studies of nighttime thyroid medication were conducted with levothyroxine. The T4 in levothyroxine must first be converted in the body to the active T3 form, a process that can take days. Thyroid drugs that contain T3 such as liothyronine (Cytomel), and natural desiccated thyroid drugs can be used directly by the body within hours. T3 drugs were not evaluated in the study.

Anecdotally, some thyroid patients have reported improvement in symptoms when taking their T3-based thyroid hormone replacement medications in the evening. But some thyroid patients also find that if they take a medication with T3 later in the day or in the evening, the stimulatory effect of the T3 medication can make it difficult to sleep.

So keep in mind that while it's possible that if a similar study were conducted with T3 drugs, the results could be similar as far as improved absorption. Still, there is some chance that it could impact your sleep quality. Only make such a change after discussing it with your doctor.

Optimally, some doctors have suggested that patients who take medications with T3 split their doses to take them throughout the day, leaving a dose for bedtime. This approach seems to minimize sleep interference.

Again, if you do make a change to how you take your T3 thyroid medication, you'll want to have a reevaluation of blood levels and symptoms after several weeks, to determine if you need to adjust the dosage or timing of your medication.

■ A word from Verywell

If you and your physician decide to change to taking your thyroid medication in the evening, be sure to have your thyroid levels evaluated around 8 to 12 weeks after you've made the switch. The blood test results, along with any improvements or worsening of symptoms, will help you and your doctor determine if you need to adjust the dosage or timing of your medication.

(Source: verywell.com)



Muscat-Bandar Abbas flight in the pipeline

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — An Omani airline is seeking to launch charter flights between Muscat and the port city of Bandar Abbas in Iran's Hormozgan province, a provincial tourism official has said without providing further details.



A view of Bandar Abbas, a port city in southern Iran.

"Demand for traveling to Iran is high among Omani nationals," Mehr quoted Mohsen Ziaei, the head of the provincial office of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, as saying on Saturday.

The official added that a large number of Omani travelers are in fact medical tourists seeking high quality healthcare in Iran.

During a recent move to boost inbound passengers from Oman, marine travels have been facilitated with providing tourists with the right to ship their own vehicles to Iran's Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf.

Indonesia boasts better growth than Thailand in foreign tourist numbers

Thailand reportedly welcomed 12.01 million foreign tourists in the first quarter of 2017, a slight increase of 2.91 percent from the same period last year, according to data from the Thailand Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

In April, the country greeted 2.82 million foreign tourists, an increase of 6.97 percent from 2016, which saw an influx of 2.64 million tourists.

Interestingly, Thailand recorded a smaller number of Chinese tourists in the first quarter of 2017. The Chinese segment fell by 7.5 percent.

More Russian tourists reportedly visited the country. The ministry states that 595,618 Russians visited the country in the first quarter of 2017, compared to 443,346 visitors during the same period the year before.

Tourist numbers from India also increased, from 94,012 to 107,451.

Thailand wants to attract at least 60 million foreign visitors by 2030.

Meanwhile, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that Indonesia welcomed 4.2 million foreign tourists in the January – April 2017 period, an increase of 19.34 percent from last year's figure.

In April, the number of foreign visitors reached 1.14 million, a 26.75 percent increase from April last year.

In terms of Chinese tourists, the archipelago greeted 165,400 visitors throughout April, also up from last year's number of 110,270. (Source: The Jakarta Post)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Churches of Chiloé

In the Chiloé archipelago off the coast of Chile are about 70 churches built within the framework of a "Circular Mission" introduced by the Jesuits in the 17th century and continued by the Franciscans in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The most exceptional illustrations of this unique form of wooden ecclesiastical architecture (the so-called Chilota School of architecture) are the churches of Achao, Quinchao, Castro, Rilán, Nercón, Aldachildo, Ichuac, Detif, Vilupulli, Chonchi, Tenaún, Colo, San Juan, Dalcahue, Chellín and Caguach.

These sixteen churches are outstanding examples of the successful fusion of European and indigenous cultural traditions. The abilities of the people of Chiloé as builders achieved its highest expression in these wooden churches, where farmers, fishermen and sailors exhibited great expertise in the handling of the most abundant material in this environment, wood. Along with the churches, the mestizo culture resulting from Jesuit missionary activities has survived to the present day.

This isolated archipelago was colonized by the Spanish in the mid 16th century.



Church of Achao in Chiloé Archipelago

The construction techniques and architecture of the churches of Chiloé are specific to this locale: European experience was adapted and reformulated, giving rise to a vernacular tradition, supported by a great quantity and variety of testimonies which are still in use. Along with the culture of the archipelago, these churches are the result of a rich and extensive cross-cultural dialogue and interaction. (Source: UNESCO)

Iran seeks balanced tourism ties with Russia

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — Iran's tourism chief on Saturday urged the need to achieve a balance between the inbound and outbound tourist flows that currently exist between the country and Russia.

"We should conduct an [in-depth] analysis and take practical measures in line with raising the number of Russian travelers to the country," Zahra Ahmadipour said in an address to a tourism meeting in Tehran.

Roughly 67,000 Iranians visited Russia in 2016, a solid growth of 72 percent compared to a year earlier, Russia Beyond the Headlines reported on April 5.

"Our failure to attract tourists from countries that we have a good political relationship with them is something that should be seriously followed through investigation," Ahmadipour added.

Launching [travel] campaigns, boosting participation in exhibitions, training courses for tourist guides fluent in Russian, translation and dissemination of attractions in Iran, and cutting the travel costs are amongst the measures that can lead to obtain an appropriate share of the Russian tourism market, the official explained.

Ahmadipour who presides over the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization also defined the role of role of the private sector as very important in this regard, saying "Such a goal would not be realized without active participation of the private sector."

Elsewhere in her remarks, Ahmadipour pointed to the 2018 FIFA World Cup as an opportunity to promote tourism in the country. Iran's national team has been qualified for the event that is scheduled to be held in Russia from June 14 to July 15, 2018.

■ Russians' low familiarity with Iran

During the meeting, CHTHO Deputy Director Morteza Rahmani-Movahhed stressed the need for greater public awareness of Russian travel associates on Iran's tourism potentials, adding that the organization has invited a delegation of Russian tour guides to visit Iran during October in a bid to



Iran's tourism chief Zahra Ahmadipour (C) addresses a travel meeting on Russia in Tehran on June 17, 2017.

introduce the country's tourism potentials.

He also talked on an already-achieved visa simplification program that eases bureaucracy for certain groups of travelers, describing a comprehensive visa waiver program as time-consuming.

Ebrahim Pourfaraj, the chief executive of Iranian Tour Operators Association, for his part, reminded attendees of the fact that Iran's tourist destinations are not well-known to the Russian nationals.

"Russians' familiarity with Iran [sites] is very low," Pourfaraj said, as he proposed holding exhibitions and photo tours amongst several solutions to deal

with the issue.

On March 28, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked a visa-free agreement for tourist groups in Moscow.

Based on the agreement tour groups of 5 to 50 people heading to Russia from Iran or vice versa will be granted a visa-free stay of up to 15 days, Sputnik reported.

Russians expect around 100,000 Iranians to visit the country this year while most travelers (about 95 percent) are usually interested in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Zoroastrians hold Pir-e Sabz congregational pilgrimage

By Naghmeh Mizanian

Zoroastrian pilgrims from all over the country gathered in the city of Yazd to hold congregational pilgrimage of Pir-e Sabz, also called Chak-Chak.

This year, Pir-e Sabz shrine hosted about 1,000 Zoroastrian pilgrims from June 14-18, Arsham Belivani, the head of Zoroastrian Association of Sharifabad and sponsor of Pir-e Sabz ceremony told the Tehran Times.

The majority of pilgrims gathered mainly on Thursday and Friday, Belivani added.

A congregational prayer, calling Gahanbar, was also held during the event, to wish for the health and well-being of Zoroastrian people, he added.

The pilgrims gathered at the site to pray in hope of a better future. After they visited the shrine, some of them prepared a meal and played music in general merriment, for it is their dedication and joy that gives strength to the hope for a joyous future.

Pir-e Sabz is the best known among Zoroastrians as it is also frequented by non-Zoroastrians and is part of tourist itineraries.

Pir is referred to shrine and Sabz means green and the alternative name, Chak-Chak, is said to be derived from the sound of drip-



ping water in the cave which contains the shrine.

Pir-e Sabz is located in a shallow cave on the side of a barren mountain. Visitors and pilgrims walk up a trail and flight of steps past some buildings to the shrine itself.

Pir-e Sabz is dedicated to the royal princess Nikbanu (banu meaning lady and nik meaning good). The princess was the

daughter of the last Sassanian king Yazdegerd III.

According to legend, after the fleeing royal party had split up in an effort to avoid capture by the invading Arabs, princess Nikbanu fled to Pir-e Sabz. The Arabs caught up with her and now trapped, she prayed devoutly and a cleft in the mountain parted taking the princess into its womb.

Kashan tourist arrivals rise 62% y/y

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — The number of foreign tourists visiting the central city of Kashan rose 62 percent to 16,300 during April 4 to June 5 in comparison to the same period last year, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Throughout the same period, 10,314 foreign travelers visited the city with French travelers accounting for 6,000, Alireza Abdollahzadeh, a data analyst at the Statistical Center of Iran, said in a press conference on June 17.

Many travelers opt to bypass Kashan on their journeys between Tehran, Isfahan and Yazd, but this delightful oasis city on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir is one of Iran's

most alluring destinations.

The city not only boasts a cluster of architectural wonders, an atmospheric covered bazaar and a UNESCO recognized garden, but it also offers some of central Iran's best traditional hotels.

During the Seljuk period (1051–1220) Kashan became famous for its textiles, pottery and tiles, reaching high levels of accomplishment in each of these cottage industries. Today it is more widely known as a major center for the production of rose water, which is sold at outlets around the main tourist attractions and at dedicated stores in the bazaar.

Myanmar's tourism destination dreams fade amid empty hotels

With its sweeping view of the Shwedagon Pagoda, a glittering golden stupa and Myanmar's top cultural attraction, the Esperado Lake View Hotel should be in an enviable spot.

Yet, just two years after it was built, this four-star hotel sits half-empty for many months at a time, according to manager Nero Kyaw Wai. "We aren't seeing the demand in Myanmar," he said.

When the country opened to the outside world in 2011 after decades of military rule, the former British colony held promise as one of the world's hottest tourist destinations, a last frontier for adventure travel. With its lush landscapes

and ancient temples, government planners hoped tourism would become a big part of the development equation, just as it has been for neighboring Thailand.

But it hasn't worked out that way. A construction glut has flooded Myanmar with unused hotel rooms, and poorly regulated building has damaged national treasures like the archaeological site of Bagan and scenic Inle Lake, which is becoming clogged with silt and garbage.

"It's a massive challenge for the country to develop such a complex sector where they have no experience," said Paul Rogers, a tourism consultant and adviser to the Myanmar government.

Change has come quickly since Myanmar's emergence from isolation. A democratically elected coalition led by Aung San Suu Kyi — the former political prisoner and Nobel laureate — formed a new government last year, pledging to end ethnic conflict and open the economy.

In recent years, foreign investment has poured in, bringing the first Western fast food restaurants, a Coca-Cola Co. bottling plant and cellphone service. In 2016, the country clocked one of Asia's fastest economic growth rates, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Still, the country remains one of the world's poorest, the military still holds

powerful sway, and ethnic violence persists. The United Nations in February said members of the army and the police had likely killed hundreds of Rohingya Muslims, and forced nearly 90,000 from their homes during a crackdown last year against the minority group. A government adviser who had called for religious harmony was shot and killed outside Myanmar's international airport in January.

"There is no safe travel in the northern part of the country and the country gets a lot of bad press," said Thet Lwin Toh, chairman of the Union of Myanmar Travel Association.

(Source: Bloomberg)



Foreign traverses are seen during their visit to the Tabatabaei House, 19th-century tourist destination in Kashan, Iran.



# Autonomous cars will transform everyday life, researchers say

Car culture is whooshing toward what tech legend Andy Grove of Intel would've called a "strategic inflection point." The autonomous-car movement is accelerating faster than a Tesla in Ludicrous Easter Egg mode.

In recent weeks, Jaguar Land Rover invested \$25 million in Lyft so JLR can test its autonomous cars on Lyft's ride-hailing service. Honda, which had lagged in driverless tech, unveiled ambitious plans to make cars by 2020 that can drive themselves on highways.

UK-based auto parts maker Delphi and French transport company Transdev said they will jointly start testing "driverless, on-demand mobility" on roads in France.

Yet while we can see driverless cars coming, it's hard to understand just how much they will change everyday life. We can imagine doing work or watching a movie when we'd otherwise be nudging through traffic and angrily yelling words we wouldn't use in front of our mothers. Government officials are already starting to wrestle with big societal issues related to this issue.

## National League of Cities

The National League of Cities just released a study that gets into concerns about privacy (who gets to know that you take daily trips



to the booze store?), regulation, ownership of data, hacking and, of course, safety. And there's still so much more to consider.

Some research says that in 20 or 30 years, most people in urban settings will

move around in driverless cars. At that point, the cascading impact of driverless transportation will be as great — and as nuanced — as the shift from horses to cars in the early 1900s.

For instance, most consumers will find

**Honda, which had lagged in driverless tech, unveiled ambitious plans to make cars by 2020 that can drive themselves on highways.**

## Researchers use light to manipulate mosquitoes

Scientists at the University of Notre Dame have found that exposure to just 10 minutes of light at night suppresses biting and manipulates flight behavior in the *Anopheles gambiae* mosquito, the major vector for transmission of malaria in Africa, according to new research published in the journal *Parasites and Vectors*.

Critical behaviors exhibited by the species, such as feeding, egg laying and flying, are time-of-day specific, including a greater propensity for nighttime biting. A recent report from the World Health Organization stated an estimated 212 million people worldwide are infected with the disease, resulting in 429,000 deaths annually -- mostly children.

Insecticide-treated bed nets and walls have helped prevent bites and reduce malaria, but researchers say mosquitoes are adapting to preventive conditions, leaving adults and children vulnerable in the early evening and early morning hours -- when they are not under the nets or in the house.

## Current methods

"Anopheline mosquitoes are adapting to these current methods by developing resistance to insecticides and by shifting feeding to earlier in the evening or later into the early morning, times of the day when people are not in bed and therefore not protected by a net.

So what used to be an efficient method is becoming less effective," said Giles Duffield, associate professor of biology in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Notre Dame and the Eck Institute for Global Health, who specializes in the molecular biology of circadian rhythms and photobiology in mammals and mosquitoes. "We need to discover new methods to address mosquito control and prevention. The systems and tools we currently have including global distribution and usage of insecticide-treated bed nets and spraying are not enough."

For the study, Duffield and his team tested the mosquitoes' preference to bite during their active host-seeking period by separating them into multiple control and test batches. Control mosquitoes were kept in the dark, while test batches were exposed to a pulse of white light for 10 minutes.

## Propensity of mosquitoes

Researchers then tested the propensity of the mosquitoes to bite immediately after the pulse and every two hours throughout the night, holding their arms to a mesh lining that allowed uninfected mosquitoes to feed while remaining contained.

Results indicated a significant suppression. In another



experiment, mosquitoes were pulsed with light every two hours, and using this multiple pulse approach the team found that biting could be suppressed during a large portion of the 12-hour night.

"Most remarkable is the prolonged effect a short light treatment has on their preference to bite, with suppression lasting as long as four hours after the pulse," Duffield said. "This may prove to be an effective tool that complements established control methods used to reduce disease transmission."

(Source: EurekAlert)

## Imperiled Atlantic salmon decline worsens: conservation group

Fewer of North America's Atlantic salmon are making it back to rivers to spawn, which bodes poorly for the future of the imperiled fish, an international conservation group says.

Atlantic salmon were once abundant in the rivers of New England and Atlantic Canada, but they are now endangered or have disappeared in parts of both areas. The salmon are born in rivers, swim to the Atlantic and return to their natal river to spawn.

The New Brunswick, Canada-based Atlantic Salmon Federation released a report this month that says total estimated returns of the fish to North America in 2016 was a little more than a half million salmon. That is a 27 percent decrease from the previous year.

## Young salmon

The group says young salmon who spent only one winter at sea before returning to the river, called grilse, fared especially poorly last year. They returned at a rate nearly a third lower than 2015, the group said.

The salmon federation warns that signs show 2017 is looking like another poor year, said spokesman Neville Crabbe.

"What do we do? We've asked people to choose to kill fewer salmon," Crabbe said. The "long term solution is government to government agreements."

Atlantic salmon face a number of challenges in the wild, ranging from the presence of river dams to continued fishing pressure off of Canada and Greenland.

Crabbe said the changing environment of the North Atlantic has also impacted populations. Because of changes in availability of the fish they prey upon, the salmon have to exert the same amount of energy to eat the same amount of food, he said. That makes it more difficult for the fish to live long enough to make it back to rivers and spawn.

## Federation's report

The salmon federation's report states that Greenland fishermen are catching fewer of the fish, which could be a signal of poor survival of salmon in the wild. Greenland fishermen caught less than half as many salmon last year as in 2015, the report states.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released a recovery plan for Gulf of Maine salmon that calls for restored



habitats, removal of dams and use of hatchery programs to try to rebuild the population. The Gulf of Maine's Atlantic salmon was listed an endangered in 2000 and has fallen sharply in population since the 19th century.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Northeast Fisheries Sci-

ence Center includes an Atlantic Salmon Ecosystems Research Team that tracks and studies the population. Tim Sheehan, a research fishery biologist with the team, said it's important to keep an eye on long-term trends in salmon population and not put too much stock in one year.

## In the car era

In the horse era, there was a need to have stables everywhere. In the car era, we've needed gas stations everywhere — about 120,000 of them in the U.S. But in the driverless era, most cars will be electric and will automatically find a charging station once depleted, the way a Roomba returns to its dock after vacuuming up the cat hair. Gas stations will become something we tell our grandkids about.

Self-driving cars don't need to park. They can drop you off and give someone else a ride. There are as many as 2 billion parking spaces in the U.S. and billions more worldwide. What if we don't need parking lots anymore? Turn them into parks? Urban farmland? Maybe hipsters will make converted parking decks into the coolest places to live, like they did with old warehouses in downtrodden parts of cities.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Jupiter is the oldest planet in the Solar System

Jupiter's ancient name really is well-deserved: according to a new study, the king of the planets isn't just the largest in the Solar System, it's also the oldest. A team of researchers from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California and the University of Munster in Germany have determined that Jupiter's core was already 20 times the size of Earth merely 1 million years after the sun took shape 4.6 billion years ago. Since newborn stars tend to release energy that blows away gas and dust for planet formation, the gas giant must have had to absorb materials very, very fast.

The team came to the conclusion after testing for the presence and abundances of molybdenum and tungsten isotopes in some iron meteorites that fell to Earth. They found that the meteorites contained components from two distinct reservoir of materials, thanks to the data from the molybdenum isotopes.

The data from the tungsten isotopes, on the other hand, showed that the two pools of materials were separated for 2 to 3 million years. In addition, they've been separated as early as a million years into the formation of the Solar System.

The team explained that the "most plausible mechanism to efficiently separate two disk reservoirs for an extended period is the accretion of a giant planet in between them." Yes, that gas giant is Jupiter, and while its formation slowed as the years went by, it kept growing and growing enough to create a permanent barrier between the two pools.

That means we could owe our existence to Jupiter, because who knows if and how life would flourish on Earth if it's too near other, more massive planets.

(Source: Engadget)

## Dutch firm aims to deliver first flying car in 2018

From "The Jetsons" to "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang", flying cars have long captured the imagination.

While several futuristic projects are under way in different countries, a Dutch design may be the first one sold and soaring into the skies.

After years of testing, the PAL-V company aims to pip its competitors to the post. It is poised to start production on what they bill as a world first: a three-wheeled gyrocopter-type vehicle which can carry two people and will be certified for use on the roads and in the skies.

"This kind of dream has been around for 100 years now. When the first airplane was invented people already thought 'How can I make that drivable on the road?'," chief marketing officer Markus Hess told AFP.

The PAL-V (Personal Air and Land Vehicle) firm, based in Raamsdonksveer in the Netherlands, is aiming to deliver its first flying car to its first customer by the end of 2018.

The lucky owner will need both a driving license and a pilot's license. But with the keys in hand, the owner will be able to drive to an airfield for the short take-off, and after landing elsewhere drive to the destination in a "door-to-door" experience.

Different versions of a flying car are being developed in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Japan, China and the United States.

But final assembly on the PAL-V will start in October, with the company seeking to be the first to go into commercial production.

In 2019, the company expects to produce between 50 and 100 vehicles, before ramping up to "quite a few hundred" in 2020.

But the company, which has some 40 to 50 employees, realized the weight and length of a gyrocopter's blades gave the vehicle a high center of gravity when driving, especially taking corners.

(Source: AFP)

## How Monsanto protects crops with artificial intelligence

Monsanto, the leading producer of genetically modified crops (GMOs), has announced a partnership with Atomwise. The controversial corporation will use Atomwise's artificial intelligence expertise to discover molecules that could protect crops quicker.

Atomwise uses deep learning algorithms to discover molecules that might have the desired effect, rather than look at every individual molecule. The program has not been active long, but already has partners at Stanford University and UC San Diego.

It takes 11 years and \$250 million for the typical crop protection to come to market, according to Monsanto. Atomwise could reduce the time and cost, while also improving the chances of finding multiple ways to protect a crop from disease or pests.

"Each growing season, farmers around the world are challenged with yield-robbing pests and diseases, yet the average crop protection product takes up to 11 years and more than \$250 million to commercialize," said Jeremy Williams, Monsanto's agricultural productivity innovations lead. "Discovering new solutions is critical, and this collaboration will help bring much-needed crop protection solutions to farmers faster."

(Source: ReadWrite)

## Trove of new horror species discovered in Australian abyss

A peanut worm, of the phylum Sipuncula, shrinks when threatened. Ironically, it can reproduce asexually.

What lurks in the ocean's abyssal depths? That was the question the crew of research vessel RV Investigator sought to answer in a month-long expedition exploring Australia's eastern abyss for the first time.

The Marine National Facility boat was led by Museums Victoria, along with CSIRO and other research bodies, and departed mid-May from Launceston, Tasmania, docking in Brisbane, Queensland on Friday, June 16.

The "abyss is the largest and deepest habitat on the planet, covering half the world's oceans and one third of Australia's territory, but it remains the most unexplored environment on Earth," said Museums Victoria senior curator Tim O'Hara on the voyage's departure.

At 4,000 meters down in the ocean, the abyssopelagic zone has been difficult to explore. It is so deep no light can penetrate it, and consequently extremely cold. Moreover, the pressure at that depth is crushing. So far, only a small number of samples have been collected

from Australia's abyss -- but there is much to learn from them.

## Deep-sea habitats

The "data gathered on this trip will be crucial to understanding Australia's deep-sea habitats, their biodiversity and the ecological processes that sustain them. This will assist in its conservation and management and help to protect it from the impacts of climate change, pollution and other human activity," O'Hara said.

Using multibeam sonar, the team mapped the abyss floor, which allowed them to send collecting gear such as trawling sleds down without smashing it into rocks. And they brought back a treasure trove of over 1,000 different species of deep-sea creepy crawlies, over a third of which are completely new to science.

And, being abyssal creatures adapted to survive in the crushing, freezing darkness, they are pretty grotesque to our land-dwelling human eyes -- slimy and toothy and luminescent and, in one very memorable

case, more than a little bit phallic.

The team also found a worrying amount of pollution. "We have found highly concerning levels of rubbish on the sea floor," O'Hara said. "We're 100 kilometers off Australia's coast, and have found PVC pipes, cans of paints, bottles, beer cans, woodchips, and other debris from the days when steamships plied our waters. The seafloor has 200 years of rubbish on it. Hopefully information such as this is the first step in influencing social attitudes towards rubbish disposal."

Now that the crew has landed with its collection of specimens, a science crew is hard at work processing and photographing and preserving them for museums around the world. These can then be used for research purposes for years to come.

You can slake your curiosity on the gallery below, and a selection of the specimens will be on exhibit at Melbourne Museum later this year.

(Source: CNET)



## UN veteran Kang Kyung Wha is South Korea’s first female foreign minister

**SEOUL (AFP)** — South Korean President Moon Jae In on Sunday (June 18) appointed a veteran diplomat as the country’s first female foreign minister, tasked with easing tensions over North Korea’s nuclear ambitions.

Kang Kyung Wha, 62, served as Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs before becoming a senior policy advisor to UN chief Antonio Guterres this year.

Her appointment comes less than two weeks before Moon’s first trip to the U.S. for a summit with President Donald Trump as fears grow over Pyongyang’s weapons program.

The isolated regime has staged a series of missile launches this year, defying global pressure and triggering tightened UN sanctions.

Kang served at the South’s foreign ministry for years before joining the UN.

Her diplomatic experience will help the South navigate tricky waters and tackle sensitive issues with its allies and neighbors, Moon’s office said earlier.

Moon, a center-left politician who took office after the ouster of impeached president Park Geun Hye, has advocated dialogue with the North to bring it to the negotiating table in a break from his conservative predecessors who took a hardline stance against Pyongyang.

## RECIPE OF THE WEEK

### Peach cobbler

Recipe by: Lil Kane “An old fashioned fruit cobbler made with fresh or canned peaches. Delicious served with vanilla ice cream! If using canned peaches use juice from can instead of water”

#### Ingredients:



1/4 cup butter  
1/2 cup white sugar  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 cup milk  
2 cups fresh peaches, pitted and sliced  
1/4 cup white sugar  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 1/2 cups water

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Lightly butter a 9x9 inch glass baking pan.

In a large bowl, cream the butter and 1/2 cup sugar. In a separate bowl, mix flour, salt and baking powder. Add to the creamed mixture alternately with the milk.

Spread mixture evenly into baking dish. If using canned peaches, drain thoroughly, reserving the juice. Spoon fruit over batter.

Sprinkle with cinnamon and 1/4 cup sugar. Pour fruit juice or water over the top.

Bake at 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) for 45 to 55 minutes. During baking the fruit and juice go to the bottom and the batter rises.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Describing Someone’s Face

A: Let’s play a game!

B: Ok! How about **Scrabble**?

A: No, no, a friend of mine taught me this really fun game. I’m going to describe someone’s face, and you guess who it is! B: Ok!

A: Let’s see. He has a **Roman nose**, **bushy** eyebrows and **dimples**!

B: Our cousin Pete! My turn! She has a **pointy nose**, **sunken eyes** and a **mole** on her chin!

A: Aunt Rose! That mole is so huge! Ok, my turn. He has a **crooked** nose and full lips. He has quite a few **freckles** and an **oval** face. Oh, he is also **bald**!

B: Your future husband!

A: Not funny.

#### Key vocabulary

**Scrabble**: a game in which players try to make words from the separate letters they have

**Roman nose**: a nose that curves out near the top

**bushy**: bushy hair or fur grows thickly

**dimple**: a small natural indentation in the flesh

**pointy nose**: a nose that is pointy is sharp, and in most instances, it can be noticed straight away

**sunken eyes**: eyes that have fallen inwards, especially because of age or illness

**mole**: a small, dark brown spot on a person’s skin

**crooked**: bent, twisted, or not in a straight line

**freckle**: a small, brownish spot on someone’s skin

**oval**: having the shape of an egg

**bald**: having little or no hair on your head

#### Supplementary vocabulary

**cheeks**: the fleshy side of the face

**nostrils**: the holes in the nose that allow the pass of air

**forehead**: a part of the face above the eyes

**eyelash**: the hair on the eyelid that protects the eye

**chin**: the lower portion of the face including the jaw

(Source: irlanguage.com)

# Oil industry paves way for capable women

**W O M E N TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has issued an order, paving the way for women with high capabilities to boost presence in the oil industry.

As per the ministerial decree which released on Sunday, all gender discriminations between male and female employees should be removed for all occupational positions, except for working on oil and gas platforms.

Appointing Ms. Marzieh Shahdaei as the managing director of the National Petrochemical Company was the oil minister’s first step toward providing women with equal employment opportunities with men.

Currently, a number of 17,000 women are working in the Iranian oil industry,



including 7,000 official employees and 10,000 contractual employees.

This number stands for about 8 percent of the oil industry’s total workforce.

Educated women make up 7 percent of management posts in the oil industry. A number of three women are working as senior officials in grade “over D”, eight women are working as high-level officials in “grade D” and 350 women are working in other supervisory and managerial positions.

The majority of women working in the oil industry are 30-34 years old, most of them with a working experience of 10 to 15 years. More than 70 percent of women working in the oil industry hold a bachelor’s or higher degree which proves the experience and high scientific level of female forces in the oil industry.

## Muslim girl, 17, killed on way home from Virginia mosque

A Muslim teenager was assaulted and killed in the early hours of Sunday as she walked home after prayers at a mosque near Washington.

The death of Nabra Hassanen, 17, of Reston, northern Virginia, stunned the local community. Police have charged 22-year-old Darwin Martinez Torres with her murder.

A potential hate crime is one of the possible motives under investigation, the Washington Post reported. Nabra’s mother, Sawzan Gazzar, told the paper: “I think it had to do with the way she was dressed and the fact that she’s Muslim. Why would you kill a kid? What did my daughter do to deserve this?”

The All Dulles Area Muslim Society (Adams) mosque in Sterling, the biggest in northern Virginia, holds extra late-night prayers during the last 10 days of Ramadan. Nabra was reportedly among four or five teenagers who had left the mosque in the early hours of Sunday. It was not unusual for worshippers to walk after nightfall in what is usually a safe neighborhood.

A Fairfax county police statement said: “An investigation determined she was walking outside with a group of friends when they got into a dispute with a man in a car. It appears the suspect, Darwin A Martinez Torres, 22, of Sterling, got out of his car and assaulted the victim. Her friends could not find her and police were called to help.”



*Nabra Hassanen’s mother said she believed the teenager was killed because of how she was dressed.*

Nabra was reported missing about 4 a.m. A police helicopter, patrol officers and search and rescue teams joined the hunt. “While searching, one officer saw a car driving suspiciously in the area and stopped it,” the statement added. “The driver, later identified as Martinez Torres, was taken into custody as a suspect.”

About 3 p.m. the body of a girl believed to be Nabra was found in a pond in Sterling. A baseball bat was discovered nearby, police said. Detectives later obtained a murder warrant against Martinez Torres.

## Muslims lend Christians hijabs to help them escape ISIS in disguise

Terrified Christians are escaping ISIS militants in the Filipino town of Marawi by wearing hijabs borrowed from Muslims.

There are around 1,500 people trapped in the besieged Filipino city, which is about 60 miles south of Cagayan de Oro.

Almost 100 people have escaped on foot, while others have swum across the river. Medics tending those who have made their way out alive recounted the resourcefulness of those who fled.

“Some of the stories that stuck were Muslims helping protect Christian workers by letting them borrow a hijab,” said Dr Gioia Ancheta, head of the psychosocial therapy team.

The civilians face starvation, being held as human shields and are also under attack from bombing assaults by the military who are trying to oust the jihadists.

There are reports that some local residents are so hungry they had “started to eat their blankets”, according to local politician Zia Alonto Adiong, who is managing the relief and rescue efforts.

“Some residents are eating (cardboard) boxes. They just dip it in water to soften the material and eat it,” he said.

Islamic militants stormed Marawi three weeks ago, leaving 290 people dead, including 205 ISIS fighters, 58 soldiers and 26 civilians. Mr Adiong said that residents reported seeing terrible carnage left by the fighting.

“Dead bodies, at least 100, scattered around the encounter area,” he said.

Lieutenant Colonel Jo-Ar Herrera said his security forces were edging towards the business area of Marawi City, which is under the control of the combatants who have sworn allegiance to ISIS.

There are around 200 Islamist fighters who have taken up sniper positions, he said. “The battlefield is very fluid.”

U.S. troops are located close to Marawi City but are not actively fighting ISIS insurgents, a Philippines military spokesman said.

“There are some U.S. personnel who are operating equipment to provide information on situation awareness to our troops,” Brigadier General Restituto Padilla told a news conference. “I do not know the exact number and the specific mission. They are allowed to carry rifles for self-defense. But they are not allowed to fight, they only provide support.”



*Government troops are waging a fierce battle with local Islamic militants in Marawi Romeo Ranoco.*

President Rodrigo Duterte placed the entire Mindanao region under martial law after the Maute, a radical Islamic organization, backed by other jihadist extremists, attacked Marawi City.

(Source: The Independent)

## France elects record number of women to parliament

France voted a record number of women into parliament, election results showed on Monday, after President Emmanuel Macron’s victorious Republic on the Move (LREM) party fielded a gender-balanced candidate list.

Of the 577 newly elected lawmakers, 233 were female, beating the previous record of 155 set after the last election.

That sent France leapfrogging from 64th to 17th in the world rankings of female parliamentary representation and to 6th place in Europe, overtaking Britain and Germany, according to Inter-parliamentary Union data compiled at the start of June.

LREM, which won an overwhelming majority in Sunday’s ballot, had the highest proportion of women elected, at 47 percent.

“For the first time under the (postwar) Fifth Republic, the National Assembly will be deeply renewed - more diverse, younger,” the party’s acting president, Catherine Barbaroux, said.

“But above all, allow me to rejoice, because this is a historic event for the representation of women in the National Assembly.”

Female representation in the National Assembly has risen steadily, from 12.3 percent at the 2002 election to 38.6 percent this time.

But most parties still put up more men for election, despite France having a system in which a party’s funding is restricted if women do not make up at least 49 percent of candidates.

Female candidates have also tended to stand in constituencies they are unlikely to win, keeping the numbers of women who make it to the Palais-



*The president of La République En Marche party, Macron’s party, Catherine Barbaroux, delivers her speech at the party headquarters, in Paris, France, Sunday, June 18, 2017.*

Bourbon low.

“(Macron’s) En Marche (party)... proactively decided to give winning seats to women,” said 34-year-old Brune Poirson, who beat the far-right National Front to be elected in the Vaucluse district in southeastern France. “This is a really bold move.”

“Normally political parties allocate women seats that are almost impossible to win, so they can say ‘hey, we have as many female candidates as male,’” added Poirson, a parliamentary novice with masters degrees in political science from Harvard and the London School of Economics.

Poirson decided to become a candidate in January when Macron sent a video to LREM members urging more women to put themselves forward.

“(Macron)... said: this is your responsibility as well - we need you. It was very powerful, and it really worked,” she told Reuters.

A culture with misogynistic tendencies has long characterized the upper echelons of French politics, but there have been signs of the veil being lifted on acts that might previously have gone unreported.

Last year Denis Baupin resigned as vice-president of the National Assembly after being accused of sexual harassment by fellow politicians, while then finance minister Michel Sapin admitted behaving inappropriately toward a female journalist.

Laurianne Rossi, elected to the Hauts-de-Seine district on the outskirts of Paris, said even with the increase in female lawmakers, it would take time to make a real difference.

“There is still a long way to go before we get real equality...(but) the arrival of so many more women at the National Assembly will really help,” said Rossi, a 33-year-old former assistant to a Socialist senator.

Frances Scott, founder of Britain’s 50:50 parliament, a cross-party group campaigning for gender balance in the legislature, said the result in France would spur parties in other countries to field more women candidates. Britain set its own record in elections on June 8, with 30 percent of parliamentary seats going to women.

“It looks like France is leading the way in terms of this democratic imperative,” said Scott.

“The evidence suggests that having more women in parliament leads to more informed and more responsive decision-making. It leads to a better parliament.”

(Source: Reuters)



# Syrian, Iraqi army troops meet up at border for first time in years

Syrian government soldiers, backed by volunteer fighters from popular defense groups, have linked up with Iraqi army troops for the first time in years after they took control of a vast territory in Syria's semi-arid southeastern region of al-Badiya.

Lebanon-based Arabic-language al-Manar television network reported on Sunday that the army units in cooperation with allies had managed to liberate 25,000 square kilometers (9,600 square miles) of land during a campaign in the border region in recent weeks.

"This is the sign of the cooperation between the brotherly Iraqi and Syrian military leadership to secure the shared borders," a Syrian army general, speaking on condition of anonymity, told privately-owned and pro-government al-Ikhbariya al-Soriyah television news network.

The general said the meeting point for Iraqi and Syrian forces is northeast of Tanf base, where the US military is training anti-government Takfiri militants.

The Syrian military official further noted that the new meeting point is only 20 kilometers (12 miles) from al-Mayadeen area, where ISIL (Daesh) terrorists have



recently relocated much of their leadership to.

The development came only a day after Iraqi forces liberated al-Waleed border crossing point in the Ar-Rutba district of the western province of Anbar from Daesh extremists.

Meanwhile, the so-called Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights said Iraqi forces had moved northeast of al-Waleed, meeting up with pro-government Syrian troops for the first time since 2015.

The head of the Britain-based monitoring group, Rami Abdurrahman, said the link between Iraqi and Syrian forces

will allow Iraqi army soldiers and volunteer fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units, commonly known by their Arabic name, Hashd al-Sha'abi, to move inside Syria and help Syrian government's campaign against Daesh in the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

Separately, the artillery units of the Syrian army have struck Daesh positions across Dayr al-Zawr, killing and wounding many of the extremist militants in Panorama area, Borouk Hill, al-Tharda and al-Hueiqa neighborhoods as well as Ayash village.

A correspondent for Syria's official news agency SANA reported that Syrian Air Forces jets have bombed Daesh vehicles equipped with heavy machine-guns in Hattla and the outskirts of Dayr al-Zawr Airport.

Scores of militants have been killed and injured during the airstrikes.

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

9Source: Press TV)

## 79 people presumed dead in London tower block fire

Seventy-nine people are dead or missing and presumed dead following a devastating blaze in a London tower block, police said Monday, as Britain held a minute's silence for the victims.

"I'm afraid to say there are now 79 people that we believe are either dead or missing and I sadly have to presume are dead," police commander Stuart Cundy told reporters.

Police had earlier put the toll from Wednesday's inferno at 58 presumed dead.

He said only five people had been formally identified so far by police. Officers had earlier warned that some may never be identified due to the condition of their remains.

Cundy said the search and recovery operation was ongoing in the burnt-out 24-story tower, which was built in 1974 and had received a major refurbishment that was completed last year.

"This is an incredibly distressing time for families and they have my commitment that we will do this as quickly as we possibly can," he said.

Cundy promised an "exhaustive" criminal investigation into the fire that would also look at the refurbishment.

"We will go where the evidence may take us," and do everything possible "to ensure that those responsible will be brought to justice," he said.

"If I identify... an issue that is a risk to public safety, we will be sharing that immediately with the relevant authorities," he added.

The fire has prompted warnings about fire safety risks in many other council tower blocks built in the same era.

### ■ Death toll warning -

Cundy warned that the toll of 79 people could

change.

"I believe there may be people who were in Grenfell Tower that people may not know were missing and may not have realized they were in there on the night.

"Equally, there may be people who thankfully may have managed to escape the fire and for whatever reason have not let their family or friends or police know," he said.

By the blackened Grenfell Tower, firefighters took off their helmets and stood still to observe the minute's silence, some with their arms around each other's shoulders.

Other emergency service workers stood with their hands behind their backs and their helmets on the ground.

Distressed women were seen hugging after the silence.

London fire chief Dany Cotton told BBC radio that it might be "some days yet" before firefighters could say they have reached everyone in the building.

She also defended the fire service's advice for people to stay in their flats during tower block fires, saying that having everyone evacuate from such blocks through a single staircase would cause further injuries and hamper efforts to put out smaller blazes.

She said firefighters did not know "why the fire spread in that absolutely unusual and extraordinary way".

"Until we do that, we cannot look at anything other than staying with the same advice."

### ■ 17 patients in hospital

The National Health Service said that 17 patients were still being treated in hospital, of whom nine remain in critical condition.



Prime Minister Theresa May was to chair another meeting of top officials in response to the tragedy.

London police on Sunday released images taken within the tower, saying conditions inside verged on the "indescrivable".

Photos and videos published by the Metropolitan Police show the gutted wreckage of apartments.

With blackened rubble strewn across the floor and exposed pipes, one room is unrecognizable as a home until a bath and sink come into view -- the dividing wall destroyed completely by the fire.

The remnants of an exercise bike, an oven and washing machine point to the lives of residents in the moments before the blaze.

The images were taken by a recovery team inside the 120 flats.

(Source: AFP)

## 'Walk for justice' to go on despite Erdogan threat: Opposition chief

Head of Republican People's Party (CHP), the main opposition party in Turkey, says he would continue with his protest walk across the country despite threats by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that he could face legal action over the controversial action.

Kemal Kilicdaroglu said that he would press on with a "walk for justice" from Ankara to Istanbul in protest at a heavy jail sentence handed down to former journalist turned CHP lawmaker Enis Berberoglu.

A court sentenced Berberoglu to 25

years in jail on Wednesday for leaking classified information to a newspaper.

Kilicdaroglu said he was undeterred by Erdogan's threats that the action might lead to legal proceedings against him.

"They want to provoke us but we will not give in! They want to threaten us with the courts and he (Erdogan) calls out the judges, the prosecutors," said the CHP chief, adding, "We are walking for justice, not against justice."

The 68-year-old Kilicdaroglu made the remarks while completing the fourth

day of the 450-kilometer (280 miles) trek that is expected to take almost a month and will culminate at Maltepe prison in Istanbul where Berberoglu is being held.

Erdogan said Saturday that actions like the march by Kilicdaroglu would bring no good for Turkey, saying the opposition leader should not "be surprised" if legal proceedings were opened.

Turkey has seen a surge in political fighting since a failed coup attempt on July 15 last year. The opposition has constantly criticized a crackdown launched since the coup which has seen more than

40,000 people arrested and over 100,000 discharged from their jobs. Kilicdaroglu even once accused Erdogan of being the "July 20 coup plotter", saying he had used the deadly coup by military renegades to consolidate his rule in Turkey.

Tensions rose again on April 16 when voters endorsed changes to Turkey's constitution and gave Erdogan more powers as president. The CHP has censured Erdogan's narrow victory in the referendum while warning that Erdogan would slide Turkey into a one-man rule system.

(Source: Hurriyet)

## Is radicalism possible today?

grown up in a stiflingly dull WASP town. It was only when he met the cosmopolitan stew of different ethnicities in New York that he got the chance to "breathe a larger air." At a time of surging immigration, and fierce debate over it, Bourne celebrated that "America is coming to be, not a nationality but a trans-nationality, a weaving back and forth, with the other lands, of many threads of all sizes and colors."

Bourne believed in decentralized change — personal, spiritual, a revolution in consciousness. The "Beloved Community" he imagined was a bottom-up, Whitmanesque "spiritual welding," a graceful coming together of unlike ethnicities.

The crucial decision point came as the United States approached entry into World War I. Lippmann supported the war, believing that it would demand more federal planning and therefore would accelerate social change. Bourne was appalled by such instrumentalist thinking, by the acceptance of war's savagery. As McCarter puts it, "As Bourne has been arguing, no choice that supports a war will realize any ideal worth the name."

### ■ Radical split

The radicals split between pragmatists willing to work within the system and visionaries who raised larger possibilities from outside. Spreading their ideals, they pushed

America forward. Living out their ideals, most were disillusioned. Reed lost faith in the Soviet Union. Lippmann lost faith in Wilson after Versailles. Bourne died marginalized and bitter during the flu epidemic of 1918.

Bourne was the least important radical a century ago, but with his fervent embrace of a decentralized, globalist, cosmopolitan world, he is the most relevant today. He is the best rebuttal to both Trumpian populism and the multicultural separatist movements on the left, who believe in separate graduation ceremonies by race, or that the normal exchange of ideas among people represents cultural appropriation.

Most of the 20th-century radicals were wrong to put their faith in a revolutionary vanguard, a small group who could see farther and know better. Bourne was right to understand that the best change is dialogical, the gradual, grinding conversation, pitting interest against interest, one group's imperfections against another's, but bound by common nationhood and humanity.

Are we really going to hand revolutionary power to the state, the intellectuals, the social scientists, the working class or any other class? No. This is not 1917. But can we recommit ourselves to the low but steady process of politics, bartering and exchanging, which is incremental about means but radical about ends? That's a safer bet.

(Source: The NYT)

## BRICS foreign ministers call for diplomacy to tackle Korean tensions

Foreign ministers from BRICS nations called for the use of "preventative diplomacy" to tackle the situation on the Korean Peninsula, according to a communique on Monday.



The ministers from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa met in Beijing for a two-day conference that ended on Monday. BRICS leaders will meet in the southern Chinese city of Xiamen in September.

"The foreign ministers support the use of political and diplomatic means to resolve disputes in Libya and on the Korean Peninsula, and the promotion of preventative diplomacy built on common consensus," the communique said, according to a version posted on the Chinese foreign ministry website.

The document also condemned unilateral military interventions and economic sanctions that violate international law or internationally accepted norms.

Addressing the ministers after the meeting, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that BRICS cooperation was entering a "golden decade".

"At present the international situation has complexities and also factors of instability and it is right for the BRICS to speak their voice," he said.

Tensions on the Korean peninsula have escalated over North Korea's nuclear and missile tests and its vow to develop a nuclear-tipped weapon capable of hitting the U.S. mainland. The United States has called for greater action from China to pressure Pyongyang into abandoning its weapons programs.

China has said repeatedly that it adheres to United Nations Security Council sanctions against North Korea but does not support unilateral sanctions, instead calling for restraint and diplomacy.

China's top diplomat Yang Jiechi is due to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Washington on Wednesday in talks that the United States says will focus on curbing North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

Last week, Tillerson said Washington was considering imposing "secondary sanctions" on foreign firms doing business with North Korea and had been in discussions with Beijing about the activities of entities inside China.

(Source: Reuters)

## Arson attacks on German rail tracks, police probe G20 protest link

Several intercity rail tracks in Germany were hit by arson attacks overnight, police said Monday, in what could be protest action by left-wing extremists ahead of the G20 summit in July.

Cable ducts of rail signaling equipment were set on fire in the states of Lower Saxony, Berlin, North Rhine-Westphalia and Saxony, police said.

"A political motive in relation to the G20 summit in Hamburg is not ruled out," they said in an appeal for eyewitnesses.

In all, 12 cases of arson were reported, with the perpetrators believed to have struck between 1 am (2300 GMT) and 4:30 am (0230 GMT).

Services in several locations including the eastern cities of Leipzig and Dresden as well as long-distance lines linking Berlin and Prague were disrupted, rail operator Deutsche Bahn said.

An anonymous claim of responsibility has been published on a far-left leaning website.

The group which called itself "Shutdown G20: take Hamburg offline!" said it had struck rail tracks which it described as "the central nervous system of capitalism".

Similar sabotage action hit Germany in 2011, believed to be carried out by leftist extremists then protesting against the German military's deployment in Afghanistan.

(Source: AFP)

## Turkish troops arrive in Qatar for military exercise

The Qatari defense ministry has announced the arrival of the first group of Turkish soldiers in the capital, Doha, to take part in joint military exercises.

The forces conducted their first training at Tariq bin Ziyad military base on Sunday, the ministry said.

The exercises, which had been long planned, are part of a mutual agreement aimed at strengthening the defense capabilities of both countries, as well as boosting efforts to combat armed groups and maintaining stability in the region.

The drills come as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Egypt and a number of other countries severed relations with Qatar last week, accusing it of supporting "terrorism" and Iran. Qatar rejects the accusations.

Earlier this month, Turkey's parliament fast-tracked the approval of a separate agreement with Qatar that allowed troops to be deployed to a Turkish military base in the Persian Gulf state.

That agreements was signed in April 2016. Turkey has been the foremost supporter of Qatar since the Persian Gulf dispute began on June 5.

Ankara has also been trying to mediate between the sides in order to find a solution to the crisis. (Source: Al Jazeera)

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### ■ Genius for creating ideals

There were many people then who had a genius for creating ideals, and for betting their whole lives on an effort to live out these ideals. I've just been reading Jeremy McCarter's inspiring and entertaining new book "Young Radicals," which is a group portrait of five of those radicals: Walter Lippmann, Randolph Bourne, Max Eastman, Alice Paul and John Reed.

All of them had a youthful and exuberant faith that transformational change was imminently possible. Reed was the romantic adventurer — the one who left Harvard and ventured to be at the center of wherever the action might be — union strikes, the Russian Revolution. Paul was the dogged one — the diminutive activist who gave up sleep, gave up leisure, braved rancid prisons to serve the suffragist movement.

But the two true geniuses were Lippmann and Bourne, who offer lessons on different styles of radicalism. With his magisterial, organized mind, Lippmann threw his lot in with social science, with rule by experts. He believed in centralizing and nationalizing, and letting the best minds weigh the evidence and run the country. He lived his creed, going from socialist journalism to the halls of Woodrow Wilson's administration.

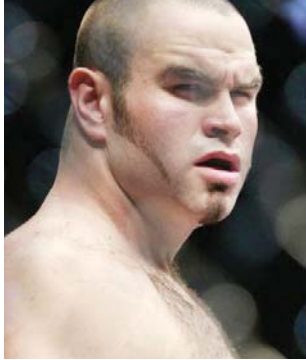
Bourne was more visionary and vulnerable. He'd



## Former UFC fighter dies aged 34 after knockout in boxing bout

Former UFC fighter Tim Hague has died aged 34 after being knocked out in a boxing bout in Canada on Friday.

The Canadian, who fought in UFC from 2009 to 2011, was knocked down five times in the first two rounds against Adam Braidwood before it was stopped.



He walked out of the ring but was then taken to hospital and fell into a coma.

"It is with incredible sadness, sorrow and heart-break to report that Tim has passed away," his family said in a statement on Sunday.

"He was surrounded by family, listening to his favourite songs," they added. "We will miss him so greatly. We ask for privacy during this difficult time."

Hague beat Pat Barry on his UFC debut but went on to lose his other four fights.

He held a similar record after moving to boxing, starting with victory over Patrick Graham, then losing the following three bouts, including two knockouts against fellow Canadians Mladen Miljas and Braidwood.

(Source: BBC)

## Fans throw fake money at Gianluigi Donnarumma during Italy Under-21 match

Teenage goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma had fake money thrown at him during Italy's European Under-21 Championship opener against Denmark by fans seemingly upset by his decision not to renew his contract with AC Milan.

The 18-year-old, who has made more than 70 first-team appearances for Milan since his debut in 2015, looks to be on his way out of San Siro after it was revealed by the Rossoneri on Thursday that he would not be committing to a new deal.

That will have alerted many of Europe's top clubs, with the likes of Real Madrid, Juventus and Manchester United all reportedly interested in his services, and appears to have incurred the wrath of some supporters.

As well as scores of fake dollar bills being thrown at the teenager during Italy Under-21's 2-0 victory over Denmark in Krakow, there was also a banner behind his goal which read 'Dollarumma'.

Milan director Marco Fassone told a press conference, in quotes carried by La Gazzetta dello Sport, on Thursday afternoon: "We are disheartened. (Donnarumma's agent) Mino Raiola has conveyed to me Donnarumma's decision not to renew. It's his final decision.

"This decision, taken by the player and his agent, makes us sad but we must move forward, Milan must move forward."

The Castellammare di Stabia-born player has 12 months remaining on his deal with Milan.

(Source: PA Sport)

## Joan Laporta: Barcelona board must resign

Former Barcelona president Joan Laporta has called on the club's board to resign due to their "intoxication, manipulation and lies".

Laporta lost the 2015 presidential election to Josep Maria Bartomeu – in the wake of the Catalans winning the treble – and held the position at the club between 2003 and 2010.

"If [the board] resigned now, I'd definitely stand [for election]," Laporta told The Guardian.

"The problem is [the current board's mandate] ends in 2021. If they went now, I'd stand. But if they continue for three, four years, I don't think so.

"We all have our moment. Right now, it's still fresh to me, but if it goes on longer, I'd like a candidate I can look at and think: 'Yes, this is the one.' Renewal's always necessary. I'd like someone with clear ideas, a model I can share, a person I can trust.

"We left them [Rosell, Bartomeu] the greatest Barca in the club's history and they spent their time destroying it. Barcelona has been kidnapped. It's hostage to the intoxication, manipulation and lies [of this board] and it's sad.

"I'm demanding they resign. If they had any shame they'd resign; if they had any shame, they'd have gone when they did a deal with the public prosecutor to make the club, not them, liable in the Neymar case."

(Source: Football Espana)

# Real Madrid fans aren't buying claims Cristiano Ronaldo wants to leave

If Cristiano Ronaldo's leaked desire to leave Real Madrid was intended to create a wave of pressure on the club from supporters to not allow him to leave, so far it's not working.

Diario AS polled 7,500 fans on their website on Sunday and 81 per cent replied 'No' to the question: Is Ronaldo's rage understandable?

Marca columnist Roberto Palomar wrote in his long-running and respected weekly 'I don't like Mondays' column: 'The president [Florentino Perez] should not worry about being the man who sells a club legend. If he goes down on to the street and has a coffee with supporters he will soon find out whose side they are on.'

The reason for the cold response to Ronaldo's unspoken overtures – he still has said nothing publicly on the matter – is that Real Madrid fans feel they have been here before, twice in fact, once in 2012 and once in 2015. And on both occasions the player finished up with an improved contract.

In 2012 Ronaldo's beef was that the club were not backing him publicly in the way that Barcelona were backing Lionel Messi. The president did not accompany him to the Ballon d'Or ceremony, sending a low-ranking director instead, and it opened old wounds that it was never Perez who signed Ronaldo. The deal was put in place by the previous president Ramon Calderon.

In a subsequent contract renewal his net salary went up from around the €12million to past the €20m point.

The next flirtation with the exit came in November 2015. Ronaldo was, with good reason, unhappy about the way the club had ripped up the team that won the Champions League in 2014 and sacked Carlo Ancelotti in the summer of 2015.

He didn't much care for Rafa Benitez's



training methods either and he said in a Kicker interview: 'Will I leave Madrid one day? Why not?'

Perez publicly had it out with the player asking him: 'Why did you say that?' knowing that he was being filmed by the club's television channel at the time.

Later Ronaldo, again in front of television cameras, winked and put an arm around the shoulder of Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser Al-Khelaifi as he walked through the media area at the Bernabeu.

Ronaldo stayed when things improved under Zinedine Zidane and in 2016 he signed another contract keeping him at the

club until 2021 worth just under €24m net a season. He said it was be his penultimate and vowed to keep playing until he was 41.

This time the discontent is far more personal and more difficult to put right. He doesn't like the 'tax cheat' label.

The unhappiness lies deeper this time. The suggestion that he has instructed his agent Jorge Mendes to get him to United was leaked to A Bola on Sunday. Ronaldo played the same evening, picking up a man-of-the-match award in Portugal's draw with Mexico.

He could have spoken about his situation after the game but would only answer

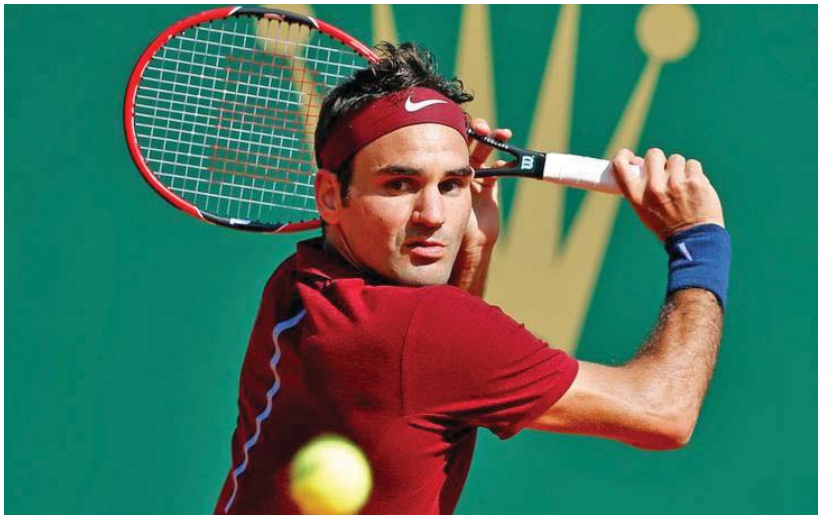
questions about the match itself. Having said nothing publicly he has the 'get-out' of blaming the media inventions for the current storm if he ends up starting the season in a white shirt.

Real Madrid supporters are expecting that to be the outcome. And if things turn out differently then they will simply look to the future.

The front pages of Marca and AS on Monday were dedicated to Marco Asensio and Kylian Mbappe. Madrid are briefing one very simple message: no one is bigger than the club, not even its greatest ever player.

(Source: Daily Mail)

## Federer seeks to reignite comeback bid after Stuttgart stumble



After his comeback was cut short by Tommy Haas in Stuttgart last week, Roger Federer is eager to get a win under his belt in the opening round of the Gerry Weber Open in Halle as the Swiss gears up for another tilt at Wimbledon.

Federer, who was stunned 2-6 7-6(8) 6-4 by 302nd ranked German Haas, faces Taiwan's Lu Yen-Hsun in his opening game in Halle, a tournament the 18-times grand slam champion has won eight times.

"A comeback is never simple, especially on grass where margins are so slim," Federer, who sat out the entire clay court season to prepare his bid for an eighth Wimbledon crown, was quoted as saying by the ATP website.

"It's important for me, especially after the Stuttgart week, to come here and make sure I win my first-round

match and get going ... The history I have here, having come and played well so often, definitely should help me to play good tennis this week.

"I want to take the right decisions on the tennis court. I don't want to question myself too much. I'll have the right focus and mindset, that point-by-point mentality."

Federer had no regrets about missing the French Open to focus on Wimbledon but said it was a move he was unlikely to repeat.

"It was a decision that was taken within a couple of days," Federer added. "I didn't want to compromise the goal of the grass court season, Wimbledon, the U.S. Open and beyond ... But it's not a trend that I might follow in the future. I don't know what the future holds. This was just a one-off decision."

(Source: Reuters)

## Chinese clubs face 100% tax on signings



Chinese Super League clubs face a 100% tax on signings as their mid-season transfer window opened on Monday.

The country's Football Association (CFA) is proposing the measure for loss-making clubs in order to try to curb the league's extravagant spending.

Chinese clubs spent £331m during the country's winter transfer window, which was more than their English Premier League counterparts in January.

The proceeds from the tax would go into a government-run fund.

If enforced, the measure would in effect double the fee for any player.

Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney and Chelsea striker Diego Costa are among the high-profile players to be linked with the Chinese Super League (CSL), with the transfer window open until 14 July.

In the last transfer window, Shanghai SIPG bought Brazil international Oscar

for £60m from Chelsea, while Shanghai Shenhua spent £40m on Carlos Tevez. The Argentina striker signed a deal worth a reported £310,000 a week.

At the time, a spokesperson for China's General Administration of Sport said clubs in the country were "burning money".

Limits on the number of foreign players in squads were put in place for the current season, which runs from March to November. Only three non-Chinese players can now be fielded in a fixture in a move the CFA hoped would tackle "irrational" spending.

Costa was a target for Tianjin Quanjian but the club's owner, Shu Yuhui, said in January that a bid to sign the forward had been scuppered by new CSL rules limiting the number of foreign players.

In each game next year, clubs will also have to field as many Chinese under-23 players as overseas players.

(Source: BBC)

## Blatter sought Nobel Peace Prize for FIFA

Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter has claimed he wanted football's governing body to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The 81-year-old was suspended in October 2015 and later banned from all football activities for eight years, reduced to six on appeal, over what was deemed to be a "disloyal payment" made in 2011 to Michel Platini, who also lost his post as UEFA president in the wake of an investigation.

It marked a spectacular fall from grace for Blatter, who had served as the head of FIFA since 1998.

In an interview the Guardian, the Swiss claimed he had not sought the Nobel Peace Prize on an individual basis, insisting he wanted his organisation as a whole to receive recognition.

"We had meetings with the Nobel prize organisation," he said.

"I was there, and what I was asking, really asking, was for the Nobel prize: for football, not for a man. It is



the movement, for FIFA."

Blatter, who was hospitalised in November 2015, confirmed he suffered a breakdown in the wake of the corruption scandal that saw a host of FIFA officials arrested as part of a joint investigation by

law enforcement authorities in the United States and Switzerland.

"I had this collapse on 1 November and this was at the cemetery," he said.

"The Catholics, we always go to the cemetery to pay honour to our parents, all the families in the same grave, and I was there, I felt very bad at that time. They brought me immediately back to Zurich in a clinic; my immune system had collapsed."

Of the scandal that cost him his gilded status, he added: "I was not bitter, I was shocked. And I have never recuperated about the shock."

Blatter also expressed the belief that he has been unfairly singled out after senior figures in regional roles were arrested and charged.

He said: "So why the hell then should the FIFA president bear all the charges, the responsibility and the blame?"

(Source: Soccerway)



# President Rouhani meets Iranian sportspersons

President Hassan Rouhani attended an Iftar (evening meal) ceremony with athletes and sports officials on Sunday night.

Rouhani said: "Now the election time is over and the competitions are over just as domestic leagues, and any team's fans are now the national team's fans".

President also said: "Today, we want to take part in regional and global competitions and, in the field of security, science and self-sufficiency, reach the first levels".

On the importance of physical and spiritual exercise, Rouhani said: "Body health is one of God's great blessings and thanking these blessings will only be possible by attempting to take good care of them and this is possible through sport".

President Rouhani went on to refer to the Supreme Leader's emphasis on the need to promote sport in the country and said: "Sport spreads health and liveliness in the society".

"Keeping our bodies healthy is an order in Islam and one of our duties," continued the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He also added: "30 to 40 years ago, if there was any talk of sport for women, even hiking and mountaineering was unacceptable for some people but now it is not the case. Women must have a role in sport".

(Source: President.ir)



## Iran could dethrone Brazil in 2018 Blind Football Worlds

**S P O R T S** Iran is in contention to dethrone the d e s k South American powerhouses in the 2018 International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) Blind Football World Championships.

16 teams to compete at World Championships in Madrid next June, Paralympic.org wrote.

Three-time Paralympic medallists Argentina, Rio 2016 runners-up Iran and European champions Turkey are all in contention to dethrone the South American powerhouses.

Sixteen teams will compete in the tournament overall, and even though reigning Paralympic and world champions Brazil are the strong favorites, the rest of the teams are not just there to make up the numbers.

The 2018 IBSA Blind Football World Championships will take place in Madrid, Spain, between 5-18 June.

The Worlds will have a 16-team expanded format. The first stage will feature four groups of four teams, with the top two in each group qualifying for the quarter-final.



## Russia defeat Iran to progress to final six of FIVB World League

**S P O R T S** Russia booked their place in the final d e s k six of the International Volleyball Federation World League as they cruised to a straight-sets victory over Iran in Lodz in Poland.

The London 2012 Olympic gold medallists beat Iran 3-0 (26-24, 25-18, 25-18) in Pool H1.

Egor Kliuka topped the scoring charts for Russia as he notched 13 points, while Mojtaba Mirzajanzpour managed 12 for the defeated Iranians.

The result saw Russia pick up their fourth straight World League victory and ensured they progressed to the next round.

"This match didn't have big rivalry meaning for us,



because it was already known that we can't qualify for the FIVB Final Six, while for Russia it was very important," Igor Kolakovic said in the post-match news conference.

"Russia is a big team, which they showed and in general during this tournament, because they defeated Poland and USA. I had a chance to give other players opportunity to play. They didn't spend long time on court before, during the major events. Although, I think that they used this opportunity in good way," he added.

"They showed good volleyball, but to beat Russia much more is needed. I am happy with how they fought until the middle of the second set," said Kolakovic.

## Real Madrid selling Cristiano Ronaldo would be a 'big mistake' - Calderon

Former Real Madrid president Ramon Calderon has told talkSPORT that the European champions would be making a "big mistake" if they let Cristiano Ronaldo depart this summer.

Sources have told ESPN FC that Ronaldo, 32, wants to leave Madrid to play in another country rather than deal with what he sees as "persecution" in Spain after being accused of tax evasion totaling €14.7 million.

But Calderon -- who brokered the deal to sign the Portugal international from Manchester United in 2009 -- has

urged Madrid to do all they can to keep hold of a player who he says cannot be replaced.

"It would be a big mistake if [president] Florentino Perez doesn't try to keep him with us," he said. "It took me a long time and a big effort to sign him when Man United didn't want to let him go. We have to keep him.

"I think he will stay. I hope so. It would be very bad business to sell him. It doesn't matter what we can get for him. There is no replacement for him. I don't see anybody in world football who can

substitute for him."

Calderon concedes that Ronaldo is "strong-minded" when it comes to making decisions, as he learned first-hand when negotiating the deal to bring him to the Santiago Bernabeu eight years ago.

And with United, as well as Paris Saint-Germain, being linked with moves to sign Ronaldo, Calderon also acknowledged that the forward holds his former club in high esteem.

"He is very strong-minded and when he decides something he goes through with it," Calderon added. "The point now

is whether he really has decided to leave.

"He likes Manchester United -- that is something we all know. One year before he was going to come [in 2008], he told me that he was really grateful to Manchester United, the fans, the people there, his teammates -- everything in the city."

Ronaldo is currently in Russia with Portugal for the Confederations Cup. He played in his country's 2-2 draw with Mexico on Sunday, but has not yet made any comment since news broke of his desire to leave Madrid.

(Source: Soccermet)

## Australia in talks over Iran friendly as Queiroz enters frame for Socceroos job

The Socceroos could be set to face former rivals Iran for the first time in more than 20 years, with discussions taking place aimed at staging a high-profile friendly in Australia before the 2018 World Cup.

Fairfax Media can reveal Football Federation Australia are deep in negotiations with their Iranian counterparts to play a senior international between the two nations for the first time since the infamous 1997 World Cup qualifier at the MCG. (Australia were 2-0 up and looked like they were headed to France until serial pest Peter Hore ran onto the field, cut up Iran's goal net and halted all their momentum late in the second half. In the first leg, Australia had scored an impressive 1-1 draw in front of more than 128,000 at the Azadi Stadium.)

A deal is yet to be done but it's understood talks are at an advanced stage. The friendly would be held in the March international window in what both federations hope will be a key part of their preparations for Russia 2018.

FFA chief executive David Gallop confirmed that negotiations were taking place.

"We are talking to a number of excellent football nations from Asia and other confederations. Iran is one of them," Gallop said. "The anniversary of that heartbreaking night at the MCG is a point to highlight. Many people, including me, remember it as one of the most devastating moments in Australian sport. It would be great to play a strong team in preparation for Russia but talks are at an early stage."

Team Melli proved one of the biggest drawcards for fans at the 2015 Asian Cup in Australia, boasting the

second highest average attendance for a visiting team, second only to Japan. Despite moving to the Asian Football Confederation in 2006, Iran is one of the only major nations in the region Australia has not played in a senior international.

Several previous attempts have been made to hold a match between the two nations, with logistical issues having proved too difficult to overcome.

Should the FFA be successful in luring the three-time Asian champions to Australia, it would provide the FFA with a close-up look at a prime candidate to replace Ange Postecoglou as Socceroos coach.

Fairfax Media understands Iran coach Carlos Queiroz is interested in moving to Australia to take charge of the national team after the 2018 World Cup, following confirmation that Postecoglou will not renew his contract and will pursue coaching opportunities abroad.

FFA would not comment on their efforts to identify a successor to Postecoglou, but sources suggest the former Real Madrid coach and Manchester United assistant would be a strong candidate.

Queiroz is set to be a free agent as of July next year, with sources suggesting he will likely leave Iran after the 2018 World Cup campaign. Queiroz's seven-year tenure with Team Melli has been successful on the field yet frustrating off it, with allegations of infighting, political disputes, poor planning and funding issues having taken their toll on the 64-year-old. Queiroz has resigned from his post on numerous occasions, only to be convinced to return each time.

Despite his issues with the Iranian federation, the



Portuguese coach has been a revelation with Iran, taking them from 66th to 30th in the world rankings, ahead of the likes of the Netherlands and Sweden, to become the top-ranked nation in Asia. Under his guidance, Iran became the first nation from the AFC to qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia and just the second in the world alongside Brazil, having gone eight games without conceding a goal.

Queiroz led South Africa and Portugal to World Cup appearances in 2002 and 2010 respectively and was the long-term assistant to Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United. He spent one season as the head coach of Real Madrid.

(Source: smh.com)

## Iran basketball suffer loss against China in friendly

Iran basketball team lost to China 65-55 in their third friendly match in Ningbo.

Zhai Xiaochuan scored 15 points for the Chinese team.

Sajad Mashayekhi led Iran with a match-high 16 points.

Iran defeated China 63-60 in their first warm-up match on Tuesday.



Team Melli lost to the Chinese team 72-67 in the second match held in Changchun on Friday.

The two teams are preparing for the 2019 World Cup in China and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

The Iranian team are headed by Mehran Hatami.

## Iran's Asgari seizes silver at Karate 1-Series A

Bahman Asgari Ghoncheh from Iran claimed a silver medal at the 2017 Karate 1-Series A opener in Spanish city of Toledo.

Asgari Ghoncheh lost to his French rival Logan Da Costa 8-7 in the men's under-75kg final.

Sajad Ganjzadeh and Hadi Arab were also Iran's representatives in the competition but were knocked out in the early stages. Series A complements the top-tier Karate 1-Premier League with four events scheduled this year.

After Toledo, the Karate 1-Series A season will stop in Istanbul, Salzburg and Okinawa.

More than 800 competitors from 67 countries registered for the Toledo competition, which took place at the Sports Hall Javier Lozano Cid.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Esteghlal completes signing of Dariush Shojaeian

Gostaresh Foolad midfielder Dariush Shojaeian joined Esteghlal Tehran football team on Sunday.

The 25-year-old player has penned a three-year contract with Iranian popular team for an undisclosed fee.

"I have been an Esteghlal-supporter since I was a kid. I hope that I can wear Iran's jersey through Esteghlal," Shojaeian said.

Shojaeian started his professional career with Fajr Sepasi in 2009 and joined Bahman Shiraz in the 3rd Division one year later.

He signed a contract with Iran Professional League Gostaresh Foolad in 2015.

Shojaeian has made three appearances for the Iranian national football team (also known as Team Melli).

(Source: Tasnim)



## Mario Balotelli due to extend his contract with Nice - report

Mario Balotelli is set to sign a new contract with Nice, a report in France claims.

Balotelli, 26, moved to the Ligue 1 side when he left Liverpool just under a year ago, signing a 12-month deal.

The striker proved an instant hit in France, scoring 15 league goals -- a career-best tally for a season -- as Nice finished third last term, leading coach Lucien Favre to call the move "a good idea."

Balotelli had been expected to leave Nice after a season, but Nice-Matin has reported that he will remain at the club.

The paper cites a source close to the club saying "there are a few details to be ironed out" before the ex-Inter Milan, Manchester City and AC Milan player puts pen to paper.

It adds Balotelli is expected to team up with the rest of the squad on Wednesday ahead of Nice's Champions League third qualifying round first-leg tie on July 25 or 26.

Speaking on Saturday, Nice president Jean-Pierre Riviere, who engineered the deal that brought Balotelli to France, told C8: "We'll see if he will still be with us, but our goal is to build a team quietly and calmly. Next Monday, we're expecting him for pre-season. He should be there, because he's still under contract with us."

(Source: Soccermet)





# Sculptor Parviz Tanavoli to realize his “Lions” dream

**1 →** The sculptor also said that his oldest work of his “Lions” series that is a painting goes back to 1962 and then a ceramic lion he made the next year.

“My lions changed gradually over the years. They grew bigger and bigger since I got to know the importance of lion in our culture more and more and I made most of the lions over the past 20 years,” he explained.

He added that his largest, lion which weighs three tons, will go on display in the exhibit for the first time.

Secretary of the exhibit Behzad Hatam called the exhibit a rare opportunity.

“This exhibit reveals an important aspect of Tanavoli as an artist and sculptor. He has played a major cultural role beside his art, and that is he has collected little cultures and discards of the country over the years,” Hatam said at the conference.

“He collected all the things people were tired of and had thrown away like locks, keys and seals, and followed the cultural process of Iran, making them his source of inspiration,” he said.

Hatam also explained that Tanavoli acted like a refinery, that is, he put the raw materials into the refinery and remade them and created a precious art.

Tanavoli made his outstanding artworks from the works by very simple people, Hatam said.

Mohammadreza Kargar, the director of Iran’s Museums and Historical Properties Office, also attending the conference, gave details on how works were selected from the museums across the country.

“The central theme was quite clear and master Tanavoli had comprehensive knowledge about different lions appearing on Iranian cultural artifacts such as carpets, metal or stone works. Some of these items dating back to 5000 years ago are from the National Museum of Iran, including the Achaemenid Persian Lion Rhyton; some are from the Reza Abbasi Museum and several others are from different museums across the



“Big Lion”, the largest work from Parviz Tanavoli’s series “Lions”, was completed in 2016.

country,” Kargar said.

The opening ceremony will be followed by screening “Cypher and Lion”, a documentary on the artistic insight of Tanavoli by director Sarvnaz Alambeigi. The exhibit will be running until August 29.

In addition, the Austrian-Iranian Symphonic Orchestra

(AISO) will honor Tanavoli by two performances at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on July 3 and 5.

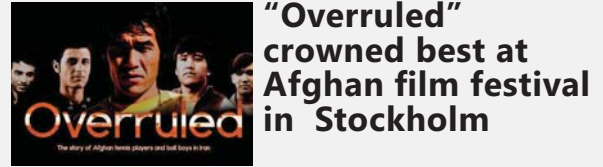
Maziar Yunesi is scheduled to conduct the AISO, which is slated to perform a repertoire of pieces composed by himself and his fellow Iranian musicians Christophe Rezaei and Peyman Yazdani.

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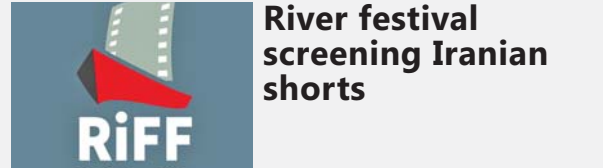
## NEWS IN BRIEF



### “Overruled” crowned best at Afghan film festival in Stockholm

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — “Overruled” by Iranian filmmakers Farnaz and Mohammadreza Jurabchian won the award for best international documentary about Afghanistan at the 4th Afghan Documentary Film Festival in Stockholm, Sweden on Saturday.

“Overruled” is about the lives of some young Afghan refugees in Iran. They work as ball boys in tennis clubs in Tehran, so they have learned how to play tennis. But the problem is they are not accepted in this society in any way and will always remain as outsiders.



### River festival screening Iranian shorts

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A lineup of five Iranian short films are competing in the 11th River Film Festival, which is currently underway in Padova, Italy.

The lineup includes “Vision” by Soheil Amirsharifi, “Honey Moon” by Puya Nabi, “Wirelefant” by Saman Ghanaemi, and “Mother” and “Reporter”, both directed by Mohammadreza Kheradmandan.

The festival will come to end on June 30.

## “Truck art” tradition trundles along in Pakistan

**ISLAMABAD (Reuters)** — They pollute the roads and chug along at a snail’s pace, but to their Pakistani owners the rickety trucks are moving pieces of art, commanding attention with garish portraits of flowers, Islamic art, and snow-capped Himalayan peaks.

South Asian “truck art” has become a global phenomenon, inspiring gallery exhibitions abroad and prompting stores in posh London neighborhoods to sell flamboyant miniature pieces.



A security guard poses for a portrait in front of his favorite decorated truck at a truck stop outside Faisalabad, Pakistan, May 3, 2017.

(Reuters/Caren Firouz)

Yet closer to home some people sneer and refuse to call it “art”.

For the drivers, the designs that turn decades-old vehicles into moving murals are often about local pride. Picking the right color or animal portrait is tougher than the countless hours spent on the road.

Truck driver Haji Ali Bahadur, who hails from the tribal belt bordering Afghanistan, said green and yellow have been his colors of choice during 40 years behind the wheel.

“We, the drivers of Khyber, Mohmand and other tribal regions like flowers on the edge of the vehicles,” he said. “The people of Swat, South Waziristan and Kashmir region like portraits of mountains and different wild animals.”

Truck art has become one of Pakistan’s best known cultural exports and offshoot toy and furniture industries have been spawned closer to home.

With Pakistan’s economy picking up speed and new roads opening up trade routes to China, truck art may soon find new admirers abroad.

## Stephen Furst, Flounder in ‘Animal House,’ dies at 63

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Stephen Furst, who played naive fraternity pledge Flounder in the hit movie “Animal House,” has died of complications from diabetes, his family said Saturday. Furst was 63.

Furst died Friday at his home in Moorpark, California, north of Los Angeles, said his son, Nathan Furst.

Furst played Kent “Flounder” Dorfman in the 1978 film that also starred John Belushi. It was Belushi’s character, Blutarkey, who drew Flounder into a prank that went terribly wrong and ended up with the frantic Flounder shooting a gun loaded with blanks into a ceiling, frightening a horse so much that it died of a heart attack.

## Sayeh to take “The Door” to Canadian, French events

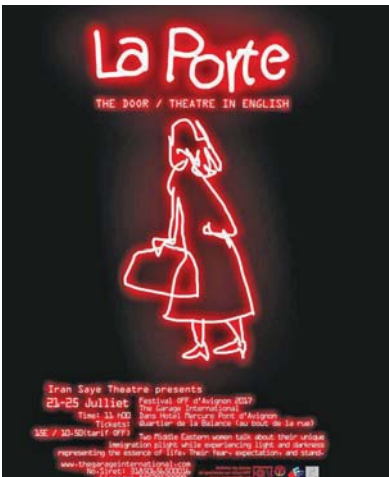
**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Sayeh, an Iranian theater troupe led by director Mehdi Mashhur, will perform “The Door” during festivals in Canada and France during July.

The play will first go on stage at the 29th Toronto Fringe Festival, which will be held in the Canadian city from July 5 to 16.

Sayeh will then leave Canada to perform the play at the Festival OFF d’Avignon that is scheduled to be held in the French city from July 7 to 30.

“The Door”, which is about two women who want to emigrate from Iran to Canada, will be performed in English.

Shiva Makinian and Mina Zaman are the main members of the cast for



the play that went on stage at the New York International Fringe Festival last August.

## Music, theater unite in “Si” to recount stories from Shahnameh

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Musicians and thespians have joined together in a project named “Si” (literally meaning ‘thirty’ in Persian) to stage stories from Persian poet Ferdowsi’s epic masterpiece Shahnameh.

The team features top musicians such as vocalist Homayun Shajarian and composer and instrumentalist Sohrab Purnazeri, and a cast composed of Shahr Dowlatshahi, Mehdi Pakdel and Amir Jadidi.

In a press conference held at Tehran’s Espinas Palace Hotel on Sunday, playwright Naghmeh Samini who is collaborating with “Si” called it “a musical drama” that provides an atmosphere to link music and theater.

The project gets its title from the Shahnameh verse reading, “I toiled much over thirty years, by the Persian language I remade Iran” that it refers to the fact that Ferdowsi spent 30 years writing the Shahnameh over a millennium ago.

“The Shahnameh was able to revive



Vocalist Homayun Shajarian (3rd L) and his colleagues attend a press conference at Tehran’s Espinas Palace Hotel on June 18, 2017 to brief the media about the “Si” project. (ISNA/Hemmat Khahi)

the Persian language during a critical and chaotic period of the history of Iran. And today, we are in a sensitive period but we can still seek help from our national legends,” dramaturge Amir-Hossein Mahozi said at the press conference.

The stories of “Zal and Rudabeh”, “Rustam and Esfaniyar” and “Rustam

## IAF to celebrate Abbas Kiarostami’s birthday

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The birthday of the legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami will be celebrated at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) on Thursday.

A short film showing different scenes from Kiarostami’s movies and one of his latest interviews will be screened during the celebration, the IAF announced in a press release on Monday.

Dozens of his colleagues and friends have been invited to the celebration.

A collection of 43 graphic designs by Kiarostami will be showcased in an exhibition at the IAF Morteza Momayyez Gallery on the sidelines of the event.

His younger son, Bahman, and his friends, including Amir Esbati, Negar Eskandarfar, Ali Bakhtiari, Seifollah Samadian and Ebrahim Haqiqi, loaned the collection to the exhibit entitled “In



Praise of Life”.

The exhibit will run until June 30 at the IAF located on Musavi St., off Taleqani Ave.

The performances will be directed by Ali-Asghar Dashti who said that dialogues have been composed in melodic qualities to attain the atmosphere that the music is planned to feature.

The project will have some surprises for the audience, Shajarian said and added his troupe will do its best to satisfy people from every walk of life in the concerts.

“It is a new form of performance and I am extremely excited about how things will go,” he said.

He said he will remain loyal to the principles of Iranian music in all his performances. However, he added that he doesn’t limit himself to a certain musical form.

Purnazeri who is the initiator of the project, said, “The project intends to help us reconstruct our national identity.”

He added that a fusion of regional and traditional Iranian music and Western classical music will be performed in the project.

## “Mulan” director Tony Bancroft to make Chinese animated musical “Songhua”

**SHANGHAI (Hollywood Reporter)** — Veteran Hollywood animator Tony Bancroft, director of Disney’s “Mulan” and the recently released “Animal Crackers”, has signed to direct the Chinese animated musical “Songhua”.

The announcement was made during a signing ceremony on day two of the Shanghai International Film Festival.

The film, written by Joe Bockol (Akuma), will be co-produced by Astro-Nomical Entertainment in association with Pelagius Entertainment.

Inspired by the famed Harbin ice festival in northern China, “Songhua”

is based on themes from Chinese folklore, the producers say. The film is set in ancient China, in a mythical world of ice, and the story follows a quick-witted spirit who helps a young princess and an underdog hero fulfill their destinies and save their homeland.

The project has been budgeted at \$35 million. The producers say they aspire for the film to appeal to families in both China and around the world.

The film is produced by Jay Ahn, Chris Henderson and Joe Fries, with Pelagius Entertainment’s Natalie Khoury serving as executive producer.