



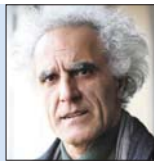
U.S. House passes measure to negotiate sea incidents with Iran **2**



Luxembourg ready for co-op with Iran in ICT, construction **4**



German Football Association confirms Tehran derby in Bielefeld **15**



Play to recall art elites from East and West **16**

Iran rules out any move to divide Syria



National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani (R) and his Russian counterpart Alexander Lavrentiev

See page 2

Dignitaries grieve death of math genius Mirzakhani

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Senior scientific and political figures have expressed condolences on the sad demise of Maryam Mirzakhani, the genius Iranian mathematician who died of breast cancer on Saturday.

Mirzakhani, 40, was the first woman in the world and the first Iranian to be awarded the prestigious Fields Medal.

She fought with cancer for four years and was hospitalized lately at a hospital in the U.S. as the cancer had spread to her bone marrow.

"The grievous passing of Maryam Mirzakhani, the eminent Iranian and

world-renowned mathematician, is very much heartrending," said President Hassan Rouhani in a message.

"The news of young Iranian genius and math professor Maryam Mirzakhani's passing has brought a deep pang of sorrow to me and all Iranians who are proud of their eminent and distinguished scientists," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif posted on his Instagram account.

"I do offer my heartfelt condolences upon the passing of this lady scientist to all Iranians worldwide, her grieving family and the scientific community," Zarif added. **->13**

Industrial projects worth \$1.5b to come on stream

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) will invest 60 trillion rials (about \$1.5 billion) to implement 18 projects by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018).

"These projects will create 8,000 direct and indirect jobs," IRNA quoted IDRO Chairman Mansour Moazzami as saying on Saturday.

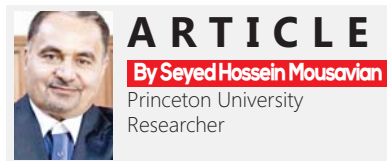
As he further explained, implementing an automatic transmission project in Zanjan province, establishing a tire company in Sistan-Baluchestan province and another one in Lorestan province, founding special economic zones in Semnan province

and Fars province are among the planned projects.

"IDRO has created some 250 projects in the country, which are currently being privatized," Moazzami added.

"The organization have made 20 trillion rials (about \$527 million) of investments in deprived areas of Iran, among them it can be referred to the mentioned tire company in the capital city of Sistan-Baluchestan province, Zabol," he said.

The IDRO chairman also informed that 9 out of 28 MOUs signed with foreign partners after the removal of sanctions (in January 2016) have been already finalized.



ARTICLE
By Seyed Hossein Mousavian
Princeton University
Researcher

Understanding Iranian threat perceptions

A pervasive perception in US policy circles and among US allies is that Iran seeks hegemony in the Middle East. Israel and other regional states often claim that Iran wishes to "revive the Persian Empire." While such claims would be dismissed as farcical by any Iranian official, it is important to note that such sentiment lies at the root of the current standoff between Iran, its regional rivals and the United States.

Contrary to mantras such as the above, Iranians broadly view their contemporary history as one of falling victim to aggressive outside powers and struggling to maintain a sense of security. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, a series of events and factors have led Tehran to believe that Washington and its regional allies seek regime change and Iran's territorial dismemberment. This perception is fueled by comments such as that of US Defense Secretary James Mattis earlier this week, who said that regime change will be necessary before the US and Iran can have substantially positive relations.

Broadly speaking, six factors have shaped Iran's threat perceptions since 1979.

First are the challenges of the 1980s, namely the Iran-Iraq War and separatist rebellions in Iran's Kurdistan and Khuzestan provinces, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and caused hundreds of billions of dollars in damages. The United States and allied Persian Gulf littoral states played a decisive role in exacerbating these crises, including by buttressing separatists and providing Saddam Hussein with every means of support, including ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, which were used to deadly effect. Toward the end of the war, the United States also directly attacked Iranian oil platforms and even shot down an Iranian civilian airliner. **->13**

Iran launches WHO's PEN disease intervention program

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran has adapted and launched a pilot program in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) Package of Essential Non-communicable (PEN) disease interventions for primary health care in low-resource settings.

The adjusted scheme, called IRAPEN, was piloted in provinces of Zanjan, Fars, Mazandaran, and Alborz and the results are hoped to be implemented nationwide, Baqer Larijani, the vice-chairman of the National Non-Communicable Diseases Control and Prevention Committee said on Friday, IRNA reported.

The WHO's PEN is an innovative and action-oriented set of cost-effective interventions that can be delivered to an acceptable quality of care, even in resource-poor settings. These tools will enable early detection and management of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases and cancer to prevent life threatening complications (e.g. heart attacks, stroke, kidney failure, amputations, and blindness).

IRAPEN is a screening program for early diagnosis of non-communicable diseases by health care providers at health care centers in villages, towns and cities for all residents aging 30 to 70. Once a patients is diagnosed with one of the aforementioned diseases they'll be referred to specialty and subspecialty centers for intensive care.

Currently health care providers are trained and over the course of the sixth five year development plan (2017-21) some 90 percent of the people must have undergone the screening procedure.

"It is essential to carefully assess the pilot scheme and execute it on a national scale by addressing the challenges and compensating for the shortcomings," Larijani highlighted.

Non-communicable diseases are emerging as a health problem and they are responsible for major part of the burden of the disease across the countries in the world. 70 percent of the diseases are attributed to the NCDs globally. Regarding Iran the number is

pretty much higher; 76 percent of the burden of the diseases comes from non-communicable diseases.

In 2011, the heads of states gathered in New York and decided to combat NCDs. Following the gathering WHO came up with a program that covers four specific categories of NCDs comprising ischemic heart diseases, diabetes, Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and cancer and four risk factors which are common across these categories including unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, smoking, and alcohol consumption.

In line with WHO's activities to combat non-communicable diseases in 2015 Iran established a committee called National Non-Communicable Disease Committee at the Ministry of Health headed by the Health Minister, Hassan Qazizadeh Hashemi. The committee is prompting provincial action plan by asking the universities of medical sciences to prepare their plans to combat non-communicable diseases.

UN chief: 'Sustained commitment essential' for Iran nuclear deal

Marking the second anniversary of the historic agreement aimed at ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has commended the Persian Gulf country for implementing its nuclear-related commitments.

Two years ago, Iran and the so-called 'E3+3' or 'P5+1' reached an agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was endorsed by the Security Council.

"The JCPOA was a major achievement in the area of nuclear non-proliferation," said Mr. Guterres in his statement issued overnight.

"It gives us all hope that the most complex issues in this domain can be addressed through dialogue, understanding and cooperation," he added.

He welcomed the recent recommitment expressed by the JCPOA stakeholders on 25 April to the full and effective implementation of the plan, and called on them to continue to work together in good faith and reciprocity.

"Their sustained commitment is essential for the long-term viability and success of the agreement," he said, calling on all member states to support further pursuit of this historic agreement and pledging that he will do the same.

"It is in the interest of the international community that this achievement of multilateral diplomacy endures transitions and implementation challenges cementing our collective commitment to diplomacy and dialogue," he stressed.

(Source: UN News Center)

Horse riding competition held in East Azerbaijan



Horse riding competition was held in in Khajeh City, East Azerbaijan Province, Iran.

The competition brought the horses from Arabian, Turkmen, Kurdish and Thoroughbred races together.

Persian horses have a good temperament, together with great stamina. They are sure footed and extremely intelligent. Horse racing is one of the most ancient past-times, dating back to some of the earliest civilizations of man.

ISIL leader in Afghanistan killed

The head of ISIL terrorist group in Afghanistan, Abu Sayed, was killed in an attack on his headquarters in Kunar province earlier this week, the Pentagon said.

Spokeswoman Dana White said in a statement that other members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) were killed in the strike on Tuesday.

"U.S. forces killed Abu Sayed, the emir of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria - Khorasan Province (ISIS-K) - in a strike on the group's headquarters in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, July 11," White said in the statement, referring to ISIL's other acronym.

"The raid also killed other ISIS-K members and will significantly disrupt the terror group's plans to expand its presence in Afghanistan."

Sayed is the third Islamic State leader in Afghanistan to be killed since July 2016.

Sayed had led the group since late April after the previous leader, Abdul Hasib, had been killed by U.S. forces. Hasib's predecessor Hafiz Sayed Khan was also killed by US forces.

The U.S. military had said Hasib's death would "help reach our goal of destroying them in 2017."

The compound used by Hasib in Nangarhar province was not far from the spot where on April 13, the U.S. military dropped the largest non-nuclear bomb it has ever used in combat, hitting ISIL positions.

The deployment of the so-called Mother Of All Bombs (MOAB) killed at least 95 fighters, according to the Afghan defense ministry, but fighting in the area has continued.

ISIL established a presence in Afghanistan in 2015 and overran large parts of Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, near the Pakistan border.

However their part in the Afghan conflict had been largely overshadowed by the operations against the Taliban.

(Source: agencies)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran, Russia hold joint naval drill

POLITICS TEHRAN — A Russian Navy fleet, on d e s k the third and last day of its presence in Iranian waters, carried out a joint naval exercise with an Iranian flotilla in the Caspian Sea on Saturday, Mehr reported.

In line with strengthening friendly relations and development of maritime interactions between Caspian Sea littoral states, the fifth naval fleet of the Russian Navy moored at Bandar Anzali port of Iran on Thursday.

Paykan missile boats of the Iranian Navy participated in the joint exercise.



Iran proud to have helped liberate Mosul: envoy

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to d e s k Iraq has said the Islamic Republic is proud to have helped liberate the city of Mosul from Daesh.

Iraj Masjedi, in a meeting with some local Iraqi officials on Saturday, said the victory will establish firmer ground for friendship between Iran and Iraq, ISNA reported.

In the meantime, Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee chief Alaeddin Boroujerdi said the United States is the biggest hurdle against complete liberation of the Iraqi city.



Iran impartial in Qatar-Saudi row: diplomat

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador d e s k to Kuwait has said that the Islamic Republic stands impartial in the recently-flared Qatar-Saudi disagreement.

"This is a position Iran announced in the beginning of the crisis," Alireza Enayati said, Al-Rai reported on Saturday.

He nevertheless stressed that Iran's help to blockaded Qatar falls within a humanitarian category.

Welcoming the Kuwaiti government's effort to mediate between the conflicting sides, Enayati said the Iranian government only cares for the people of Qatar.



Independent MPs set conditions for next cabinet

POLITICS TEHRAN — The faction of d e s k independents in parliament has set conditions for to-be proposed ministers, MP Gholam-Ali Jafarzadeh Aimenabadi said on Saturday.

If the proposed ministers lack those qualifications, they will not get the faction's vote, he added.

"Not only that, we will rise as critics," the MP said, adding his group is against seeking shares in the future cabinet, Fars reported.



'Total agreement shows opportunities in Iran outweigh sanction risks'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Lord David Hannay, d e s k ex-British ambassador to the UN, has said a recent contract between Iran and the French giant oil company, Total, shows that the opportunities in Iran outweigh risks of sanctions being restored.

He argued that if Total went to Iran "with their investment and then Iran started its nuclear program again, then the sanction of course will be restored and Total would lose lots of money," Hannay told IRNA in an interview published on Saturday.



Hooligan shot dead after stabbing 4 in Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — A hooligan was shot d e s k dead by police after stabbing four people with machete in the Shahr-e Rey subway station in southern Tehran on Saturday.

The man stabbed a cleric and 3 other people. He did so in a fight after the cleric had given him some moral advices, ILNA reported.

The attacker died as he was being carried to hospital. 13 people suffered minor injuries in a rush that followed.

World marks second anniversary of Iran nuclear deal

By Mohammad Homaeifar

TEHRAN — Friday marked the second anniversary of the historic nuclear agreement reached between Iran and the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China, Russia and the European Union.

The deal ended decades of economic sanctions against Tehran in exchange for restrictions on its nuclear program.

The nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed on July 14, 2015 and went into force on January 16, 2016. The accord enters its third year despite continuing mistrust and tension between Tehran and Washington.

The JCPOA was reached after 20 months of "arduous" negotiations. During the final negotiations, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry stayed in Vienna for 17 days, making him the top American official devoting time to a single international negotiation in more than four decades.

Since the implementation of the deal, many countries across the world have established closer ties with Iran, looking for opportunities to invest in the country's economy.

Earlier this month, France's energy giant Total signed a landmark gas deal with Iran worth nearly \$5 billion. The deal marked Iran's first major energy contract since the nuclear-related sanctions were lifted.

"We're here to build bridges, not walls," said Patrick Pouyanné, the chairman and CEO of Total, in an interview with Agence France-Presse at the signing ceremony in Tehran. "Economic development is also a



way of building peace," he noted.

Pouyanné's remarks drew a clear distinction between European leaders' vision of improving relations with Iran and that of the American leaders, who repeatedly target Iran with sanctions and threats, especially since Donald Trump became the president of the United States.

Since Trump took office, Europe and the U.S. have taken increasingly different

approaches toward Tehran, with Europe seeming interested in the new economic opportunities up for grabs in Iran, and on the other hand, the U.S. president flip-flopping on whether he will stay committed to the nuclear deal and his anti-Iran rhetoric.

Marking the anniversary of the JCPOA, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Friday praised the

"This deal belongs to the international community, having been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, that expects all sides to keep the commitments they took two years ago," European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said.

U.S. House passes measure to negotiate sea incidents with Iran

By Ali Kushki

TEHRAN — The U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday unanimously passed a measure which requires the Pentagon to consider options for negotiating an Incidents at Sea Agreement with Iran and other countries operating in the Persian Gulf.

Introduced by representatives John Conyers and Ruben Gallego, the move was voted unanimously to be included in the annual National Defense Authorization Act.

The House approved the act on Friday, authorizing \$696 billion in defense spending in fiscal year 2018, well above the \$603-billion plan President Trump had requested in May.

Before being signed into law, the bill must be ratified by the Senate, as well.

An incidents at sea agreement between the U.S. and Iran would not be the first time two countries with tense relations have been able to effectively maintain civil interactions for the sake of peace.

In 1972 the U.S. and USSR signed such an agreement to avoid unnecessary collisions and miscalculations, which resulted in success for both sides and a reduction in the

frequency of naval encounters between the two nations.

The step signifies one area where U.S. policy can shift back towards diplomatic engagement, and where the U.S. and Iran can pursue dialogue.

The measure requires the U.S. Defense Department to write a report on the feasibility and the advisability of negotiating an Incidents at Sea Agreement with Iran.

The Iranian side has not commented on the move so far.

Making diplomatic channels a priority in case of sea incidents becomes more meaningful in the context of the current political atmosphere in Washington with tensions between Tehran and Washington escalating since inauguration of the Trump administration in January.

In his presidential trail, Donald Trump pledged that any Iranian vessels that harass the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf would be "shot out of the water".

The U.S. Navy's presence in the Persian Gulf, Iran says, has jeopardized the security and stability of the Strait of Hormuz, "the world's most important oil chokepoint."

In 2015, there were roughly 30 dangerous interactions between Iranian and U.S. Navy warships in the Persian Gulf, according to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, with a 50-percent increase by August 2016.

Iran rules out any move to divide Syria

By Negar Asadi

TEHRAN — Iran's Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani asserted on Saturday that any agreement on the Syrian conflict must not lay the ground for the disintegration of Syria, reiterating Tehran's position that it is necessary to respect the Syrian sovereignty.

Shamkhani made the remarks after a meeting in Tehran with Alexander Lavrentiev, Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy on Syria.

Iran and Russia back Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian crisis, on for seven years now.

Lavrentiev was visiting Iran after Putin and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump agreed on a cease-fire in southwest Syria on July 7. The agreement was made after Putin and Trump met on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Hamburg, Germany.

After the meeting concluded, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who was present at the meeting, said that Russia, the U.S., and Jordan have issued a joint memorandum on establishing a de-escalation zone in southwest Syria, in the regions of Daraa, Quneitra and Suwayda.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson who was also present in the meeting said, "I think this is our first indication of the U.S. and Russia being able to work together in Syria."



National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani (R) and his Russian counterpart Alexander Lavrentiev

Reacting to the Moscow-Washington deal, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday Tehran would welcome the ceasefire initiative provided that it takes effect in other areas across the country, as well.

Before the move, Russia had cut all coordination channels with Washington after the U.S. Air Force shot down a Syrian fighter in June.

■ Elements use ceasefire to recruit

Iran's top security official also noted that the Zionist regime of Israel takes actions to weaken the Syrian government

and change the political and security equilibrium in order to undermine the resistance front.

"The Zionist regime of Israel establishes deep and expansive relations with terrorist groups and their supporters and seeks to use these groups as a tool to provide security in Israel's borders," he stated.

Elsewhere, he said that some elements within terrorist groups use ceasefire and political dialogue as opportunities to recruit forces which is "unacceptable" and a source of concern.

"It has been proven by experience

deal, urging all signatories to remain committed to their obligations.

"This deal belongs to the international community, having been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, that expects all sides to keep the commitments they took two years ago," she said.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson also praised the nuclear accord as a "historic diplomatic achievement" in a statement on Friday.

"The Iran nuclear deal has helped to make the world a safer place by imposing strict limits on Iran's nuclear program, in return for the lifting of sanctions. It's an example of what can be achieved when the international community works together," Johnson said.

Since January 2016, when the JCPOA took effect, the International Atomic Energy Organization, which monitors the technical implementation of the deal, has in numerous reports confirmed Iran's compliance.

Last month, the United Nations political chief called on the participants of the plan of action on Iran's nuclear program as well as the wider international community to continue to support the full and effective implementation of the agreement.

"The Secretary-General believes that the comprehensive and sustained implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) will guarantee that Iran's nuclear program remains exclusively peaceful, while allowing for transparency, monitoring and verification," said Jeffery Feltman, the under-secretary-general for Political Affairs.

Back in March, an official with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps' navy said that unprofessional acts by the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf may have "irreversible consequences."

The comments followed after IRGC fast-attack vessels forced the USNS *Invincible* and three ships from the British Royal Navy accompanying it to change direction in the Strait of Hormuz, the first such incident under the Trump administration.

The last serious naval incident was in January when a U.S. destroyer fired three warning shots at four Iranian fast-attack vessels near the Strait after they closed in at high speed.

Also, in January 2016, 10 Americans, including one woman, were arrested by the naval forces of the IRGC after entering Iranian waters, released hours later.

The quick de-escalation of the development was due to personal diplomacy between Secretary of State John Kerry and Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, who had already, together with five other foreign ministers, forged the Iran nuclear deal.

The National Iranian American Council has voiced strong support for the House's decision.

that these elements are not committed to any agreement and use any opportunity to kill the innocent people in order to achieve their inhumane objectives," Shamkhani added.

He also described the Astana talks on Syria as a "successful strategy" that can help put an end to the crises in the Middle East.

Brokered by Russia, Iran and Turkey since the beginning of 2017, the Astana talks have brought representatives from the Syrian government and opposition groups to the negotiating table in order to find a solution to the Syrian conflict.

So far, the sides have convened at the Kazakh capital five times with the sixth round due to take place at the end of August.

The signature achievement of the Astana initiative was agreed upon during the fourth round of negotiations on May 4 as Russia, Turkey and Iran agreed to establish four separate de-escalation zones in Syria for at least six months.

The largest of the planned zones includes Idlib province, which neighbors Turkey, and adjoining districts of Hama, Aleppo and Latakia provinces.

The other three zones are in northern Homs province, the Eastern Ghouta region east of the capital Damascus and along the Jordanian border in southern Syria.

still living in their previous delusional atmosphere and are not aware of international developments as they were unaware in the past."

He advised Trump's administration pay attention to Iran's "positive" and "constructive" role in the world.

joint press conference with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Thursday.

"Today, we face new threats from rogue regimes like North Korea, Iran, and Syria, and the governments that finance and support them," he said.

Qassemi said, "Apparently, his [Trump's] advisors are

Muslim world condemns Israel's closure of al-Aqsa Mosque

The Muslim world has denounced Israel's recent move to shut down the al-Aqsa Mosque after a deadly shooting at the holy mosque's compound in the Old City of occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds.

The Friday gunfight took place just outside the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) and left three Palestinians and two Israeli police officers dead.

Following the incident, Israeli police closed the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, briefly detained Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the grand mufti of Jerusalem al-Quds, and cancelled Muslim Friday prayers at the site.

"We insist on reaching al-Aqsa mosque and performing prayers there. The occupation preventing us from praying marks an assault against our right to worship in this pure Islamic mosque," Sheikh Muhammad said.

The measures taken by the Tel Aviv regime drew condemnations from the Muslim world.

■ Arab League, Jordan demand al-Aqsa reopening

The Arab League warned against the consequences of Israel's "dangerous" closure of the al-Aqsa Mosque and ban on Friday prayers.

In a statement released on Friday, the 22-member pan-Arab organization said the move would adversely affect the so-called peace process in the region and fuel conflict, terrorism and extremism.

It further called on Israel to the immediately reopen al-Aqsa and avoid any attempt to change the historic status of the mosque, demanding the international community protect the Islamic and Christian sacred sites.

Additionally, Jordan, which serves as the custodian of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, urged the reopening of the site and advised Israel to "refrain from taking any step aimed at changing" the status quo of Jerusalem al-Quds or the mosque compound.

"Jordan rejects any attack on the rights of Muslims," Jordanian government spokesman Mohammad Momani said in a statement carried by the official Petra news agency on Friday.

■ Qatar wants global action

In a similar development, Qatar's Foreign Ministry censured the Israeli closure of the al-Aqsa Mosque, prevention of prayers there and declaration of the area as a closed military zone as a severe violation of the sanctity of Islamic sites and a provocation to millions of



Muslims around the world.

In a statement, the ministry called on the international community to assume its responsibility in halting these violations.

■ 'Aqsa's historical status must be respected'

Meanwhile, the Turkish Foreign Ministry expressed regret over Friday's incident, saying, "It is a humanitarian and legal obligation to respect the sanctity and historical status of the religious sites in the Israeli occupied East Jerusalem [al-Quds], especially the Haram al-Sharif."

The Haram al-Sharif should be opened to worshipers "via the immediate lifting of the entry ban imposed by Israel and calm should be attained as soon as possible," it added.

■ Dozens arrested after shooting

In the immediate aftermath Friday's shootout, Israeli forces detained dozens of employees of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, an Islamic religious trust that manages the current Islamic edifices on

and around the Haram al-Sharif.

Firas Dibs, head of the Waqf public relations, told the Palestinian Ma'an news agency that Israeli forces had detained 58 staff of the organization, and interrogated them over the gunfight.

The occupied lands have witnessed tensions ever since Israeli forces imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshipers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound two years ago.

The Tel Aviv regime has been trying to change the demographic makeup of Jerusalem al-Quds by constructing settlements, destroying historical sites and expelling the local Palestinian population.

More than 300 Palestinians have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces since October 2015, when the tensions intensified.

Tel Aviv has come under fire for using violence against Palestinians and adopting a policy of shoot-to-kill.

(Source: agencies)

France wades into Qatar row, urges end to punitive measures

France's foreign minister on Saturday called on Qatar's neighbors to immediately lift measures impacting thousands of people in the Persian Gulf, becoming the latest foreign diplomat to visit the region and attempt to find a resolution to a crisis that has dragged on for more than a month.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said in Doha on Saturday that Paris wants to assist Kuwait-led mediation on the crisis between Qatar and four other Arab states.

"France should be a facilitator in the mediation" led by Kuwait, Le Drian told reporters following talks with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

Le Drian arrived in Qatar for a Persian Gulf tour aimed at helping defuse the crisis pitting Qatar against Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt.

"France is very concerned by the sudden deterioration in relations between Qatar and many of its neighbors," he said.

"France is talking to all these countries to help in the search for a solution," he said, calling for "dialogue and calm" between the Arab states concerned.

Le Drian is to travel on to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE, following a four-day mediation mission by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that made little progress in defusing mounting tensions in the Persian Gulf.

This comes as Qatar's foreign minister



French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian (L) embraces his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani as they walk out of a press conference in the Qatari capital Doha on July 15, 2017.

said Friday it would be unfair to describe U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's shuttle diplomacy to find a solution for a major Persian Gulf feud as a failure, insisting that the crisis "cannot be solved in a day."

During a joint news conference with his Turkish counterpart, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani also told reporters in Ankara that Qatar would continue to work with the United States and Kuwait to end the standoff with its four Arab neighbors.

Tillerson concluded his mediation efforts on Thursday, making no promise of

an imminent breakthrough but voicing optimism that Qatar and its neighbors might soon be willing to talk face to face.

"There is no criterion or evidence that indicates that (Tillerson's visit) was a failure," al-Thani said. "We cannot expect such a tense crisis to be solved in a day."

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, whose nation has supported Qatar in the dispute, said he believed a solution would be possible "in the mid-term."

The Qatari minister again denied accusations that his nation provided support to terror groups, accusing the four of failing to provide "single evidence"

against his gas-rich nation.

Cavusoglu said that a recent pact that Qatar agreed with United States to strengthen its counterterrorism efforts was evidence of Doha's "sincerity" in countering extremist groups.

Qatar vehemently denies allegation of supporting extremist groups, though it has provided aid that helps Islamist groups that others have branded as terrorists, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates - argues that the pressure and demands it has placed on Qatar helped lead to the counterterrorism pact, but it says the agreement does not go far enough to end the dispute.

Those countries are insisting that Qatar agree to a 13-point list of demands that includes shutting down Qatar's flagship Al-Jazeera network and other news outlets, cutting ties with Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, limiting Qatar's ties with Iran and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the tiny Persian Gulf country.

The White House said that President Donald Trump spoke on Friday from Air Force One with Saudi King Salman and that the two discussed the recent diplomatic efforts to resolve the Arab quartet's dispute with Qatar.

In particular, the statement said, Trump emphasized the need to cut all funding for terrorism and discredit extremist ideology.

(Source: AP)

Russian-American lobbyist met with Trump Jr., Russian lawyer

A lobbyist who was once a Soviet counter-intelligence officer participated last year in a meeting with senior aides to U.S. President Donald Trump, including his eldest son, and a Russian lawyer, NBC News reported on Friday, adding to allegations of possible connections between Moscow and the November election.

NBC News, which did not identify the Russian-American lobbyist, said some U.S. officials suspected him of still having ties to Russian intelligence, something he denied to the network.

The Associated Press said the lobbyist, whom it identified as Rinat Akhmetshin, confirmed that he had attended the June 2016 meeting in New York's Trump Tower.

A source familiar with the participants of the meeting confirmed to Reuters that Akhmetshin was in the room.

The meeting appears to be the most tangible evidence of a connection between Trump's election campaign and Russia, a subject that has prompted investigations by congressional committees and a federal special counsel.

Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and former campaign adviser Paul Manafort were also at the meeting, which the president's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., agreed to attend because he believed he could get damaging information about Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Trump Jr. did not mention Akhmetshin's presence when he released a series of emails about the meeting earlier this week.

■ "Deeply Disturbing"

Representative Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, said the report about Akhmetshin "if accurate, adds another deeply disturbing fact about this secret meeting."

Akhmetshin was not available for comment on Friday. There was no answer at the door of his house in Washington.

The White House had no immediate comment about the NBC News report of a Russian-American lobbyist at the meeting.

Kushner's spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment, and Manafort's spokesman Jason Maloni said Manafort had no comment on the meeting.

A former Trump campaign adviser, Michael Caputo, told reporters after he testified to the House Intelligence Committee in closed session on Friday that he had no contact with Russians and never heard of anyone in the campaign "talking with Russians."

Accusations by U.S. intelligence agencies that Moscow meddled in the election and colluded with the Trump campaign have dominated the Republican president's first months in office. Russia denies the allegations, and Trump says there was no collusion.

The agencies said earlier this year that Russia sought to help Trump win the election by hacking private emails from Democratic Party officials and disseminating false information online.

To help the White House deal with Russia-related investigations, Trump is hiring veteran Washington lawyer Ty Cobb, a source familiar with the matter said on Friday. Cobb's role is separate from Trump's outside legal team, led by New York lawyer Marc Kasowitz.

Akhmetshin has been accused in federal and state courts in the United States of engaging in hacking conspiracies, although the allegations were later withdrawn, according to court records.

In 2015, lawyers for the Russian mining company International Mineral Resources claimed in the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia that Akhmetshin helped organize the hack, theft and dissemination of private documents.

That case was dropped. The same company filed a lawsuit against Akhmetshin in the New York Supreme Court but withdrew it last year.

U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley described Akhmetshin in a letter to the Justice Department in March as "a former member of the Russian military intelligence services (GRU)" who was working to overturn the 2012 "Magnitsky Act" of Congress, which blacklists Russians for human rights abuses.

The Kremlin has often complained about the act.

Congressional records show that Akhmetshin lobbied Congress last year for the Human Rights Accountability Global Initiative Foundation, a Washington-based advocacy group that says it is working to lift laws that prevent U.S. residents from adopting Russian children. Those laws were put in place by Moscow in response to the Magnitsky Act.

Trump told Reuters on Wednesday that he did not know about his son's meeting last year until recently. But in a conversation with reporters later that day, Trump said: "In fact, maybe (the meeting) was mentioned at some point," adding that he was not told it was about Clinton.

Trump Jr.'s lawyer, Alan Futerfas, said he had talked with a person who came to the meeting between Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya and Trump aides.

"He told me specifically he was not working for the Russian government, and in fact laughed when I asked him that question," Futerfas told NBC News. It was not immediately clear if the person he referred to was Akhmetshin.

The lawyer said Trump Jr. knew nothing about the man's background at the time of the meeting.

The Russian lawyer in the meeting, Veselnitskaya, has said she was not working for Russian authorities, but she told The Wall Street Journal in an interview on Friday that she was meeting with Russian authorities regularly.

She said she shared information about a U.S.-born fund manager who lobbied for passage of the Magnitsky Act with the Russian prosecutor general's office, including with Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika, a top official appointed by the Kremlin, the Journal said.

(Source: Reuters)

Trump asks Supreme Court to block travel ban ruling

The U.S. Justice Department on Friday asked the Supreme Court to block a judge's ruling that prevented President Donald Trump's travel ban from being applied to grandparents of U.S. citizens and refugees already being processed by resettlement agencies.

In a court filing, the administration asked the justices to overturn Thursday's decision by a U.S. district judge in Hawaii, which limited the scope of the administration's temporary ban on refugees and travelers from six Muslim-majority countries.

The latest round in the fight over Trump's March 6 executive order, which he says is needed for national security reasons, came after the Supreme Court intervened last month to partially revive the two bans, which were blocked by lower courts.

The Supreme Court said then that the ban could take effect, but that people with a "bona fide relationship" to a U.S. person or entity could not be barred.

The administration had narrowly interpreted that language, saying the ban would apply to grandparents and other family members, prompting the state of

Hawaii to ask Hawaii-based U.S. District Judge Derrick Watson to expand the definition of who could be admitted. He ruled for the state late on Thursday.

In the court filing, the Justice Department said the judge's ruling "empties the (Supreme) Court's decision of meaning, as it encompasses not just 'close' family members but virtually all family members."

The conservative-leaning Supreme Court is not currently in session but the justices can handle emergency requests. The administration's application could be directed either to Justice Anthony Kennedy, who has responsibility for emergency requests from western states, or to the nine justices as a whole. If the court as a whole is asked to weigh in, five votes are needed to grant such a request.

"The truth here is that the government's interpretation of the Supreme Court's stay order defies common sense," said Omar Jadwat, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union involved in challenging the ban. "That's what the district court correctly found and the attorney general's misleading attacks on its decision can't change that fact."

In his decision, Watson harshly criticized the

government's definition of close family relations as "the antithesis of common sense."

Watson also ruled that the assurance by a resettlement agency to provide basic services to a newly arrived refugee constitutes an adequate connection to the United States because it is a sufficiently formal and documented agreement that triggers responsibilities and compensation.

In the court filing, the Justice Department said Watson's ruling on refugees would make the Supreme Court's decision on that part of the executive order "effectively meaningless."

The ruling, if left in place, means refugees can continue to be resettled in the United States, beyond a cap of 50,000 set by the executive order. That limit was reached this week.

The Supreme Court's decision last month revived parts of Trump's March 6 executive order banning travelers from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days, as well as refugees for 120 days. The court also agreed to hear oral arguments in the fall over whether the ban violates the U.S. Constitution.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iran ranks 89th in sustainable development index

ECONOMY TEHRAN —According to the 2017 edition of “SDG Index and Dashboards Report” of Bertelsmann Stiftung and SDSN, Iran is ranked 89 out of 157 nations in a global index that assesses the performance of countries towards achieving the ambitious sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Iran’s score was 64.7 out of 100 in the mentioned ranking.

New foreign companies to replace Siemens in Russia very soon: official

It is regretful that one of Germany's biggest companies, Siemens, might leave Russian market, however, in this case, it will be replaced by other foreign companies, the head of Federal Anti-monopoly Service, Igor Artemyev, said Friday in an interview to Rossiya 24 TV channel.



“New companies will enter the Russian market very soon due to economic reasons and not to emotional ones or any traditions established during cooperation. [Siemens] will just be replaced by some other company, I don’t know from where. It might be a company from China, from the Middle East or from Europe, let’s say, from France and not from Germany, but it will definitely come” Artemyev said.

On July 5, media reported that at least two gas turbines manufactured by Siemens for the supply to Russia were illegally delivered to Crimea evading anti-Russia sanctions. Siemens denied the information. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the turbines had been made in Russia from Russian parts that’s why it wasn’t subject to any restrictions.

On July 11, Siemens brought a lawsuit to Moscow Arbitration Court against Russia’s Technopromexport that allegedly transferred the turbines to Crimea. Despite speculations appeared in media Friday, saying that Siemens might leave Russian market, this information has not been confirmed by Siemens spokesman so far.

(Source: Sputnik)

Toyota made UK investment decision after Brexit reassurances

LONDON (Reuters) — The British government helped to secure a more than 240-million (\$310 million) pound investment from Toyota in its English plant with a letter reassuring the Japanese carmaker over post-Brexit trading arrangements, two sources told Reuters.

Toyota said on March 16 it would install its new car platform at its Burnaston plant. One source, who is familiar with the letter, said that Toyota delayed the decision due by the end of December while it weighed up a number of factors including Brexit.

The business ministry has confirmed the existence of a letter but refused to release it.

The source said the letter was similar to one sent to Japanese carmaker Nissan last year when it decided to build two new models at its northern English plant. The document sparked public and lawmaker concern about secretive deals.

The source, who did not say when the letter was sent, said it contained several reassurances.

“They received a similar set of warm words as Nissan on electric vehicles, commitment to further training and to ensure the competitiveness of the UK automotive industry,” the source said.

A Toyota spokesman declined to comment on whether it had received such a letter. He referred to the company’s March 16 statement which said the British government was providing funding for training and research and development. Toyota also said at the time that “continued tariff-and-barrier free market access... will be vital for future success.”

Britain said in March it would back up the investment from Toyota, which builds roughly 10 percent of Britain’s 1.7 million cars, by spending 21.3 million pounds to support skills and training, research and development and innovation, subject to an independent assessment.

A spokesman at the business ministry declined to provide any comment for this story. Business minister Greg Clark said last year that assurances offered to Nissan were available to other firms.

Reuters has a freedom of information (FOI) request to the business ministry to see documentation relating to the investment decision, which the ministry said included a letter.

In its response, an official at the ministry refused to release the letter and a company briefing note, saying the information was “both highly commercially sensitive” and “would be likely to cause harm to the company’s commercial interests if disclosed.”

Clark has refused to publish the Nissan letter. He said he will release the information when it is no longer commercially confidential.

Luxembourg ready for co-op with Iran in ICT, construction

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Chairman of Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce said his country is ready to cooperate with Iran in the fields of information and communication technology (ICT) and also construction.

Carlo Thelen made the remarks in a meeting with Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Chairman Gholam-Hossein Shafeie in Luxembourg, ICCIMA portal reported.

Thelen also emphasized the need

for expansion of trade ties between the two countries, saying “We hope the exchange of delegations between the two sides pushes the economic relations to a higher level as both sides expect.”

Iranian official for his part stressed the importance of economic relations noting that good trade relations will pave the way for better political relations.

Shafeie also pointed to some of the potential areas for cooperation and said the level of trade between the two sides should grow to a higher level.

ICCIMA’s chairman who visited the Eu-



Chairman of Iran Chamber of Commerce Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (L) shaking hand with his Luxembourgian counterpart, Carlo Thelen

ropean country heading a 35-member trade delegation also attended an Iran-Luxembourg business forum which was held on Friday.

A high-ranking Luxembourgian trade delegation visited Iran in April and Iranian delegation’s visit aimed to follow up on the discussed subjects as well.

Iran, Kenya ink agreement on double taxation avoidance

ECONOMY TEHRAN – A Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) was signed between Iran and Kenya during the visit of an Iranian trade delegation to the African country.

According to the Public Relations Department of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the agreement was signed by the Iranian ambassador to Kenya Hadi Farajvand, and the Principal Secretary for Kenya’s National Treasury Kamau Thugge, IRNA reported.

In the signing ceremony, Farajvand said “Being the gate to the east of Africa, Kenya has always been consid-



ered an important trade partner and a good market by Iran.”

The Kenyan official for his part noted that with the DTAA being finalized the level of investment and trade will rise in both countries.

S. Korea’s June crude oil imports from Iran up 10.5% y/y

South Korea’s crude oil imports from Iran increased 10.5 percent in June from a year earlier as Tehran continued to ramp up output after sanctions over its nuclear program were lifted.

Seoul imported 1.15 million tons of crude from Tehran in June, or 281,338 barrels per day (bpd), compared with 1.04 million tons a year ago, customs data showed on Saturday.

In the first half of the year, South Korea’s intake of Iranian oil jumped 51.5 percent to 9.27 million tons, or 375,597 bpd, over the same period a year ago.

South Korea is one of the main Asian customers for Iranian crude, including an ultra-light oil known as condensate.

Although Iran ranked as South Korea’s second-biggest crude oil supplier in the January-March period in 2017, the data showed it slid to No.3 spot behind Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the first half of this year as Iran struggled to keep condensate shipment volumes after clearing stocks stored on tankers.

Iran, a member of the Organization



of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is exempt from the oil producer club’s commitment to cut production to clear a global glut.

Iran has been pumping around 3.8 million bpd in recent months and expects its oil output to rise to about 4 million

bpd by the end of the year, its deputy oil minister Amir-Hossein Zamaninia said.

Meanwhile, South Korea’s imports from Kuwait declined 13.2 percent in June from a year ago to 1.53 million tons, or 374,010 bpd, according to the data. But Kuwait regained No.2 posi-

tion in the first six months of 2017 with almost 11 million tons of crude shipment in the Jan-June period of 2017, or 445,123 bpd, up 2.9 percent from the same time last year.

In June, oil supplies from Saudi Arabia rose 13.7 percent to 3.48 million tons, or 849,772 bpd, a year ago, the data noted. Korea’s oil imports from the world’s top exporter climbed 4.2 percent to 21.71 million tons in the first half of 2017.

Overall, the world’s fifth-biggest crude importer brought in 11.61 million tons of oil last month, or 2.84 million bpd, up 3.2 percent from 11.26 million tons a year ago.

In the first six months of 2017, South Korea imported 72.24 million tons of crude, or 2.93 million bpd, up 1.8 percent from nearly 71 million tons over the same period last year.

Final data for June crude oil imports by state-run Korea National Oil Corp (KNOC) is due later this month.

(Source: Reuters)

The BOJ’s inflation target is unattainable, most economists say

Stable inflation above 2 percent is unattainable in Japan in the foreseeable future, according to more than 60 percent of economists surveyed by Bloomberg. The remainder say it will happen, but almost no-one thinks it will happen as quickly as the Bank of Japan says.

None of the 43 analysts surveyed see the central bank changing monetary policy at the meeting next week, and almost no-one thinks that there will be any changes before the term of Governor Haruhiko Kuroda ends in April next year. And while the overwhelming expectation is that the BOJ will join its global peers in ending stimulus eventually, only four people expects that to begin before April.

The BOJ board forecasts that inflation will reach the 2 percent target sometime in the fiscal year that starts in April 2018. The bank will update that assessment at the meeting next week, with media reports saying that they may lower their price forecasts for this year and next year, while raising the outlook for economic growth.

Since the bank adopted a yield-curve control policy last year, it has been able to slow its purchases of bonds, which are now well under the stated guideline of increasing its holdings by about 80 trillion yen (\$708 billion) a year. Buying less means that the policy is more sustainable, as it delays the point at which there are no more bonds the BOJ can buy.

However, that strategy may become more difficult as other central banks increase interest rates and start talking about cutting their stimulus. Those moves have pushed down global bond prices and dragged down the price of Japan’s bonds. That’s pushed up yields, which move inversely to prices, and forced the BOJ to step into the market last week to both buy more bonds and also promise to buy an unlimited amount of bonds at a fixed price.

If that trend continues, it may mean that the BOJ will have to actually increase its purchases of bonds. That may explain why a majority in the survey don’t see the



BOJ changing the wording on the 80 trillion yen guideline before April, if at all.

(Source: Bloomberg)

U.S. deficits to jump \$248 billion over next two years due to tax shortfall

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The budget deficit for President Donald Trump’s first two years in office will be nearly \$250 billion higher than initially estimated due to a shortfall in tax collections and a mistake in projecting military healthcare costs, budget chief Mick Mulvaney reported on Friday.

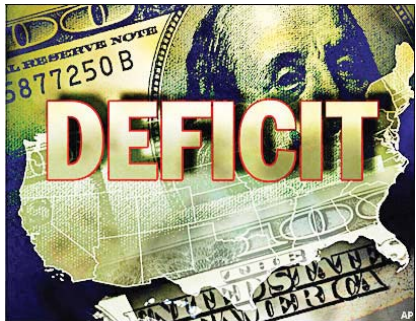
In a mid-year update to Congress, Mulvaney, director of the Office of Management and Budget, revised the estimates supplied in late May when the Trump administration submitted its first spending plan.

Since then, Mulvaney said, the deficit projected for the current fiscal year has increased by \$99 billion, or 16.4 percent,

to \$702 billion. For 2018, the deficit will be \$149 billion more than first expected, increasing by 33 percent to \$589 billion.

The figures come as the administration is facing widespread doubts among economists and analysts that it can erase government deficits largely by boosting economic growth and changing laws like the Affordable Care Act. ACA reform is facing a difficult path in Congress, and the Congressional Budget Office on Thursday said the administration’s growth and deficit reduction plans were optimistic.

The letter from Mulvaney said the bulk of the problem this year and next stems from lower-than-expected tax collections.



Individual and corporate income taxes and other collections for this year are expected to be \$116 billion less than the administration anticipated in May. Tax receipts in 2018 are expected to be \$140

billion less than initially estimated.

Spending in 2017 will be \$17 billion less than expected -- and would have been even lower if not for the use of “erroneous outlay rates” used in estimating costs of health programs for the U.S. military, Mulvaney said in a letter to House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan.

Costs for the defense health program will be \$19 billion higher in 2017 and \$9 billion higher in 2018 than initially expected. Overall spending in 2018 will rise by \$10 billion Mulvaney said.

The estimates are based on existing law and do not include any proposed changes to health, welfare or other programs.

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Europe’s Brexit envy

By John Lloyd

Britain’s intention to leave the European Union - Brexit - will greatly affect the rest of the world. It’s not confined to the effect it will have on the British economy, even if that is likely to be major, nor on the adjustments the remaining 27 EU states must make.

There’s more than a little suspicion in the UK that the continental elites are enjoying the mess the Brits are in, unwillingly forced to accept the will of the people and struggling to get a grip on the complexities of separating trade, legal systems, financial and political commitments built up over 44 years. When a friendly country, especially one perceived as arrogant (a widespread view of the British establishment) enters a time of trouble, something inside its close allies quietly rejoices. We compete, after all, not just in trade and growth, but in our national self images.

■ Pro-Brexit camp



But schadenfreude is hollow. Most Western countries now face, in differing degrees of intensity, the same issues that impelled a narrow majority to vote for Brexit last year. These are closely tied together: immigration, fear of terrorism, the sovereignty of national parliaments, embattled ethnic identity, and lack of community cohesion. They were summed up by the pro-Brexit camp as “Taking back control!” That concept doesn’t stop at the English Channel. Expect, in the next year, more pressure on the EU and national administrations fuelled by the same discontent that motivated Brexit. And in democracies, sooner or later, such discontent must take political forms.

Popular attitudes throughout Europe now appear to be increasingly out of kilter with those of the political and corporate leaderships. One index was a study of 10,000 Europeans across 10 EU states, published by foreign affairs think tank Chatham House showing that an average of 55 percent of those polled agreed with President Donald Trump’s efforts to ban citizens from several Muslim-majority states from entering the United States.

Another large study from the same source, published last month , showed that “there is simmering discontent within the public, large sections of whom view the EU in negative terms, want to see it return some powers to member states, and feel anxious over the effects of immigration. Only 34 percent of the public feel they have benefited from the EU, compared with 71 percent of the elite.”

■ Percentage of migrants

Both Germany and Sweden have taken in large numbers of migrants, many of them desperate and poor. Sweden, the self-declared “humanitarian superpower,” which took the highest percentage of migrants relative to its population, now faces a backlash, especially since an Uzbek asylum seeker drove a van into a crowd, killing five, in Stockholm in April. The majority of Swedes now call for reduced migrant numbers; the anti-immigrant Swedish Democrats remain the country’s second most popular party and police have been directed to crack down on illegal immigrants. In Germany, numbers have been cut back sharply since nearly a million migrants were allowed entry last year, but attacks, often by far right groups, on migrant hostels and homes were running at nearly 10 per day.

In Italy, where most migrants surviving the dangerous crossing from ports in North Africa land – half a million in the last four years, with 13,000 lost at sea - opposition to immigration is growing steadily, with the NGOs that now rescue a third of those trying to cross to Europe blamed for encouraging the migration. A poll taken at the end of 2016 showed Italy to be the most anti-immigrant country in Europe, with 52 percent of Italians agreeing with the statement that, “there are so many foreigners living here that it doesn’t feel like home anymore.”

France wasn’t far behind, in second place, with 47 percent of those polled holding the same view.

Speakers at a London conference organized by the Henry Jackson Society this week noted that native populations can accept migrants without much conflict - but not if they arrive in sudden waves, not if they remain apart from the host citizens and not if they are also of a different ethnic group.

Erik Kaufmann, a politics professor at London’s Birkbeck College who spoke at the conference, has written that “the most important driver of majority attitudes is demography: the balance between ethnic change and integration.”

Those countries which cope best with diversity, such as Canada, actively encourage it. Ottawa’s official immigration website proclaims that “different backgrounds and cultures are not only accepted, they are encouraged. People are not expected to be one type - but can be made up of many different things and yet still be Canadian.” But Canada’s location means that Canada is not besieged by desperate migrants: it can, in the main, choose whom it allows in. Canada’s points-based immigration policy has, for some years, focused “on fueling economic prosperity,” placing “a high priority on finding people who have the skills and experience required to meet Canada’s economic needs.”

It is unlikely that this identification - of strong community bonds, sovereign politics (“taking back control!”) and immigration - is much different in the UK from elsewhere in the Western world. For the governing and other elites, the conclusion of the experts at the London conference was to cease to see all opponents to mass immigration and loss of national sovereignty as reactionaries - even though some will be - and to manage the issues at the pace that people can bear. These leaders should not see voter opposition to mass immigration and their support for national sovereignty as permanent, racially-based ill will. If most of our fellow citizens are of that mind, then we really are in trouble.

(Source: Reuters)

Trump’s crusade against Qatar is revenge for a failed business deal

By Anthony Harwood

Another day, another story about one of The Trump Family being up to no good.

First it was a meeting between the President’s oldest son, Donald Jnr, with a pro-Kremlin lawyer who said she had damaging information on Hillary Clinton before the election.

Reports claimed he was specifically told that Natalia Veselnitskaya had material from the Russian government which could help his father’s candidacy.

But he let his visitor into Trump Tower anyway.

Donald Snr was not in the room but his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, was at the meeting which took place after Trump secured the Republican nomination last year. Which brings us to Meeting No 2.

A year earlier Kushner was not just in the room but chairing a series of meetings with one of the world’s richest men to re-finance one of his ailing New York properties to the tune of \$500m (£388m).

And where was the man with the magic mountain of money from? Qatar.

Unlike the meetings with Natalia which, it is said by the White House, were over in a day when it became clear she had nothing to offer, these talks went on for about two years.

With their immense wealth the Qataris had an awful lot to offer and talks continued beyond the election, before coming to an abrupt end in March when Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani walked away.

The reason? Kushner was unable to come up with any co-funding as stipulated by the Qataris from the outset.

No betrayal, no foul play, no double crossing – just what was warned would happen when a Chinese insurance company, which had looked likely to invest, suddenly pulled out.

■ The scourge of Qatar

Fast forward two months and Donald Snr is suddenly the scourge of Qatar.

In a visit to Saudi Arabia he rounds on the tiny [Persian] Gulf [Arab] state as the chief financier of terrorism before repeating the claim in the Rose Garden at the White House a few weeks later.

Less than a month later a Saudi-led alliance is emboldened by the President’s words to launch a diplomatic and transport blockade of Qatar which continues to this day.

But was Qatar singled out for punishment because it cozies up to Iran and is the world’s biggest supporter of



Was Qatar singled out for punishment because it cozies up to Iran and is the world’s biggest supporter of terrorism? Or was it because it failed to back The Family?

terrorism? If so, why has America got a 10,000-strong military base there?

Or was it because it failed to back The Family?

It is like some scene out of The Godfather. You can almost hear Don Vito Corleone saying: “Revenge is a dish best served cold.”

Well, maybe lukewarm when you consider how quickly the Trump Family got its retaliation in.

■ Financial trouble

The Kushner office building in question at 666 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan, is in dire financial trouble because it does not generate enough revenue to pay off The Family’s debts, and The Family has less than two years to come up with \$1.3bn (£1bn), when the interest-only mortgage is due.

Federal investigators are now also looking at whether Kushner sought Russian financing for the building from the CEO of a Russian state-owned bank in December.

The Kushner Family has form when it

comes to revenge. Jared’s father, Charles, once hired a prostitute to seduce his brother-in-law for co-operating with a federal investigation against him.

The trouble is you can’t run the White House like some crazed Mafia outfit, because you’re likely to end up being impeached over conflicts of interest.

But for the moment Trump appears happy to ditch the rule book and accuse his detractors of perpetrating fake news.

This week his Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, is frantically engaged in shuttle diplomacy flying around the Middle East trying to sort out the mess caused by The Don.

The scary thing is how a man with no political experience, who happens to be married to the President’s daughter, can have all this power in the leadership of the free world.

As one of Tillerson’s associates put it: “Rex put two and two together and concluded that this absolutely vacuous kid was running a second foreign policy out of the White House family quarters.”

Kushner has been tasked with find-

ing a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, something which has eluded the greatest political minds for generations.

He is also the President’s lead adviser on relations with China, Mexico and Canada.

But for the moment it is a White House-created mess in the Middle East which the administration is having to clear up.

Tillerson needs to convince leaders in the [Persian] Gulf that the White House is not running an alternative foreign policy where it sides with Saudi Arabia against Qatar.

He also needs to convince the Saudis that its 13 onerous demands on Qatar need to be re-drawn into something that might be negotiated.

Tillerson’s shuttle diplomacy is a huge test of American power and influence in the region.

The Secretary of State has just reached an agreement with Qatar on the steps it needs to take to reduce support for terrorism.

It remains to be seen whether he can convince the Saudis to use this as a basis for a negotiated settlement.

(Source: Independent)

Don’t expect China to halt Kim’s nuke weapons program

By Harry Kim

Before leaving the White House, President Obama advised then President-elect Trump to press China for greater support in freezing North Korea’s nuclear progress.

The new administration appears onboard with that idea – when President Xi visited Mar-a-Lago in April, President Trump asked him to rein in Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons program.

The rationale behind American leaders pushing Beijing to “fix” the North Korean issue is, in concept, not a bad strategy. North Korea is an intractable problem across the Pacific that diverts resources from other international objectives and domestic agendas. Negotiating an end to Beijing’s supply of materiel and resources to North Korea is an obvious strategy.

Yet the question remains: will Beijing apply meaningful pressure on Pyongyang on behalf of Washington, at the risk of destabilizing the Kim regime?

■ Will China give up North Korea?

Earlier this year, North Korea watchers speculated that Beijing might abandon Pyongyang in light of Pyongyang’s first public condemnation of Beijing and Beijing’s decision to cut a vital coal supply to Pyongyang. The euphoric days when Mao Zedong described the two countries’ relations as “close as lips and teeth” seemed long over.

Yet the relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang, even under Mao, was never consistently cordial. Instead, both countries have oscillated from ‘brotherhood’ to hostility over economic, ideological, and political disputes.

The 1960s was arguably the most contentious period between Beijing and Pyongyang. The Cultural Revolution triggered a serious rift, as Pyongyang opposed Beijing’s way of implementing the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

According to Eastern bloc sources, the



North Korea watchers speculated that Beijing might abandon Pyongyang in light of Pyongyang’s first public condemnation of Beijing and Beijing’s decision to cut a vital coal supply to Pyongyang.

Korean Workers Party (KWP) described the revolution as “a ‘great madness,’ having nothing in common with either culture or a revolution” and Mao Zedong as “an old fool who has gone out of his mind.”

Pyongyang also publicized its deteriorating relationship with China to other socialist countries and blamed Beijing for its own internal economic problems such as shortages in cooking oil, grain, petroleum products and coke coal.

The Chinese ambassador in Pyongyang left on October 1966. Traffic and commerce across the border halted and repatriations and family visits ceased. Chinese language schools in North Korea were closed down.

In the Red Guard newspaper

Dongfanghong, Beijing also published a scathing article on the anti-Chinese tendency of Koreans and accused Koreans of being “revisionists” by opposing their revolution.

The two countries’ relationship deteriorated to the point where the Korean leadership feared economic sanctions, which would have brought serious economic consequences to North Korea. However, after Pyongyang’s raid on South Korea’s presidential compound (the Blue House) and its seizing of the USS Pueblo (which increased a risk of war against the U.S.), Beijing and Pyongyang mended fences.

In 1970, both countries even issued the joint communique in the United Nations which stressed their shared goals of reunifying the two Koreas and

Mainland China and Taiwan.

The durability of the China-North Korean relationship, surviving even tough times, suggests that relationship is crucial for both sides, particularly for Beijing.

Pyongyang remains a valuable partner for Beijing in many ways: economically, Beijing maintains exclusive access to North Korea’s natural resources — minerals and fishing —unencumbered by any environmental or labor regulations.

Strategically, North Korea provides a buffer zone against the U.S. military presence in the Peninsula. Unlike Seoul, Tokyo or Washington, Pyongyang’s growing stockpile of nuclear weapons do not pose a direct security threat to Beijing when compared to the uncertain future of post-Kim era.

Politically, Beijing’s important role in mediating the North Korean problem gives political leverage over Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington. These interests provide strong incentives for Beijing to keep Kim’s regime in Pyongyang alive.

■ So what for Washington?

This history demonstrates that the relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang has hit rough patches over economic, ideological and political difference. Yet because the two countries have muddled through and resolved these differences suggests that the relationship is crucial for both sides.

Therefore, dealing with the North Korean threat will require more than just goading Beijing to do Washington’s bidding. Washington should not completely bypass Beijing in resolving the North Korean issue, but delegating the issue entirely to China is not a strategy.

If Washington is truly concerned about the North Korean threat, then it is time for American policymakers to shoulder greater responsibility in halting North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and preventing Pyongyang’s behavior.

(Source: Newsweek)

BY MARYAM AZISH

As compared with other neighboring countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran's relations with Iraq is outstanding and Tehran has deepening of ties on its agenda.

The two neighboring countries' relations are exceptional in different domains which include religious, economic and fighting against terrorism, since the Islamic Republic of Iran has seriously been suffered by terrorism, Tehran enjoys a deep understanding about this evil phenomenon.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has strong belief that a powerful Iraq will benefit the whole region, Iran in particular and the two countries enjoy a strategic ties and undoubtedly the maintenance of mutual ties would serve the interests of both nations, the Muslim world and regional countries in particular.

In an indication of two countries' strong determination to amend cordial relations, al-Abadi recently traveled to Iran to review the avenues to expand all-out ties with Iran mainly broadening economic relations between the two countries.

Some Iranian officials believe that the visit would open a new chapter in expansion of economic cooperation with Iran.

While in Iran, the Iraqi prime minister conferred with Iran's high-ranking officials including Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, President Hassan Rouhani, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri and Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi on issues of mutual interest and regional developments as well.

■ Never trust U.S.

In a meeting with al-Abadi and his accompanying delegation, Ayatollah Khamenei underlined the need for maintaining integrity of Iraq, stressing that the Iraqi officials should "never trust the U.S."



Ayatollah Khamenei hailed the "unity and harmony of political and religious currents in Iraq in their fight against the Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group."

He also described the Iraqi "popular forces" as a major and auspicious phenomenon "and source of authority" for that country.

"One should be vigilant against the U.S. and never trust them because they and their allies in the region oppose Iraq's independence, identity and unity," said the Leader.

Warning against the U.S. plots to wreak havoc in Iraq, Ayatollah Khamenei further noted, "No chance should be given to the U.S. to sow discord or cause conflict in Iraq. The U.S. forces should be prevented from intervening in Iraq on the pretext of education or other issues."

"Iran as a neighbor is opposed to

rumors on holding referendum to separate a part of Iraq and consider those fanning the flames of division opponents of Iraq's independence and identity," said the Leader.

Highlighting Iraq's material, historic and human richness, Ayatollah Khamenei said that with such a historic and cultural civilization, Iraq should remain integrated. Not to mention that such a country is entitled to standing on its own feet and strongly counter those seeking to undermine Iraq.

Al-Abadi, for his part, appreciated Iran for its supports against the terrorist group of Daesh.

"Today, Iraq is united and integrated against Daesh and all political and religious parties are unanimous in continuing campaign until uprooting Daesh," Iraqi PM said.

Stressing that destroying Daesh is possible, the Iraqi PM reaffirmed that Iraq needs Iran aid in the fight against the terrorist group as well as in post-Daesh era which is a time for stability and reconstruction.

■ Mosul Liberation

In a meeting with al-Abadi, Presi-

dent Rouhani said that liberating Mosul is a victory for regional countries, but fighting terrorism shouldn't put Quds and the danger of the Zionist regime out of mind.

President Rouhani congratulated Iraq's Prime Minister on Iraq's victories, and said, "Liberating Mosul is a symbol of the end to terrorism and a victory for Iran, Iraq, Syria and all the regional countries dealing with terrorism."

Saying that fighting terrorism and creating piece in the region depend on collaboration of all the countries and that Iran considers Iraq's security as its own, President Rouhani said expansion of terrorism is the ominous plan of the Zionists and fighting terrorism shouldn't make Quds issue and the danger of the Zionists fade away.

Rouhani added that there are no barriers on the way of the two countries to expand collaboration and Tehran is after expanding all-out ties

with Iraq, which is definitely the wish of people of both countries and in line with joint interests.

The Iranian president also reiterated that the territorial integrity of all the countries should be preserved and disintegrating the countries is of no benefit to anyone, and Iran backs a unified Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi prime minister said that his country is determined to expand ties with Iran in every field.

He also said that Daesh terrorists know no borders and that it is necessary that all countries cooperate to fight terrorism.

Iraqi PM, added that any movement other than toward a unified Iraq is illegal and unacceptable.

■ Iran-Iraq Sincere Ally

Larijani in a meeting with al-Abadi said Iran considers Iraq as its sincere ally.

He said disintegration of Iraq is desire of the Zionist regime and confron-



The Iranian president also reiterated that the territorial integrity of all the countries should be preserved and disintegrating the countries is of no benefit to anyone, and Iran backs a unified Iraq.

tation against separatism in Iraq is so important.

We believe you have successful experiences in fight against terrorism and you are very well aware that nature of terrorists in the region is different from past decade, but Iraq shown its might and demolished them.

Takfiri terrorists have two goals for future in Iraq; one to create problems inside Iraq to prepare grounds for disintegration, which is desire of the Israelis, and second goal is to involve Iraqis by internal problems, so that they cannot have trans-border activities, because Iraq is a democratic state and can has good growth and is effective in the region.

Larijani said that missiles fired into Daesh bases in Syria were carrying this message that Iran has entered a new phase in the fight against terrorism.

Al-Abadi expressed pleasure for visiting Iran, and said this visit means re-emphasizing consolidated relations between the two brotherly and neighbor states, a friendship which benefit both nations, countries and the region.

He reiterated that solidarity among countries is necessary to annihilate Daesh and stressed that unfortunately some differences between countries of the region, which created obstacle in the way of demolishing Daesh and creating stability and security in the region and we hope they find out the sensitivity of the situation and look for returns of security in the region.

There are some political differences among parties and groups in Iraq, but we are trying to these differences from being abused by Daesh.

He pointed to developments in Syria, and said that problems in Syria became more complicated because different countries like Jordan, Turkey, the U.S. and the Persian Gulf littoral states are following their own interests, but Iraq has two main goals there; first to annihilate and fight against the ISIS and then to establish good relations with the Syrian government.

Al-Abadi called for increase in economic and trade interactions between Tehran and Baghdad, and added that in this visit "we had good meetings" in this concern.



The Annual Ordinary General Assembly of Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company (P. J.S) was held in Tehran TALASH Amphitheater on Saturday July 9 in the presence of the majority of its real and legal shareholders.

Eng. Mahmoud Nourian Managing Director of the Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company was the first speaker who pointed to the role of his company in the provision of raw materials for steel industries with the aim of materializing industrial and economic objectives of the country and said: "With the adoption of appropriate policies in the past Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017), the company managed to take giant strides in materializing most of its economic objectives."

He pointed to some of the salient achievements taken by his company gained in the last Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017) as follows: conducting research activities, reducing consumption and spending,

optimizing and reducing energy consumption, using most modern technologies in production line, etc.

Benefited from the most experienced and expert manpower, the company managed to manufacture over 785 percent of parts and equipment needed at the production lines of company, no need to import similar foreign parts and equipment.

Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company's combined cycle 500-MW steam unit was inaugurated in Ardakan, Yazd Province in April 2016.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the managing director pointed to the at-hand projects of his company as follows: plan for the construction operation of Direct Reduction plant (sponged iron, Direct Reduction Iron DRI), with the capacity of 1,550,000 tons/year, plan for supplying water in Ardakan with the production capacity of treatment of 2.9 million cubic meters/year, etc.

He pointed to the two other development projects of the company and said: "Construction of new pelletizing factory with the production capacity of four million tons and also construction of hot and cold rolling mill with the production capacity of 1.2 million tons per annum."

He revealed the investment of Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company in SARMA Steel and Iron Industries Company in Abarkuh and added: "Construction operation

of this company for production of 500,000 tons of various round bars started in late last year." Construction operation of this unit is underway with the production capacity of 600,000 tons of steel ingot, he maintained.

He pointed to a plan for supplying and transferring water of Persian Gulf to Iran central regions as one of the most important investments made by the company and said: "In line with enforcement of a bylaw ratified on August 3, 2013 by the Board of Directors, it was decided that Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company should participate with purchasing 20 percent of stocks of Persian Gulf Water Supply and Transfer Company for the implementation of water conveyance project from the Persian Gulf to the mineral and mining industries of the country such as Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company."

He put the current share of this joint venture partnership at 22.22 percent. It is hoped that a large portion of water shortage problem facing large-scale industries will be removed en route of water conveyance line from Bandar Abbas to Yazd Province.

He evaluated the performance and activity of the company as "positive and constructive" and said: "Over 10,005,000 tons of iron ore concentrate, 496,000 tons of graded iron ore and 3,720,000 tons of conglomerate was

Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. Pays 200 Rials DPS in Fiscal Year Closing on Mar. 20, 2017



produced in the same period, showing that most economic objectives of this company were materialized."

With due observance to the said issue, the company managed to win second rank among other mineral and mining companies in terms of exploration, extraction and operation as accredited by Industrial Management Institute (IMI).

At the end of Annual Ordinary General Assembly

meeting, legal inspectors and auditors of the company submitted their reports to the Assembly separately.

The managing director of the company responded questions asked by shareholders. Finally, financial statements of the company were approved by the majority of shareholders unanimously.

DPS (Dividend per Share) of company was determined 200 rials for the fiscal year closing on March 20, 2017.

A Brief Review on Financial and Operating Performance of Company in Current Year

Submitting report on financial performance of company in recent two years along with percentage of changes as compared to a year earlier and description of the main relevant reasons:

1) Profit and Loss Account

| Description | Profit and Loss Account for Fiscal Year Closing on March 20, 2017 | | | Profit and Loss Account for Fiscal Year Closing on March 20, 2017 | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| | Concentrate and Graded Iron Ore | Conglomerate (Pellet) | Total | Concentrate and Graded Iron Ore | Conglomerate (Pellet) | Total |
| Domestic sale: | 10,717,445 | 10,092,097 | 20,809,542 | 8,693,331 | 6,354,286 | 15,047,617 |
| Exports sale | 152,458 | 0 | 152,458 | 91,258 | 0 | 91,258 |
| Total sale | 10,869,903 | 10,092,097 | 20,962,000 | 8,784,589 | 6,354,286 | 15,138,875 |
| Cost price of goods sold | (7,577,072) | (6,227,009) | (13,804,081) | (5,980,608) | (3,605,077) | (9,585,685) |
| gross profit | 3,292,831 | 3,865,088 | 7,157,919 | 2,803,981 | 2,749,209 | 5,553,190 |
| Admin., general and sales costs | (216,671) | (10,092) | (226,763) | (160,312) | (6,354) | (166,666) |
| Other operating incomes and costs | 71,987 | 0 | 71,987 | 31,068 | 0 | 31,068 |
| Operating profit | 3,148,147 | 3,854,996 | 7,003,143 | 2,647,737 | 2,742,855 | 5,417,592 |
| Financial costs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other costs and non-operating incomes | 651,025 | 0 | 651,025 | 555,498 | 0 | 555,498 |
| Net profit before taxation | 3,799,172 | 3,854,996 | 7,654,168 | 3,230,235 | 2,742,855 | 5,973,090 |
| Taxation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Net profit | 3,799,172 | 3,854,996 | 7,654,168 | 3,230,235 | 2,742,855 | 5,973,090 |
| Income of each share - Rials | 134 | 137 | 271 | 189 | 160 | 349 |

Analysis of Net Profit Fluctuations for the Fiscal Year Closing on March 20, 2017 with the Net Profit on the Fiscal Year Closing on March 20, 2016

| Product | Fluctuation Amount Caused by Changes | | | Percent of Fluctuation Caused by Changes | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|--|-----------------|--------|
| | Sales rate per ton | Amount of Sales | total | Sales rate per ton | Amount of Sales | total |
| Concentrate | 1,031,050 | 868,737 | 1,899,787 | 11.86 | 9.99 | 21.85 |
| Grading | 54,894 | 130,632 | 185,526 | 60.15 | 143.15 | 203.30 |
| Conglomerate | 730,042 | 3,007,770 | 3,737,812 | 11.49 | 47.33 | 58.82 |
| total | 1,815,986 | 4,007,139 | 5,823,125 | 11.63 | 25.61 | 37.24 |

B) Fluctuation of Total Amount of Cost Price of Goods Sold:

| Description | Fluctuation Amount Caused by Changes | | | Percent of Fluctuation Caused by Changes | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--|------|---------|
| | 2017 | 2016 | Changes | 2017 | 2016 | Changes |
| Changes caused by the fluctuation of sales rates | | | 1,815,596 | 11.63 | | |
| Changes caused by fluctuation of sales amount | | | 4,007,139 | 25.61 | | |
| changes caused by the fluctuation of cost price in each ton | | | (1,680,151) | (17.50) | | |
| changes caused by the fluctuation of goods sold | | | (2,538,244) | (25.71) | | |
| changes caused by the fluctuation of operating costs | 226,763 | 166,666 | (60,097) | (36.06) | | |
| Changes caused by the fluctuation of financial costs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| Changes caused by the fluctuation of other operating incomes | 71,987 | 31,068 | 40,919 | 131.71 | | |
| Changes caused by the fluctuation of other non-operating incomes | 651,025 | 555,498 | 95,527 | 17.20 | | |
| Net profit | 7,654,168 | 5,973,090 | 1,681,079 | 28.14 | | |
| %PS | 271 | 349 | (78) | 28.14 | | |

A) Fluctuation of total Sales Amount

| Product | Fluctuation Amount Caused by Changes | | | Percent of Fluctuation Caused by Changes | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|--|-----------------|-------|
| | Sales rate per ton | Amount of Sales | total | Sales rate per ton | Amount of Sales | total |
| Concentrate | 911,435 | 608,563 | 1,519,998 | 15.45 | 10.31 | 25.76 |
| Grading | 2,635 | 73,831 | 76,466 | 3.29 | 92.33 | 95.62 |
| Conglomerate | 766,083 | 1,855,849 | 2,621,932 | 21.25 | 51.48 | 72.73 |
| Total | 1,680,151 | 2,538,244 | 4,218,396 | 17.50 | 25.71 | 43.21 |

C- Fluctuation of Total Net Profit

| Description | Fluctuation Amount Caused by Changes | | | Percent of Fluctuation Caused by Changes | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--|------|---------|
| | 2017 | 2016 | Changes | 2017 | 2016 | Changes |
| Changes caused by the fluctuation of sales rates | | | 1,815,596 | 11.63 | | |
| Changes caused by fluctuation of sales amount | | | 4,007,139 | 25.61 | | |
| changes caused by the fluctuation of cost price in each ton | | | (1,680,151) | (17.50) | | |
| changes caused by the fluctuation of goods sold | | | (2,538,244) | (25.71) | | |
| changes caused by the fluctuation of operating costs | 226,763 | 166,666 | (60,097) | (36.06) | | |
| Changes caused by the fluctuation of financial costs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| Changes caused by the fluctuation of other operating incomes | 71,987 | 31,068 | 40,919 | 131.71 | | |
| Changes caused by the fluctuation of other non-operating incomes | 651,025 | 555,498 | 95,527 | 17.20 | | |
| Net profit | 7,654,168 | 5,973,090 | 1,681,079 | 28.14 | | |
| %PS | 271 | 349 | (78) | 28.14 | | |

America goes to war over its military infrastructure

By Frederico Bartels

There is a lot to like in the House and Senate Committee versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Unfortunately, both proposals would force taxpayers to continue to pay for unneeded real estate.

Each version specifically prohibits the Pentagon from spending money to initiate a new round of Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC). Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has called BRAC "one of the most successful and significant efficiency programs" at the Pentagon's disposal.

Were lawmakers to deny Mattis this valuable waste-reduction tool, it would be hard to take seriously their perennial public complaints about "Pentagon waste."

The language that prohibits BRAC funding should be stripped from both bills when they come to the floor. BRAC allows the Defense Department to manage its real estate infrastructure and move functions from one installation to another. And the department sorely needs that authority.

A March 2016 study determined that the Defense Department currently maintains 22 percent excess infrastructure. That excess capacity is found in every single service. The Army has 33 percent of that excess capacity while the

Air Force has 32 percent, the Navy has 7 percent and the Defense Logistics Agency has 12 percent.

■ Maintaining excess infrastructure

The Pentagon cannot afford the luxury of maintaining excess infrastructure. It's like owning a vacation home on a beach with a perpetual off season. Even if the property is not in use, it must still be maintained and safeguarded.

While there are plans to grow the military in coming years, that growth is unlikely to follow the lines of the infrastructure already in place. Moreover, guidance can easily be crafted to preclude closing any facility that could conceivably be needed for military growth. A new round of BRAC would enable the department to right-size the infrastructure and emphasize installations that best accommodate the type of growth that is planned.

And there is no reason to fear that a round of BRAC would go "too far," jettisoning real estate and facilities needed to accommodate a rebuilt military. The typical BRAC round eliminates only five percent of excess capacity. This would leave the plenty of room for growth.

The previous five rounds of BRAC together have generated recurring savings of over \$12 billion annually. The latest round, conducted in 2005, accounts for nearly a

third (\$4 billion annually) of those savings. Even with increased construction requirements and an emphasis on transforming the infrastructure, the break-even point for the 2005 round was far shorter than most Americans' home mortgages.

While individuals or private entities would simply divest themselves of properties whose costs exceeds their benefits, the Pentagon cannot. Since 1977, Congress has set very strict limits on how much real estate the DOD can realign or close without explicit congressional authorization. The BRAC process was developed to allow the department to take a holistic and comprehensive look at its infrastructure with as little political interference as possible.

The data gathering and analysis portion of a BRAC takes over eighteen months to complete because it goes into much finer detail than the capacity analysis done in March 2016. It's that fine analysis that enables the department to assess base infrastructure utilization rates.

■ In-depth analysis

Congress would do well to give the Pentagon permanent authority to conduct these in-depth analyses. It would enable the Defense Department to present Congress with more robust data and evidence to justify future requests

for BRAC.

There are several other steps that Congress could take to avoid cost overruns and uncertainty associated with a new round of BRAC.

As described in recent Heritage Foundation research, lawmakers could set a target for infrastructure reduction for a new round of BRAC. This would make the goal of the new round very clear, forcing the department to focus on recommendations that indeed reduce the current infrastructure and accelerate cost savings. Congress could also mandate that the department restrict its recommendations to those that generate savings within a five-year window.

Outside the walls of the Capitol, there is broad bipartisan support on the Hill for a new round of BRAC, as evidenced by a recent open letter to Congress but the ball is in Congress' court. Lawmakers can amend the current versions of the 2018 NDAA and authorize a new round of BRAC, or they can leave in provisions that force the Pentagon to waste money on infrastructure it doesn't want or need. Option one would save taxpayers an estimated \$2 billion a year.

(Source: nationalinterest.org)

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What’s your definition of happiness?

Learn from other people's happiness and see what reflects your own happiness

What’s your definition of happiness? Research in the field of positive psychology and happiness often define a happy person as someone who experiences frequent positive emotions, such as joy, interest, and pride, and infrequent (though not absent) negative emotions, such as sadness, anxiety and anger (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Happiness has also been said to relate to life satisfaction, appreciation of life, moments of pleasure, but overall it has to do with the positive experience of emotions.

The key to these definitions is that positive emotions do not indicate the absence of negative emotions. A “happy person” experiences the spectrum of emotions just like anybody else, but the frequency by which they experience the negative ones may differ. It could be that “happy people” don’t experience as much negative emotion because they process it differently or they may find meaning in a way others have not. In fact, using the phrase “happy person” is probably incorrect because it assumes that they are naturally happy or that positive things happen to them more often. Nobody is immune to life’s stressors, but the question is whether you see those stressors as moments of opposition or moments of opportunity.

Regardless of where you are on the happiness spectrum, each person has their own way of defining happiness. Philosophers, actors, politicians, and everybody in between have all weighed in on their own view of happiness. Read some of our favorite definitions below and let us know what resonated with you.



Happiness has also been said to relate to life satisfaction, appreciation of life, moments of pleasure, but overall it has to do with the positive experience of emotions.

The ancient Greeks defined happiness as:

“Happiness is the joy that we feel when we’re striving after our potential.”

Shirley MacLaine, Academy Award winner, said:

“To be happy, you have to be willing to be compliant with not knowing.”

Michael J. Fox said:

“My happiness grows in direct proportion to my acceptance, and in inverse proportion to my expectations.”

Mastin Kipp, the founder of Daily Love, said:

“I don’t expect to always be happy, I simply accept what is. And that acceptance is key. This is what self-love is all about, really, acceptance and the ability to love yourself right where you are.”

Gabrielle Bernstein, author, said:

“Choosing happiness is the path of least resistance.”

Aristotle said:

“Happiness is a state of activity.” Dr. Shefali Tsabary, psychologist and author, said:

“Only when we fill our own need and feel satiated from within can we truly be fulfilled and happy.”

Eleanor Roosevelt said:

“Someone once asked me what I regarded as the three most important requirements for happiness. My answer was: A feeling that you have been honest with yourself and those around you; a feeling that you have done the best you could both in your personal life and in your work; and the ability to love others.”

What’s great about all these definitions is that commonalities start emerging. Shirley MacLaine and Michael J. Fox tell us to accept life’s situations and to accept uncertainty as a natural part of life.

And the greater we are able to do that, the greater we can lean into happiness. Mastin Kipp tells us it’s ok to not strive to be happy, but accept whatever we’re feeling. He hints at an important concept, which is that we so often try to fix things and get to be “happy” or “at peace” or “over a situation,” but sometimes we need to acknowledge what we’re feeling (whatever that is).

What you often find is that acknowledgement will allow you to move into the “happy space” more quickly because your emotions aren’t trying to get your attention. Your emotions aren’t screaming at you,

telling you that you’re sad or angry. You’ve already begun the work of processing it.

Lastly, Aristotle shares a crucial part of happiness, which is staying active. How many “happy” people do you know who sit at home all day, every day? They might be content or “ok” temporarily, but are they truly thriving in happiness? Happiness is often found in the doing of what you’re passionate about and in building connections that are meaningful to you.

Research has supported this with findings showing that strong social support is correlated with a number of positive outcomes. You might be in a rut now and you might have moments where you lose your connection to life, but you always have the opportunity to rebuild that connection.

So now it’s your turn to begin finding the happiness in you. What brings you joy? Maybe it’s a night in watching TV. Maybe it’s a night out at a new restaurant in town. Maybe it’s staying up late watching a movie with your partner. Maybe it depends on your mood. Wherever your happiness resides, go enjoy it.

(Source: psychologytoday.com)

7 foods that help you lose weight

By Ashley Neglia

According to nutrition experts, weight loss starts at the grocery store. Find out what you should be eating to drop pounds fast.

Shop smart

Forty billion dollars. That’s how much Americans spend on weight-loss programs and diet-related supplements every year, according to the National Eating Disorders Association. Of course, there may be a time and place for certain programs, but weight loss really starts at the grocery store.

We talked with Dee Sandquist, RD, spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, who says the following foods can not only help you trim down, but also are rich in essential nutrients.

Eggs

Put down the bagel! Adults who eat two eggs for breakfast are 65 percent more likely to lose weight and feel more energetic than those who start the day with a bagel containing the same amount of calories, according to a study published in International Journal of Obesity.

Chock full of protein, eggs contain as many cancer-fighting antioxidants as an apple and are the richest food source of choline—a B-vitamin that promotes healthy brain function.

Worried about cholesterol? Eating up to one egg a day has not been shown to increase heart disease risk in healthy individuals, according to the Harvard School of Public Health. However, if heart disease and high cholesterol is a concern for you, check with your doctor before adding eggs to your diet.

Kale

A longtime unsung hero of the produce aisle, kale’s not only full of satiating fiber, one cup of chopped kale contains only 33 calories. Plus, it’s rich in vitamin A, which may help prevent night



The hotter the pepper, the more fat-fighting capsaicin, the ingredient that gives peppers their fiery kick—it contains.

blindness, bone-strengthening vitamin K, and the body’s immunity superstar, vitamin C.

Lentils

High in protein and brimming with soluble fiber and essential nutrients, such as Folate, which may lower Alzheimer’s risk, lentils are nutritional powerhouses. Plus, adding lentils and other legumes to your diet may help prevent weight gain, according to a study published by the Smart Foods Centre, School of Health Science.

Hot peppers

Capsaicin—the ingredient that gives peppers their fiery kick—may help speed up metabolism and shrink fat cells, according to several studies.

The hotter the pepper, the more fat-fighting

capsaicin it contains, but you don’t have to reach for the Ghost chili (the world’s hottest pepper) to feel the proverbial burn. Jalapeños, poblanos and even banana peppers fall on the Scoville scale, which measures the spicy heat of chili peppers. Or you could add a little heat to most meals with a dash of Tabasco sauce.

Greek yogurt

You really can’t go wrong with low-fat or fat-free yogurt, but if weight loss is your game, consider going Greek.

Compared to regular yogurt, Greek-style yogurt contains fewer grams of sugar and almost double the amount of protein—a 6-ounce serving has as much protein as 2 ounces of lean meat—which may help promote weight loss by keeping you fuller longer. Plus, it contains bone-building calcium and probiotics, which may boost immunity and reduce gastrointestinal distress.

Grapefruit

The grapefruit is back! Eating half of a grapefruit before meals may significantly help with weight loss and improve insulin resistance, according to a study published by the Department of Nutrition and Metabolic Research.

Chia

Don’t laugh, but the seeds that brought us the Chia Pet may also help with weight loss. Packed with protein and fiber—two tablespoons contains 42 percent of your daily-recommend value—Chia seeds help increase satiety.

While the jury’s still out on Chia seeds’ fat-burning capabilities, adding two tablespoons to yogurt, oatmeal, or smoothies can help jumpstart the day with a fiber and protein boost (and may even keep you from reaching for that mid-morning snack).

(Source: huffingtonpost.com)

Lightheaded? Top 5 reasons you might feel woozy

Dehydration, medication side effects, sudden blood pressure drops, low blood sugar, and heart disease or stroke may be to blame.

Feeling woozy, lightheaded, or a little faint is a common complaint among older adults. Although it’s not usually caused by anything life-threatening, it could be, so you need to be careful.

“Don’t ignore it. Even if the lightheadedness does not have a serious cause, it could lead to serious injuries from a fall. And at the worst, the cause may itself be life-threatening,” says Dr. Shamai Grossman, an associate professor of emergency medicine at Harvard Medical School.



If you feel lightheaded, Dr. Grossman recommends having a drink of water or orange juice and lying down. If symptoms last more than 15 minutes, he says it’s time to seek medical help in an urgent or emergency care setting. Even if symptoms are brief, and even if you think you know the cause, report the lightheadedness to your doctor.

Following are the top causes of lightheadedness and common fixes.

Dehydration

You may become dehydrated if you’re overheated, if you aren’t eating or drinking enough, or if you’re sick. Without enough fluids, the volume of your blood goes down, lowering your blood pressure and keeping your brain from getting enough blood, causing lightheadedness. “A glass of water may be enough to make you feel better, but if you haven’t been eating or drinking much for days, it will take more than that to rehydrate your body,” says Dr. Grossman. You may need an intravenous infusion of fluid. A doctor can check to see if you need electrolytes like potassium or salt.

Drug side effects

Sometimes medications make you feel lightheaded, especially those that lower your blood pressure or make you urinate more. “If they work too well, they’ll lower your blood pressure too much and make you lightheaded. Diuretics are notorious for this,” says Dr. Grossman. The fix may be as simple as adjusting the dose or trying a different drug.

Sudden drop in blood pressure

The autonomic nervous system helps the body regulate the shift in blood pressure when we stand up. As we get older, this system may deteriorate, causing a temporary drop in blood pressure when we stand—known as orthostatic hypotension—resulting in lightheadedness. This may be a long-term problem, but there are medications to treat it, such as midodrine (ProAmatine) and fludrocortisone (Florinef), so this too warrants a trip to your doctor.

Low blood sugar

“When you don’t have enough blood sugar, every system in your body goes on reserve to use as little energy as possible, including your brain, making you feel lightheaded or confused,” says Dr. Grossman. It may only take a drink of juice to relieve your symptoms, but it’s best to get your blood sugar levels checked, especially if you need more glucose (sugar) in intravenous or pill form.

Heart attack and stroke

At its most serious, lightheadedness may be a sign of a heart attack or stroke. Other symptoms of a heart attack often accompanying lightheadedness are chest pain, shortness of breath, nausea, arm pain, back pain, or jaw pain. Symptoms suggesting a stroke are the sudden onset of headache, numbness, weakness, visual changes, trouble walking, or slurred speech. “But in older adults, lightheadedness may be the only symptom of a heart attack or a stroke, especially if it doesn’t go away,” says Dr. Grossman. In that case, every second counts, so get to an emergency room for treatment.

Dizziness: How it’s different

“Are you feeling lightheaded or dizzy?” your doctor may ask. Although it is often hard to tell the difference, your answer may have a big impact on how the doctor moves forward with diagnosis. Lightheadedness is not the same as dizziness, also known as vertigo, which refers to feeling like your surroundings are spinning.

Common causes of dizziness include medication side effects; infections or other disorders of the inner ear; tumors; a stroke that occurs in the back of the brain; Ménière’s disease, which attacks a nerve important in balance and hearing; benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, when tiny crystals in the inner ear become dislodged and move around inside the ear canals; and Parkinson’s disease.

Treating the underlying condition can relieve dizziness. But don’t ignore bouts of dizziness, warns Dr. Grossman. “Vertigo can lead to falls and injury. It’s a real problem, particularly in the elderly, and in many cases, it can be prevented,” he says.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

Police seize dozens of prehistoric relics near Tehran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iranian authorities have d e s k confiscated dozens of prehistoric objects in Varamin, southeast Tehran, which are supposed to be associated with the splendid Mesopotamia civilization, CHTN reported on Friday.



Picture depicts pieces of artifacts confiscated by the Iranian police in Varamin near Tehran on July 8, 2017.

"The haul of antique objects were seized with the judicial coordination on July 8 following nearly a month of intelligence operations," CHTN quoted Mahmoud Parsa, a Tehran province police commander, as saying.

"One individual has been arrested in this regard who is now under investigation and we are probing other agents and liaisons of the gang," he added in a press conference.

Initial studies demonstrate that 29 artifacts out of the 59 seized objects are associated with the Mesopotamian civilization and date back to some 3000 BC, Shahab Pazouki, the director of Varamin's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department said in a keynote speech on Thursday.

A cradle of civilization, Mesopotamia literary meaning "between two rivers" was an ancient region in the eastern Mediterranean bounded in the northeast by the Zagros Mountains and in the southeast by the Arabian Plateau, corresponding to today's Iraq, mostly, but also parts of modern-day Iran, Syria and Turkey.

Archaeological excavations starting in the 1840s CE revealed that human settlements in Mesopotamia dates back to 10,000 BC, according to ancient History Encyclopedia.

Urbanization, the wheel, writing, astronomy, mathematics, wind power, irrigation, agricultural developments, animal breeding, and the narratives which would eventually be re-written as the Hebrew Scriptures and form the Christian Old Testament all came from the land of Mesopotamia.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic Monuments of Novgorod and Surroundings

Situated on the ancient trade route between Central Asia and northern Europe, Novgorod was Russia's first capital in the 9th century.

Inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list as a serial property, the Historic Monuments of Novgorod and its Surroundings have a direct relation to the process of establishment of the Old Russian state in 9th-10th centuries. It is surrounded by churches and monasteries, as a center for Orthodox spirituality as well as Russian architecture.



A view of Yuriev Monastery in Novgorod, Russia

The most ancient Russian Old Church Slavonic manuscripts (11th century) were written at Novgorod, including an autonomous historiography (as early as the 12th century) and, in particular, the first complete translation into Slavonic of the Old and New Testaments (late 15th century). Novgorod was a birthplace of the national style of stone architecture, and one of the oldest national schools of painting.

The majority of historical monuments are associated with Novgorod Republic (12th-15th centuries) which itself was a unique phenomenon of Medieval Russia. It was only after the conquest of the two republics (1478, in the case of Novgorod) by the Muscovite rulers that the present Russian capital acquired cultural supremacy.

The outstanding archaeological and cultural layers of Novgorod of 10th-17th centuries occupy an area of about 347 ha, with a depth of 7-8 meters and are waterlogged and anaerobic, thus preserving organic materials.

(Source: UNESCO)

Sassanid-era bridge undergoes urgent restoration

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A d e s k Sassanid-era mudbrick bridge that its foundation dates back to roughly 1,700 years ago has underwent some vital restoration works in Dezful, southwest Iran.

Best known as the Dezful bridge, the massive monument on the Dez River is believed to be the oldest still-standing bridge in the world and it remained in full functionality until recently.

"Emergency restoration and risk management practices are on the top of the agenda for this stage as attempts are made to reinforce parts of the walls and ceilings of the bridge and its pillars that are caused a hazardous situation for passers-by and visitors to this national heritage site due to the loss of materials," Mehr quoted a top heritage official as saying on Friday.

The project also entails the elimination of harmful causes such as cutting deep roots of the adjacent trees and plants, added Hojjatollah Aryaeinia who presides over Dezful Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Referring to budget limits, the official said: "After a great deal of follow-up, one billion rials (nearly \$25,000) has recently been allocated for reinforcing the bridge."

Unfortunately, the assigned budget does not fully cover restoring the damage occurred to this exquisite national heritage, which is why the Dezful cultural heritage department is still waiting and pursuing the attraction of more credits promised to us in the



A view of the Dezful bridge constructed on Dez River, southwest Iran

past, the official explained.

The Dezful bridge has been extensively repaired and renovated in various eras to ensure its functionally and preservation.

Nowadays, cars are no longer allowed to pass over the structure due to its historical value and fragility.

It is said that the monument was built

by Roman prisoners of war after suffering a defeat at the hands of the Sassanid king Shapur I the Great, who reigned over Persia from around 240-270 CE.

Tourism key to foster trade for least developed countries: UN

A United Nations-backed report released on Tuesday stressed the need for greater recognition of tourism as a key service export in order to attract technical assistance to the sector in least developed countries (LDCs).

Although tourism represents seven percent of all international trade and 30 percent of the world's services trade, it is often difficult to direct trade-related technical assistance towards the sector because tourism and trade tend to fall under different line ministries, the report points out.

Produced by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the report, titled Tourism for Sustainable Development in Least Developed Countries, was launched on the occasion of the Aid for Trade Review held in Geneva.

In LDCs, tourism accounts for seven per cent of total exports of goods and services — a figure that stands at 10 per cent for non-oil LDC exporters.

The report says that tourism can make a strong contribution to the economies of LDCs, but successful inter-



ventions in tourism require strong collaboration across government agencies as well as across different actors at the regional or local level.

The report also aims to increase the commitment and investment in coordination and raise tourism's prominence in trade-related technical assistance as to ensure

the sector delivers on its powerful capacity to create jobs and incomes where they are most needed and for those who are most vulnerable — including youth and women.

UNWTO, ITC and EIF are working to contribute to this process of increased co-ordination and collaboration by joining forces in the design and implementation of tailored tourism technical assistance and tourism export strategies, and leveraging resources.

The report's launch coincides with the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017.

The Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Goal 17 sets as one of the targets a "significant increase of exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020", to which tourism as service export can contribute.

(Source: UN News Center)

Why your airline says it's sorry

The domestic airlines would like you to know that they are very sorry.

Delta is sorry about the time it kicked a family off a flight and threatened to arrest them. American is sorry about the time its employee seemed to almost accidentally hit a baby while grabbing a stroller. And United is probably sorriest of all, about the time it put a passenger on a plane to San Francisco rather than Paris, about the time an infant passed out on a plane that sat on a hot tarmac and, of course, for that time a passenger sustained a concussion, a broken nose and lost two teeth when being ejected from a flight to accommodate an employee.

Air carriers have become more

apologetic in the wake of the viral video spawned by that last episode, but those quick regrets have not led to broad systemic change in policy toward customers. Even as customer complaints against them soar, the airlines often respond with a quick refund or voucher, an apology that grabs headlines in a local news outlet, and business as usual. Some compensation policies for bumping passengers are more generous, but the main impact on consumers has been a seemingly never-ending stream of apologies that are a catalog of customer relations gone awry.

There is reason to say sorry, though. Justin T. Green, a lawyer at the New York City law firm Kreindler & Kreindler

who specializes in aviation law, said apologizing reduced the chance of consumers' pursuing legal action because it leaves them feeling as though they have been honored. "An apology will go a long way to avoid a lawsuit and is a very effective and economical way to improve customer relations," he said.

The apologies picked up steam in April, after Dr. David Dao was dragged, bloodied, from the United flight "The Dr. Dao instance was a public relations crisis for United, but worse, the airline didn't rush to say 'I'm sorry,' which led to even more customer outrage and even caused the airline's stock price to drop," said Joshua March, the founder of Conversocial, a software system that allows

companies to engage with customers over social media.

Mr. March pointed out that United was already in hot water because of an episode a few weeks earlier at Denver International Airport, when a gate agent for the airline barred two teenage girls, who were "pass" passengers flying free, from boarding a flight after deeming that the leggings they were wearing were inappropriate.

"Both issues hurt United's image badly," Mr. March said, "and the lesson learned was that airlines need to jump to offer a heartfelt apology to their customers for any wrongdoings."

(Source: The New York Times)

Cheshmeh-Ali, a tourist hub in southern Tehran

TOURISM A boy dives into a pool in Cheshmeh- d e s k Ali, literally meaning Spring of Ali, a historical and recreational spot located in the south of Tehran and north of Rey, on July 14, 2017. A 19th-century rock-carved bas-relief commissioned by the Qajar king Fath Ali Shah (r. 1797 – 1834) is seen in the background as well.

Every day, during the summertime, the site is occupied by hundreds of locals who come for a swim to escape the harsh surrounding environment.

In the past, locals used to clean their rugs and carpets in the pool that is fed by an underground mineral spring, with the idea that the property of this spring water is good and clean for carpets and make them full lighter color by its mineral water.

Cheshmeh-Ali is in the neighborhood of the ancient Ebn-e Babveyh cemetery, the 12th-century Tughrul Tower, the historical Rashkan Castle and next to the aged Rey Castle.



© Tehran Times/ Mohammad Mohebbi

NASA admits it probably can't put a person on Mars in the 2030s

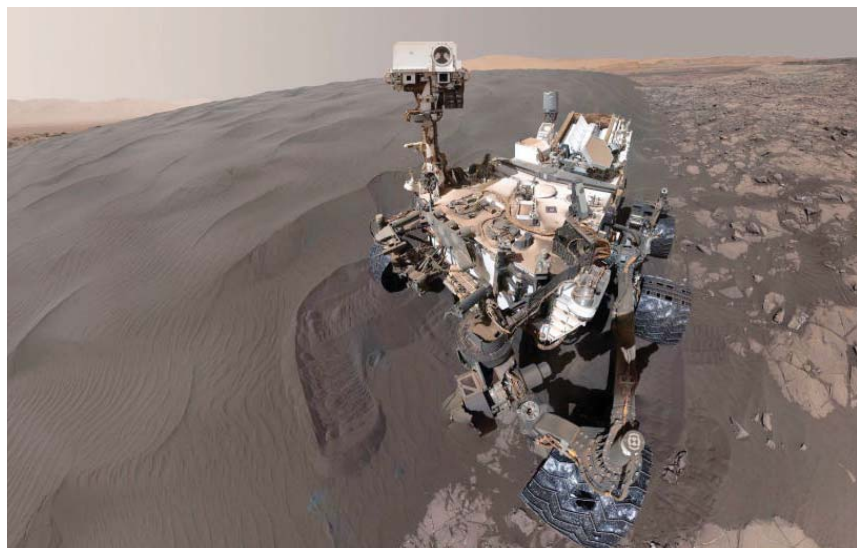
NASA's Journey to Mars might be officially dead. That is, the agency doesn't seem likely to land an astronaut on the Red Planet in the 2030s, and NASA's associate administrator for human exploration, William H. Gerstenmaier, recently said that NASA does not have the funding for a crewed Mars mission in the current timeline. Gerstenmaier also addressed the underlying problem: The agency just doesn't know how to land something as heavy as a crewed spacecraft on Mars.

"I can't put a date on humans on Mars, and the reason really is the other piece is, at the budget levels we described, this roughly two percent increase, we don't have the surface systems available for Mars," said Gerstenmaier at a meeting of the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics. "And that entry, descent, and landing is a huge challenge for us for Mars."

Missions to Mars have such a high failure rate that in 1997, American journalist and historian Donald Lloyd Neff surmised in Time magazine that there must be a Great Galactic Ghoul living on Mars that subsidizes on human spacecraft.

Spacecraft landing

Indeed, of 16 attempted spacecraft landings on Mars since 1970, only 7 have been successful, all carried out by NASA's



Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The European Space Agency crashed a would-be lander into Mars in October of last year.

In April, Popular Mechanics spoke to NASA transition team member and CU astrophysics professor Jack Burns, who

said that due to the challenges of landing, "I think it's going to be a bit longer than the 2030s before we can land astronauts (on Mars) safely."

The problem, explained Burns, is that Mars's atmosphere is as bad as it

can possibly be for landing spacecraft. Mars has an atmospheric pressure of less than one percent of Earth's atmosphere. That's just thick enough that you need a heavy heat shield made of something like titanium or composites to keep the spacecraft from burning up on entry. The atmosphere is far too thin, however, to brake sufficiently for landing using parachutes alone.

Inflated air bags

In the past, NASA has used parachutes to brake as much as possible, then let the spacecraft slam into the planet with sufficient inflated air bags to bounce along the Martian surface — which is how the agency landed the Opportunity rover.

The most sophisticated Mars landing, however, was the so-called "sky crane" used to deposit the Curiosity rover on the surface.

The sky crane system involved a standard capsule with a heat shield and a parachute. Once the capsule slowed enough to avoid significant friction heating, it jettisoned the heavy heat shield. Then as the spacecraft approached the surface of the Red Planet, still essentially in freefall, Curiosity, strapped to the sky crane, jettisoned the capsule and parachute.

(Source: Popular Mechanics)

The most sophisticated Mars landing, however, was the so-called "sky crane" used to deposit the Curiosity rover on the surface.

Protected wolves in Alaska face peril from beyond their preserve: study

Within the 2.5 million acres of the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve in central Alaska, wolves and other majestic animals are protected. But animals like wolves do not respect lines drawn on a map. And a recent study suggests that efforts to limit populations of these predators outside those borders is having negative effects on wolves living within the preserve.

The study, published in June in Wildlife Monographs, suggests that when the Alaskan authorities were limiting wolf populations outside the Yukon-Charley preserve, survival rates of wolves within the preserve were lower than usual. The findings highlight the notion that managing wildlife within human-imposed boundaries requires communication and cooperation with the authorities beyond a preserve's boundaries, and could have implications for wildlife management programs elsewhere.

Sterilizing wolves

Since the 1990s, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has spent millions of dollars, first sterilizing wolves, then shifting to shooting and killing hundreds of the animals from helicopters (independently, it announced the planned suspension of the program next year).

The wolves were targeted as part of an intensive predator management program in the Upper Yukon-Tanana region aimed to increase the population

of the Fortymile caribou herd in lands surrounding the preserve. Once estimated to number in the hundreds of thousands, the caribou herd fell to just 6,000 in the 1970s and now generally peaks at about 50,000 to 60,000.

After 22 years monitoring wolves in the preserve using radio collars, the researchers, led by John Burch, a wildlife biologist for the National Park Service, were not surprised to find that wolf survival rates decreased during lethal management outside the preserve in the Upper Yukon-Tanana Predation Control Area. "Every single wolf pack went outside the bounds of the preserve," Dr. Burch said. The state never shot wolves inside it, but many wolves that left the boundaries of Yukon-Charley were shot and killed.

What was surprising, however, was the intricate story that unfolded of how the wolves responded to control efforts.

Surviving wolves inside the preserve tended to have more pups — but not enough to immediately offset those killed during predator control efforts.

Population analysis

"Even though they were adding more members to the pack, they were losing more than that, so in the average year, they ended up behind," said Josh Schmidt, a biostatistician who led the population analysis.



"They were not self-sustaining and were dependent on dispersing individuals coming in from other areas from outside of the area most likely."

The targeted caribou herd, which was already increasing before these efforts began, has now reached more than 50,000 and is showing signs of nutritional stress, according to a study published in The Journal of Wildlife Management in January. It suggests that food availability, rather than wolf predation, could be limiting the size of the caribou population.

(Source: The NYT)

Scientists just fit a GIF onto DNA

GIFs are the fundamental building blocks of our digital existence. Whether they are in texts, tweets, or articles, GIFs are now a staple of how we communicate in the modern world.

But now GIFs are making their way to a new frontier: scientists have finally figured out how to store and retrieve them from bacterial DNA.

Researchers at Harvard Medical School used CRISPR, a new, incredibly precise and relatively cheap gene sequencing tool, to encode Eadweard Muybridge's 19th Century animation of a running horse, essentially the world's first GIF, inside bacterial DNA.

While putting the animation on DNA is a feat within itself, impressively (and perhaps more importantly) researchers only made a few errors while sequencing the bacteria's genome to recreate the running horse. This means that the recording DNA can capture and replay events in the order in which they occurred. Their work, which was funded by the National Institutes of Health, was published this week in the journal Nature.

Piece of information

"We used the video because it's a good example of a complex piece of information that has both many parts to it (that is, many pixel values) and a time

component that was organized over time. So, it was a good way for us to test if the CRISPR adaptation system that we're using could actually acquire enough information that we could go in and sequence the bacteria after we had encoded it and reconstruct the movie."

Shipman and his team's choice of a GIF as DNA storage test media is not surprising when you look at their long-term goal of biological recording.

Scientists can only see so far into their human body and its systems. No one knows, for instance, how neurons, which start out unspecialized in young brains, develop into distinct types of neurons.

Brain is matured

But what if a cell with access to the brain could watch and record that development from day one and then, when the brain is matured, be extracted and, through CRISPR genome sequencing, play back the entire evolution of a neuron? It's only a start but this bacterial-encoded gif could be on small step toward making that dream a reality.

To test the time-based recording capabilities of biological DNA, Shipman's team fed in to the bacterial DNA strands the galloping horse GIF frame-by-frame over the course of five days.

(Source: Mashable)

BMI's Museum, Manifestation of History of Country's Banking Industry: 1st Vice President

In the inaugural ceremony of Museum of Bank Melli Iran (BMI), First Vice President Eng. Es'haq Jahangiri said: "Inauguration of Museum of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) is the manifestation of history of banking industry of country."

Moreover preserving and protecting valuable objects, introducing brilliant history and showcasing salient achievements of banking industry of country are the important objectives behind establishment of this magnificent museum, he maintained. He expressed his special thanks to the unsparing efforts taken by Dr. Hosseinzadeh Chief Executive of the bank and industrious staff and personnel who took effective steps in launching this grand museum.

Turning to the specific standing of museum in Iran, he added: "Iran is a great and civilized country which is home to many historical and natural works that should be showcased deservedly. Turning the museums into cultural, recreational, training and educational



centers should be taken into consideration in a civilized country."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the key role of private sector and state-owned institutions in setting up museums and added: "Presently, there are 600 museums in the country which play an important role in yielding income, disseminating culture and developing civilization."

In the end, First Vice President Eng. Es'haq Jahangiri once again pointed to the positive move taken by Bank Melli Iran in this respect and said: "As a monetary and financial institution, public and state-owned enterprises should pay their social costs."

In The Name Of God

"Public Call"

Identifying the Purchasers of Sulfuric Acid

National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO) intends to evaluate and identify the eligible domestic and international buyers for supplying of its own sulfuric acid produced in metallurgical smelting plants, with the following conditions:

Supply condition

1. Concentration above 98.5%, according to the international standard analysis.
2. 3000 MTPD deliverable sulfuric acid.
3. The delivery point is Kerman province; Sarcheshmeh acid plants/Khatoon abad acid plant
4. Sulfuric acid will be supplied continuously in one year period.

Upon publication of this public call, natural and legal persons who are interested in purchasing sulfuric acid within the above conditions will be invited to express their interest and readiness maximally within 30 days after the date of this advertisement along with their own resume and experiences by mailing to the address below:

Tehran, Vali Asr st, Before Saeia Park, no. 2161, 3rd floor, Contract affairs or Fax to: 021-88102823.

NOTE:

1. Submission of the readiness letter or letter of interest does not create any right for applicants.
2. After evaluation process, tender auction documents will be forwarded to the eligible applicants.
3. This advertisement does not make any legal obligation or liability for NICICO in order to sell sulfuric acid or holding an auction for selling its sulfuric acid, and the final decision will be made only by NICICO.
4. For more information, please contact us via below contact numbers:

Tel: 021-82128384 and Fax: 021-887181978



National Iranian Copper Industries Company.

Manufacturing Multistage Process Pumps Localized in Iran



Production of Multistage Process Pumps were indigenized in Iran.

Bijan Aalipour Managing Director of National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) announced the above statement and said: "Project of localizing multistage centrifugal pumps BB3 has been implemented in line with materializing objectives of resistance economy and supporting domestic production and construction."

This giant project was conducted for the first time in the country according to the reliable international standards and in cooperation and collaboration with the expert engineers selected by the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) and domestic companies, he maintained.

The stages of formulating technical knowhow, designing, casting and manufacturing this type of pump were conducted in the country wholly, he said, adding: "The prototype pump manufactured in the company and all the performance tests were performed successfully, so that its performance and efficiency are in accordance with the API 610 Standard."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the chief executive of the company said that the prototype pump manufactured by expert engineers of NISOC is carefully designed and manufactured to compete with the products of large foreign pump manufacturing companies.

Considering that pumps have been designed and manufactured for the first time in the country, designing, formulating technical knowhow and technical-engineering activities of the project were of great and specific complexities, he said, adding: "These pumps were manufactured under the strict supervision of domestic and expert engineers of the company successfully."

Benefited from the most experienced and skilled manpower, the company finally managed to manufacture these

types of pump successfully, he emphasized.

According to him, multistage centrifugal pumps have vast applications in oil and gas units. By indigenizing multistage centrifugal pumps, moreover preventing from capital flight, not only employment will be generated in the country but also domestic industries will be supported duly.

Generally speaking, by localizing multistage centrifugal pumps, capital flight will be prevented, more employment opportunities will be generated and finally, domestic industries will be backed deservedly, he reiterated.

■ CEO of NISOC's Office, Leader in Honoring Clientele and Meeting Customers' Demand

Honoring "Clientele" and facilitating inter- and intra organizational relationship have been cited as one of the most important objectives of organizations and departments, he said, adding: "In this regard, directors' office and officials at directors' offices, who regulate relationship between senior managers and inter- and intra-organizational factors, play a key and determining role, he said, adding: "In the contemporary world of today, gaining customers' satisfaction is of paramount importance. That is to say that meeting demands in the shortest time possible is one of the criteria that can lead any organization towards boom and prosperity."



To learn more about the details, we studied the way of performance at the official of managers in this company and even in the Ministry of Oil. In our research activity, we reached to the salient points such as accuracy, precision, and way of responding to the contacts and administrative correspondences related to the CEO of National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC). It should be noted that giant steps were taken by **Mehrzaad Shakib** Senior Advisor to the CEO of National Iranian South Oilfields Company.

According to the research activity conducted in this regard, the office of the Chief Executive of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company responds to more than 180 letters sent to the office per day in written form. The automation correspondences of this Office stand at more than 150 ordinary and 30 confidential letters per day respectively.

In other words, the office of CEO of the company responds to more than 180 letters and written requests per day on average. The correspondences related to e-mail (complaints and proposals) sent on the performance and activities of all employees of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) stand at approx. 20 cases per day. It should be noted that all complaints and proposals are studied and monitored meticulously by the senior executive official of the company i.e. Eng. Bijan Aalipour. After reading all letters sent to his office as the Managing Director of the company, he issues necessary orders in this respect, the subject of which is unique of its kind thanks to his several activities.

As the CEO of the largest industrial and Production Company in the Middle East region, responding to all letters sent to the office of managing director is unique of kind.

The management of the company voices its readiness to response to all questions sent to the office of the company either in written form or system-



atically. In addition, the company also receives about 20 emails sent by real or legal entities per day and responds to them all in the shortest time possible.

Regarding to the in-person attendances of both real and legal entities, the company responds to 20 cases of referrals. In order to prevent from wasting time, the company responds to all questions of persons who attended the company's site via post, fax or e-mail or telephone contact and/or any other electronic devices in the shortest time possible.

It should be noted that the number of telephone contacted with the Office of managing director of the company stands at over 150 all of which are answered deservedly and with ultimate respect in line with the implementation of plan to Honor Clientele.

It is noteworthy to mention that since Mehrzad Shakib was appointed as the senior advisor to the managing director of the company, almost all letters and correspondences have been responded appropriately in due date. In other words, almost all letters and correspondences sent to the office of the managing director of the company and/or all calls received via phone have been responded in appropriate date. In the same di-



rection, by setting up a special taskforce system, the respected managing director of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company answers letters sent by the management offices of other companies, departments and affiliated departments once every four days for ordinary letter, once every three days for urgent letters and once every two days for very urgent letters.

In other words, the senior official of NISOC responds to ordinary, urgent and very urgent letters every four days, every three days and every two days respectively. In the same direction, drafting and registering their issuance

been launched according to the repeated statement of Eng. Bijan Aalipour, the Chief Executive of National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) for the provision of appropriate response within the framework of current rules and regulations.

In all of these cases, expert, competent and able staff and personnel at the Office of the Managing Director of the company have focused on accuracy, double efforts, confidentiality, honoring clientele, trustworthiness and observing administrative rules and regulations.

It is worth mentioning that all these subjects have been carried out at the time of tenure of Eng. Bijan Aalipour (Chief Executive of NISOC) and after the appointment of Mehrzad Shakib as senior advisor to the chief executive of the company. All measures taken at the company are unique of its kind and unprecedented.

For invigoration and acceleration of current activities, Mehrzad Shakib also takes advantage of constructive cooperation of one of his colleagues at Oil Technical School of Art named "Abolqassem Habibipour" as the official in charge of following up special cases at the Office.

Appointment of Mehrzad Shakib as senior advisor to the Chief Executive of the company indicates the accurate cognition of the respected CEO of the company from human capitals of the organization and the way of accurate and efficient arrangement of personnel in appropriate positions of the company.

Given the above issue, National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) is currently considered as one of the leading companies in the field of implementation of a plan honoring "Clientele".



Trump: We will maintain good relations with Qatar

The U.S. will maintain good relations with Qatar, President Donald Trump has told an American news channel, adding that the U.S. airbase won't be moved out of the Middle Eastern country despite the diplomatic and economic blockade imposed on Doha by the Saudi-led group.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt imposed a land, sea and air blockade on Qatar on June 5.

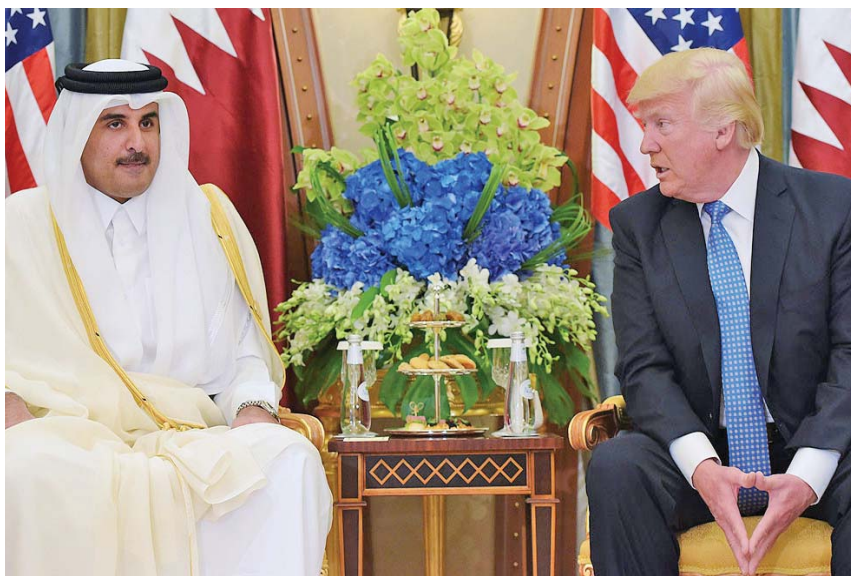
Qatar is home to the Al-Udeid airbase that holds the forward headquarters of Central Command and hosts around 10,000 American troops.

But while saying there are "10 countries willing to build us another base," Trump said "we will not have a problem with the military base."

"We are going to have a good relationship with Qatar and not going to have a problem with the military base," Trump said in an interview with CBN News aired on Wednesday.

"If we ever had to leave, we'd have 10 countries willing to build us another one. And they'll pay for it. The days of us paying for things are largely over."

Following the Arab countries' decision to impose the blockade on Qatar last month, Trump, in a series of tweets, seemed to back the move, saying his trip to the Middle East is "already paying off" after he "stated there can no longer be



funding of radical Ideology".

"I made a speech in Saudi. I said we got to stop funding of terrorism. They [Qatar] were known as funders of terrorism. We can't have wealthy countries funding terrorism," Trump said in Wednesday's interview.

He visited Saudi Arabia in May on the first leg of his first foreign trip since taking office and held a series of meetings with the king and other Arab and Muslim

leaders.

During the two-day visit, Trump also signed an arms deal with Saudi Arabia worth almost \$110bn.

Last month, the United States and Qatar signed a deal for the purchase of F-15 fighter jets with an initial cost of \$12bn.

On Thursday, the White House said Trump spoke to the Saudi King Salman by phone and discussed efforts to resolve the dispute.

The anti-Doha quartet issued a list of 13 demands that included shutting down Qatar's Al Jazeera Media Network, sever all alleged ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and with other groups, including Hezbollah, al-Qaeda and ISIL (also known as ISIS), limiting Qatar's ties with Iran and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the country.

Qatar denies the charges of extremism and called the demands "unrealistic".

In an interview published by The Times newspaper on Wednesday, Noura al-Kaabi, the UAE minister for the federal national council, said the Emirates sought "fundamental change and restructuring" of Al Jazeera rather than to shut it.

"The staff at the channel can keep their jobs and Qatar can still fund a TV channel but not one which provides a platform for extremists and where the English channel is a protective shield for the much more radical Arabic one," Kaabi told The Times.

Foreign diplomats, including U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, visited the region and called for direct talks to solve the crisis.

During Tillerson's visit to Doha, Qatar and the U.S. also signed an agreement to help combat "terrorism financing".

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Castro blames Trump for 'setback' in U.S.-Cuba relations

Donald Trump's hardline stance towards Cuba marks "a setback" in its relations with the United States after ties were gradually restored in 2015, president Raul Castro said.

Castro criticized Trump's partial rollback of his predecessor Barack Obama's rapprochement with the communist island in comments made less than a week before the second anniversary of Havana embassy's reopening in Washington on July 20.

"The announcements made by the current president... mean a setback in bilateral relations," Castro said in remarks, broadcast on state television, at the closing of the first session of Cuba's Parliament.

Castro's remarks came after Trump in June - standing before a crowd of anti-Castro activists in Miami's Little Havana - announced tightened rules for Americans traveling to Cuba, banned ties with a military-run tourism firm and reaffirmed the existing U.S. trade embargo.

The Cuban president called the new measures a toughening of the U.S. embargo against the island, imposed since 1962, saying they evoked "an old and hostile rhetoric that characterized the Cold War".

In his first public riposte to Trump since the latter unveiled his new Cuba policy last month, Castro told the national assembly that any attempt to topple the revolution would fail, as it had under 11 previous US presidents.



"We reject the manipulation of the topic of human rights against Cuba, that can be proud of much in this area, and does not need to receive lessons from the United States nor anyone."

Castro said Cuba remained open to negotiating matters of bilateral interest with the United States, sticking to the relatively conciliatory tone it has struck of late.

"Cuba and the United States can co-operate and live side by side, respecting their differences," he said. "But no one should expect that for this, one should have to make concessions inherent to one's sovereignty and independence."

Castro said Trump had clearly been ill-informed about Cuba's history with the United States and Cubans' patriotism.

Castro has seven months to go before he steps down as president, although he will remain head of the Communist Party, in which political power is vested in Cuba. His generation, which has ruled Cuba since the 1959 revolution, is dying.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Merkel tells voters: Brexit, French poll changed my view on Europe

German Chancellor Angela Merkel told voters on Saturday that Britain's decision to leave the European Union and France's election of President Emmanuel Macron had changed her view on the bloc, adding it was worth fighting for a stronger Europe.

Merkel's comments, made in a speech in the Baltic Sea resort town of Zingst two months before a federal election, underline her personal determination to deepen European integration if she is re-elected for a fourth term.

Calling European Union membership one of Germany's biggest strengths, Merkel said last year's Brexit decision and elections in France and the Netherlands, in which pro-European parties defeated populist candidates, had changed her perspective.

"For many people, including myself, something changed when we saw the Britons want to leave, when we were worried about the outcome of the elections in France and the Netherlands," Merkel told voters, some of whom wore straw hats with black-red-and-gold hatbands, the colors of the German flag.

The center-right chancellor admitted that the EU was far from perfect and that Brussels sometimes was too bureaucratic.

"But we have realized in the past few months that Europe is more than just bureaucracy and economic regulation, that Europe and living together in the



European Union have something to do with war and peace, that the decades of peace after World War Two would have been completely unthinkable without the European Union," Merkel said to applause.

Many people in the past had taken the EU and its advantages for granted -- such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom to travel, said Merkel who grew up in communist East Germany.

"You don't have all this in many parts of the world. And that's why it is worth fighting for this Europe," Merkel said.

"That's why one of our election placards is saying: If Europe is stronger, then Germany will be stronger. This is directly related."

Merkel has said she is open to proposals of strengthening the single currency through the creation of a euro zone finance minister who would oversee a pooled budget for investments and transfers intended to help member states cushion downturns.

(Source: Reuters)

Understanding Iranian threat perceptions

Second, Iran has faced a military buildup on its borders since the Islamic Revolution. Iran is not only ringed by US military bases, but US-made weapons regularly flow into the region — especially the Persian Gulf. Under Barack Obama, the United States sold Saudi Arabia roughly \$115 billion worth of weapons, which is more than any previous administration. Donald Trump is poised to outdo his predecessor. Yet Iran spends one-fifth of what Saudi Arabia spends on defense — despite having twice the population. Even the United Arab Emirates, with a native population of 1.4 million, has double the military spending of Iran.

The third factor is the unparalleled sanctions Iran has been subject to since 1979. Even as Iran is carefully abiding by the historic July 2015 nuclear deal, Congress is pushing through a set of sanctions. Such sanctions have long been promoted by Israel and Saudi Arabia, who wish to cripple Iran's economy.

Fourth comes covert warfare in the form of cyberattacks, assassinations and the propping up of terrorist organizations like the notorious Mujahideen-e-Khalq. Such tactics are set to be stepped up with the recent creation of a special CIA unit focused on Iran under the leadership of the ultra-aggressive Michael D'Andrea. Indeed, every US administration has since 1979

pursued an "all options on the table" policy against Iran.

The fifth factor involves Saudi Arabia's confrontational stance toward the Islamic Republic while apparently establishing a strategic relationship with Israel. As part of the goodwill foreign policy of the late Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran and Saudi Arabia reached a diplomatic detente, negotiated by myself and then-Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, which resulted in good relations from 1996 onwards. Around the same time, then-Supreme National Security Council Secretary Hassan Rouhani and then-Saudi Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayef also reached a landmark security pact. However, over the course of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's tenure (2005-2013), Saudi Arabia drifted away from these agreements, as the international environment became conducive for pressuring Iran and even provoking a war. Former US Defense Secretary Robert Gates proclaimed in 2010 how the Saudis always want to "fight the Iranians to the last American" while former Secretary of State John Kerry has also stated that regional countries called on Obama to "bomb these guys."

Sixth, Iran faces serious threats on its borders, whether from terrorist organizations or Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria or a

fragile nuclear-weapons state like Pakistan. As one Iranian military official has said, roughly 60% of Iran's borders are "not controlled by the neighboring country."

These realities have compelled Iran to establish a proactive and pre-emptive presence in the region to secure its borders, sovereignty and integrity. To these ends, Iran's foreign policy goals center on warding off threats, fostering regional stability and improving self-sufficiency in establishing conventional military deterrence, including its ballistic missile capability.

At its root, the underlying reason behind misconstrued perceptions of Iran's foreign policy intentions is the lack of dialogue between regional powers. As things stand, there are no fora for regional powers to communicate their concerns and grievances to one another. Instead, rival states resort to self-serving narratives to gain influence in the realm of public opinion.

Regional stability and the eradication of terrorism rest on understanding and collective cooperation between regional and global powers. With reference to the fight against terrorism, contrary to the common framing of a "nefarious" Iranian pursuit of hegemony, Tehran in fact played an instrumental role in ousting the Islamic State (IS) from Fallujah, Mosul, Aleppo and other key areas across

Iraq and Syria.

Top Iraqi officials have stressed how Baghdad may have fallen to IS if not for Iranian assistance. Iraqi Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani has also stated that "Iran was the first country to provide us with weapons and ammunition" as Erbil was on the verge of collapse.

While the Trump administration's regional policy appears to be centered on military intervention, no regional crisis can be durably resolved without inclusive diplomacy. In that respect, it should be noted that the negotiations that resulted in the nuclear deal provide a useful model for multilateral diplomacy to resolve a seemingly intractable crisis, demonstrating the impact that external great powers can have in terms of facilitating conflict resolution in the region.

The Trump administration should take to heart the words of a group of top retired US generals and admirals, who emphasized in a recent open letter that "without diplomatic connections, minor conflicts can easily spiral out of control." Indeed, rather than stepping up military intervention, demonizing Iran or undermining the nuclear deal, Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson should pursue robust diplomatic engagement with all relevant parties to resolve regional crises and perhaps more importantly, help foster the creation of a system for institutionalized regional cooperation.

Dignitaries grieve death of math genius Mirzakhani

"Sad to learn about the passing of Maryam Mirzakhani - the intelligent Iranian daughter, wife, mother, professor. May her eternal soul RIP," Gary Lewis, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator in Iran, wrote on his twitter account.

Ali Akbar Salehi, an MIT-educated nuclear physicist who currently leads the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, also said, "I offer my condolences over the untimely and heartbreaking demise of her to Iranians, her family, and all scientists worldwide."

Light turns off

"A light was turned off today, it breaks my heart.... Gone far too soon," Iranian-American NASA scientist Frouz Naderi posted on his Instagram. Later he tweeted: "A genius? Yes. But also a daughter, a mother and a wife."

The two times gold medal winner in the International Mathematical Olympiad, Mirzakhani received her Bachelor of Science in mathematics from Iran's Sharif University of Technology in 1999 and earned a PhD degree in mathematics from Harvard University in 2004 and became full professor of mathematics at Stanford at the age of 31.

Her honors also include the 2009 Blumenthal Award for the Advancement of Research in Pure Mathematics and the 2013 Satter Prize of the American Mathematical Society.

She is survived by husband Jan Vondrák, a Czech theoretical computer scientist, and their 6-year-old daughter Anahita.

Hezbollah accuses foreign governments of preventing Syrian refugees' return

Hezbollah's deputy-chief Sheikh Naim Qassem Saturday renewed his party's call for the repatriation of Syrian refugees to safe zones in Syria, accusing influential foreign governments of preventing their return.

"There is an international decision to not allow the return of Syrian refugees to their country," Qassem said at a memorial service held in south Lebanon's Ghazieh in the district of Sidon. "The United Nations and influential governments are hindering the return of the Syrians," he added.

Qassem said that a senior European official had informed him of the alleged "international decision" against the return of the refugees to their country.

There are 1 million Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Lebanon, although the Lebanese government places the total figure at close to 1.5 million.

As of 6 May 2015, UNHCR suspended new registrations as per instructions from the Lebanese government.

"There is an effort to use this matter [of the return of refugees] to take some decisions against the Syrian regime," Qassem continued, adding that the return should be voluntary.

He also said he hoped that "the Lebanese government would [not bend to] Arab and international political pressures" and ultimately communicate with the Syrian regime to facilitate the refugees' return.

He also said "a humanitarian coordination" with the Syrian government would benefit the people of both Syria and Lebanon.

"The matter of Syrian refugees should be approached from a humanitarian angle," Qassem said, adding that "Syrian refugees suffer from poverty, diseases and hard social conditions" and that the Lebanese are living under "the burden of this displacement."

(Source: Daily Star)

China eyes broader cooperation with central, eastern European countries

Senior Communist Party of China (CPC) official Liu Yunshan said that China and Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries should further broaden cooperation under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Liu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, made the remarks in a keynote address at the China-CEE countries political parties dialogue.

The Belt and Road Initiative has become a public good welcomed by the international community and will provide sustained dynamism for world development and prosperity, said Liu after recalling the successful convening of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in May in Beijing, China.

Having suffered from the scourges of war in history, China and CEE countries both cherish peace and stability and can work together to address the threat of terrorism and the potential danger of local conflicts that the Belt and Road also faces, Liu said.

"As the Belt and Road Initiative injects new dynamism into economic globalization, China and the CEE countries should champion the spirit of openness and inclusiveness," Liu said.

He called on China and the CEE countries to seek common ground while shelving differences, safeguard and develop an open economy and make economic globalization inclusive and beneficial for all.

On the civilization front, Liu said China and the CEE countries should promote an outlook on civilization that advocates diversity and appreciation of one another, call for inter-civilization exchanges instead of estrangement and find ways to flourish people-to-people exchanges.

Both being emerging markets, China and the CEE countries face the same historic task of promoting development, Liu said.

He proposed both sides champion the vision of win-win outcomes and reject the notion of the zero-sum game or winner taking all, and identify converging points of interests and the biggest common ground for cooperation.

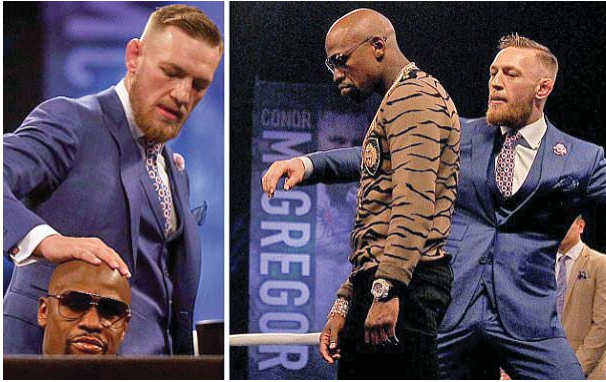
Liu is heading a CPC delegation on official good-will visits to Romania and the Czech Republic from July 12 to 19.

(Source: Xinhua)

Mayweather, McGregor wrap up profane PR tour in London

Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor wrapped up the four-day promotional tour for their boxing match in Las Vegas in August with another foul-mouthed press conference, this time in front of thousands of fans at the Wembley Arena in London.

The undefeated American Mayweather and the UFC light-weight champ McGregor of Ireland traded many of the same crude jibes used at previous events in Los Angeles, Toronto and New York. After a four-day war of words, the focus now switches to the fight itself.



Celebrating his 29th birthday and wearing another sharp suit, McGregor once again spoke first, and he wasted no time firing insults at Mayweather and his team as he strutted around the three-sided boxing ring set up for the event.

"Let's get it straight. The bullshit is now over. In six weeks I'm gonna sleep this fool, and when I sleep him, I'm going to bounce his head off the canvas as well," a jubilant McGregor told a noisy, partisan crowd mostly made up of his fans.

When Mayweather got on the mic he was booed relentlessly, the crowd chanting abuse and taunting the 40-year-old over his unpaid taxes, but he appeared unfazed.

"I'm the teacher. August 26th, I'm gonna take you to school," Mayweather roared before taunting McGregor about his submission loss to Nate Diaz in 2016.

After both sides added to the pile of homophobic, racial and misogynistic slurs aired all week with another round of profanities, the two finally squared off before taking a handful of questions from media members that eased the tension somewhat.

Both fighters now return to their respective training camps to prepare for the fight itself, which takes place at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas on August 26.

(Source: Reuters)

Antonio Conte orders Chelsea to complete both Morata and Aubameyang transfers

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte has reportedly responded to missing out on Romelu Lukaku by ordering his club to try to sign both Alvaro Morata and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang before the end of the transfer window.

The Blues have endured a frustrating summer in the transfer market so far, with Lukaku emerging as one of Conte's personal favourites to come in and replace Diego Costa up front.

However, the Belgian ended up making the £75million move to Manchester United instead, prompting the Premier League champions to look elsewhere to strengthen up front.

With Costa surely heading back to previous club Atletico Madrid, it is vital for Chelsea to be well-equipped up front next season, with Conte already known to be concerned about the depth of his squad.

According to Gazzetta dello Sport, the Italian tactician is now planning to fill that centre-forward spot with two big names, despite previous reports suggesting he'd choose from one of Morata, Aubameyang or perhaps Torino striker Andrea Belotti.

The report adds that Conte has been fuming with Chelsea's main transfer negotiators Michael Emenalo and Marina Granovskaia, and wants them to deliver his long list of top targets ahead of the new season.

Chelsea are thought to be in talks over a £65m move for Aubameyang, though Liverpool may be leading the chase for the Borussia Dortmund star's signature.

In a further potential blow for Conte, it is also claimed that Morata is currently leaning towards staying at Real Madrid after his move to United broke down.

Meanwhile, Chelsea do seem to be making progress on deals for Monaco midfielder Tiemoue Bakayoko and Real Madrid full-back Danilo.

(Source: Metro)

Ricciardo set for five-place penalty at Silverstone

Daniel Ricciardo's run of five successive podium places looks in danger of ending after the gearbox on his car was replaced ahead of the British Grand Prix, incurring an automatic five-place grid penalty.

Gearboxes must last for six races and the one in Ricciardo's Red Bull, which was swapped out before Saturday's final practice, had not done so.

The Australian won in Azerbaijan in late June and finished third in Austria two weeks ago.

It was his second grid penalty of the season, after a similar five-place drop in his home race in Melbourne in March. He started from the pit lane on that occasion and failed to finish the race.

Mercedes rival Valtteri Bottas, who won in Austria from pole position, also has a five-place penalty for Sunday's race after a similar gearbox change.

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel leads Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton by 20 points after nine of 20 races. Hamilton, who had a five-place drop in Austria, is chasing his fourth successive British Grand Prix win and fifth in total. There has been increasing debate this season about the fairness of penalizing a driver for mechanical problems beyond his control, although Formula One has always been a team sport.

(Source: Reuters)

Federer on course for eighth Wimbledon crown but expects tough battle against Cilic in the final

Roger Federer is one win away from a record eighth Wimbledon title after reaching the final without dropping a set.

The 35-year-old Swiss saw off Czech Tomas Berdych 7-6, 7-6, 6-4 yesterday in another master class on Centre Court. And Federer now faces seventh seed Marin Cilic of Croatia tonight, aiming to become the oldest winner of the men's singles in the Open era.

He said: 'Making history here, it's a big deal. I love this tournament. All my dreams came true here as a player. To have another chance to go for No 8 now, to be so close at this stage, is a great feeling. I'm unbelievably excited. I hope I can play one more good match.'

'Eleven finals here, all these records, it's great. But it doesn't give me the title quite yet. That's why I came here this year. I'm so close now.'

Federer is the oldest man to reach the men's singles final since Ken Rosewall in 1974.

Having seen off 6ft 5in Berdych, Federer will face another big-hitting giant in 6ft 6in Cilic.

'Everybody's growing,' the world No 5 said. 'Everybody's getting taller. It was a good match. He's got power, and so has Marin.'

'So, I'm in for a tough one. Plus we had a great match here last year (in the quarter-finals). Federer dismissed talk that he had been handed an advantage by being put on Centre Court in every round by the All England Club.

'You take it, you accept it, and you move on with it,' said Federer. 'I'm always ready for them to put me on the second court or any other court they want. They decide, not me.'

'The only thing you can do is try to get your ranking up, achieve something to hopefully make you a draw card in the tournament.'

On his future, he added: 'I'll be very cautious of how



much I play, how much I think is healthy.'

His conquered opponent Berdych said: 'I don't see anything that would indicate Roger is getting older. He's just proving his greatness.'

Cilic is the second Croatian player, man or woman, to reach a Wimbledon final. The first was Goran Ivanisevic in 2001.

"It would mean absolutely a world to me," Cilic said



of winning Wimbledon. "I feel that when I won the US Open in '14, it just opened so many possibilities in my mind for the rest of my career. To be able to do it again would definitely mean, I would say, even more because I know how much it meant for me to win that first one."

"It would be absolutely a dream come true to win Wimbledon here."

(Source: Daily Mail)

Bonucci thanks Juventus players and fans, but not Allegri



Leonardo Bonucci has paid tribute to the Juventus fans and his former team-mates after agreeing a shock move to Serie A rivals AC Milan, but made no mention of boss Massimiliano Allegri.

Milan will pay a reported €40million for the 30-year-old Italy center-back, who will sign a five-year contract at San Siro upon the completion of a medical.

Bonucci was a crowd hero at Juve and a star performer as they captured the last six Serie A titles.

However, an argument with Allegri during a 4-1 win over Palermo in February resulted in the player being dropped for the subsequent Champions League trip to Porto.

Juve reached the final of Europe's premier competition but lost 4-1 to Real Madrid and, after the match in Cardiff, Bonucci was forced to deny having a half-time row in the dressing room with Allegri, Paulo Dybala and Andrea Barzagli.

The former Bari player bought an entire page of Italian sports newspaper Gazzetta dello Sport to demonstrate his gratitude to all at Juventus, with one notable omission.

"Seven seasons have passed. Seven seasons of victories, of dreams realized, of

growth that took place through an empathic and exceptional bond with Juve, in its absolute entirety," Bonucci's statement read.

"There remains a great regret for not having won the Champions League, but greater pride for the achievements and for having been part of a large family."

"I've always given everything, really, to the end. Today, looking back, I nonetheless see a splendid story, worthy of ending in full respect and affection, without affecting what I have lived together with the club, the captain, my team-mates and the fans."

"A beautiful story. Thanks for everything, Juve."

Juventus captain Gianluigi Buffon and Bonucci also exchanged affectionate tweets, indicating there is no ill feeling between two pillars of defensive strength for club and country.

"Team-mate and travelers," the ever-green goalkeeper tweeted. "We walked part of the way together. A winning way. I wish you the best. But I will miss you..."

Bonucci responded: "I will miss you too. Thanks for the shared wins, for the battles won and also for those lost. See you on the national team."

(Source: Soccerway)

Real Madrid make €500m decision to thwart Barcelona transfer hopes



Real Madrid have inserted a mammoth buyout clause worth a staggering €500m (£437.7m, \$573.2m) into Dani Ceballos' contract after beating fierce rivals Barcelona to the signing of the young Real Betis star, reports in Spain suggest.

According to AS, the reigning Spanish and European champions are eager to eliminate the risk of the highly-rated 20-year-old being lured away in future by any rival – including fellow suitors Barcelona – as they hope to see him develop into one of the world's elite midfielders.

It is also suggested that they wanted to reiterate to the Spain Under-21 star that he is a big part of their future plans, with competition for places under Zinedine Zidane likely to prove particularly fierce early on.

Ceballos signed a six-year deal with Real on Friday (14 July) and will be officially unveiled at the Santiago Bernabeu next week before joining up with his new team-mates on their pre-season tour of the US.

Los Blancos are said to have paid approximately €17m for his signature, a fee which stands at €2m over his previous €15m release clause.

The former Sevilla youngster featured 105 times for Betis after making his first-team debut in 2014 and further embellished his growing reputation as one of the most sought-after young players in Europe by spearheading Spain's run to the final of the recent Under-21 European Championship in Poland. He was named as the player of the tournament despite starting two of La Rojita's five matches as a substitute.

Former Premier League target Ceballos is the second player to be signed by Real so far this summer after French centre-back Theo Hernandez, who joined from Atletico Madrid. Mariano Diaz, Pepe, Fabio Coentrao, Diego Llorente and Burghui have all left the club, while James Rodriguez was dispatched to Bayern Munich last week on a two-year loan deal.

Ceballos' contract is not the only one currently making headlines in Spain, with Barcelona's agreement with Benfica for the transfer of right-back Nelson Semedo said to contain something of a unique clause.

As revealed in a post-transfer document released by Benfica and cited by Sport, the Catalan giants must pay their Portuguese counterparts an additional €5m for every 50 official matches played by the Portuguese international until he signs his first contract extension.

Source: (IB Times)



liverpoolfc Salah announced. First game, first goal for Mo Salah.



thibautcourtois Fun to play some beach volleyball today as part of the warm up! Needless to say what team won



fcbarcelona They are back!

German Football Association confirms Tehran derby in Bielefeld

S P O R T S Iranian football giants Persepolis and Esteghlal will play at the Bielefeld Schüco Arena on July 22.

The German Football Association (DFB) has confirmed the match will be held in Bielefeld.

The match was originally scheduled for July 16 but has been delayed to July 22.

Iran Professional League champions Persepolis and runners-up Esteghlal could earn from TV revenue from broadcasting the match in Germany.

Iranian legend striker Ali Daei, currently head coach of Saipa, who was a member of Arminia Bielefeld in 1997 has been invited to attend the match.

His countryman Karim Bagheri, who has also played at Arminia Bielefeld, is assistant coach of Persepolis football team at the moment.

It will be for the first time the two teams will play in a foreign country.

Tehran derby also known as Red-Blue Derby is a football match between the two prominent Tehran clubs Esteghlal and Persepolis of Iran.

It is widely considered the major crosstown derby in the Persian Gulf Pro League, and also in the world.

This match was declared as the most important derby in Asia and 22nd most important derby in the world in June 2008 by World Soccer magazine.

It is considered as one of the world's most intense derbies. Despite being a derby between two teams from Tehran, the match has been played in other Iranian cities as well. Taking place at least twice during the year via the league fixtures, this cross-town rivalry has extended to the Hazfi Cup, as well as in minor tournaments and friendlies.

© Tehran Times/ Mohammad Reza Abbasi



World Para Athletics Championships: Iran's Javad Hardani wins silver



S P O R T S Javad Hardani from Iran claimed a silver medal at the World Para Athletics Championships on Friday.

The Iranian athlete won the silver medal in the F38 shot put with a throw of 14.13m.

Australia's Cameron Crombie – the 31-year-old produced the first world record of London 2017 in the event. He also picked up the first gold medal

of the day – at his first ever World Championships. He threw 15.95m to smash the previous record mark by 37cm.

Sweden's Victor Svanesohn took bronze with 13.63m.

The World Para Athletics Championships will run through to 23 July. More than 1,150 athletes from 90 countries are competing in 202 medal events.

Iran's discus thrower Majidi seizes bronze at World Para Athletics Championships



S P O R T S Mohsen Majidi from Iran claimed a bronze medal in the men's discus throw F37 on day two of the 2017 World Para Athletics Championships on Saturday.

Majidi finished in third place with a throw of 52.75m.

Uzbekistan's Khushniddin Norbekov's opening throw of 54.73m proved enough to seal the win ahead of Australia's Guy Henly (53.59m), who

moved up to the silver medal position with his final throw of the competition.

On first day of the competition, Iran's Javad Hardani claimed a silver medal in the F38 shot put with a throw of 14.13m.

The World Para Athletics Championships will run through to 23 July. More than 1,150 athletes from 90 countries are competing in 202 medal events.

Garbine Muguruza wins Wimbledon title after overpowering weary Venus Williams

Garbine Muguruza has ended Venus Williams' bid to win a sixth Wimbledon title at the age of 37 with a ruthless 7-5 6-0 win against the American icon in the final.

The Spanish 14th seed produced a powerful display of hitting in saving two set points in the first set before progressing to dominate the match against the fading seven-times Grand Slam winner Williams by reeling off nine straight games as the women's showpiece final ended in a sense of massive anti-climax.

Muguruza, 23, adds the Wimbledon title to her French Open success in 2016.

Williams was bidding to become the oldest winner of a Grand Slam, an honour that remains with 35-year-old sister Serena for winning the Australian Open in January.



In a match being played under the roof on Centre Court due to rain in south-west London, Spain's Muguruza saved two set points on her own serve trailing 5-4 in the first set before winning the next three games to edge ahead of the American, whose last appearance in the final was eight years ago.

Williams had won the title at the All England club in 2000, 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2008.

But losing the first set proved a fatal blow to her dream as the younger woman raced away with six straight games in the second set to claim the title in emphatic fashion by breaking the Williams serve almost at will.

(Source: Eurosport)

Manchester City sign Brazilian youngster Douglas Luiz

Manchester City have signed Brazil Under-20 midfielder Douglas Luiz on a five-year contract from Vasco Da Gama.

The 19-year-old completed his medical in Manchester this week and has now concluded a deal thought to be worth in the region of £10million.

A statement on City's official website said the Premier League club would make an announcement on "Douglas' immediate development pathway in the coming days", with the youngster widely expected to join LaLiga newcomers Girona on a season-long loan.

City's director of football Txiki Begiristain said: "We are pleased to welcome Douglas. He is an exciting player with great potential, and everyone here is looking forward to helping him develop his talent and progress in the game."

Earlier on Saturday, Douglas posted



an Instagram message thanking Vasco for developing him during his formative years.

"The day has come to say 'see you soon' to the family who welcomed me as

a child, in search of a dream, and introduced me to the world," he said.

"In Vasco, I made great friends, I lived with people who taught me a lot, and I just have to thank the club and its great

fans for everything they have done for me and my family. You will be unforgettable!

"I will be eternally grateful to Vasco for everything that is happening and will happen in my life, and I will take this century-old institution of many glories and history, forever in the heart."

City completed the signing of Kyle Walker from Tottenham on Friday in a deal that could rise to be worth £50m, following the arrivals of playmaker Bernardo Silva and goalkeeper Ederson from Monaco and Benfica respectively.

Although he is apparently less likely to have the immediate first-team involvement of his compatriot Ederson, Douglas becomes the fifth Brazilian on the books at the Etihad Stadium, also joining Fernandinho, Fernando and Gabriel Jesus.

(Source: Four Four Two)

Sardar Azmoun extends contract with Rubin Kazan

Iranian international striker Sardar Azmoun has extended his contract with Russian top-flight football team Rubin Kazan.

He has signed a one-year extension to his Rubin Kazan contract.

Azmoun has returned to Rubin Kazan after his loan spell with Rostov ends.

The Iranian forward had been already linked with Liverpool, Celtic, Sunderland and most recently Italian giant Lazio.

Azmoun scored 12 goals with three assists in 41 competitive games for Rostov this season, while he has 19 goals in 26 senior caps for Iran.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iran middle blocker Mousavi linked with Halkbank

Iranian international middle blocker Seyed Mohammad Mousavi has been linked with a move to Halkbank Ankara volleyball team.

Mousavi, who currently plays for Iran's Sarmayeh Bank, has caught the eye of Iran former coach Slobodan Kovac.

The 29-year-old volleyball player won the title of the 2017 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship in early July with Sarmayeh Bank.

Mousavi participated in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Halkbank Ankara is a professional men's volleyball team based in Ankara, Turkey and sponsored by the state-owned Halkbank.

It was founded in 1983 and plays in the Turkish Men's Volleyball League and in the CEV Champions League. Halkbank is ranked 8th (as of October 2016) in the Men's European clubs ranking.

(Source: Tasnim)

Hamilton fastest in final British GP practice

SILVERSTONE, England (Reuters) — Lewis Hamilton was fastest in final practice for a home British Grand Prix that he is aiming to win for the fourth year in a row on Sunday.

The Mercedes driver, who looks a favorite for pole position later on Saturday, lapped the cold, wet and windswept Silverstone circuit with a best time of one minute 28.063 seconds.

That was significantly faster than Friday's best of 1:28.496 and the quickest yet at the former World War Two airfield.

Ferrari's championship leader Sebastian Vettel was second fastest, a mere 0.032 slower than the Briton, with Hamilton's team mate Valtteri Bottas third on the timesheets and Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen fourth.

Renault's Nico Hulkenberg was a promising fifth.

Bottas will collect a five-place grid penalty after qualifying, due to an unscheduled gearbox change, as will Red Bull's Australian Daniel Ricciardo for the same reason.

McLaren's Fernando Alonso, meanwhile, collected a massive 30-place drop for various engine penalties, ensuring the Spaniard starts at the back -- a familiar experience for the double champion this season.

The penalties look like turning qualifying into a straight battle between Hamilton and the Ferraris in a session likely to be overcast but with a decreasing likelihood of rain after steady morning drizzle.

A pole for three-times world champion Hamilton would put him just one away from Michael Schumacher's all-time record of 68 and come as a timely boost after two races off the podium that have left him 20 points behind Vettel.

Pole is not crucial at Silverstone, however, although every winner at the circuit since 2000 has started from fourth place or higher. Hamilton has taken the top slot for the last two seasons.

Ivan Perisic exits Inter Milan training camp but Man Utd situation remains unchanged

Inter Milan have denied that Ivan Perisic's departure from their Alpine training camp casts doubt on the player's future - despite Manchester United's interest in the player.

Manchester United are keen to sign playmaker Perisic before the summer is out.

The Red Devils are angling for a big-money deal and have already had bids rejected by Inter.

The two clubs are currently locked in a stalemate over the player's transfer fee, with reports that United are yet to meet the Serie A side's valuation.

The San Siro side want £49million for their man but United have so far bid just £26m. And Italian website Calciomercato claim the stand-off is no closer to being completed and that Perisic's departure from Inter's pre-season camp in the Alpine town of Reischach has nothing to do with United's interest.

The outlet has a reporter in Reischach, who has been informed that Perisic has today travelled to Croatia to get an dental abscess seen to.

The player wanted to head to a trusted dentist in his home country and he will miss Inter's pre-season match with Nurnberg today, which is scheduled to kick off at 4pm.

Inter have told Calciomercato that Perisic's absence does not affect his status in the side.

But the 28-year-old's representatives are expecting another bid from United, who have already spent £100m on two new players this summer.

United boss Jose Mourinho has a list of targets that officials back at Old Trafford are working to sign.

It has emerged a deal for Perisic involving Anthony Martial as a makeweight could be struck between the two sides.

Mourinho and his squad are currently in the USA on their pre-season tour, while Inter plan to jet out to China later this month.

(Source: Express)

Supreme Leader lauds political drama “Midday Event”

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has praised “The Midday Event”, a political drama that features the terrorist atrocity of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) in Iran of the 1980s.

“This film was very good. Everybody played his part very well; the directing was great, the acting was very good. The plot was great. It was a well-made film,” the Leader said in his February 20 meeting with the film cast and crew.

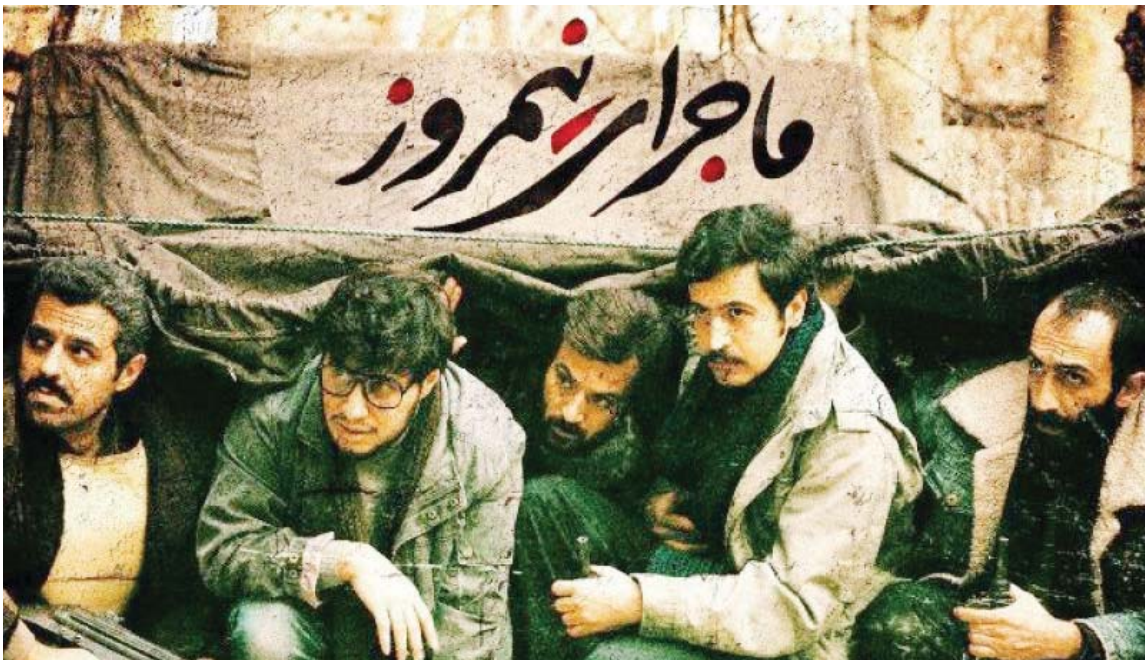
The remarks were quoted by the Islamic Revolution Document Center in a press release published on Saturday. Ayatollah Khamenei had watched the movie previously during a private screening in February 2017.

“The Midday Event” by director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian was crowned best at the 35th Fajr Film Festival in February 2017.

The film also won the audience Crystal Simorgh and the award for best film from the national point of view. In addition, it received the Crystal Simorgh for best set and costume design.

“The Midday Event”, which is based on a real-life story, features the activities of MKO leading to the assassinations of numerous high-ranking Iranian officials in 1981.

The MKO is an Iranian political-militant organization in exile that carried out many terrorist operations during the 1980s attempting to overthrow the Iranian government.



A poster for “The Midday Event” by director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian

Aram Shahbazyan, Aren Vatyan to attend Armenian Film Week in Iran

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Armenian filmmaker Aram Shahbazyan and actor Aren Vatyan will attend the Armenian Film Week in Iran.

The film week is scheduled to be held at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran, the Hoveizeh Cinema Complex in Mashhad and the Golestan Cinema Complex in Shiraz from July 23 to 29, the organizers announced in a press release on Saturday.



This combination photo shows filmmaker Aram Shahbazyan (L) and actor Aren Vatyan.

Shahbazyan is a graduate of Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinema. He has also studied film directing in France. He currently works for Shoghakat TV, a TV company in Yerevan.

“Report during Supper” (1995), “Lavash” (1997), “Inside & Outside” (1999), “Don’t Be Afraid” (2007), and “Yerevan Ragtime” (2008) are among Shahbazyan’s noteworthy credits.

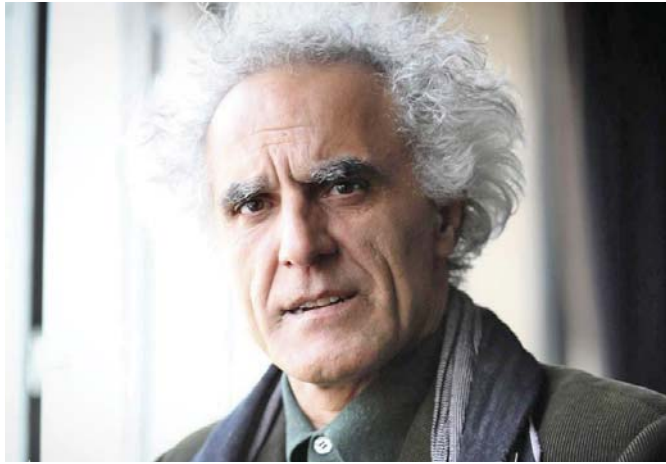
Stage and screen actor Vatyan, famous for his roles in “Lake Van” (2011), “Here” (2011) and “Do Not Be Afraid” (2007), also works at Yerevan’s Drama Theater.

He made his first short film “The Clay Man” in 2012.

A lineup of movies by filmmakers from the Republic of Armenia is scheduled to be screened during the film week in Iran.

The event has been organized in collaboration with Iran’s Art and Experience Cinema and the Embassy of Armenia in Tehran.

Play to recall art elites from East and West



Actor/director Mohsen Hosseini (Irantheater. (ir

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Actor/director Mohsen Hosseini announced on Saturday his plan to stage a play in Tehran to commemorate three prominent artists from the East and West.

Persian poet Forugh Farrokhzad, English playwright Sarah Kane and German choreographer Pina Bausch will be remembered in the play “Forugh of Sarah Pina”, he told the Persian service of MNA.

“This play is in praise of love and art, and also is based on works by Forugh Farrokhzad, Sarah Kane and Pina Bausch,” Hosseini said.

“I always have the greatest respect for these three artist ladies and my works have always come under their influence,” he added.

“These three ladies were similarly the legends in their own lifetimes and their

works were distinctly feminine,” he noted.

A cast composed of Hosseini, Roja Jafarian, Sepideh Seifuri, Ruzbeh Mehr, Elaheh Muness and Azdeh Behmanesh will perform the play.

“Theatergoers will deal with aspiration and nostalgia in this play and I imagine they will like it,” stated Hosseini who directed on “West-East Divan” at Tehran’s City Theater complex in February 2016 based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s work of the same title.

“Forugh of Sarah Pina” will go on stage at the Nazerzadeh Kermani Hall of the Iranshahr Theater Complex during September.

Hosseini lamented on the current situation concerning Iran’s theatrical performances and said that perfect plays are rarely performed in most Iranian theaters.

“100 Works, 100 Artists” coming to Golestan Gallery on Friday



Lili Golestan poses during an exhibition at her gallery in Tehran in an undated photo. (Honaronline/ Farzan Qasemi)

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 25th edition of the exhibit “100 Works, 100 Artists” will open at the Golestan Gallery in Tehran on July 21. Works by 257 artists have been selected to go on display, with each artist displaying one work, gallery director Lili Golestan said in a press release published on Saturday.

Like the previous editions, a variety of artworks selected from about 500 interested artists from across the country will be offered for reasonable prices at the exhibit, she said.

Based on the regulations of the exhibit, the items sold will be removed and replaced with new ones created by the same artists.

“Several years after I opened the gallery, I would meet a number of visitors each summer who had come to spend their summer and wanted to buy artworks,”

Golestan once said about the process that led to the founding of the exhibit.

“But since the gallery was closed in summer they used to ring the door bell at my home. After a while, I thought to myself since I am on the way from home to the gallery during summer, why not hold a summer exhibit so that people can buy what they want. It was then that the idea of the exhibit “100 Works, 100 Artists” emerged, starting with exactly 100 artists and 100 works in 1992,” she explained.

“The first exhibit was warmly received and the number of participating artists has increased ever since. As a result, the gallery is filled with artworks from the floor to the ceiling every year,” she remarked.

The exhibit will be running until August 16. The gallery can be found at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Adaptation of “A Doll’s House” to go on stage in Tehran

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A loose adaptation of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen’s 1879 play “A Doll’s House” will go on stage at Hafez Hall in Tehran on July 31.

Directors Majid Rahimi-Jafari and Ali Ettehad have renamed the play “The Lady from Oslo” to perform it in Iran.

“A Doll’s House” is about Nora Helmer who borrowed a large sum of money to help her husband recover from a serious illness. She never told him about the money and has been secretly paying it back by savings from her household allowance.

The play will remain on stage until August 20.



Producer Harun Yashayai to preside over Iran Cinema Celebration

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Harun Yashayai, the producer of many acclaimed movies including “Tenants” and “Captain Khorshid”, was appointed as the president of the 19th edition of the Iran Cinema Celebration, the Iranian House of Cinema announced in a press release on Saturday.

The Iranian House of Cinema organizes the celebration annually to commemorate Iran’s National Day of Cinema on September 12.

Fired Kermit the Frog puppeteer ‘devastated’ for failing his hero

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — The man who voiced Kermit the Frog for 27 years wrote an emotional letter about being fired, saying he was “devastated to have failed in my duty to my hero.”

Steve Whitmire made his comments in a blog post on Thursday, days after the Muppets Studio’s announcement of a new puppeteer to perform the role of the earnest Kermit, one of creator Jim Henson’s best-known characters.

Kermit was performed by Henson since he created it in 1955 until his death in 1990. The character is best known for its tempestuous relationship with the ardent Miss Piggy.

Whitmire, who started working on “The Muppet Show” in 1978 at age 19, took over the role from Henson. He called the Muppets “not just a job, a career or even a passion. They are an urgent, undeniable, impossible-to-resist way of life.”

“I would never consider abandoning Kermit,” he added on his personal blog site, saying he was told in October



Muppets character Kermit the Frog speaks at a panel for the Disney-ABC television series “The Muppets” during the Television Critics Association Cable Summer Press Tour in Beverly Hills, California August 4, 2015. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

With materials scarce, Cuban designers master recycling chic

HAVANA (Reuters) — Olaff Alejo’s salt lamps are eerily beautiful and designed to purify the air.

Yet the Cuban designer must rummage through trash bins and scour the sidewalks of Havana for scraps of wood and obsolete electrical devices to manufacture them.

In Communist-run Cuba, designers of clothes and household goods say the absence of wholesale stores as well as the expense and scarcity of raw materials have forced them to get creative. Many turn to repurposing and recycling the materials at hand.

These pioneers of the island’s fledgling private sector say they are turning a competitive disadvantage into an asset, while yielding unique, ecologically-friendly designs.

“It’s not easy to get the materials so we

have to adapt and improvise a lot,” said Alejo, 37, whose lamps contain salt crystals. “Some 50-60 percent is recycled material.”

Alejo said he asks carpenters for their leftover scraps and uses the frames of discarded windows and doors in order to make the wooden bases for his lamps. He also salvages the switches, plugs and cables from old electrical devices.

“They are extremely expensive, and there isn’t a regular supply in stores,” he said, adding his company Luzvi still must import some inputs - like lightbulbs with a softer glow than Cuba’s starkly white, energy-saving ones.

The new lamps sell for between \$25 and \$50, a relatively hefty sum in a country where the average monthly state salary is

around \$30. Lower input costs would enable Alejo to cut prices, he said.

The government has allowed more Cubans to set up their own businesses in recent years as part of its plan to update its ailing, Soviet-style economy and cut the bloated state payroll.

The number of Cuba’s self-employed more than tripled in six years to above 500,000 by the end of 2016, official data shows.

Some entrepreneurs complain, however, that the government has not followed through on certain reforms. For example, the country’s small, private businesses still do not have access to the wholesale market.

Raw materials are often in short supply and expensive, although Havana puts that

down to the half-century-old U.S. trade blockade.

Caridad Limonta, whose family firm Procle sells women’s apparel and home goods, said new textiles were costly so she mostly bought clothes or hotel curtains and sheets at state-run, second-hand stores and recycled them.

“I transform trousers for example into bags,” said the 60-year-old entrepreneur. “The backs of shirts don’t damage as much so I cut them, stick them together and make patchwork quilts.”

Limonta said Cubans are not in the habit of throwing things away, and find new uses for them instead. At Procle, shoulder pads become sponges for the kitchen, while old curtains are reinvented as tablecloths.