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File photo

The supercarrier USS Nimitz and its accompanying warship in an undated photo

Advanced economies increasingly to blame for global imbalances: IMF

The International Monetary Fund has warned that advanced economies are increasingly responsible for imbalances in the global economy, with Germany having overtaken China as the world's leading saver.

New data from the fund unveiled on Friday also showed the U.S. has maintained its long-term hold on the largest current-account deficit.

While the mismatch between global savings and spending posed less of a threat to the world than it did before the 2008 financial crisis, the IMF said, it also warned that it risked feeding new demands for protectionism.

The news plays to Donald Trump's anger at Berlin and the U.S. trade deficit with Europe's largest economy which he inherited. The Trump administration, which has made reducing the U.S. deficit with the world one of its economic priorities, has applied pressure on the IMF to do more to highlight global imbalances.

But the fund on Friday also offered a thinly-veiled rebuke to the Trump administration by publishing the results of an internal exercise showing that imposing tariffs and other trade barriers — as Mr Trump has threatened to do — would do little to address the current-account deficit and hurt both the U.S. and the global economy.

"Protectionist measures should be avoided at all costs," said Luis Cubeddu, lead author of the IMF's annual report on global imbalances. "They are unlikely to meaningfully alter imbalances and they are likely to be harmful to domestic growth and global growth."

According to the IMF data, Germany ran a current-account surplus of \$289bn, or 8.3 per cent of gross domestic product, in 2016 while China's fell to \$196.4bn, or 1.7 per cent of GDP.

The U.S., meanwhile, had a current-account deficit of \$451.7bn in 2016, or 2.4 per cent of GDP, almost four times the UK's deficit, which at \$114.5bn was the world's second-biggest in 2016. The figure for the UK is more than twice the size of the third-largest — the \$50.5bn deficit in Canada.

(Source: Financial Times)

Iran able to return to pre-JCPOA nuclear capability with greater speed: Salehi

POLITICS

TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, says his country has left the options open to immediately restore its nuclear capabilities to that of the pre-JCPOA era in case the deal is violated.

In an interview with the Hamshahri newspaper published on Saturday, Salehi discussed the future of the long-disputed nuclear agreement, also known under the acronym JCPOA, which Iran signed with six world powers in July 2015.

"Not only won't we burn our bridges, but we will also build more bridges so that if one day we are confronted by the other side's lack of commitment, we would be able to revive the country's nuclear program," he said, adding that in such case Iran would develop its nuclear capabilities even to a higher degree compared to the pre-JCPOA level.

In recent months, U.S. President Donald Trump has shown himself to have a strong longing for

leaving the UN-backed accord. On Thursday, the New York Times quoted U.S. officials as saying Trump had expected to be presented with options for how to get out of the deal.

If the Iranians balk, the Times said, their refusal could enable Washington to declare Tehran in violation of the two-year-old deal.

Salehi, however, dismissed such possibility, noting: "The Leader of the Revolution has said that we won't be the first party to breach BARJAM."

"We don't want BARJAM to be revoked," he said. "I, as the director of the Atomic Energy Organization [of Iran], knowing what I know about the technical dimension of the issue, do not want BARJAM to be revoked."

Salehi noted that if the other side makes a mistake and abandons the agreement, the ball would be in their court.

"One of their ploys is to make us angry and hot-blooded. In fact some [officials] did get angry and told us to tear up the agreement," the official remarked. "Why would we

tear it up? America is green with envy that we are benefiting from the deal."

"Bear in mind that Iran is an experienced country and is pursuing its national interests slowly but surely," he said.

■ 'Unfair to say none of the sanctions have been lifted'

Under the deal, which went into effect in January 2016, Iran was promised that all nuclear sanctions would be lifted. However, the deal's long-time critics in Iran say the country has not received the benefits it was promised, pointing to the remaining banking difficulties and Washington's renewed sanctions.

"There may be some problems regarding the issue of the sanctions, but if, for instance, one-hundred sanctions were to be lifted, at least seventy have in fact been lifted," Salehi said.

Responding to the deal's diehard critics, Salehi pointed to a number of economic benefits of the nuclear accord, saying it is "so unfair" to say none of the sanctions have been lifted.

Christian Science Monitor: Can Trump isolate Iran without isolating U.S.?

With another opportunity to withdraw from the 2015 international agreement coming up at the end of September, the White House appears to be laying the groundwork for a decision that would make good on a campaign pledge to pull the United States out of a deal Donald Trump has called "disastrous."

More broadly, such a move would bolster Donald Trump's vision of an aggressive and

nationalist — as opposed to multilateral and internationalist — foreign policy.

Pulling out of the Iran accord would complete a trifecta of withdrawals from international agreements that Trump inherited from President Obama. The agreements symbolized Mr. Obama's emphasis on multilateral approaches to international issues and diplomacy with opponents.

Trump canceled U.S. participation in the

Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal shortly after taking office, and withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord in June.

But some U.S. officials, members of Congress, and regional analysts are cautioning that withdrawing from a nuclear deal reached with other international powers would leave the U.S. isolated on the issue, when Trump's goal is ostensibly to isolate Iran. →13

Gazprom Neft inks MOU on 2 Iranian oilfields

ECONOMY

TEHRAN — Russia's Gazprom Neft Company signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Iran's Oil Industries Engineering & Construction Group (OIEC) for conducting studies on Changuleh and Azar oilfields in western Iran.

The document was signed by OIEC's CEO Behzad Mohammadi and Gazprom Neft's First Deputy CEO Vadim Yakovlev in St. Petersburg on Thursday, NIOC portal reported.

The two companies signed a non-disclosure agreement last year to explore avenues of cooperation on the subject and held five joint meetings

since then.

The Russian company signed an MOU with National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in December 2016 to conduct development studies on Cheshmeh-Khosh and Changuleh fields. Changuleh has also been awarded to Norwegian oil and gas company DNO for development study.

Azar oilfield started early production in March with an output capacity of 15,000 barrels per day (bpd).

Located in Iran's western region of Mehran along the border with Iraq, Changuleh and Azar fields are part of Anaran block which is estimated to hold 6-8 billion barrels of oil.

Nuclear security expert doubts UN treaty can lead to disarmament

M.A. Saki

TEHRAN — 122 countries at the UN voted last July in a favor of a treaty that bans nuclear bombs, a move that a specialist in nuclear security believes would not work.

The treaty, adopted on July 7, was approved after months of talks in the face of strong opposition from nuclear-armed states and their allies. Supporters hope it will lead to the eventual elimination of all nuclear arms.

"I very much doubt that this pressure will be enough to lead to disarmament," Matthew Bunn from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the full text of the in-

terview:

■ Why despite a strong emphasis on nuclear disarmament, the treaty was adapted so late?

A: The ban treaty expresses the hope of the majority of countries in the world for a world free of nuclear weapons. But all nine of the states that actually possess nuclear weapons believe that for now, these weapons are important for their security, and none of them participated in the negotiation of the ban treaty. Quite a number of other states rely in part on support from a nuclear armed state for their security, and they generally also did not vote for the treaty. →13

Saudi Shias told to leave Awamiyah or die

Local sources in the al-Awamiyah town in Saudi Arabia's Shia-populated Eastern Province say the locals have been told to either leave their homes or face death at the hands of security forces.

Since the early hours of Saturday, the Saudi forces have started taking the town under heavy shellfire, virtually barricading the public in their homes.

The sources said sharpshooters were training their fire on various targets from atop rooftops and inside armored vehicles. Ali al-Debisi, the leader of a Europe-based Saudi rights body, said the locals are afraid of going out for fear of coming under sniper fire.

Regime forces, meanwhile, continued to evict people from their homes in the town, they said.

The Qatif region in the province, where the town is located, has witnessed sporadic deaths of security personnel at the hands of unknown gunmen.

Blaming the Shia population for the attacks, Riyadh first started ordering security raids against the region before besieging the town and subjecting it to a so-called renovation project.

The project, which has featured wholesale destruction of age-old structures and rampant raids against various targets, has especially targeted the town's historic Almosara neighborhood, where the government has been toughening living conditions in order to make people leave.

The sources said the forces were now offering people "safe conduct" to desert Almosara, and were combing the neighborhood for "holed-up terrorists." Activists said the residents were resisting the eviction attempts.

On May 24, UN experts criticized the ongoing attempts to demolish Almosara and accused the Saudi kingdom of erasing cultural heritage, violating human rights, and forcing residents to flee their homes.

A month earlier, UN special Rapporteur Leilani Farha had warned that the controversial project threatened the historical and cultural heritage of Awamiyah "with irreparable harm."

(Source: Press TV)



IRNA/Ehsan Naderipour

Boccia competition held in Tehran

Boccia competition was held in Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled in Tehran on Saturday.

Boccia is a precision ball sport, similar to bowls, that can be played by individuals, pairs, or teams of three. The aim of the game is to throw leather balls as close as they can to a target ball or 'jack'. Boccia athletes typically have a disability, such as cerebral palsy or other neurological conditions, and use a wheelchair.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iraq needs to unite ethnic, religious groups, Iranian envoy suggests

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — More than anything else Iraqi needs to unite ethnic groups and minorities in order to achieve sustainable development, the Iranian ambassador in Baghdad told the Iran newspaper in an interview published on Saturday.

It is to regret that some countries suffer from ethnic and religious clashes, while one can unite people by pursuing unbiased policies, Iraj Masjedi said.

As an example, he said, in Iran there are many ethnic groups and religious minorities, but they all speak one thing.



Iran has never backed down in face of U.S.: VP

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran has never backed down in the face of U.S. provocative actions and has always come up with a proper response, said the country's first vice president on Saturday, IRNA reported.

Es'haq Jahangiri said the U.S. government tries to paint Iran as the violator of the 2015 nuclear deal, "but so far Iran has acted in a way that America has not been able to endanger country's standing in the world."



Iran Air to operate 75% of Hajj flights to Saudi Arabia

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran Air will operate three fourth of this year's Hajj flights from and to Iran, the Leader's representative in Hajj and pilgrimage affairs announced on Saturday.

Seyed Ali Qazi Askar said according to a previous agreement between Tehran and Riyadh, Iranian airlines would operate half of the Hajj flights, however Saudi Arabia has announced it is not able to operate all the flights it had undertaken.



Interior minister urges emergency center to production problems

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's interior minister has called for the formation of an "emergency center" to address problems at the country's production units.

Addressing a conference on National Dialogue, Government and Private Sector on Saturday, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said a proposal to the effect has been delivered at a cabinet meeting, Mehr reported.

He also said the cabinet has launched investigations into the reasons why Iran's non-oil exports have diminished in recent months.



IRGC official: U.S. provocative acts can have grave consequences

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The recent provocative acts by the United States in the Persian Gulf can have grave consequences for Washington, the deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps for political affairs warned on Saturday.

Referring to incidents between U.S. and IRGC forces in the Persian Gulf in recent days, Rasul Sanaei-Rad said the U.S. bears heavy responsibility for such "unprofessional" acts, Nasim reported.

He also warned that the IRGC's choice not to respond to provocative acts should not be interpreted as a sign of weakness.



U.S. sanctions a mistake, Iran should be circumspect: ex-diplomat

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The U.S. plans to return to a former state of tension with Iran, but Tehran should be cautious and control the current political turmoil, Iran's former ambassador to the UN office in Geneva has said.

Speaking to Trend on Saturday, Ali Khorram said the U.S. has violated three articles of a nuclear deal agreed between Iran and world powers including the U.S. in 2015.

Now that sanctions have been lifted, Iran should avoid any further international sanctions, he stressed.

U.S. rhetoric, actions show bad faith: Zarif

By Negar Asadi

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday said while Iran is complying with the nuclear deal in "good faith" the U.S. is showing "bad faith" through its actions and rhetoric.

The remarks by the chief diplomat came after the U.S. claimed the launch of a satellite-carrier rocket by Iran on Thursday contravened the spirit of the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Iran - unlike the U.S. - has complied in good faith with the letter AND spirit of JCPOA. Rhetoric & actions from U.S. show bad faith," Zarif tweeted on Friday.

The U.S. State Department also released a media note on Friday claiming that Iran's act in launching the satellite carrier is inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

The resolution - which endorsed the July 2015 nuclear deal between Iran, great powers and the European Union - "calls upon" Iran not to "undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology".

"Every word of JCPOA carefully negotiated. Iran does not develop missiles



that are DESIGNED to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons," Zarif said in a separate message on his Twitter account.

"Iran is not and will not be developing nuclear weapons; so by definition cannot develop anything DESIGNED to be capable of delivering them." Zarif tweeted

separately.

A day after the launch of the satellite carrier, called Simorgh (phoenix), the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on six Iran-based satellite companies.

Iran sees no limit for scientific advances'

IRGC reports new provocation by U.S. warships in Persian Gulf

By Ali Shamaghdari

TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps navy said a U.S. Navy helicopter hovered over one of its patrol boats in the Persian Gulf on Friday afternoon, a move it called a "provocative and unprofessional".

"At 4 pm (11:30 GMT) on Friday, the supercarrier USS Nimitz and its accompanying warship, while being monitored by the Guards' frigates, flew a helicopter near the Resalat oil and gas platform and approached the force's ships," the statement added.

"In a provocative and unprofessional move, the Americans warned the Zulfiqar flotilla by firing flares, but the flotilla, without paying attention to the unconventional and unusual behavior of the American ships, continued its mission and after a short period of time the American aircraft carrier and its accompanying warship left the region."

The development follows a Tuesday incident during which the U.S. Navy's patrol craft Thunderbolt fired warning shots in front of the Iranian vessel after it had reportedly ignored radio calls, flares and the ship's whistle.

The IRGC announced late on Tuesday that one of its patrol ships had neutralized the act, saying its boat paid no attention and continued with its mission and after a while the U.S. vessel left the area.

"Days after an American ship fired two warning shots in front of a Revolutionary Guards navy boat in the northern Persian Gulf, American ships committed a similar act the Persian Gulf's middle zone," said a statement by the IRGC on Saturday.

The Friday confrontation capped a turbulent week of vicious barbs traded between Tehran and Washington, one day after Iran tested a satellite-carrying rocket and on the same day Washington slapped new sanctions on six subsidiaries of a company key to Iran's ballistic missile program over the test launch.

The Trump administration's harsh rhetoric toward Tehran has exacerbated tension between the two, previously eased when Washington, coupled with more five world powers, lifted sanctions on Tehran last year as part of a deal to curb Iran's nuclear program.

During the presidential campaign last September, Trump pledged to "shot out of the water" any Iranian vessels that would harass the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf.

The two navies frequently have run-ins in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. Navy presence in the Persian Gulf, Iran says, has jeopardized the security and stability of the Strait of Hormuz, the mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a third of all oil trade passes by sea.

According to U.S. Navy, the two navies had more

than 20 and 30 tense naval encounters in 2015 and 2016, respectively. No similar data, however, has been issued by the Iranian side.

Earlier in March, an official with the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps navy said that unprofessional acts by the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf may have "irreversible consequences" after a confrontation in the Strait of Hormuz.

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 peaceful settlement of the development was itself the result of personal diplomacy between Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his American counterpart John Kerry.

In mid-July, the U.S. House of Representatives 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 as part of the annual National Defense Authorization Act.

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

Foreign Ministry, Parliament agree on anti-U.S. bill

By Mehdi Sepahvand

TEHRAN — On Saturday, Iran's parliament (Majlis) and Foreign Ministry agreed unanimously on a draft bill to counter "the U.S. support for terrorism and adventurism in the Middle East."

The draft bill sailed through with no opposition in a plenary session of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, in which deputy foreign ministers Abbas Araqchi and Hassan Qashqavi were present.

"This move means that Majlis acts in unison in face of America's Senate approval," said Alaeddin Boroujerdi, the committee's chairman.

Boroujerdi gave no details on when the bill would be officially brought to the parliament floor for approval. Nor did he speak about its details.

Overwhelmingly passed by the House on Tuesday, the U.S. Senate on Thursday passed bipartisan sanctions on Russia, Iran and North Korea on a 98-2 vote, sending the package to President Donald Trump, who must decide whether to accept or veto the measure.

The bill drew strong rebukes from Tehran and Moscow. The Iranian portion of



the measure introduces new economic sanctions against Tehran over its ballistic missile program and what Washington calls the country's "destabilizing role".

Commenting on the decision, Araqchi, who played a key role in negotiating the nuclear deal, said the Foreign Ministry fully endorses the draft bill.

"The Foreign Ministry completely agrees with the draft bill prepared by the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee," he said.

"There is need for befitting measures to counter U.S. hostile and wicked policies, which disrupt implementation of Barjam," Araqchi added, referring to the Persian acronym for the landmark nucle-



ar agreement in 2015 between Iran and six world powers including the U.S.

The nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, marked a major shift in more than three decades of antagonism between Washington and Tehran.

The deal, which removed economic sanctions against Iran in exchange for the country's curbs on its nuclear program, requires all signatories to act "in good faith and in a constructive atmosphere."

Also, the accord specifies that the United States, and other partners "will refrain from any policy specifically intended to directly and adversely affect the normalization of trade and economic relations

EU's Mogherini to attend Rouhani inauguration

By Mohammad Homaeifar

TEHRAN — European foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini will attend President Hassan Rouhani's inauguration in August, according to the union's official website.

"The HR/VP Federica Mogherini will travel to Tehran on 5 August, in her capacity as Chair of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA, to attend the inauguration ceremony of President Rouhani," a statement carried on the website said on Saturday.

"On this occasion she will have bilateral meetings with Iranian dignitaries to review the state of implementation of the nuclear deal and to discuss issues of bilateral and regional relevance," it added.

Rouhani, who won an overwhelming majority in the

May 19 ballot, is due to be inaugurated on August 5 for a second four-year term.

The news comes at a sensitive time for Tehran which is increasingly targeted by a hostile rhetoric from the Trump administration, and there are fears the escalating run-ins between Tehran and Washington kill the international nuclear deal with world powers, in which Mogherini played a consequential role.

Mogherini is a vocal supporter of the deal, once called by U.S. President Trump as a "disaster" and "the worst deal ever negotiated".

In response to calls by Washington to "review" the deal, which Rouhani bashes as its signature foreign policy achievement, the European Union's chief diplomat hailed the deal as one "made to stand the test of time" and "a

pillar of the international non-proliferation agenda".

On the occasion of the second anniversary of the deal on July 14, Mogherini renewed support for the "historic deal" saying "The European Union is and will stay committed in preserving and implementing [the Iran deal], and building on it to address the remaining unresolved sources of tension and conflict that are still afflicting the region."

Also, since implementation of the accord in January 2016, trade between Iran and EU has soared to unprecedented levels.

On July 22, the EU's deputy political director, Helga Schmid, said despite existing challenges, there has been a consistent trend of economic engagement as reflected by the latest announcements of major trade and investment deals.

Trump replaces chief of staff Priebus with retired General Kelly

Donald Trump replaced his beleaguered White House chief of staff, Reince Priebus, after only six months on the job, installing retired General John Kelly in his place in a major shake-up of his top team.

Trump announced the move in a tweet a day after his new communications director, Anthony Scaramucci, accused Priebus of leaking information to reporters in a profanity-laced tirade.

Kelly, 67, a retired four-star Marine Corps general, is currently secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and will assume the chief of staff post on Monday. He was hired with the goal of bringing more discipline to the White House, a senior White House official said.

Trump issued his decision just as he landed aboard Air Force One after a visit to Long Island and hours after Republican efforts to repeal Obamacare failed in the Senate.

Priebus was on the plane with the Republican president and made no comment. Reporters had noticed no sign of stress from Priebus during the day. Priebus told CNN he had been talking to Trump for some time about exiting the White House, and is the latest in a long line of officials to leave or not take a job at the White House.

"The president has a right to hit a reset button. I think it's time to hit the reset button," Priebus said in a televised interview from the White House. "He intuitively determined that it was time to do something different, and I think he's right."

Trump had lost confidence in Priebus, privately questioning his competence after major legislative items failed to pass the U.S. Congress, a Trump confidant said.

A source close to Priebus said the former Republican National Committee chairman turned in his resignation on Thursday night, after Scaramucci's rant against him was published by the New Yorker magazine.

A senior White House official said Trump had informed Priebus two weeks ago that he would be replacing him and that the move had no connection to Scaramucci, whose hiring a week ago prompted Sean Spicer, a Priebus ally, to abruptly resign as press secretary.



Trump and John Kelly

After frequent conversations with Kelly, Trump recently warmed up to the idea of naming Kelly chief of staff to more effectively manage personnel and offered it to him earlier this week, a senior White House official said.

■ Kelly 'a Star'

Carrying an umbrella, Trump approached reporters as he stepped off Air Force One, with rain storming down.

"Reince is a good man. John Kelly will do a fantastic job. General Kelly has been a star, done an incredible job thus far, respected by everybody. He's a great, great American. Reince is a good man," Trump said.

Priebus' 189-day tenure was the shortest in modern history for a White House chief of staff. He had hoped to stay on at least a year but struggled to manage his unpredictable boss and was unable to get a handle on conflicting factions in the White House who have frequently squab-

bled.

In a statement, Priebus said it had been one of the great honors of his life to serve Trump and the country.

"I will continue to serve as a strong supporter of the president's agenda and policies. I can't think of a better person than General John Kelly to succeed me and I wish him God's blessings and great success," he said.

Trump loyalists had chafed at Priebus, feeling he had installed his RNC allies at the White House and overlooked the people close to Trump who helped get him elected president in November.

But Priebus allies felt he was an important link to establishment Republicans in Washington as the capital attempted to adjust to the anti-establishment style of the president.

"He has served the president and the American people capably and passionately," House of Representatives Speak-

er Paul Ryan said of his close friend in a statement. "He has achieved so much, and he has done it all with class. I could not be more proud to call Reince a dear friend."

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said she did not think Priebus' exit would affect the White House's relationship with the Republican Party.

"I think we've still got a good relationship. We're going to continue working with the party and doing what we came here to do," she said.

Homeland Security Deputy Secretary Elaine Duke will become the acting chief of the department on Monday, DHS said in a statement.

U.S. Representative Michael McCaul, a Texas Republican who chairs the House Homeland Security Committee, is among those being considered for Homeland Security secretary, a DHS official said.

(Source: Reuters)

Trump to sign Russia sanctions, Moscow retaliates

U.S. President Donald Trump will sign legislation that imposes sanctions on Russia, the White House said, after Moscow ordered the United States to cut hundreds of diplomatic staff and said it would seize two U.S. diplomatic properties in retaliation for the bill.

The U.S. Senate had voted almost unanimously on Thursday to slap new sanctions on Russia, forcing Trump to choose between a tough position on Moscow and effectively dashing his stated hopes for warmer ties with the country or to veto the bill amid investigations in possible collusion between his campaign and Russia.

By signing the bill into law, Trump can not ease the sanctions against Russia unless he seeks congressional approval.

Moscow's retaliation, announced by the Foreign Ministry on Friday, had echoes of the Cold War. If confirmed that Russia's move would affect hundreds of staff at the U.S. embassy, it would far outweigh the Obama administration's expulsion of 35 Russians in December.

The legislation was in part a response to conclusions by U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and to further punish Russia for its annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Late on Friday, the White House issued a statement saying Trump would sign the bill after reviewing the final version. The

statement made no reference to Russia's retaliatory measures.

Russia had been threatening retaliation for weeks. Its response suggests it has set aside initial hopes of better ties with Washington under Trump, something the U.S. leader, before he was elected, had said he wanted to achieve.

Relations were already languishing at a post-Cold War low because of the allegations that Russian cyber interference in the election was intended to boost Trump's chances, something Moscow flatly denies. Trump has denied any collusion between his campaign and Russian officials.

The Russian Foreign Ministry complained of growing anti-Russian feeling in the United States, accusing "well-known circles" of seeking "open confrontation".

President Vladimir Putin had warned on Thursday that Russia would have to retaliate against what he called boorish U.S. behavior. Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters on Friday that the Senate vote was the last straw.

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov told U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson by telephone that Russia was ready to normalize relations with the United States and to cooperate on major global issues.

Lavrov and Tillerson "agreed to maintain contact on a range of bilateral issues", the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry said the United States had until Sept. 1 to reduce its diplomatic

staff in Russia to 455 people, the number of Russian diplomats left in the United States after Washington expelled 35 Russians in December.

■ 'Extreme Aggression'

It was not immediately clear how many U.S. diplomats and other workers would be forced to leave either the country or their posts, but the Interfax news agency cited an informed source as saying "hundreds" of people would be affected.

A diplomatic source told Reuters that it would be for the United States to decide which posts to cut, whether occupied by U.S. or Russian nationals.

An official at the U.S. Embassy, who declined to be named because they were not allowed to speak to the media, said the Embassy employed around 1,100 diplomatic and support staff in Russia, including Russian and U.S. citizens.

Russian state television channel Rossiya 24 said over 700 staff would be affected but that was not confirmed by the foreign ministry or the U.S. embassy.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's statement said the passage of the bill confirmed "the extreme aggression of the United States in international affairs".

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov met outgoing U.S. ambassador John Tefft on Friday to inform him of the counter measures, Russian news agencies reported. The U.S. Embassy said Tefft had expressed his "strong disappointment

and protest".

Most U.S. diplomatic staff, including around 300 U.S. citizens, work in the main embassy in Moscow, with others based in consulates in St Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and Vladivostok.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said it was also seizing a Moscow dacha compound used by U.S. diplomats for recreation, from Aug. 1, as well as a U.S. diplomatic warehouse in Moscow.

In December, the outgoing Obama administration seized two Russian diplomatic compounds - one in New York and another in Maryland - at the same time as it expelled Russian diplomats.

Trump and Putin met for the first time at a G20 summit in Germany this month in what both sides described as a productive encounter, but Russian officials have become increasingly convinced that Congress and Trump's political opponents will not allow him to mend ties, even if he wants to.

The European Union has also threatened to retaliate against new U.S. sanctions on Russia, saying they would harm the bloc's energy security by targeting projects including a planned new pipeline to bring Russian natural gas to northern Europe.

A European Commission spokesman in Brussels said the bloc would be following the sanctions process closely.

(Source: Reuters)

Brother of ousted Pakistani PM seen as successor

Pakistan's ruling party plans to appoint the brother of ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as his successor to fight the 2018 general elections, local media reported on Saturday, but will first have to appoint an interim prime minister.

Shahbaz Sharif, 65, the chief minister of the vast Punjab province that accounts for more than half of Pakistan's 190 million people, will need to be first elected to the national assembly before he can take over as leader of the country.

Nawaz Sharif's resignation on Friday has plunged the nuclear-armed nation into political turmoil after several years of relative stability. Sharif quit after he was disqualified by the Supreme Court over undeclared assets.

The court has also ordered a criminal investigation into Sharif, 67, and his family.

Sharif has always denied any wrongdoing and his toppling has rekindled concerns about Pakistan's democracy after a member of his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party hinted that elements of the powerful military were in some way involved.

"We know very well what the crime of Nawaz Sharif and the Muslim League is. What do we ask for? We ask for civilian supremacy in Pakistan," Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq told a news briefing.

Questioned further, however, Rafiq would not name the military as a whole.

The army has not commented on Sharif's removal, or allegations they were involved. In the past the army has dismissed claims they are behind Supreme Court's push against Sharif.

Sharif's PML-N party is due to meet on Saturday and will likely appoint a short-term leader to fill the vacuum until Sharif's younger brother becomes an elected lawmaker, according to the English-language News and Dawn newspapers.

"This decision was taken here at the PM House on Friday," the News reported on Saturday.

Among possible allies to replace Sharif in the short term are members of his outgoing cabinet including Defense Minister Asif Khawaja, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal and Petroleum Minister Shahid Abbasi.

If elected, the interim leader would be in power for at least 45 days until Shahbaz steps down as the head of the Punjab government, and contests a by-election to the national assembly.



Rafiq, the railways minister, told Geo TV late on Friday that it was not yet decided if the interim leader would be in power for a 45-day period or until the next general election, which have to be held by early August 2018.

Whoever replaces Sharif will have to tackle Pakistan's worsening ties with the United States, frayed relations with India, and persistent attacks by Islamist militants including the Pakistani Taliban and Islamic State.

The state of the economy - which is growing at its fastest pace in a decade - has also begun to concern economists, who are warning an over-valued currency is hurting exports and urge action over a ballooning current account deficit.

Shahbaz Sharif has been in charge of Punjab since 2008, building a reputation as a competent administrator focused on building infrastructure. He also has better relations with the military than his brother.

The opposition has hailed the Supreme Court's decision to remove Nawaz Sharif as a sign of progress and greater accountability in a nation where impunity is rife.

"They have given Pakistan hope. This is what everyone is celebrating," Imran Khan, cricketer-turned-politician who leads the opposition PTI party, said on Friday.

Khan's PTI party plans to hold a victory rally on Sunday.

Nawaz Sharif, who has served three separate stints as prime minister, has not commented on the Supreme Court verdict against him but his party said it had "serious reservations" about the judicial process.

Sharif was investigated for corruption after the "Panama Papers" data leak revealed his family used offshore companies to buy posh London apartments.

But his ouster was down to the little-used Article 62 of the Constitution, which allows for dismissal from office of anyone deemed dishonest. The Supreme Court enacted the law because Sharif's failed to declare monthly income, equal to \$2,722, from a Dubai-based company his son owned in disclosure papers filed for the 2013 elections his party won.

Sharif's allies have privately spoken of a "judicial coup" and say every parliamentarian would likely fail the Article 62 test, including opposition leader Khan, who also has a pending Supreme Court case against him over undeclared income.

(Source: Reuters)

Hamburg attacker was known to security forces

The migrant who killed one person and injured six others in a knife attack in a Hamburg supermarket on Friday was an extremist known to German security forces, who say they believed he posed no immediate threat, the city-state's interior minister said on Saturday.

A possible security lapse in a second deadly militant attack in less than a year, and two months before the general election, would be highly embarrassing for German intelligence, especially since security is a main theme in the Sept. 24 vote.

Hamburg Interior Minister Andy Grote told a news conference on Saturday that Friday's 26-year-old attacker was registered in intelligence systems as an extremist (Islamist) but not as a jihadist, as there was no evidence to link him to an imminent attack.

(Source: AP)

Hezbollah's fighting in Syria kept militant threats at bay: Qassem

Hezbollah's deputy-chief Sheikh Naim Qassem Saturday reiterated his party's claim that its participation in the Syrian conflict was undertaken to deter the militant threat to Lebanon.

"If we did not fight in Syria, we would have had to fight in every house we have and in every village and city in Lebanon," Qassem said during a memorial service in Beirut's southern suburbs, according to a statement released by the Hezbollah media office.

Hezbollah announced in 2013 that its fighters were engaged on the Syrian battlefield, fighting alongside Syrian government forces.

"We went to Syria to fight in the backyard before [the militant threat] reached the house, and to stop its advance," Qassem said Saturday, adding that his party, along with its allies, had managed to defeat extremists



and their supporters.

"They [the militants] were dispersed and started fight-

ing each other," he said.

In 2016, Hezbollah announced that members of the resistance were fighting against Daesh (ISIL) in Iraq.

Hezbollah recently launched a wide-scale offensive against militants from Jabhat Fatah al-Sham - formerly known as the Nusra Front - entrenched on Lebanon's northeast border, in the outskirts of the town of Arsal.

The battle was concluded with a cease-fire deal that commenced Thursday. The deal entails the return of militants to Syria in exchange for the repatriation of eight Hezbollah fighters currently held captive by Jabhat Fatah al-Sham.

The Lebanese Army is anticipated to soon launch an operation against Daesh positions north of the Arsal mountains, in the vicinity of Ras Baalbeck and Al-Qaa.

(Source: Daily Star)

NEWS IN BRIEF



IPC puts priority on 3 oilfields: Zanganeh

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan D e s k Namdar Zanganeh said three oilfields are top priority for tenders based on IPC (Iran's new model of oil contract), Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.

The minister mentioned the prioritized oilfields as Azadegan and Yadavaran oilfields (shared with Iraq in Iran's southwestern region of Karoun) and also South Pars oil layer (in the Persian Gulf).

According to the official, the IPC-based tender for Azadegan field is in progress and National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) is planning on signing deal for it by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018).



Iran to dispatch trade delegation to Switzerland in late Sept.

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN** — The head of Tehran Cham-d e s k ber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Masoud Khansari is going to lead a trade delegation to visit Switzerland on September 27-30, TCCIMA portal reported.

The official will be accompanied by entrepreneurs and businessmen active in various areas including textile, industrial machinery and equipment, oil and gas, power plants and renewable energy, electricity and electronics, food industry, medicine and medical equipment as well as financial and banking services.

ECB should think about when it wants to wind down bond buys

The European Central Bank should start thinking about how it wants to return to normal monetary policy and when it wants to wind down its bond purchases, governing council member Sabine Lautenschlaeger said in remarks published on Saturday.

"The expansionary monetary policy has both advantages and side effects. As time passes, the positive effects get weaker and the risks increase," she told the Mannheimer Morgen newspaper.

"So it's important to prepare for the exit in good time. What's crucial in that context is a stable trend in the rate of inflation towards our objective of just under 2 percent. It's not quite there yet."

She acknowledged that unwinding the ECB's expansive policy would be a long process, saying that the governing council should start addressing the question of when it wants to start winding down its bond purchases.

(Source: Reuters)

Japan household spending jumps most since 2015 in sign of sustainable growth

Japanese household spending in June jumped the most since 2015 as job availability improved to a fresh 43-year high, in a sign the tightening labor market is helping push up wages and consumer spending — albeit gradually.

Underscoring stubbornly low inflation despite the tightening job market, core consumer prices rose just 0.4 percent in June from a year earlier, unchanged from the previous month and still far below the Bank of Japan's ambitious 2 percent target.

The batch of data points to a steady growth in the Japanese economy, the world's third largest, in the April-June quarter, supporting the central bank's upbeat economic view.

The BOJ last week left monetary policy steady but once again pushed back the timing for hitting its price goal, highlighting the gap between steady growth and weak inflation and reinforcing the view that it will take some time to scale back its massive stimulus.

Japan's economy expanded at an annualized 1.0 percent at the start of this year, posting a fifth straight quarter of growth on robust exports and a pick-up in private consumption.

Domestic demand holds the key for a sustained expansion as net exports - or exports minus imports - likely trimmed gross domestic product growth in the April-June period, analysts say.

In an encouraging sign for private consumption, which comprises some 60 percent of the economy, household spending rose 2.3 percent in the year to June, up for the first time in

16 months and the biggest annual gain since August 2015.

That compared with economists' median estimate of a 0.6 percent gain in a Reuters poll, data by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications showed on Friday.

(Source: Reuters)

Wells Fargo cuts 69 executive jobs

Wells Fargo & Co said on Friday it is cutting 69 executive jobs at its retail unit, as part of a restructuring in the division.

Some of the executives positions will retire with full benefits while others may find positions elsewhere within the bank, said Wells Fargo spokesman Paul Gomez.

Some of the executives may leave the bank, Gomez added.

«We have just completed the process of consolidating the Regional President and Area President roles into a new position, Region Bank President,» Mary Mack, senior executive vice president for community banking, said in an internal memo seen by Reuters.

The unit will have 91 regional and area presidents as part of the rejig.

Wells Fargo has been engulfed in scandal since September, when it reached a \$190 million settlement with regulators over complaints that its retail banking staff had opened as many as 2.1 million unauthorized client accounts.

Wells Fargo shares ended down 2.6 percent on Friday.

(Source: The New York Times)

Mining sector requires \$18b by Mar. 2021

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN** — Iran's mining sector d e s k needs \$18 billion investment by the end of the country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021), according to an official in mining sector.

Amir Sabbag, the planning and strategic supervision director in Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), also said that to reach an eight-percent economic growth, a 15 percent growth in investment is necessary, IRIB news reported on Saturday.

The share of mining sector in Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) will be increased to 1.5 percent in the Sixth National Development Plan from the current figure of 1.1 percent, Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Jafar Sarqini told IRNA in late March.

Mining and minerals sector has all necessary qualities specified by "Resistance Economy" and is of high value added, the official highlighted.

Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has adopted the policy of reducing risks for the private sector regarding investment making in the mining industry and it has thriving this sector on its agenda, the deputy minister further stated.

Last May, Mehdi Karbasian, the head of IMIDRO, announced that Iran had offered \$40 billion in mining projects to foreign investors.



TEDPIX adds 1,347 points in a week

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN** — Teh-d e s k ran Stock Exchange (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) gained 1347 points to 81,509 in the week ended on Friday, Tasnim news agency reported.

Some 3,808 million shares worth 13.619 trillion rials (about \$359.3 million) were dealt through 302,000 deals in TSE.

The first market's index rose 1,443 points to 57,023 and second market's index added 192 points to 178,151, showing 2.597 percent and 0.11 percent growth, respectively, in the mentioned week.

Meanwhile, TEDPIX lost 88 points to end Saturday's trade at 81,420



through dealing 580 million shares worth 1.84 trillion rials (about \$48.5 million).

Also, IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), gained 0.6 percent to 920 points on Saturday, as 86 million securities worth 1.01 trillion rials (about \$37.03 million) were traded in 21,000 deals.

Tobacco companies' share prices tumble



encourage smokers to shift towards e-cigarettes as part of a major new regulatory programme.

"The overwhelming amount of death and disease attributable to to-

Private sector supplies 60% of Iran's electricity

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Private d e s k sector accounts for generating 60 percent of electricity in Iran, Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian announced on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The minister also mentioned foreign countries' interest in Iran's power sector and said several power plants have been already built in the country through foreign investment.

Iran's nominal electricity generation capacity is 77,068 megawatts (MW) at present and it will reach 80,000 MW by summer 2018, according to Iranian Deputy Energy Minister Houshang Falahatian.

Iran increased its electricity genera-

tion capacity by 2.199 gigawatts (GW), boosting it to 76.302 GW, in the past Iranian calendar year 1395 which ended on March 20, according to a report by Iran Power Grid Management Company released in late March.

Gas-fueled power plants accounted for 75.5 percent of the increased generation capacity, equaling 1.66 GW.

Combined cycled power plants, hydroelectric power plants, distributed generation power plants, and renewable energy power plants also accounted for 14.6 percent, 3.4 percent, 5.7 percent, and 0.9 percent of the total rise in the country's electricity generation capacity, respectively.

Shares in major tobacco companies across the UK fell sharply on Friday after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced that it was seeking to cut nicotine levels in cigarettes.

Shares in British American Tobacco, which had been trading close to an all-time high, tumbled well over 10 percent before recovering slightly to end the day close to 7 percent lower. That made Friday one of their worst days in years. Shares in Imperial Brands fell more than 4 percent.

By Friday evening in London, the slide in stocks was poised to wipe billions off the market value of the world's biggest tobacco producers, according to Thomson Reuters.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said that it aims to reduce nicotine levels in cigarettes but also

bacco is caused by addiction to cigarettes- the only legal consumer product that, when used as intended, will kill half of all long-term users," FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said.

Sri Lanka signs deal on Hambantota port with China

Sri Lanka has signed a \$1.1bn (£837m) deal with China for the control and development of the southern deep-sea port of Hambantota.

The deal had been delayed by several months over concerns that the port could be used by the Chinese military.

The government has given assuranc-

es that China will run only commercial operations from the port, on the main shipping route between Asia and Europe.

Sri Lanka's government says money from the deal will help repay foreign loans.

Under the proposal, a state-run Chi-

nese company will have a 99-year lease on the port and about 15,000 acres nearby for an industrial zone.

The plan envisages the eviction of thousands of villagers but the government says they will be given new land.

China has pumped millions of dollars into Sri Lanka's infrastructure since the

"Unless we change course, 5.6 million young people alive today will die prematurely later in life from tobacco use."

Analysts said that the move was a game-changer for the industry.

"It's hard to overstate what this could mean for the companies affected: non-addictive levels of nicotine would likely mean a lot fewer smokers and of those people who do still light up, smoking a lot less," said Neil Wilson, a senior market analyst at ETX Capital.

"This will blow a hole in their earnings," he said.

"This is just the US regulator acting but we can easily see others, particularly in Europe, where regulatory pressures are already extremely high, following suit," Mr Wilson added.

(Source: Independent)

Swiss franc on track for biggest drop in 6 years



0.9724 Swiss francs.

The Swiss franc is closely linked to the euro and depends somewhat on the ECB when assessing its monetary policy. In January 2015, the SNB abandoned its policy of maintaining a floor in the euro/Swiss franc of 1.20, but Jordan told CNBC in June that the central bank would continue to intervene in foreign exchange markets where necessary to combat overvaluation of the franc.

"We follow exactly the situation in the foreign exchange market, we look at the pressure, and then we

decide what to do in foreign exchange interventions," he said following an SNB policy decision in June.

When contacted by CNBC on Friday, the SNB refused to comment on the sharp dip or any intervention. However, analysts have suggested that Jordan's comments alone may have been enough to shift markets.

A Morgan Stanley note released Friday insists the franc remains the "most overvalued currency in the G10 universe," despite this week's fall.

The depreciation could relieve pressure on the SNB, which has been battling against currency appreciation during a volatile period for the euro.

"The SNB will be reassured that the depreciation has come at a time when it has pulled back from intervention," Kamal Sharma, G10 FX strategist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, told CNBC over the phone.

Weekly Swiss site deposit data has waned as the geopolitical risks in Europe have faded and investors have returned to European equities, Sharma noted.

"This has allowed the SNB to pull back from its intervention strategy. (The franc) has done what we thought it would do following this policy shift."

(Source: cnbc)

OPEC, non-OPEC nations to meet on compliance with oil targets

Representatives of some OPEC and non-OPEC nations will meet in Abu Dhabi as soon as next week to discuss why some of them are falling behind in their pledges to cut production, people familiar with the matter said.

The meeting, co-chaired by Kuwait and Russia, will examine reasons why some countries aren't fully implementing their cuts, the people said. Some nations will argue that the independent sources used by OPEC to assess compliance overestimate their production, said two of the people, who asked not to be identified because the discussions aren't public.

Targets for output reduction are based on production estimates from six independent parties, known as "secondary sources." Last year, as the deal was being negotiated, Iraq complained about these estimates, claiming they aren't accurate. Other members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries are also putting the blame on secondary sources for their poor performance, said two people.

The agreement, which came into effect at the start of the year, brings together OPEC and non-OPEC nations in an effort to take as much as 1.8 million barrels of oil a day off the market. While compliance was high in the first months of the pact,



it began to slide as the expected crude-price recovery failed to materialize.

Some non-OPEC nations have been invited to the Abu Dhabi meeting but have yet to confirm their presence, one of the people said. OPEC members Algeria and

Venezuela - who sit on the committee that oversees compliance - won't attend, two people said. Algeria's implementation so far this year was at 70 percent, while Venezuela's averaged 39 percent, according to the International Energy Agency.

■ Mounting Pressure

Saudi Arabia, OPEC's biggest producer said this week it planned to step up pressure on nations that aren't complying with their commitments. The following day, the U.A.E., another country which hasn't fully implemented its own cuts, pledged further reductions from September.

Iraq, the second-biggest producer in OPEC, will also attend the meeting, the people said. It has previously argued that it should have been excluded from cuts because of its battle against terrorists. OPEC nations Libya and Nigeria have been exempted as they try to restore production curbed by internal conflict, and Iran, freed from international sanctions, has also been permitted to increase output.

Iraqi compliance slumped to 29 percent in June, its lowest so far, while the U.A.E. made just 60 percent of its cuts, according to the IEA's last monthly report. Overall implementation weakened to 78 percent from 95 percent in May after members including Saudi Arabia boosted output.

While OPEC's June compliance slipped to its lowest, the average rate during the first six months of the pact was 92 percent, which is "still strong by historical standards," the IEA said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Oil hits two-month high in strongest week of the year

Oil ended its strongest week this year with a surge on Friday, built on receding fears of oversupply, as U.S. crude came within striking distance of \$50 a barrel for the first time since the end of May.

Traders attributed the activity to short-covering of previous bearish bets as oil finished higher in every session this week. U.S. crude settled at \$49.71 a barrel, up 67 cents, or 1.4 percent, and on the week gained nearly 9 percent.

The market was bolstered by bigger-than-expected inventory drawdowns on Wednesday and signals from Saudi Arabia that the world's biggest oil pro-

ducer would further reduce output in August.

"The bullish inventory report this week has helped confirm the declining trajectory of global inventories," said Sarp Ozkan, analyst at Drillinginfo.com. That, along with Saudi Arabia reducing exports, has "buoyed the expectations of continued inventory normalization."

U.S. crude and gasoline inventories fell much more steeply than expected in the latest week, while U.S. refineries processed an average of almost 17.3 million barrels of crude per day last week, up 620,000 bpd from the same week in

2016.

Brent crude futures settled at \$52.52 a barrel, up 2 percent, or \$1.03 a barrel, after reaching a two-month high of \$52.68 a barrel earlier in the day.

The gains in Brent pushed the difference between the two benchmarks to the widest in two months.

September Brent was now priced higher than October, meaning the front of the curve has flipped into backwardation.

Short covering in the September contract contributed to the rally in the front-month spread, traders said. Physical mar-

kets have firmed due in large part to very strong refining margins.

"Both markets are seeing a strong move in spreads through most of 2017 and 2018 due to shorts covering into heavy producer flow," said Scott Shelton, broker at ICAP in Durham, North Carolina.

"Overall, I think the bullish demand story is taking the headlines away from the supply story as products are strong globally when refinery runs are maxed and that implies that current demand expectations could be significantly below reality."

(Source: Reuters)

Pace of U.S. oil rig count growth slows as prices climb

The number of active oil rigs in the United States rose this week by 2 rigs showing a growth—albeit a slower one—in oil drilling as U.S. players proceed more cautiously than before. Combined, the total oil and gas rig count in the U.S. now stands at 958 rigs, up 495 rigs from last year, with oil rigs in the United States increasing by 2 and gas rigs increasing by 6 this week.

Canada, which added 15 oil and gas rigs the week prior, added another 14 rigs for week this week. Of the 14 new active rigs this week in Canada, 11 were oil rigs. Oil rigs in Canada now stand at 129, up 60 on the year.

Prices had risen to an eight-week high on Thursday, a continued to climb on Friday, with WTI trading up 1.08 percent at \$49.57 at 12:01pm and Brent crude trading up 1.67 percent at \$52.35. Oil prices are on track for the largest weekly gain in 2017 as the momentum from reports that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and UAE would cut crude oil exports and a larger than expected inventory draw for crude oil and gasoline.

But while the rise in the number of active rigs in the U.S. slows, U.S. crude oil production is not, with average production averaging 9.41 million barrels per day for the week ending July 21—more than 1 million barrels higher than in January 3, 2014, when 1,378 U.S. oil rigs were active. (Source: oilprice.com)

Exxon misses estimates after cuts fail to offset output declines

The partial shutdown of a Dutch natural gas field and lingering effects of Canadian forest fires unexpectedly cut oil and gas production for Exxon Mobil Corp., spurring a \$10 billion loss in market value for the company after it reported earnings that fell short of analyst estimates.

Exxon clawed back half that value, falling 1.5 percent at the close of trading. Still, the drop shows the skittishness of investors at a time when oil prices have lingered below \$50 a barrel.

The world's largest oil explorer by market value is on track to shave its full-year drilling budget by 26 percent as cash conservation took center stage amid a stagnant crude market.

"Exxon was weak on the upstream side of the business," said Brian Youngberg, an analyst at Edward Jones & Co. in St. Louis. The company "continues to struggle to see any production growth on a consistent basis."

The disappointment overshadowed the U.S. oil giant's improvement in net income, which almost doubled in the second-quarter to \$3.35 billion from a year earlier. Exxon's production shortfall stemmed from restrictions on output at the giant Groningen gas field by Netherlands regulators and an outage at the Syncrude oil sands facility in western Canada, Sam Margolin, an analyst at Cowen and Company LLC, said in a note to clients.

(Source: Bloomberg)

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Trump's love of 'Winning' could lead America into a costly war

By Christopher A. Preble

This notion doesn't sit well in a country that bested Nazi Germany and the Empire of the Rising Sun, put a man on the moon, outlasted the Soviet Union in the Cold War and drove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait in a matter of days. That country shouldn't struggle so mightily to defeat insurgent groups whose most lethal weapon is explosives fashioned from common household items and discarded artillery shells or old landmines.

Our failure to win was a frequent refrain during Donald Trump's successful campaign. And it resonated. His solution was elegantly simple to say, but devilishly difficult to implement: Fight harder, or stop fighting.

Once in office, the commander-in-chief continued to lament the sorry state of the nation's military, and hinted that he wasn't above walking away from a hopeless contest. "We never win, and we don't fight to win," he told the nation's governors in February. And he promised, "We've either got to win, or don't fight it at all."

But, five months later, Donald Trump is learning how hard it is to leave. That doesn't mean, however, he has figured out how to win. One can almost sympathize. Almost.

Trump avoided military service in Vietnam, but attended a military high school, that, he said, gave him "more training militarily than a lot of the guys that go into the military." So he thinks he has more-than-a-passing knowledge about martial matters.

And he — like most Americans — has seen the U.S. military's formidable capabilities, for example, on television or in movies, and in flyovers at sporting events. Trump and others imagine that this power inevitably leads to victory. And they still believe this today, even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Last weekend, for example, at the commissioning of the USS Gerald R. Ford, the Navy's newest aircraft carrier, President Trump said: "When it comes to battle, we don't want a fair fight. We demand victory and we will have total victory, believe me." The president also claimed "This ship is the deterrent that keeps us from having to fight in the first place."

The Council on Foreign Relations' Micah Zenko observed "if this were true the Taliban would have quit 15 1/2 yrs ago."

Political effects

But Donald Trump isn't alone. Many people, especially those with no military experience, believe that if you can kill with precision, then you will achieve the political effects that you intend. The corollary to this view is that a failure to achieve our desired ends must flow from a lack of will to use this prodigious power. That explains our rare failures, as in Vietnam, for example.

Donald Trump didn't suffer from this problem, he assured his supporters. "We will have so much winning if I get elected that you may get bored with the winning," he promised.

As noted, however, Trump didn't merely speak of winning the wars we were in. He also spoke out, at a time when very few Republicans would do so, about avoiding stupid wars, including the war in Iraq. And a number of people that voted for Trump didn't want to try harder. They wanted mainly to stop trying.

Which brings us to Afghanistan. As Politico reported last week, the White House is wrestling with what to do there. For now, Donald Trump is resisting calls from National Security Adviser H. R. McMaster for a major U.S. troop increase. Trump told reporters "I want to find out why we've been there for 17 years." And when asked on his way into a meeting in the Pentagon whether he intended to expand the U.S. presence there, Trump replied "We'll see."

The easiest course, politically, is to continue to employ force — launch the missiles, send in the troops, "bomb the sh*t out of" them — and hope that the video footage of explosions, clouds of smoke and the rare dead body (of a bad guy; all the dead bodies are bad guys, we're assured) maintains a whiff of something approaching victory. The real object, however, is to avoid the unmistakable odor of defeat.

But, eventually, the politician needs an actual win. My great fear is that Donald Trump, desperate for one, will seek it against North Korea or Iran, rather than merely expanding the fights he inherited from his predecessors.

And he will discover, too late, that winning isn't easy there, either.

(Source: The National Interest)

Chance to bounce back

After many years finally come some good tidings from Libya. Tuesday's accord, however, could either be a cornerstone in bringing back the country into the fold of civilized societies or just another piece of paper that's not worth the cost of the trip to Paris. And it comes at a very crucial period when the country's neighbors, friends and allies have given up on its resurrection.

Still, it is clear that it's the Libyans themselves who have been tasked with taking the first step in this thousand-mile trip to demonstrate that they are honest in their commitments to relieve the pain and destitution inflicted on their people.

It also magnifies the challenges that have to be addressed including unity of the people, blanket coverage by lawful institutions and transparent control of the country's vast resources, ambitious goals in a country that has hit rock bottom thanks to the designs, ambitions and loyalties to external powers.

But it should not be an impossible feat if efforts are focused on the dynamics to building and serving the populace, especially as the country's significant resources can go a long way in facilitating this revival.

The first challenge in a vast state like Libya is to unite all efforts to combat terrorism in any form without mercy otherwise the task of rebuilding will never take off.

By doing so, Libya can finally reconcile with its neighboring states, mainly Egypt, and ensure the country and its people are friends with their neighbors rather than a menace that exports terror and havoc.

It's obvious that Europe and international community are keen to pull Libya out of its hell, but this can only be accomplished if the Libyans are ready, committed, willing and sincere.

(Source: The Daily Star)

Why chaos in DC will cause concern in Eastern Europe



Europe expressed concern that rather than forcing the Kremlin to fall in line, sanctions could create further tensions across the continent and especially in Eastern Europe.

that since he criticized it, that money has been "pouring in" from other allies making it no longer obsolete. While his alteration in tone was welcomed, the fact his mind on such a fundamental issue could be so easily changed is not entirely comforting to those who feel the heat from Moscow's proximity.

On top of the reversal in defense spending cuts across the alliance, a new European Defense Action Plan was agreed earlier this year that will see greater continental military cooperation.

For Trump, the key strategic question now on Russia is whether recent developments have destroyed the opportunity that may have existed for a warming of relations between Washington and Moscow.

The President has previously given multiple indications that he believes Russia is not a serious threat to the U.S., hinting in January that he could

even drop existing economic sanctions if the country "is helpful." Specifically, he appears to believe there were multiple common interests over issues such as preventing Iran secure nuclear weapons and combating international terrorism.

But his proposed repositioning of relations with Russia now looks for the time being to have been put on ice.

Should Trump be forced to sign the sanctions legislation, Pence's visit should help calm America's allies and reassure them that the U.S. still has an interest in defending their values.

However, talk from Moscow of retaliation and reserving "the right for reciprocity and other measures that may affect the interests of the U.S." will concern some smaller nations in Russia's so-called "sphere of interest."

And any breakdown in relations with Russia would, potentially, have significant implications for relations

between Moscow and Washington in other areas of the globe, including the Syrian conflict.

As Pence prepares for his trip to reassure America's allies, Trump now finds himself in a big bind over Russia. Despite his desire for warmer relations, the Senate and the House may have closed that window. Yet the legacy of his warm rhetoric toward Moscow has made his traditional allies in Eastern Europe understandably jumpy.

It's hard to know exactly how the President will move forward now, but nothing can be taken for granted. Trump already has the reputation for making unpredictable foreign and defense policy decisions when he has been backed into a corner at home. His political inexperience and ad hoc style of governing means this cannot be ruled out again now, as he faces multiple crises in DC.

(Source: CNN)

Tillerson took 'time off' after reports he could quit over frustration with Trump's White House

By Graham Lanktree

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is "taking a little time off" amid reports he is frustrated with the Trump administration and may not remain in the top Cabinet role for the entire year.

The State Department was not telling reporters where Tillerson was at the beginning of this week. His public schedule is released daily via email. On Monday and Tuesday it said he was unavailable.

When asked by reporters about Tillerson's whereabouts and feelings on behavior of the White House State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Tuesday that Tillerson was "just taking a little time off."

Nauert said Tillerson has "got a lot of work" and that "he's entitled to take a few days himself." She pointed out that he made a "mega-trip overseas" at the beginning of the month to the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany. Nauert avoided giving specifics on what she felt Tillerson's feelings toward the White House were.

"He does have the ability to go away for a few days on his own," she said. Wednesday Tillerson is back at the State Department meeting with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

Tillerson's absence came after reports citing sources familiar with his conversations with friends that said he may not last the year in his post as the Trump adminis-



tration's top diplomat.

Reports first in CNN and then Politico cited multiple sources familiar with Tillerson's conversations with friends outside Washington. Those who know him say he is growing increasingly frustrated with the White House, the president and working in the Trump administration.

Tillerson has viewed Trump's public shaming of his Attorney General Jeff Sessions as unprofessional, several sources told CNN.

Before last week, Tillerson had strongly maintained he would see through his task of reorganizing the entire State Department after Trump's March budget proposal laid out plans to cut \$10 billion from its roughly \$47 bil-

An international affair

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's ousting was sparked by revelations in the Panama Papers – the unprecedented leak from an offshore law firm – concerning luxury London property, bought through British Virgin Islands companies linked to Mr Sharif's children, who were minors at the time. In 2008, they used the Swiss arm of Deutsche Bank to borrow £7m against the flats.

The files proved, in eye-opening fashion, that members of the political elite have not played by the rules their citizens obey. The very wealthy realized long ago that they could maximize and conceal their wealth (and its origins) by exploiting the existence of multiple jurisdictions. Journalists have taken note. The German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung shared the data; the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

arranged for teams from 80 countries – including a group at the Guardian – to collaborate in reporting. Equally strikingly, authorities have begun to band together to tackle tax evasion and corruption across borders – sometimes through simultaneous raids.

The Panama Papers sparked the resignation of Iceland's prime minister within days. David Cameron came under intense scrutiny over his family's tax affairs. Malta is still dealing with the political fallout. Now Mr Sharif has gone. The impact has been financial too: governments are tracing billions of dollars in unpaid taxes or other assets. The European commission has published proposals to get tough on offshore tax schemes.

Efforts must not stop there. The public



register for beneficial owners of UK companies must be extended to British tax havens; it must include trusts; and a proper means of checking it must be introduced. Accountability should not depend on leaks, however effective they have proved this time.

(Source: The Guardian)

Trump: The anti-Gorbachev

By John Feffer

Back in the late 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev had a magic touch internationally. Traveling outside the Soviet Union, he often received the adulation that was so frequently lacking at home. When Gorbachev visited other Communist countries, crowds would turn out to welcome him as a savior.

He had that effect in Beijing when he visited on May 16, 1989. The protests in Tiananmen Square had started the month before, and the protesters saw in Gorbachev a possible future trajectory for China. According to a contemporary account in The New York Times:

The demonstrations were doubly embarrassing for the Chinese leaders because of the obvious enthusiasm that many of the protesters felt for Mr. Gorbachev. Several had prepared banners in Russian hailing him as a great reformer, and a crowd of workers and bicyclists applauded when he drove past them on his way to the Great Hall of the People.

Even more startling was his appearance at East Germany's celebrations of its 40th anniversary on October 7, 1989. As he passed along Unter den Linden, crowds on either side of East Berlin's famous boulevard cried out, "Gorby, help us." Two days later, 70,000 people showed up to demonstrate, non-violently, in Leipzig. The East German regime, as Gorbachev had warned, was living on borrowed time. The Berlin Wall would fall a mere one month later.

Gorbachev made other important visits — Czechoslovakia in April 1987, Romania in May 1987, Cuba in April 1989 — that contributed to a wave of transformation that took place in East-Central Europe (though not China or Cuba). Of course, Gorbachev failed to transform the Soviet Union as he'd hoped and ended up destroying the very structure he wanted to rehabilitate. Still, he'll be remembered for his contributions to ending the Cold War and bringing hope to many throughout the Communist world.

Now along comes Donald Trump, the head of another putative superpower desperately in need of internal reform. Trump has promised his own form of perestroika in the form of his attacks on the "administrative state." He offers his own form of glasnost with his obsessive tweeting. Trumpeting a xenophobic foreign policy, he's also vowed to thoroughly transform the bloc that he nominally leads.

And when Trump goes abroad, he has his own transformative effect. But while Gorbachev promoted democratization in his wake, Trump promotes exactly the opposite.

■ The Trump touch

Donald Trump is the Tinkerbell of tyranny. He sprinkles pixie dust on autocracies to make them more so and on democracies so that they move ever closer to dictatorship.

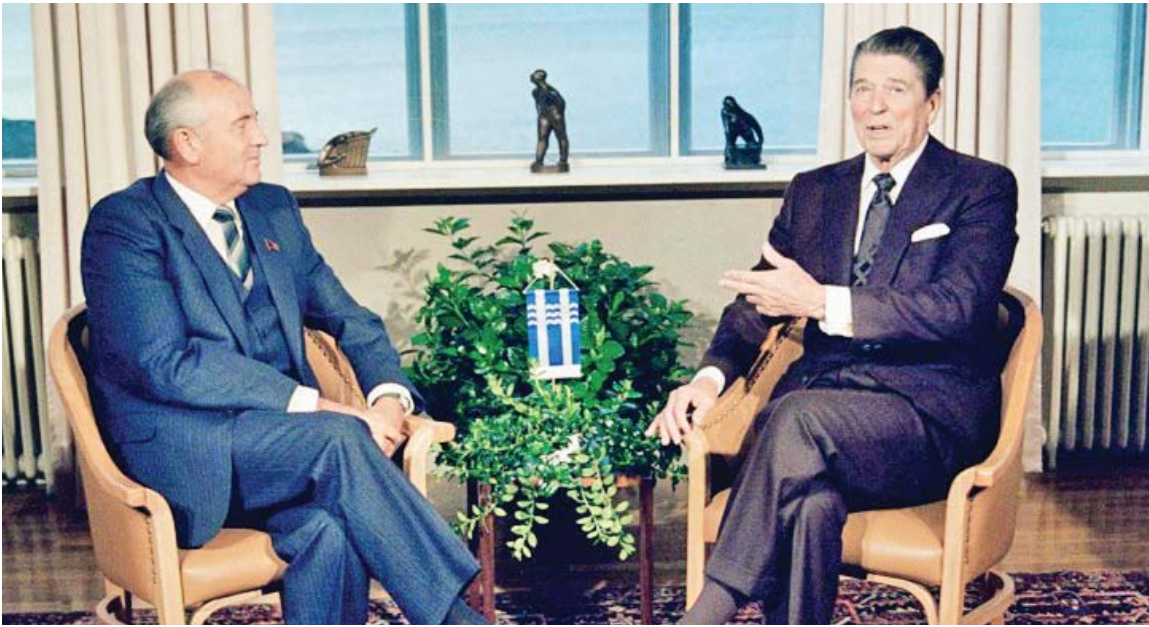
Trump's touch was on full view in Saudi Arabia during his first overseas stop as president of the free world. It was an odd choice of destinations, since Saudi Arabia is one of the key leaders of the unfree world.

But Saudi Arabia is Trump's kind of place, where oil is king, women are submissive, no one protests on the

Donald Trump is the Tinkerbell of tyranny. He sprinkles pixie dust on autocracies to make them more so and on democracies so that they move ever closer to dictatorship.

street, and the ruling clique does pretty much whatever it wants to do. Trump seemed fully at home in this feudal kingdom, and he had nothing but praise for his hosts. While there, he also met with other autocrats of the Gulf, such as those ruling Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

Not long after he left, Bahrain decided that Trump had effectively given the country a green light to crack down on its opposition. A mere two days after meeting Trump in Riyadh, where the president assured King Hamad bin Issa al-Khalifa that his administration wouldn't complicate bilateral relations with anything so trivial as human rights considerations, the Bahraini government used force to disband a nonviolent sit-in in support of the country's most prominent Shiite leader. Five protesters died, and the authorities arrested hundreds. Then, the government shut down al-Wasat, the most prominent independent newspaper, and the Trump administration uttered not a peep of protest.



Like Mikhail Gorbachev, Trump helms a fading empire. But while the former Soviet leader supported democratization in his wake, Trump's sowing the seeds of autocracy all over the globe.

Saudi Arabia, having extracted a promise of even more U.S. military assistance with which to prosecute its war in Yemen, decided to see how far it could go to leverage its new relationship with the Trump administration. Together with the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt, it moved against Qatar, a Gulf outlier for its relatively cordial relations with Iran and its relative tolerance for independent journalism in the form of Al Jazeera. This time, the Trump administration was divided, with Trump himself seeming to side with Riyadh while the State Department and the Pentagon stuck up for Doha, a key ally on military matters in the region.

The latest place to experience this Trump effect is Poland. Since Poland is a democracy, at least for the time being, the people fought back and produced an unexpected result.

■ The putative polish putsch

Trump's decision to visit to Poland just before the G20 summit was just as pointed as his choice of Saudi Arabia as a first overseas stop. The Polish government that took over 2015, led by the Law and Justice Party (PiS), has taken just the kind of stances that Trump loves: against immigration, against a free press, against the rule of law.

Poland was the perfect place for Trump to hammer home his veiled white supremacist message. Peter Beinart, in The Atlantic, contrasts Trump's speech in Warsaw to George W. Bush speech there in 2003:

In his 2003 speech, Bush referred to democracy 13 times. Trump mentioned it once. And for good reason. Ideologically, what links the current American and Polish governments is not their commitment to democracy

— both are increasingly authoritarian. It is their hostility to Muslim immigration. The European Union is suing Poland's government for refusing to accept refugees. Among Trump's biggest applause lines in Warsaw was, "While we will always welcome new citizens who share our values and love our people, our borders will always be closed to terrorism and extremism of any kind." Given that Trump had linked "our values" to America and Poland's "tradition," "faith," "culture," and "identity," it wasn't hard to imagine whom that leaves out.

Equally important, at least for the PiS audience, was the benediction Trump gave to Poland's leadership. Poland, Trump said, is "an example for others who seek freedom."

Shortly after the visit, the Polish ruling party decided to remind the world of precisely what that example represents. It attempted to ram through several laws that would have severely hobbled rule of law in the country. One would have allowed the government to fire all Supreme Court justices and appoint its own re-

placements; a second would have given parliament, controlled by PiS, the authority to appoint members of the National Council of the Judiciary, a body designed to preserve the independence of the judiciary.

Building on earlier moves to eliminate any pesky judicial constraints on its authority, which prompted an EU "probe" into Polish actions, PiS was following a game plan devised by Viktor Orban and Fidesz in Hungary: to clear away all constitutional barriers to creating an illiberal democracy.

The surprise came when Polish President Andrzej Duda vetoed the two bills. A former PiS stalwart — he had to resign from the party when he became president — Duda was responding to an EU threat to suspend Poland's voting rights as well as the enormous wave of protests that had washed over the country. Hundreds of thousands of Poles took to the streets in Warsaw, and many veterans of the Solidarity era, including Lech Walesa himself, spoke out vehemently against the government.

PiS was furious at this apostasy. It put enormous counter-pressure on Duda to force him to sign the third bill in the package, which gives the justice minister the power to appoint the heads of all lower courts.

The EU is nevertheless following through on its threat to begin proceedings against Poland, beginning with a legal suit filed by the European Commission against the country for breaking rules on judicial independence and sizeable fines from the European Court of Justice.

In Poland, Donald Trump sees a future trajectory for his own administration. He hasn't yet attempted to change the laws regulating the courts because he's been too busy packing them with right-wing ideologues, starting with Neil Gorsuch at the Supreme Court and including 27 lower-court judges (three times what Obama nominated over the same period). Trump has been woefully slow in filling administration positions, particularly at State, but he's moved at lightning speed to transform the judiciary.

More generally, Trump's trips to Saudi Arabia and Poland are part of a new geopolitical realignment that advisers like Steve Bannon are pushing. Forget NATO. Forget the Community of Democracies. Donald Trump wants nothing less than a worldwide suppression of liberal values such as rule of law, freedom of speech and assembly, and an independent press.

Gorbachev presided over the end of a geopolitical system — the Cold War. Popular protest — in East-Central Europe and in the Soviet Union itself — led to the unraveling of Soviet-bloc Communism as well. Trump may inadvertently preside over the end of U.S. hegemony, as both Europe and Asia chart more independent paths.

Let's hope that popular resistance destroys his Trumpian perestroika as well, before it gets any further off the ground.

determined to provoke war between the U.S. and Russia?

It should send shivers up your spine that you can ask this same question about all 50 states, and almost all congressional districts.

You can ask the same question about the bordello known as "the American media." There will be no one alive to post or to read the headlines of the war that they are helping to promote.

The United States and the rest of the world with it along with all life on earth are being sent to their graves by the total failure of American leadership.

What is wrong with Americans that they cannot understand that any "leader" who provokes war with a major nuclear power should be instantly institutionalized as totally insane?

Why do the dumbshit Americans sit night after night in front of the TV absorbing lies that confront them beyond all doubt to their deaths?

America has failed itself and the world.

Empire of destruction: Precision warfare? Don't make me laugh

By Tom Engelhardt

(Part Two)

In many ways, rubblization has been at the heart of this whole process, starting with the 9/11 moment. After all, the very point of those attacks was to turn the symbols of American power — the Pentagon (military power); the World Trade Center (financial power); and the Capitol or some other Washington edifice (political power, as the hijacked plane that crashed in a field in Pennsylvania was undoubtedly heading there) — into so much rubble. In the process, thousands of innocent civilians were slaughtered.

In some ways, much of the rubblization of the Greater Middle East in recent years could be thought of as, however unconsciously, a campaign of vengeance for the horror and insult of the air assaults on that September morning in 2001, which pulverized the tallest towers of my hometown. Ever since, American war has, in a sense, involved paying Osama bin Laden back in kind, but on a staggering scale. In Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, a shocking but passing moment for Americans has become everyday life for whole populations and innocents have died in numbers that would add up to so many World Trade Centers piled atop each other.

The origins of TomDispatch, the website I run, also lie in the rubble. I was in New York City on that day. I experienced the shock of the attacks and the smell of those burning buildings. A friend of mine saw a hijacked plane hitting one of the towers and another biked into the smoke-filled area looking for his daughter. I went down to the site of the attacks with my own daughter within days and wandered the nearby streets, catching glimpses of those giant shards of destroyed buildings.

In the phrase of that moment, in the wake of 9/11, everything "changed" and, in a sense, indeed it did. I felt it. Who didn't? I noted the sense of fear rising nationally and the repetitious ceremonies across the country in which Americans hailed themselves as the planet's most exceptional victims, survivors, and (in the future) victors. In those post-9/11 weeks, I became increasingly aware of how a growing sense of shock and a desire for vengeance among the populace was freeing Bush administration officials (who had for years been dreaming about making the "lone superpower" omnipotent in a historically unprecedented way) to act more or less as they wished.

As for myself I was overcome by a sense that the period to follow would be the worst of my life, far worse than the Vietnam era (the last time I had been truly mobilized politically). And of one thing I was certain: things would not go well. I had an urge to do something, though no idea what.

In early October 2001, the Bush administration unleashed its air power on Afghanistan, a campaign that, in a sense, would never end but simply spread across the Greater Middle East. (By now, the U.S. has launched repeated air strikes in at least seven countries in the region.) At that moment, someone emailed me an article by Tamim Ansary, an Afghan who had been in the U.S. for years but had continued to follow events in his country of birth.

His piece, which appeared at the website Counterpunch, would prove prescient indeed, especially since it had been written in mid-September, just days after 9/11. At that moment, as Ansary noted, Americans were already threatening — in a phrase adopted from the Vietnam War era — to bomb Afghanistan "back to the Stone Age." What purpose, he wondered, could possibly be served by such a bombing campaign since, as he put it, "new bombs would only stir the rubble of earlier bombs"? As he pointed out, Afghanistan, then largely ruled by the grim Taliban, had essentially been turned into rubble years before in the proxy war the Soviets and Americans fought there until the Red Army limped home in defeat in 1989. The rubble that was already Afghanistan would only increase in the brutal civil war that followed. And in the years before 2001, little had been rebuilt. So, as Ansary made clear, the U.S. was about to launch its air power for the first time in the twenty-first century against a country with nothing, a country of ruins and in ruins.

From such an act he predicted disaster. And so it would be. At the time, something about that image of air strikes on rubble stunned me, in part because it felt both horrifying and true, in part because it seemed such an ominous signal of what might lie in our future, and in part because nothing like it could then be found in the mainstream news or in any kind of debate about how to respond to 9/11 (of which there was essentially none). Impulsively, I emailed his piece out with a note of my own to friends and relatives, something I had never done before. That, as it turned out, would be the start of what became an ever-expanding no-name listserv and, a little more than a year later, TomDispatch.

■ A Plutocracy of the rubble?

So the first word to fully catch my attention and set me in motion in the post-9/11 era was "rubble." It's sad that, almost 16 years later, Americans are still obsessively afraid for themselves, a fear that has helped fund and build a national security state of staggering dimensions. On the other hand, remarkably few of us have any sense of the endless 9/11-style experiences our military has so imprecisely delivered to the world. The bombs may be smart, but the acts couldn't be dumber.

In this country, there is essentially no sense of responsibility for the spread of terrorism, the crumbling of states, the destruction of lives and livelihoods, the tidal flow of refugees, and the rubblization of some of the planet's great cities. There's no reasonable assessment of the true nature and effects of American warfare abroad: its imprecision, its idiocy, its destructiveness. In this peaceful land, it's hard to imagine the true impact of the imprecision of war, American-style. Given the way things are going, it's easy enough, however, to imagine the scenario of Tamim Ansari writ large in the Trump years and those to follow: Americans continuing to bomb the rubble they had such a hand in creating across the Greater Middle East.

And yet distant imperial wars do have a way of coming home, and not just in the form of new surveillance techniques, or drones flying over "the homeland," or the full-scale militarization of police forces. Without those disastrous, never-ending wars, I suspect that the election of Donald Trump would have been unlikely. And while he will not loose such "precision" warfare on the homeland itself, his project (and that of the congressional Republicans) — from health care to the environment — is visibly aimed at rubblizing American society. If he were capable, he would certainly create a plutocracy of the rubble in a world where ruins are increasingly the norm.

(Source: TomDispatch)

By Dr. Paul Craig Roberts

Are you ready to die? You and I are going to die and not from old age, because our fellow Americans are brainwashed that the dumbshits believe all of the lies that are leading us to our certain destruction. This is what the Atomic Scientists tell us. And they are right.

Can you comprehend the absurdity? President Trump is under full-scale attack from the military/security complex, the U.S. prostitute media, the Democratic Party, and from many Republicans, such as Republican Senator from South Carolina Lindsey Graham and Republican Senator from Arizona John McCain simply because President Trump wants to reduce the dangerous tensions between the two major nuclear powers.

What explains the total lack of concern for their own lives on the part of the populations in South Carolina and Arizona who send to the Senate and keep sending to the Senate two morons



What is wrong with Americans that they cannot understand that any "leader" who provokes war with a major nuclear power should be instantly institutionalized as totally insane?

It's time for liberals to fight back

By John Lloyd

Poland is in an uproar. The decision of its ruling Law and Justice Party to bring the judiciary under political control has been partially blocked by President Andrzej Duda after large street demonstrations in most major cities.

But this is not a government which brooks denial. The Justice Minister Zbigniew Ziobro, responding on Wednesday to a complaint against the bill filed by the European Union, said the government wouldn't succumb to "blackmail, threats and intimidation." "No threats will stand in our way. We won't let anyone from the outside treat us this way," he told reporters.

"Outside" in this instance is a Union whose democratic and civic norms Poland enthusiastically embraced when it joined the EU in 2004 with nine other states, eight of which were formerly Communist-ruled. "Outside" is a Union which, in 2015, pumped in €13.4b (\$14.2b) to its economy, by some way the largest subsidy to any EU member.

Over the 13 years of its membership, Poland has received some €150bn. "What we are witnessing," writes the Polish-Nigerian commentator Remi Adekoya, "is, without doubt, one of the largest wealth transfers between nations

in modern history."

■ Rule of leaders

"Outside" is a Western world where the rule of laws must take precedence over the rule of leaders. Where the divisions of ethnicity must no longer be a matter of discrimination or prejudice.

"Outside" is also globalization, the complex networks of trade agreements, transnational corporate production and overarching financial, political and legal institutions. And "outside" has been suffused, since the collapse of Soviet communism in 1991, with a broadly liberal ideology which stresses openness, multiculturalism and constant willingness to change.

The current Polish government is against most of that. And why should it not be? So is the leader of the Western world.

President Donald Trump, in a speech in Warsaw early this month, forbore to mention the justice law, instead sharing distaste for the news media with President Duda and lamenting the decline of Europe, implicitly exempting Poland from that declines. Home again, Trump signaled that he remains a reactionary by banning transgender people from the military. He had already shown his belief that govern-

ment was all about him by attacking Attorney General Jeff Sessions for recusing himself from an investigation about alleged Russian involvement in the 2016 election – as by law Sessions had to – and in doing so, being "unfair" to the president.

A shift is taking place in politics and society worldwide, and no-one can know how far it will go. The release from communism in the early 1990s was expected by many – including me, then a correspondent in Eastern Europe – to result in a stable embrace of liberal democratic norms by the former communist countries, including Russia itself.

That was a liberal illusion. It is now being proven wrong, most starkly in Russia, but also in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and possibly – after the coming October election – in the Czech Republic.

The opposite of communism, in these countries, is not now liberal democracy, but semi-authoritarian nationalism. That had been a discreet component of communism; it has flourished much more openly since communism collapsed. As the European Council president Donald Tusk (a former Prime Minister of Poland) put it – "Poland is moving us back, in time and space, to the East."

But it isn't just the East. Trump is a standing affront to the ideals and practices of democratic statehood, which have had the adherence, more or less, of liberals, conservatives and social democrats in the post-war West.

Under his giant shadow, movements of both the far left and right have become less inhibited about their distaste for political establishments they see as moribund, even illegitimate.

The far left showed one version of this at the G-20 summit in Hamburg earlier this month. German Chancellor Angela Merkel chose Hamburg for its radical, open culture – only to have parts of the city trashed and burned by mainly young, often masked demonstrators. A Syrian bystander, who had arrived 18 months before as a refugee, told a reporter, "I can't believe my eyes. They have such a beautiful country and they're destroying it."

The protesters destroyed more than Hamburg's shops (and put more than 200 of the 20,000 police deployed in hospital). As the veteran German journalist, Josef Joffe put it, the 'anti-capitalist' demonstrations are the "postmodern version of Rome's bread and circuses – almost no risk and lots of fun. And selfies." ➔13

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10 tips for glowing skin

Get 10 easy tips for keeping your skin fresh and radiant

When you're pregnant, you seem to emanate a radiant glow. But even the loveliest complexion can use a little extra pampering -- especially during the summer months. Between the sun, chlorine, sweat, and your fluctuating hormones, your skin can begin to look less than radiant if you don't treat it with care. Try these tips for healthy, soft, and clean skin -- and let your pregnancy glow shine through!

1. Cleanse: Clean skin is beautiful skin. It's important to keep your skin cleansed of sweat, dirt, and oil to prevent clogged pores and a dull appearance. Wash your face with a gentle cleanser every morning and night, followed by a quick sweep with toner on a cotton pad. Also, wash your face after activities such as exercising, cleaning the house, gardening, or any other dirty or physically exerting activity, or one that requires the use of sunscreen.

2. Exfoliate: Does your skin seem dull? It could be the buildup of dead skin cells, sunscreen, makeup, or oils. Exfoliation, which is done with a mild scrub or by using a cream containing fruit acids, is a good way to get that glow back to the surface by revealing the fresh, new skin underneath. If you choose a scrub, try not to scrub too hard or your skin will look ruddy. Gentle pressure is all you need to help the scrubbing granules in an exfoliant do their work. If you use a fruit-acid cream or gel, don't overdo it. Follow the product instructions to prevent skin irritation.

3. Refresh: If you don't have time to wash your face, or just want to get rid of that "tired" look, use an astringent to refresh and clean your skin. Try witch hazel on a cotton pad. Or fill a spray bottle with one part alcohol to six parts water, and add a few drops of your favorite essential oil. Close your eyes and lightly spritz your face. You'll feel invigorated and your face will show it!

4. Moisturize: Keeping your skin



It's important to keep your skin cleansed of sweat, dirt, and oil to prevent clogged pores and a dull appearance.

moisturized is very important. Even if your skin is oilier than usual because of the summer heat and pregnancy hormones, you should use an oil-free moisturizer to replace the moisture that's stripped when you cleanse your face. Also, you'll need a moisturizer to even out your skin tone if you have "combination skin" -- skin that's oily in some parts and drier in others. Apply moisturizer to your face after each cleansing. Look for products that are hypoallergenic, because many skin types become very sensitive with the changes of pregnancy.

5. Protect: One of the most critical thing you can do to keep your skin healthy, younger looking, and evenly

toned is to wear sunscreen every day. This is especially true when you're pregnant because your skin might be more sensitive and prone to burning. If you tend to have breakouts or skin irritations, look for oil-free or extra-gentle sunscreens especially formulated for facial skin.

6. Soothe: If you've overdone your exposure to the sun, soothe your skin with aloe vera gel or cocoa butter cream. These ingredients coat the skin with soothing moisture and are very gentle. Opt for fragrance-free formulations to minimize the possibility of further skin irritation.

7. Enhance: Just because you're minimizing sun exposure doesn't mean you can't get that sun-kissed

look. Enhance your pregnancy glow with a shimmery bronzer -- a sheer cream or gel that's used like a foundation and easily washed off. Use a tester to select a shade that's just a bit darker than your natural skin tone. After evenly applying a light layer of bronzer, lightly dust some rosy blush on the apples of your cheeks, and you'll look like you've been having fun in the sun!

8. Powder: Glow looks great, but grease doesn't! With the mercury rising, you're bound to sweat. If you have oily skin then you might be prone to more breakouts. Keep a translucent pressed powder compact on hand, and blot your skin frequently with a powder puff or tissue tipped in powder to absorb extra sweat and oil. You'll look fresh and it'll help keep breakouts under control.

9. Nourish: The stress of summer and pregnancy can do a real number on your skin. But you can fight back by nourishing your skin with a relaxing facial mask. Buy a botanical mask for normal skin, a mud mask for oily skin, or an avocado mask for dry skin. Or for all skin types, here's an easy mask you can make at home: Simply mix 1/2 cup of oatmeal with warm water and a tablespoon of honey. Apply liberally to your face, avoiding the eye area. Sit back and relax for 10 minutes and rinse well. Your skin will feel soft and fresh!

10. Pamper: Your skin will feel and look fantastic if you make it a point to pamper it once a week. Give yourself a home spa treatment by gently cleansing your face, then steaming it over a bowl of hot water with lavender and rose leaves or your favorite fragrant tea, for five minutes (just use a towel draped over the back of your head while leaning over the bowl to trap the steam from the hot water). Next, splash with cold water and apply some toner and moisturizer. Your pores will be deep-down clean, and you'll look and feel relaxed!

(Source: parents.com)

8 ways to quell the fire of heartburn

Heartburn is a common problem. It's caused by the backwash of stomach acid into the esophagus, the tube connecting the mouth and stomach. This is formally called gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). More than just a minor discomfort, heartburn can significantly reduce quality of life. "Heartburn can cause damage to the esophagus and even increase the risk of cancer if ignored and untreated," says Dr. William Kormos, editor in chief of Harvard Men's Health Watch and a primary care physician at Massachusetts General Hospital.

■ These eight steps can help ease heartburn.

1. Eat in a heartburn-smart way. Large meals put pressure on the muscle that normally helps keep stomach contents from backing up into the esophagus. The more you eat, the longer it takes for the stomach to empty, which contributes to reflux. Try smaller, more frequent meals — and don't wolf down your food.

2. Avoid late-night eating. Having a meal or snack within three hours of lying down to sleep can worsen reflux, causing heartburn. Leave enough time for the stomach to clear out.

3. Don't exercise right after meals. Give your stomach time to empty; wait a couple of hours. But don't just lie down either, which will worsen reflux.

4. Sleep on an incline. Raising your torso up a bit with a wedge-shaped cushion may ease nighttime heartburn. Wedges are available from medical supply companies and some home goods stores. Don't just prop your head and shoulders up with regular pillows — doing so can actually increase pressure on the stomach by curling you up at the waist.

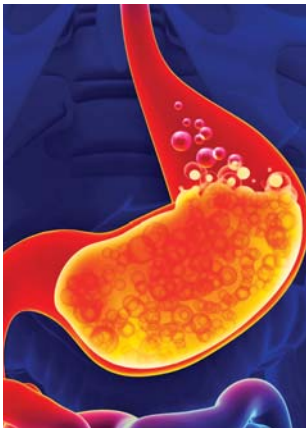
5. Identify and avoid foods associated with heartburn. Common offenders include fatty foods, spicy foods, tomatoes, garlic, milk, coffee, tea, cola, peppermint, and chocolate. Carbonated beverages cause belching, which also causes reflux.

6. Chew sugarless gum after a meal. Chewing gum promotes salivation, which helps neutralize acid, soothes the esophagus, and washes acid back down to the stomach. But avoid peppermint-flavored gum, which may trigger heartburn more than other flavors.

7. Rule out medication side effects. Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether any of the medications you take might cause pain resembling heartburn or contribute to reflux.

8. Lose weight if you need to. Being overweight puts more pressure on the stomach and pushes stomach contents into the esophagus. The tight-fitting clothing and belts that come with weight gain may also be a factor.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)



Ohio boy takes his first steps with the help of prosthetic legs

,By Gabriela Siegal

At the age of 9, Gabe Davis has walked for the first time. He was born with a rare congenital disability that left his legs underdeveloped and limited his motor skills.

Last week, he took his first steps using a new pair of prosthetic legs -- and it has brought him closer to his dream of becoming a professional baseball player.

Gabe was born with a condition called proximal femoral focal deficiency. He was born without tibias and feet that were not large enough to walk on.

"His legs were completely twisted," said Ryan Davis, Gabe's father. "A couple of doctors said it was the worst case they had ever seen."

But now, after his 14th surgery in six years, Gabe is finally able to pursue his dream on the baseball field in his new hometown of Berea, Ohio.

The Davis family adopted Gabe six years ago from Ghana. When they adopted him, they were aware of his condition, but did not understand how severe it was, because he had been misdiagnosed in Ghana.

"It was not until we adopted him that we very quickly realized he couldn't do anything," Ryan Davis said.

At first, the Davises sought medical care for Gabe near where they lived in Ohio, but many doctors said the severity of Gabe's disorder put it beyond the scope of their expertise. Then, last year, the family found a doctor in Florida who could perform surgery that would give Gabe greater functionality in his legs. The surgery, if successful, would let him walk for the first time.

In March and April 2016, Gabe underwent his two most serious surgeries. Gabe spent the summer



Gabe was born with a condition called proximal femoral focal deficiency. He was born without tibias and feet that were not large enough to walk on.

in physical therapy and tried on his prosthetic legs for the first time in October.

He spent the past few months learning how to comfortably use them -- and last week, he was

able to take his first steps on his own.

"It felt kind of different and interesting to use them," Gabe said. "I was afraid I would fall. I did fall, but I got right back up."

Gabe has never been easily deterred from pursuing his passions, his parents said. He first picked up a baseball bat three years ago, when his parents and older brothers taught him how to play. He then asked his father if he could join a "typical" baseball team.

"Gabe is perseverant. He just doesn't quit. When he gets something in his head he just won't stop," Ryan Davis said. "We just had to figure out how to help him do this."

After recovering from his most recent surgery, Gabe was finally ready to join a team. This spring, he joined the Berea Tigers Little League team as a pitcher and catcher.

He played sitting on the ground, without his prosthetic legs.

"I was way more nervous about him playing baseball than he was," Gabe's mother, Summer Davis, said. "But he did great and was one of the better kids on the team."

While Gabe loved his first season with the Berea Tigers, he said, the highlight of his baseball career to date was getting to throw the first pitch at both a Myrtle Beach Pelicans minor league game and a Cleveland Indians major league game.

"It was really cool and really fun," Gabe said.

Gabe aspires to go on to play in the major leagues one day -- and his athletic dreams extend beyond baseball. "My big dream is to be in the Paralympics for Ghana or the USA," Gabe said. "But I want to play track!"

(Source: CNN)

Signs & symptoms of hearing loss

In general, there are three types of hearing loss. These are the conductive hearing loss, the sensor neural hearing loss, and the mixed hearing loss.

Conductive hearing loss is a disorder if either the outer ear or the middle ear prevents the sound from getting into the inner part of the ear. If you have this problem, the sounds you hear are faint and distorted. This is mainly due to ear canal infection, wax build-up or the presence of a foreign object in the ear canal.

Sensor neural hearing loss happens if the nerves in the inner ear become damaged. They cannot transmit the signals to the brain. People with this

illness say that they hear speech as mumbles or they are able to hear that you are saying something but can't understand it at all. This is common to old people. Other than age, the factors that contribute to this type of hearing loss are injury, diabetes, meningitis, or even heredity, among others.

Mixed hearing loss comes about when these two are combined. This means the patient has problems with all the components of the ear. He has

acquired both conductive and sensor neural hearing loss.

Identifying hearing loss especially in children and infants necessitates meticulous observation, systematic medical examination as well as audiological testing.

- You need to raise your voice consistently in order to get your child's attention.

- Your child frequently asks "huh?" or "what?" when you are

Sensor neural hearing loss happens if the nerves in the inner ear become damaged. They cannot transmit the signals to the brain.

talking to him.

- Your child's response to sounds is inconsistent, at times hearing it while other times may not.

- Your child had suffered some sort of ear infection.

- Your child complains that his ears are painful.

- Your watches T.V. with very high volume level.

- Your child's speech very poor compared to other his age.

- Your child seldom uses verbal language.

- Your child asks frequently that you repeat what you have said.

(Source: thehealthsuccesssite.com)

This fed-up mom reality-checks anyone who thinks C-sections are "the easy way out"

You would've expected to see comments of support and congratulations on Raye Lee's Facebook page, after she gave birth earlier this month. Instead, the new mother was bombarded with comments claiming that a C-section somehow invalidated the monumental occasion. We'd love to spend a paragraph (or more) explaining why declaring a C-section "the easy way out" is a terrible thing to do, but Raye's emotional (and graphic) follow-up post does an even better job.

Long dramatic post warning:

"Oh, A C-section? So you didn't actually give birth. It must have been nice to take the easy way out like that."

Ah, yes. My emergency C-section was absolutely a matter of convenience. It was really convenient to be in labor for 38 hours before my baby went into distress and then every contraction was literally stopping his heart.

Being told at the beginning that I was displaying great progress and wouldn't need a cesarean section... and then being told that I was being prepped for major abdominal surgery was not a shock at all. It had nothing to do with the fact that I physically couldn't because I was given no other choice to save the life of my child. Oh, and that surgery is super easy peasy to recover from.

WRONG, That is all sarcasm.

This was the most painful thing I have experienced in my life.

I now belong to a badass tribe of mamas with the scar to prove that I had a baby cut out of me and lived to tell the tale.

(because you can die from this, you know.)

Having a shrieking infant pulled out of an incision that is only 5 inches long, but is cut and shredded and pulled until it rips apart through all of your layers of fat, muscle, and organs (which they lay on the table next to your body, in order to continue to cut until they reach your child) is a completely different experience than I had imagined my sons birth to be.

This was not pleasant. It still isn't.

You use your core muscles for literally everything... even sitting down, imagine not being able to use them because they have literally been shredded and mangled by a doctor and not being able to repair them for 6+ weeks because your body has to do it naturally.

When that first nurse asked you to try getting out of bed and the ripping pain of a body cut apart and stitched back together seared through you, you realized the irony of anybody who talks about it being the "easy way out".

I am the strongest woman that I know. Not only for myself, but for my beautiful son... and I would honestly go through this every single day just to make sure I am able to see his smiling face.

(Source: greatist.com)

Gas station in Tehran gets national heritage status

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A relatively long-standing gas station in downtown Tehran has recently been inscribed on the National Heritage List, bringing the number of Iran's registered heritage sites to 31710, ISNA reported on Wednesday.



A view of the time-honored gas station number 234 in downtown Tehran

Called gas station number 234 -- formerly number 4 -- it marks the second oldest filling station in the county after a counterpart in Abadan, said Akbar Nematollahi, the director of Iran Petroleum Museum and Documents.

Such old stations enjoyed unique architecture, which unfortunately many of them have been demolished or repurposed over the course of time, he added.

Located on 15th Khordad St., the gas station number 4 was built by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in the early 20th century during the Reza Shah Pahlavi reign (1925 -- 1941).

The country's oldest gas station in Abadan, Khuzestan province, was placed on National Heritage list earlier this month. The monument is now part of a petroleum industry museum, which showcases variety of documents and objects such as pumps, scales, jerry cans amongst other tools.

'Incredible shrinking airline seat': U.S. court says seat size a safety issue

A U.S. appeals court panel has said that federal officials must reconsider their decision not to regulate the size of airline seats as a safety issue.

In a ruling on Friday, one of the judges called it "the case of the incredible shrinking airline seat".

The Flyers Rights passenger group challenged the Federal Aviation Administration in court after the agency rejected its request to write rules governing seat size and the distance between rows of seats.

A three-judge panel for the federal appeals court in Washington said the FAA had relied on outdated or irrelevant tests and studies before deciding that seat spacing was a matter of comfort, not safety.

The judges sent the issue back to the FAA and said the agency must come up with a better-reasoned response to the group's safety concerns.

"We applaud the court's decision, and the path to larger seats has suddenly become a bit wider," said Kendall Creighton, a spokeswoman for Flyers Rights. (Source: The Guardian)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic City of Meknes

Inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list, the Historic City of Meknes has exerted a considerable influence on the development of the civil and military architecture (the kasbah) and works of art.

Founded in 1061 CE by the Almoravids as a military stronghold, its name originates from the great Berber tribe Meknassa who dominated eastern Morocco as far back as the Tifilalet in the 8th century.

Geographically, it is remarkably located in the Saiss Plain between the Middle Atlas and the pre-rifan massif of Zerhoun. It contains the vestiges of the Medina that bears witness to ancient socio-economic fabric and the imperial city created by the Sultan Moulay Ismail (1672-1727).



Bab al-Mansour, a massive gate outside the city of Meknes in Morocco

It is the presence today of this historic city containing the rare remains and important monuments located within a rapidly changing urban environment that gives this urban heritage its universal value. The two ensembles are surrounded by a series of ramparts that separate them from one another.

In addition to its architectural interest of being built in the Hispano-Moorish style, Meknes is of particular interest as it represents the first great work of the Alaouite dynasty, reflecting the grandeur of its creator. It also provides a remarkable approach of urban design, integrating elements of both Islamic and European architecture and town planning. (Source: UNESCO)

Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, cozy and symmetrical

TOURISM TEHRAN — The 17th century Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in Isfahan, central Iran, is one of the architectural masterpieces of Iranian architecture.

In comparison to many mosques scattered across the country, it appears to be relatively unusual, having neither a minaret nor a courtyard probably because the mosque was never intended for public use, but rather served as a worship place for women.

The Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque punctuates the middle of two-story arcades that are encircling the enormous Emam Square, itself a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Inside the sanctuary, there are thousands of mosaics that adorn the walls and its extraordinarily gorgeous ceiling that features a series of shrinking, yellow motifs, itself a masterpiece of design. Photography is allowed but using a flash is not.

Built between 1603 and 1619 during the reign of Shah Abbas I, the mosque was dedicated to the ruler's father-in-law, Sheikh Lotfollah, a revered Lebanese scholar of Islam who was invited to Isfahan to oversee the king's mosque (now the Emam Mosque).

The mosque is also very famous for having a very picturesque dome that makes extensive use of delicate yet very intercalate cream-colored tiles, changing color throughout the day from cream to pink. Some say the sunset is usually the best time to witness the change.

The exterior panels boasts collections of arabesques and floral designs that have become a signature motif of the masterpiece. The portal itself contains some stalactite-type stone carving used to decorate doorways and window recesses with rich concentrations of blue and yellow motifs.

Also known as Naghsh-e Jahan ("Image of the World"), the Emam Square is a public urban square in the center of Isfahan, a city located on the main north-south and east-west routes crossing central Iran. The square is anchored on each



Travelers sit overlooking the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in Isfahan. (Photograph: James Strachan/Getty/Robert Harding World Imagery)

side by four magnificent buildings: to the east, the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque; to the west, the pavilion of Ali Qapu; to the north, the portico of Qeyssariyeh; and to the south, the celebrated Emam Mosque.

According to UNESCO, the Emam Square was at the heart of the Safavid capital's culture, economy, religion, social power, government, and politics. Its vast sandy esplanade was used for celebrations, promenades, and public executions, for playing polo and for assembling troops.

Under tourists' eyes:

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the historical mosque have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

• 'The most beautiful mosque'

The mosque itself is small but the im-

pact is great. I love the fact that you can lay down and watch the main hall ceiling. The lonely planet describe the ceiling as "harmonious understatement". I didn't understand it until I saw it in real life. It's harmonious and stunning. (Stephen C. form Canada, visited July 2017)

• 'The inside just makes one well up'

Beautiful mosaics - and that doesn't go near to describing it. We sat on the floor staring at the dome -- exquisite. (Drift T. from the UK; visited June 2017)

• 'The most atmospheric mosque'

From the entrance you walk down a gold clad corridor to this huge domed room which is just breath taking. It is like nothing else we had seen in the whole of Iran. The basement is also worth visiting. (R. Della from United Kingdom; visited

April 2017)

• 'A must if you are in the square'

Fantastic architecture. The tile work was most impressive. You need a guide to explain it all. Well worth a visit. (Madeleine S. from the UK; visited April 2017)

• 'A nice visit'

The amount of mosaic and wall painting is amazing. You can visit the whole Mosque in half hour time. (Covaltio from Greece; visited January 2017)

• 'Magnificent jewel'

After the splendors of the neighboring Shah Mosque, one might expect a visit to the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque to be anti-climatic... The design provides for an amazing reveal as the visitor turns at the end of the passageway to confront the mosque's hidden magnificence. (Kirk E. form the U.S.; visited Nov. 2016)

South Africa's tourism a bright spot despite recession

CAPE TOWN (Reuters) — South Africa's top tourist hub Cape Town expects a 13 percent jump in tourist arrivals this year to 1.77 million, officials said on Thursday, a rare bright spot in an economy that slid into recession in March.

Cape Town had the country's four most popular attractions, including Robben Island -- apartheid's most notorious jail where former President Nelson Mandela spent 18 years.

South Africa's economy is in dire need of some positive news.

It fell into recession in the first quarter of the year and is seen in Reuters polls growing just 0.7 percent for 2017 as a whole. Unemployment is at a 14-year high of 27.7 percent.

The country's credit rating, meanwhile, has been downgraded to junk by two of the top three credit rating agencies.

But tourists have been coming, possibly encouraged by the weak rand. It has fallen more than 20 percent against the dollar since a high last year.

Britain, Germany and the United States



Tourists take pictures from a viewing platform overlooking Cape Town's Atlantic beachfront and Robben Island, where former President Nelson Mandela spent much of his 27 year incarceration, in this picture taken November 10, 2013.

were the three leading sources of tourist arrivals to the Western Cape province, Alan Winde, regional minister of economic opportunities in the Western Cape

province, said.

"Tourism can help South Africa to course correct its current economic trajectory," he told reporters.

Arrivals to Cape Town reached 1.56 million in 2016 from 1.38 million in 2014, with foreign spending rising by 3.6 billion rand to 18 billion rand (\$1.4 billion) over the same period, Winde said.

According to South African Tourism, some 10 million foreigners overall arrived last year.

Tourists numbers to the Western Cape, which was the country's best performing region in terms of paid bed nights and first time visitors, have recovered from 1.32 million in 2015 when strict new visa rules were implemented. The rules have since been lifted and flights were also increased as tourism rebounded.

The Treasury said in February that tourism contributed 3 percent to GDP in 2015, and 711,746 people or 4.5 percent of the total workforce was employed in the sector.

"We believe that the tourism sector, which is not rand hedged, has the potential to pull us out of recession and to save and grow jobs," Winde said.

Raja operates weekly rail tours to northern Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — Photo depicts a train operated by Iran's Raja Rail Transportation Company crossing the monumental Veresk Bridge in northern Iran on July 27, 2017.

Raja conducts the tours every Thursdays from Tehran passing through Varamin, Garmsar, Pol-e Sefid as well as picturesque mountainous terrains of Firuzkuh region with the return leg on the same day.

It also stops over various historical and scenic districts across its colorful itinerary with experienced tour guides giving informative dialogs.

The Veresk Bridge is a masonry arch passage that was constructed mostly by Austrians before World War II. It is located in the Veresk district of Savadkuh County in Mazandaran province.

Raja Rail Transportation Company was launched in November 1996.



© IRNA, Albor Tavakkoli

Supersonic passenger jet quieter than a truck could halve flight times

Supersonic passenger air travel could soon become a reality again, and this time around it may make as little noise as the average high-end car. Bidding is set to open next month for construction of a "low boom" plane that can break the sound barrier (761 miles per hour), NASA told Bloomberg.

Over the next few years, more people are expected to want to travel farther by air, which "will drive the demand for broadly available faster air travel," Peter Coen, project manager for NASA's commercial supersonic research team, said.

"That's going to make it possible for companies to offer competitive products in the future."

■ Supersonic aircraft

The agency awarded the design of a low boom supersonic aircraft to researchers last year, and in June a smaller-scale model of its X-plane design passed wind tunnel tests.

If successful, the full-size jet would aim to cut in half the six-hour flight time between New York and Los Angeles.

The small-scale design model, labeled the Quiet Supersonic Transport (QueSST), apparently can travel at supersonic speed without causing the ear-cracking sound



known as the sonic boom. U.S. aeronautics firm Lockheed Martin cooperated with

The small-scale design model, labeled the Quiet Supersonic Transport (QueSST), apparently can travel at supersonic speed without causing the ear-cracking sound known as the sonic boom.

NASA on the design.

The low boom feature would put the jet ahead of what has been the most ubiquitous supersonic passenger jet to date — the Concorde. According to Bloomberg, the contract for building the new aircraft will soon be up for grabs.

NASA's aim is for it to produce 60 to 65 A-weighted decibels (dBA). That is around the level of noise of a standard luxury car.

■ Noise problems

This is crucial for the success of the aircraft, as noise problems limited where the Concorde could fly. Carbon emissions and airport engine noise will also be challenges, albeit ones that historically have been less problematic for the industry.

NASA would like to spend \$390 million over five years to build the prototype based on the tested design, and then to run tests over populated areas with the full-scale version.

It has not specified where it would run the tests, but in order to have a robust track record of success, NASA is planning to fly over six different populated areas starting in 2022, if all goes as planned.

(Source: Newsweek)

Saturn moon Titan has molecules that could help make cell membranes

Titan's thick atmosphere contains large quantities of vinyl cyanide molecules, which could conceivably form membranes around cells in the liquid-hydrocarbon seas that dot the frigid moon's surface, according to the study.

Many astrobiologists regard these seas of methane as possibly habitable environments, especially considering that a variety of complex, carbon-containing organic compounds are known to exist on Titan. However, any life the moon's seas may support would have to be very different from Earth's organisms, which depend heavily on liquid water.

Cell membranes are a case in point. Here on Earth, membranes consist of fatty molecules called lipids. But lipids cannot survive in the otherworldly Titan environment, which features a hydrocarbon-based weather system and average surface temperatures of around minus 290 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 180 degrees Celsius), study team members said.

■ Cassini spacecraft

NASA's Cassini spacecraft used a special filter to peer through the hazy atmosphere of Saturn's moon Titan and see its methane seas. The images for this view were taken on Oct. 7, 2013.

NASA's Cassini spacecraft used a special filter to peer through the hazy atmosphere of Saturn's moon Titan

and see its methane seas. The images for this view were taken on Oct. 7, 2013.

However, computer simulations show that vinyl cyanide (C₂H₃CN) likely could form membranes under Titan conditions. NASA's Saturn-orbiting Cassini spacecraft has found tantalizing hints of the molecule in the moon's nitrogen-dominated atmosphere, but vinyl cyanide had never been confirmed there — until now.

In the new study, which was published online on July 28 in the journal Science Advances, researchers detected vinyl cyanide in Titan's air after scouring data collected in 2014 by the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA), a network of radio telescopes in northern Chile.

■ Modeling work

And there should be a lot of the stuff: The ALMA data and computer modeling work suggest that enough vinyl cyanide has made its way down into Titan's seas to form about 10 million membranes per cubic centimeter of liquid, the researchers said. (For comparison, coastal ocean waters here on Earth harbor about 1 million bacteria per cubic cm of water.)

This natural-color image by NASA's Cassini spacecraft shows the Saturn moon Titan's upper atmosphere — an active place where methane molecules are being broken apart by solar ultraviolet light, and the byproducts



combine to form compounds like ethane and acetylene.

The \$3.2 billion Cassini-Huygens mission — a joint effort of NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Italian Space Agency — has been delving into that chemistry during its 13-plus years in the Saturn system. The Cassini orbiter has detected negatively charged ions, known as anions — a discovery that came as a surprise to many researchers, because anions are extremely reactive and theoretically should combine with other molecules very quickly.

(Source: space.com)

World's first solar car unveiled – up to 18 miles PV added range per day

Sono Motors unveiled on Friday its prototype electric and solar car, the world's first series production bound solar powered car, with deliveries expected in 2019.

Sono Motors Sion – solar to add up to 18 miles of range in a single day Integrated solar cells (330 to be exact) on the Sion's body produce enough electricity to add around 18 miles of range per day in addition to the ~100 miles it has from plugging in its 30 kWh battery.

Although technically not completely a solar car (since by definition a solar car is significantly powered by solar) it's about halfway there.

■ Sustainable mobility

It all started with three young entrepreneurs from Munich who had a passion to see some changes toward sustainable mobility by becoming independent from oil. Laurin, Navina, and Jona spent three years developing, building, and testing a pre prototype of the Sion in Laurin's garage.

Aiming to bring to market an affordable EV for all, last July they launched Sono

Motors along with a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo to help raise needed funds for building a couple prototypes for show and test drives. The campaign was a big success with over €600,000 raised and more than 1,100 preorders.

Originally the Sion was going to be offered in two models, an Urban model priced at €12,000 with a 14.4 kWh battery giving a real world range of 50-60 miles, and an Extender model priced at €16,000 featuring a 30 kWh battery providing around 110-120 miles of real world range. But last week the decision was announced to only develop the Extender model and drop the Urban model due to weak demand because of its low range.

■ Another change

Another change from the original concept is that there will only be 5 seats instead of 6 in order to keep production costs low.

The price of €16,000 (\$18,720 USD currently) does not include the price of the 30 kWh battery which will be offered as a monthly battery lease or an upfront



battery purchase, estimated by Sono to be €4,000, which is \$4,680 USD by today's exchange rate.

330 Integrated Solar Cells to be on the Sion

Estimated final cost in USD is expected to be in the \$23,000 range with production in 2019, and test drives next summer in the U.S.

Some notable features are it's bi-directional charging which can turn the car into a mobile power station with up to 2.7 kW output, a special moss for air filtration, and an optional 750 kg capacity trailer hitch (1654 lbs.)

Fast charging is supported, but no details are available yet.

(Source: insideevs.com)

Engineering on a blue streak

■ Broad change of applications

"These chemistries independently are used in a broad range of applications," from dental composites, automobile bumpers to drug delivery materials, Shete said.

However, the process of linking polymers is not simple. It requires two chemical reactions, which are typically initiated through either a lengthy two-step process or a one-step process induced at elevated temperatures and longer time spans.

The method Kloxin and Shete developed is one step and works rapidly at room temperature and ambient conditions.

They use 470-nanometer blue light, which is similar to blue LED light used to detect certain body fluids in crime scene investigations. This light triggers reactions with a photosensitizer called camphorquinone and an activator called amine. These materials are commonly utilized in polymeric dental composites for filling cavities.

■ Chemical reactions

The light irradiates the materials to photostimulate the two chemical reactions, but not simultaneously.

First up is a reaction called the copper-catalyzed azide-alkyne cycloaddition (CuAAC) click polymerization. This reaction is facilitated by copper, and polymerization occurs in steps. Next is a reaction called the methacrylate polymerization, which forms a plastic-like material in a manner similar to adding links to a growing chain. "This is unique in the way the blue light induces sequential reactions," says Kloxin.

The end result is a material that Kloxin and Shete describe as a "glassy film," less brittle than pure methacrylate and stronger than pure CuAAC at higher temperature. The films made from this IPN material also exhibit shape memory -- when deformed, it can be returned to its original size and shape with 15 minutes of heating at 80 degrees Celsius.

This blue-light approach to form interpenetrating polymer networks saves time and energy, but those are not its only advantages. For one, this approach allows Kloxin and Shete to control the pair of chemical reactions with increased precision, allowing them to fashion the polymer networks into complex shapes.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Corn could be major victim of climate change

The weather has always been an unpredictable element of agriculture, but climate change is expected to make matters significantly worse. Determining how much worse has historically been a challenge. A new study, however, says climate-induced drought could hit several of the world's major corn producing regions all at once.

The Met Office, the UK's national weather service, used a novel approach to determine the probability of severe water stress in three major corn-producing regions that are responsible for 40 percent of global production. Instead of relying on observed historical data — which the researchers found to seriously underestimate the impact of climate change — the new study used a model focusing on water stress. The authors noted the limitations of the study, including its reliance on a single climate model, and they advise researchers to utilize multiple models in the future.

There are few agricultural products as omnipresent as corn. Thanks to the crop's geographic adaptability and genetic malleability, it has found its way into nearly every part of the Western diet. It's in ketchup, soda, bread and candy. It is the U.S.'s top feed grain, a dietary staple today for cows, pigs and chickens. In 2016, the U.S. harvested nearly 87 million acres, producing 15.1 billion bushels, for a total value of \$51.5 billion.

"We haven't seen a major drought in the U.S. and China in the same year in the last 30 years," said Chris Kent, the lead researcher on the study. "Our simulations indicate that that type of scenario is possible in the current climate."

(Source: Bloomberg)

Sleeping badly could add 3cm to your waistline, study suggests

Sleeping badly could be driving weight gain, scientists fear, after finding that people who slept just six hours a night had waist measurements an inch greater than those who get nine hours.

The results strengthen the evidence that insufficient sleep could contribute to the development of metabolic diseases such as diabetes.

The study by the University of Leeds involved 1,615 adults who reported how long they slept and kept records of food intake. It also measured other indicators of overall metabolic health such as blood pressure, blood cholesterol, blood sugar, and thyroid function as well as weight and waist circumference recorded.

Those who slept for six hours or less a night had waists that were on average 1.1 inches (3cm) larger than those who slept for nine hours.

Shorter sleep was also linked to reduced levels of good cholesterol which helps remove fat from the body and protects against conditions like heart disease.

Dr. Greg Potter, a researcher in metabolism at Leeds University, said: The "number of people with obesity worldwide has more than doubled since 1980.

"Obesity contributes to the development of many diseases, most notably type 2 diabetes. Understanding why people gain weight has crucial implications for public health."

Crucially, the study did not find any relationship between shortened sleep and a less healthy diet - a fact that surprised the researchers.

Other studies have suggested that shortened sleep can lead to poor dietary choices. But the new research suggests that it is the sleep itself which is driving the effect.

(Source: The Telegraph)

Scientists find sunscreen potential in Antarctic plants

Scientists in Chile have discovered molecules in two species of Antarctic flowers that protect the plants from solar radiation and could potentially be used in products such as sunscreen for humans and protection for vulnerable crops.



Researchers at the University of Santiago investigating the properties of Antarctic plants grown under controlled conditions found that Colobanthus quitensis (pearlwort) and Deschampsia antarctica (hair grass) could tolerate high levels of ultraviolet radiation.

According to the British Antarctic Survey, these are the only two flowering plants found in the icy polar region, growing around its more temperate edges. But climate change and melting ice are increasing their range, the Chilean researchers said.

The scientists have identified a group of molecules in the flowers, particularly Colobanthus that acts as a solar filter and prevents radiation damage, said project leader Gustavo Zuniga.

The university is seeking commercial partners to develop spin-off products from the research, he said.

"It could be used in the not too distant future," he said. "For example, for a crop that doesn't tolerate increasing levels of radiation, that genetic information could be used to make the crop respond better."

Natural sunscreens or creams could also be developed incorporating the molecules to protect human skin from damage from ultraviolet radiation, he added.

(Source: Reuters)

Tehran to host Young Earth Scientists Congress

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The 4th edition of Young Earth Scientists (YES) Congress will be held from August 27 to 30 in Tehran.

The congress will be held with the main theme of “Mitigation Geohazards, Resources for Future Generations”.

The event is cosponsored by the Ministry of Education, the House of Industry and Mine, and the National Iranian Oil Company.

About 4,000 persons have applied for participating in the congress, including 80 experts from 31 countries, the secretariat of the event announced in a press release.

Previous editions of the congress were held in China, Australia, and Tanzania and the next congress will be held in Germany.

The United Nations proclaimed the triennium 2007-2009 as “International Year of Planet Earth” (IYPE), which was officially launched in the UNESCO Headquarters on February 12, 2008. The Young Earth Scientists Network is one of the major global legacies of IYPE.

Australia is building a 1,250-mile highway for electric vehicles

Australia will install 18 electric vehicle fast-charging stations along a nearly 1,250-mile stretch of coastal highway in Queensland, creating one of the world's longest EV roadways, Reuters reported.

The network, which will cost \$3 million to build and open within six months, will stretch from Cairns to Coolangatta and west to Toowoomba, running parallel to the Great Barrier Reef. The charging stations will power a vehicle in 30 minutes. Drivers will be able to charge their vehicles for free for at least a year.

“This project is ambitious, but we want as many people as possible to board the electric vehicle revolution, as part of our transition to a low-emissions future,” said Steven Miles, Queensland’s environment minister.

News of Australia’s project follows several other major electric vehicle announcements made recently. Britain and France said this month they will ban the sale of new gas and diesel cars after 2040. India has pledged to sell only electric cars by 2030, and Norway has the same goal by 2025. The mayors of Paris, Madrid, Mexico City, and Athens said they will ban diesel cars from city centers by 2025.

The Australian electric highway will span about the same distance as the budding “west coast electric highway” in the U.S., a network of EV charging stations that stretches from California to Washington, The Guardian reported. The Trans-Canada EV highway, the world’s longest, stretches nearly 5,000 miles from British Columbia to Nova Scotia.

(Source: Yale Environment 360)

LEARN ENGLISH

Cleaning the House

A: Honey, the house is **such a mess**! I need you to help me **tidy up** a bit. My boss and her husband are coming over for dinner and the house needs to be **spotless**!

B: I’m **in the middle of something** right now. I’ll be there in a second.

A: This can’t wait! I need your help now!

B: Alright, alright. I’m coming.

A: Ok, here’s a list of **chores** we need to get done. I’ll do the dishes and get all the **groceries** for tonight. You can **sweep** and **mop** the floors. Oh, and the furniture needs to be **dusted**.

B: You know what, I have to pick something up at the mall, so why don’t you clean the floors and I’ll go to the supermarket and get all the groceries.

A: Sure that’s fine. Here is the list of all the things you need to get. Don’t forget anything!

B: Hey, honey I’m back. Wow, the house looks really good!

A: Great! Can you set the table?

B: Just a sec I’m just gonna **vacuum** this rug real fast.

A: Wait! Don’t turn it on...

■ Key vocabulary

such a mess: very dirty, disordered

tidy up: put things in place, organize

spotless: perfectly clean

in the middle of something: busy doing something at the moment

chores: house tasks

groceries: food that you buy at a store

sweep: to clean the dust, dirt etc. from the floor or ground, using a brush with a long handle

mop: to wash a floor with a wet mop

dust: to clean the dust from a surface by moving something such as a soft cloth across it

vacuum: to clean using a vacuum cleaner

■ Supplementary vocabulary

immaculate: perfectly clean, having no dirt at all

do the laundry: wash the dirty clothes

dish detergent: soap used to wash the plates, knives, forks, bowls, etc.

trash: garbage (AmE)

rubbish: garbage (BrE)

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Cabinet adopts macro strategy to fulfill Paris Agreement

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The cabinet of ministers has devised and adopted a new macro strategy on energy to fulfill Paris Agreement by maximizing energy efficiency and lowering greenhouse gases emission, environment chief said on Friday.

According to Masoumeh Ebtekar, last week the cabinet approved the macro strategy which is designed to curb greenhouse gas emission, combat air pollution, boost energy efficiency and harness renewable energies fully and effectively.

The newly adopted strategy revolves around energy and the challenges pertained to it; it has been mapped out and drawn up in details in Energy Supreme Council and is now approved by the cabinet, ISNA news agency quoted Ebtekar as saying.

Mentioning low energy efficiency in Iran she highlighted that the use of renewable and clean energies as well as the importance of taking measures to address challenges such as air pollution and greenhouse gas emission are well noted



in the strategies.

Measures to harness wind and solar powers and maximizing energy efficiency in industries, plants, and houses are proposed in the energy macro

strategy, she stated.

The environment chief went on to say that energy macro strategy are sets of comprehensive instructions for making a progress and are in accordance with

July 30: World Day against Trafficking in Persons, Intl. Day of Friendship



World Day against Trafficking in Persons and International Day of Friendship are both global events which fall on July 30.

■ ‘Act to Protect and Assist Trafficked Persons’

Human trafficking is a crime that exploits women, children and men for numerous purposes including forced labor and sex. The International Labor Organization estimates that 21 million people are victims of forced labor globally. This estimate also includes victims of human trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation. While it is not known how many of these victims were trafficked, the estimate implies that currently, there are millions of trafficking in persons victims in the world.

This year the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has chosen ‘act to protect and assist trafficked persons’ as the focus of the World Day. This topic highlights one of the most pressing issues of our time -- the large mixed migration movements of refugees and migrants. The theme puts the spotlight on the significant impact of conflict and natural disasters, as well as the resultant, multiple risks of human trafficking that many people face. It addresses the key issue concerning trafficking responses:

that most people are never identified as trafficking victims and therefore cannot access most of the assistance or protection provided.

Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination for victims. Children make up almost a third of all human trafficking victims worldwide, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. Additionally, women and girls comprise 71 per cent of human trafficking victims, the report states.

In 2010, the General Assembly adopted the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, urging Governments worldwide to take coordinated and consistent measures to defeat this scourge. The Plan calls for integrating the fight against human trafficking into the UN’s broader programs in order to boost development and strengthen security worldwide. One of the crucial provisions in the Plan is the establishment of a UN Voluntary Trust Fund for victims of trafficking, especially women and children.

The Trust Fund facilitates effective, on-the-ground assistance and protection to victims of trafficking, through grants to specialized NGOs. In the coming years, it aims to prioritize victims coming from a context of armed conflict and those identified among large refugee and migration flows. It will also focus its assistance to victims trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, organ removal, forced begging, forced criminality and emerging exploitative purposes (e.g. skin removal, online pornography).

In 2013, the General Assembly held a high-level meeting to appraise the Global Plan of Action. Member States also adopted resolution A/RES/68/192

and designated July 30 as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons. This resolution declared that such a day was necessary to “raise awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and for the promotion and protection of their rights.”

In September 2015, the world adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and embraced goals and targets on trafficking in persons. These goals call for an end to trafficking and violence against children; as well as the need for measures against human trafficking, and they strive for the elimination of all forms of violence against and exploitation of women and girls.

Another important development is the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, which produced the groundbreaking New York Declaration. Of the nineteen commitments adopted by countries in the Declaration, three are dedicated to concrete action against the crimes of human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

■ International Day of Friendship: unite for the greater good

Our world face many challenges, crises and forces of division — such as poverty, violence, and human rights abuses — among many others — that undermine peace, security, development and social harmony among the world’s peoples.

To confront those crises and challenges, their root causes must be addressed by promoting and defending a shared spirit of human solidarity that takes many forms — the simplest of which is friendship.

Through friendship — by accumulating bonds of camaraderie and developing strong ties of trust — we can contribute to the fundamental shifts that are urgently needed to achieve lasting stability, weave a safety

the country’s current needs; “additionally it creates opportunities for fostering international cooperation and fulfilling the Paris climate accord as well as our national goals.”

The Paris Agreement Paris climate accord or Paris climate agreement, is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020. The language of the agreement was negotiated by representatives of 196 parties at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in Paris and adopted by consensus on 12 December 2015. As of July 2017, 195 UNFCCC members have signed the agreement, 156 of which have ratified it.

In the Paris Agreement, each country determines, plans and regularly reports its own contribution it should make in order to mitigate global warming. Iran has pledged to reduce its emission by 12 percent.



net that will protect us all, and generate passion for a better world where all are united for the greater good.

■ Background

The International Day of Friendship is an initiative that follows on the proposal made by UNESCO and taken up by the UN General Assembly in 1997 (A/RES/52/13).

The International Day of Friendship is also based on the recognition of the relevance and importance of friendship as a noble and valuable sentiment in the lives of human beings around the world.

The International Day of Friendship was proclaimed in 2011 by the UN General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.

To mark the International Day of Friendship the UN encourages governments, international organizations and civil society groups to hold events, activities and initiatives that contribute to the efforts of the international community towards promoting a dialogue among civilizations, solidarity, mutual understanding and reconciliation.

(Source: un.org)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

Iran’s embassy hosts charity event in memory of firefighters

A charity market was held in Iran’s embassy in Tokyo in memory of the firefighters who lost their lives in Tehran’s Plasco building collapse on January 19.

The event was organized by diplomats’ wives in Tokyo, Japanese women having Iranian husbands, and Iranian merchants in Tokyo.

Iranian handicrafts, traditional food and costumes were on display at the market.

All the proceeds will be donated to those who suffered injuries and losses during the tragic incident.

ENGLISH PROVERB

A problem shared is a problem halved

■ **Explanation**: talking about a problem with someone else usually makes it seem less daunting or troubling

■ **For example**: Just tell me what’s bothering you, honey. You know what they say—a problem shared is a problem halved.

PHRASAL VERB

Dash off

■ **Meaning**: to leave somewhere very quickly

■ **For example**: Harry dashed off before she had a chance to thank him.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Tighten your belt

■ **Explanation**: to spend less money or be careful how you spend it because there is less available

■ **For example**: Another bill? I’ll have to tighten my belt this month!

برگزاری بازارچه خیریه به یاد آتش نشانان فداکار در سفارت ایران در توکیو

بازارچه خیریه سفارت جمهوری اسلامی ایران در توکیو به منظور ادای احترام از فداکاری آتش نشانان ایرانی در حادثه ساختمان پلاسکو همراه بود.این بازارچه خیریه به همت همسران دیپلماتهای سفارت جمهوری اسلامی ایران در ژاپن و با مشارکت بانوان ژاپنی دارای همسر ایرانی و جمعی از تجار و بازرگانان ایرانی مقیم برگزار شد. در غرفه های بازارچه خیریه اسمال، صنایع دستی کشورمان لباس محلی و غذاهای سنتی و محلی ایران معرض بازدید شرکت کنندگان قرار گرفته بود. عواید حاصل از بازارچه صرف حمایت از آسیب دیدگان حادثه پلاسکو و سوانح سوختگی خواهد شد.

North Korea: Second ICBM test proves U.S. in strike range

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said the second flight test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) demonstrated that his country can hit the US mainland.

His comments came hours after the launch which left analysts concluding that a wide swath of the United States, including Los Angeles and Chicago, is now in range of North Korean weapons.

The Korean Central News Agency said on Saturday that Kim expressed "great satisfaction" after the Hwasong-14 missile reached a maximum height of 3,725 kilometers and travelled 998 kilometers, before accurately landing in waters off Japan.

The agency quoted Kim as saying that the launch reaffirmed the reliability of the country's ICBM system and ability to fire at "random regions and locations at random times", with the "entire" U.S. mainland now within range.

Analysts had estimated that the North's first ICBM on July 4 could have reached Alaska, and said that the latest missile appeared to extend that range significantly.

Immediately after the launch, U.S. and South Korean forces conducted live-fire exercises.

Song Young-moo, South Korean de-



fense minister, called for the deployment of strategic U.S. military assets - which usually means stealth bombers and aircraft carriers - as well as additional launchers of an advanced U.S. anti-missile system.

U.S. President Donald Trump condemned the test as a threat to the world, and rejected North Korea's claim that nuclear power ensures its security.

"In reality, they have the opposite ef-

fect," he said in a statement.

Weapons and tests "further isolate North Korea, weaken its economy, and deprive its people," he said, as he vowed to "take all necessary steps" to ensure the security of the U.S. and its allies.

China meanwhile, North Korea's most important ally, urged Pyongyang to abide by the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and refrain from escalating tensions, according to a foreign ministry

spokesman quoted by the Xinhua news agency.

■ Growing concern

Washington and its allies have watched with growing concern as Pyongyang has progressed towards its goal of having all of the US within range of its missiles, to counter what it labels as U.S. aggression.

There are other hurdles, including building nuclear warheads to fit on those missiles and ensuring reliability.

But many analysts have been surprised by how quickly Kim has developed North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, despite several rounds of United Nations Security Council sanctions that have squeezed the impoverished country's economy.

North Korea created a stir on July 4 when it test-fired its first ICBM, a Hwasong-14 missile, which experts believe could have the potential to reach Alaska.

Kim, who personally oversaw that launch on America's Independence Day, described it as a gift to the "American bastards".

North Korea is not believed to have yet developed the technology to miniaturize a nuclear weapon to fit in a missile's warhead.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Nuclear security expert doubts UN treaty can lead to disarmament

I→ I think that the ban treaty was not agreed to until 2017 because most states previously took a more pragmatic approach, understanding that disarmament could only be achieved with the states that actually possess the nuclear weapons to be disarmed taking an active part.

■ Why was the treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly which is not mandatory?

A: The ban could only have moved forward in the General Assembly, where the majority rules; in the Security Council, it would have been vetoed by nuclear-armed states.

■ Can the ban treaty lead to nuclear disarmament?

A: Supporters of the ban treaty hope that over time it will generate political pressure on the states that possess nuclear weapons to get rid of them. I very much doubt that this pressure will be enough to lead to disarmament.

If disarmament is to be achieved, it will require difficult work to build new structures of international security that can provide security without nuclear weapons, new approaches to verification, and more, none of which was addressed in the ban treaty.

■ Supporters say the treaty will put pressure on nuclear powers to eliminate their nuclear arsenal. What can be the possible pressures?

A: Except for votes in the General Assembly, UN bodies will not be able to put much pressure on the nuclear powers, given that five of them have vetoes on the UN Security Council.

■ Why hasn't the IAEA been seeking nuclear disarmament?

A: In fact, nuclear disarmament is not included as a goal of the IAEA in the IAEA Statute.

The only mention of the issue in the statute is a provision requiring that the IAEA conduct its activities "in conformity with policies of the United Nations furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament and in conformity with any international agreements entered into pursuant to such policies." In other words, the IAEA does not have the job of pursuing disarmament or verifying disarmament itself, but it does need to do its job in a way that conforms with what the United Nations is doing with respect to disarmament. States COULD ask the IAEA to verify some aspects of disarmament, however — as Russia, the United States, and the IAEA discussed with respect to verifying excess fissile material in the Trilateral Initiative of the 1990s.

One area where Iran could play a very helpful role in the future of the ban treaty is in helping states come to a common definition of what the provision that says states cannot "develop" nuclear weapons actually means.



One area where Iran could play a very helpful role in the future of the ban treaty is in helping states come to a common definition of what the provision that says states cannot "develop" nuclear weapons actually means. (The NPT just prohibits non-nuclear-weapon states from receiving, manufacturing, or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons; the word "develop" is not included.) In the JCPOA, Iran wisely agreed not to undertake a number of activities that have few real purposes other than contributing to the development of nuclear weapons. Those prohibitions could be a major part of what states might come to agree "develop" means, and Iran could help explain its experience with implementing such provisions.

Angry Jordanians demand Israeli embassy closure

Angered by a recent fatal shooting at the Israel embassy, Jordanians hold a demonstration in Amman demanding the government shut down the mission and scrap the unpopular 1994 peace treaty with Tel Aviv.

Protesters chanted slogans such as "Death to Israel" and "No Zionist embassy on Jordanian soil" during Friday's protest near the Israeli mission in the Jordanian capital.

On Sunday, an Israeli embassy guard shot dead two Jordanians after one of them allegedly attacked him with a screwdriver.

Israel's Foreign Ministry claimed that the guards had acted in self-defense.

However, Jordanian police said that the security officer shot the Jordanian victim, who worked for a furniture company and was delivering an order, after they got into a brawl.

The security man, along with the rest of the embassy staff, returned to the occupied territories under the protection of diplomatic immunity.

The shooter received a warm welcome from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who praised him for what he termed acting "calmly."

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman



Safadi denounced Netanyahu's move as "a disgrace," saying Israel "tried to portray things as if the ambassador and the suspect were under siege, and that they were liberated and celebrated as heroes coming home."

Jordan has launched an investigation into the deadly shooting incident and Jordan's attorney general has filed murder charges against the Israeli embassy guard.

On Friday, 56 Jordanian lawmakers signed a petition, urging the Amman

government to expel Israeli ambassador Einat Schlein and bring back Jordan's envoy to the occupied territories, Walid Obeidat.

The 195-seat legislative chamber is set to discuss the issue during a Sunday session.

A day earlier, Jordan's King Abdullah II urged Israel to put the shooter on trial and said the premier's behavior towards the security guard had been "provocative on all fronts and enrages us, destabilizes

security and fuels extremism."

"We demand that the Israeli Prime Minister abides by his commitment and takes all measures to ensure the trial of the killer, and not handle this like a political show to achieve personal political gains," he pointed out.

During Friday's demonstration, which saw a heavy police presence, the Jordanian demonstrators called for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador.

"The main headline of this protest is to move the shameful embassy of the Zionist entity from our capital Amman and at the same time to focus on cancelling the shameful agreement of Wadi Araba," said protester Abdul Majeed Dandeas.

He further noted that the Jordanians will continue anti-Israel demonstrations "because the national dignity is a red line for us and Zionists have to understand this."

Another protester, Ahmed al-Ramahi, said, "The demands today are to close this (Israeli) embassy and to say no for Wadi Araba agreement that did not bring anything for the Jordanian people."

According to a Jordanian government official, the country would not allow the return of Israel's ambassador until the shooting incident is properly investigated.

(Source: al Alam)

Yemeni naval forces target Emirati vessel off Mukha coast

Yemeni naval forces, backed by fighters from Popular Committees, have reportedly targeted an Emirati military vessel in a missile attack off the coast of the country's southwestern province of Ta'izz.

A military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Arabic-language al-Masirah television network that the frigate was targeted with a guided missile in waters near the port city of Mukha, situated 346 kilometers south of the capital Sana'a, on Saturday afternoon.

The development came less than a week after Yemeni forces and their allies destroyed a gunboat of the Saudi-led coalition off the coast of Yemen's western province of Hudaydah.

An unnamed military source asserted that the Saudi vessel was carrying out radar jamming and deception against the Yemeni army when it was targeted with a missile on July 24.

On January 30, Yemeni army forces, backed by fighters from allied Popular Committees, fired a guided missile at al-Madinah warship in waters near the city of Hudaydah.

The Saudi-led coalition, which is assisting Riyadh in its war on Yemen, later confirmed the incident but claimed only five people had lost lives in the attack.

Yet, footage of the raid, provided by Yemeni forces, showed the enormity of the explosion and subsequent fire on the deck of the Saudi vessel.

On January 21, the Yemeni Coast Guard warned enemies' battleships against using the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, to bomb civilian targets, emphasizing that such a practice poses grave threats to international maritime navigation in the area.

In October 2016, Yemeni forces and fighters from the Popular Committees destroyed an Emirati HSV-2 Swift hybrid catamaran off the shores of Mukha.

Yemeni army forces had destroyed a Saudi warship in a missile attack in the southwestern coast of Yemen, in the Bab el-Mandeb, on October 10, 2015.

The development came only days after Yemeni forces managed to destroy another Saudi vessel in the area, with reports saying that the sunken ship had repeatedly fired rockets on residential areas in Ta'izz Province.

(Source: Press TV)

'Syrian army reaches last town before Dayr al-Zawr'

A monitoring group says Syrian government forces have reached the last town held by the ISIL (Daesh) Takfiri terrorists on the road to the Arab country's beleaguered eastern city of Dayr al-Zawr.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), affiliated to the foreign-based opposition groups, said on Friday that the army troops are on the outskirts of al-Sukhna town, some 70 kilometers (45 miles) northeast of the ancient city of Palmyra.

Al-Sukhna, the last on the desert road to Dayr al-Zawr city, and the oil and gas fields in the surrounding countryside have been held by Daesh since 2015.

Dayr al-Zawr has been effectively under siege by Daesh Takfiri militants since early 2015, when the militants launched an offensive, capturing the city of Palmyra in Homs Province, then cutting off the remaining supply line to the city.

Syria's Tishreen newspaper also quoted a field source as saying that the Syrian army continues to advance toward al-Sukhna, saying the troops gained control of the hill of Om Khism and the mountain of al-Qalaylat, southwest of the town.

"Heavy fighting is ongoing between the two sides," SOHR head Rami Abdel Rahman said.

The Britain-based monitoring group said Daesh commanders had fled to surrounding mountains as the army troops, backed by Russian airstrike, approached the town.

Syria has been gripped by conflict since March 2011. The government has repeatedly blamed certain foreign countries for the spread of the devastating militancy in the country.

Over the past few months, Syrian forces have made sweeping gains against Takfiri elements, which have in turn increased their acts of violence across the country.

(Source: SANA)

It's time for liberals to fight back

8→

■ Mainstream politicians

On the right, ideologists like Trump's senior adviser Steve Bannon embrace the most lurid themes and practices of tabloid journalism, especially in representing immigrants as criminal and lazy, the state as oppressive and mainstream politicians as corrupt, in order to cement a bloc of the public behind a right-wing program. According to the journalist Ian Birell, Trump is now a role model for authoritarian leaders in Liberia, Rwanda and Cambodia. When Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was asked in an interview about nepotism, by employing her sons in her administration, she shot back: "My sons? Ask Trump!"

A large part of the Western public is indeed justified in disappointment with and fear of what they see as the effects of liberal globalization. Wages have stagnated, rapid change has favored the elites and the wealthy and skills have given shape to lives, even communities, are now captured by increasingly intelligent machines. But, as both Americans and Poles are discovering, the "cure" from the far right is worse.

The extremes wish to make sure that the center will not hold. There's a fight on between the nationalist and the globalist visions which, even after the defeat of the far right in France and the Netherlands, remains intense. Moderate liberalism, after years of easy assumption that its bases were secure, now must show itself capable of mind-to-mind combat.

(Source: Reuters)

Christian Science Monitor: Can Trump isolate Iran without isolating U.S.?

I→ "If the United States withdrew from the JCPOA," the acronym for the nuclear deal's official name, "the nuclear accord would continue [but] the political optic would shift," says Robert Litwak, vice president for scholars and academic relations at the Wilson Center in Washington.

In reaching the deal, it was "the United States and the world versus Iran," he says. But "if the United States unilaterally withdrew, the optic would shift to Iran and the world versus the United States," adds Mr. Litwak, author of "Iran's Nuclear Chess: After the Deal" Under that new scenario, the U.S. "would be the outlier."

As Sen. Bob Corker (R) of Tennessee, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told a Washington audience this week, "You want the breakup of this deal to be about Iran. You don't want it to be about the U.S., because we want our allies with us."

The president, on the other hand, appears to be focused on scrapping the deal — whether that means the U.S. is "going it alone" or not.

Trump accepted Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's recommendation last week that the president again find Iran in compliance with the deal. But he also instructed his national security staff to prepare the rationale for the oppo-

sition finding — and for justifying a withdrawal — for the next three-month review he must deliver to Congress.

He has also signaled publicly that he is unlikely to again certify Iran's compliance.

The State Department is already preparing initial steps to ratchet up what Mr. Corker calls "radical enforcement" of the deal. As one example, U.S. officials will soon call on the International Atomic Energy Administration (IAEA), the international nuclear watchdog agency charged with verifying Iran's compliance, to seek access to Iranian military sites, according to news reports.

Barcelona give PSG ultimatum over world record move for Neymar

Barcelona have given Paris Saint-Germain an ultimatum over their world record move for Neymar - pay up and he can go.

The French giants are reported to have agreed a five-year deal for the Brazilian superstar but have yet to agree a fee for his signature.

Neymar has a £197million buy-out clause in his contract, but it is believed PSG want to pay less than that figure and a deal is far from being completed.

Barcelona president Josep Bartomeu has made it clear the club will not change their valuation and has told PSG to pay up or end their interest.

Bartomeu, speaking to ESPN in Miami, said: "We want Neymar to stay, but there are clauses. If he wants to leave, (the club need to) pay and leave.

"They have to pay the clause, to the last peseta . UEFA has fair play controls and if any club exceeds them, they will be sanctioned."

Neymar's future continues to dominate the headlines and the transfer saga looks to be affecting him following his training ground bust-up with team-mate Nelson Semedo in Miami.

(Source: Mirror)

Guardiola says Manchester City will try to sign central defender

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola says the club "will try" to sign a central defender this summer.

Eliaquim Mangala is expected to depart, which would leave City with Vincent Kompany, John Stones and Nicolas Otamendi as established centre-backs.

"We don't have too much more to spend but we are going to see," said Guardiola, speaking before Saturday's friendly against Tottenham (23:00 BST).

City have spent about £200m this summer - £120m of that on three full-backs.

This month, England right-back Kyle Walker moved from Spurs for £45m, Brazil international Danilo joined from Real Madrid for £26.5m and France left-back Benjamin Mendy was recruited from Monaco for £52m.

They join Portugal midfielder Bernardo Silva (£43m) and Brazilian goalkeeper Ederson Moraes (£35m) in arriving at City this summer.

City have also been linked with moves for Arsenal's Chile forward Alexis Sanchez and another Monaco player, £160m-rated 18-year-old France striker Kylian Mbappe.

However, Guardiola declined to answer questions on that duo, stating that "they are Arsenal and Monaco players".

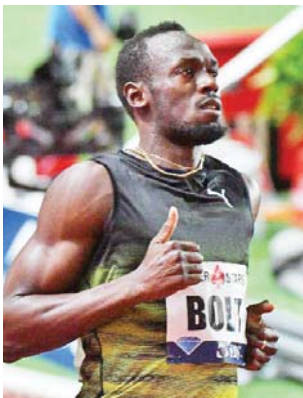
(Source: BBC)

Bolt could reverse retirement decision, says Gatlin

Usain Bolt could be tempted to reverse his decision to retire from athletics after next month's world championships, his American sprint rival Justin Gatlin said on Friday.

The great Jamaican, who has won eight Olympic and 11 world championship gold medals, is planning to quit the track after competing in the 100m and 4x100m relay in the global event in London.

However, Gatlin, who was beaten by Bolt in the last two



world championship 100m and 200m finals and at last year's Olympics in Rio, believes the 30-year-old could one day find a return impossible to resist.

"Why not? He has that rock star mentality where he can travel the world, have fun, party in different places and then say: 'I want to take this seriously one more time,'" Gatlin told reporters at the U.S. team's training camp in Birmingham.

"He has the opportunity to come back, once he leaves he can have a year of rest and say: 'I love track so much I can't leave it too soon!'"

The 35-year-old Gatlin, twice banned for doping violations, has only beaten Bolt once in a world championship final, in 2005 in Helsinki when the Jamaican was still a teenager.

But with the main man of athletics due to depart the sprint scene, Gatlin predicted an exciting new era.

"It makes you a little more jittery. Who's going to step up to fill that void, who's going to rise to the occasion and want to be the next superstar?" he said.

"Now you're not worried about the Usain Bolt Show. Now you're more concerned about the head-on competition, people rising to the occasion and saying: 'I will do it for me and my family now I have the opportunity to run from the front!'"

(Source: Reuters)

Ten years on: How Iraq's soccer stars brought warring nation together

On the evening of July 29, 2007, the streets of Baghdad, Iraq, echoed to the sound of gunfire.

Far from an uncommon occurrence, the rattle of bullets usually signaled the latest manifestation of sectarian violence that had engulfed the country in the wake of the US and allied invasion of 2003.

Yet on this particular evening thousands filled the streets, dancing and waving flags as cars honked their horns in delight.

The gunfire, far from being malicious, was a sign of celebration as Iraqis fired their weapons into the air to salute an unlikely group of soccer heroes.

By defeating Saudi Arabia 1-0 in the Asian Cup final in Jakarta, Indonesia, Iraq's national team had confounded the odds and claimed the continent's most prestigious competition for the first time.

They had also, however briefly, united a nation that was tearing itself apart.

Looking back at that period, Iraqi midfielder Hawar Mulla Mohammed who played in all six games of the 2007 tournament finds it hard to comprehend just how violent his country had become both during and after the invasion.

"The national security HQ was close to where I lived and when it got bombed the building would swing left and right," Mohammed said. "It was indescribable, we used to practice while the airstrikes were going on."

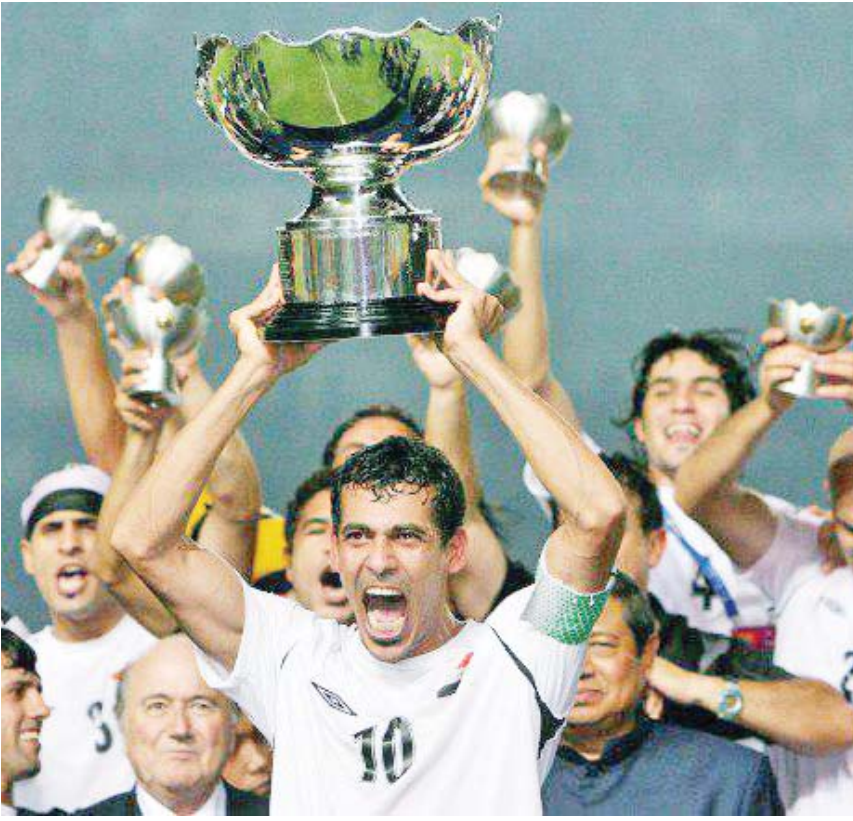
Mohammed said that between 50 and 60 people from his clan, including five of his cousins, died as a result of the Iraq conflict and its aftermath.

In 2007 alone, more than 26,000 civilians were killed according to figures from the Iraq Body Count monitoring group.

■ A history of violence

Yet violence was nothing new for the Iraqi national football team. They'd been ruled by fear from within their own locker-room for many years.

Uday Hussein, eldest son of Iraq's late ty-



rannical dictator Saddam Hussein, ensured that the consequences for failure on the field were brutal.

Tales of his cruelty were legion: beatings, torture, imprisonment. But by 2007, Uday was long gone — killed along with his brother Qusay in 2003.

Still, on the eve of the Asian Cup four years later, the Iraqi national team was in disarray. With just weeks to go until the start of the tournament, they didn't even have a coach.

The Brazilian journeyman Jorvan Vieira was a last-minute call-up.

According to Salih Sadir, who played in the early rounds of the 2007 tournament

and was an unused substitute in the final, such haphazard preparation ensured expectations remained low.

"We were expecting that it would be mere participation and then we'd leave the competition," Sadir said casting his mind back. An opening match draw against unfancied Thailand did little to alter that theory.

But in the second game against Australia everything changed. A 3-1 defeat of the pre-tournament favorite transformed the belief among the Iraqi players. More importantly, it made people back home take notice.

"Every time we won, we return(ed to the dressing room) to listen and watch the

response, and reaction from our families," Sadir said. As the tournament progressed, that response became increasingly excited.

Unity and togetherness

In a country that was fracturing along religious and ethnic lines, its soccer stars had begun to offer an example of how Iraqis could work together.

A team of Sunnis, Shias and Kurds could easily have been divided, just like their countrymen. But the players agreed to leave religion at the door.

They found a way to unite. Not only that, they inspired. "People's support for us started increasing. We started seeing that we are unifying the people," Sadir said. As such, "the players became determined to bring the cup back to Baghdad."

James Montague, a journalist and author of the book "When Friday Comes: Football, War and Revolution in the Middle East," spent some time with the team before they flew out for the tournament.

He recalls a group of players who had all been deeply impacted by the conflict in their homeland. "Many had lost loved ones while some had threats of violence directed against them or their families by insurgents. There was also the threat of kidnap by criminal gangs," he said.

But Montague also detected a strong determination among the players to put aside religious and cultural differences. He describes a camaraderie, humor and unity between teammates.

On top of this, Coach Vieira had decreed that the players would not pray together in the dressing room before the game or at half-time, something teams from the Middle East commonly do, Montague said.

Yet small measures such as this were only part of the reason this Iraqi team would write an underdog story more unlikely than "Leicester City winning the English Premier League or the Red Sox breaking the 'Curse of the Bambino,'" Montague added.

(Source: CNN)

Tottenham boss responds to Antonio Conte & Jose Mourinho

Tottenham's Mauricio Pochettino wants fellow Premier League managers to show respect by not talking about his club.

Chelsea's Antonio Conte and Manchester United boss Jose Mourinho have both spoken about Tottenham this week.

Conte said Spurs' expectations were not as high as elsewhere, while Mourinho believes Pochettino has had a good summer having sold only Kyle Walker.

"I am not a manager who likes to speak about another club, another manager," said Pochettino.

"I like to show respect. I expect the same from the people who compete with us."

Tottenham have not won the league title since 1961, with their last major trophy being the League Cup in 2008.

This summer, they are still to buy a player while Chelsea, Manchester City and Manchester United have each spent in excess of £100m.

Pochettino said: "For different clubs who have spent a lot of money, the expectation and pressure is massive. For us it is the same. It is our own pressure and ambition."

Pochettino refused to confirm he was interested in signing Everton's England midfielder Ross Barkley, 23.

He did say Tottenham would eventually be active, and said the club's fans should not be concerned about their lack of activity.

He said: "Our moment will arrive. We are calm because our squad is competi-



tive. We have a plan. We have a very clear idea of what we want.

"There are a lot of rumours about the big sides spending money and it looks like Tottenham is not ambitious.

"I want to tell our fans 'don't be worried' because we will move in the market."

Spurs midfielder Eric Dier has been heavily linked with a move to Manchester United this summer.

Red Devils boss Mourinho said on Tuesday he was trying to sign a defensive midfielder player.

Pochettino would not talk about United's apparent interest in 23-year-old Dier, but did say "the idea" was not to sell the England international.

He said: "Today Dier is our player. We are not trying to sell him. He is an important player for us."

(Source: BBC)

Don't compare me to Baggio, warns new Juventus signing Bernardeschi

New Juventus signing Federico Bernardeschi claims it would be disrespectful to compare him with former Italy star Roberto Baggio.

Bernardeschi completed his €40million transfer from Fiorentina on Monday and has been handed the number 33 shirt for the new season, despite having worn the number 10 at the Artemio Franchi.

The 23-year-old's move has been compared to that of Baggio, who left Fiorentina for Juve in 1990 for what was then a world-record fee of £8million in a deal that sparked riots from furious Viola fans on the streets of Florence.

Bernardeschi, however, insists he should not be likened to Baggio and admits that he rejected the chance to wear the number he inherited from Michel Platini as he does not feel ready for the responsibility.

"I think it's right and think I have to prove I deserve to wear it," he told a news conference at his official presentation in Turin. "So this year is the right one to show the club, the coach and my teammates that I can wear it.

"There's no-one like Baggio. In my opinion, comparisons are always wrong. Baggio was perhaps the greatest Italian footballer of all time, he showed that, so I don't think you should compare me to him.

"I'm flattered, but I think it's a bit disrespectful to him."

Bernardeschi is said to have been the target of vitriolic messages from Fiorenti-



na fans since completing his Juve move, while an offensive banner criticising the player was pictured in the city.

The Italy international says it is "unhealthy" to receive such threats on social media but thanked those who have wished him well in Turin.

"I think this is part of an unhealthy society we have in the world today, like fans wishing death or serious illness to people on social media," he said.

"I'm not here to feed this unhealthy part of society. In fact, I thank the fans who, despite everything, wished me good luck.

"Then there are also those who said to me: 'We won't be supporting you anymore but we hope you grow as a professional'. That part of society is healthy and should be supported."

(Source: Soccerway)

McLaren's Fernando Alonso gives blessing to 'halo' safety system

It has split opinion across the Formula One paddock — and among motorsport fans — but two-time world champion Fernando Alonso believes adopting the divisive "halo" cockpit safety system for the 2018 season is the right decision.

The McLaren driver concedes that the head protection device — attached to the cockpit of each car to protect drivers from flying debris and other potential hazards — may not look attractive but says that shouldn't detract from its value in saving lives.

"I know that, from the aesthetic point of view, it's a big impact, it's a change, but I don't want to have any more fatal injuries," Alonso told CNN's The Circuit.

"I don't want to have any more friends struggling after accidents like Jules (Bianchi) or Justin (Wilson). I want to make the most horrible (looking) car if it is safe and will save one life."

Bianchi died in July 2015 from head injuries sustained at the 2014 Japanese Grand Prix the previous October. The 25-year-old Frenchman's death was quickly followed by Justin Wilson, who was killed when flying debris hit his helmet during an IndyCar race at the Pocono Speedway in

Pennsylvania in August 2015.

Alonso is no stranger to life-threatening crashes himself. At the 2016 Australian Grand Prix the 35-year-old emerged with only minor injuries after his McLaren car went tumbling into the barriers following a collision with Esteban Gutierrez.

Prior to that, at Spa, the Spaniard narrowly avoided catastrophe when Romain Grosjean's out-of-control Lotus came within inches of his head at the start of the 2012 Belgian Grand Prix.

Alonso tested the Halo at last year's Singapore Grand Prix and says he is "happy with a halo or no halo."

"We need to test it at more circuits, with more different type of corners. Maybe we have to test it in wet conditions so there is still some things we need to improve," he said.

The announcement that all 20 cars on the 2018 grid will be fitted with the safety device was confirmed by motorsport's world governing body, the FIA, on July 26.

A number of F1 drivers have spoken out in opposition to the halo — Dutchman Max Verstappen said there needed to be a "certain element of risk" in the sport — but four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel offered his support, saying

the sport would be "ignorant and stupid" to ignore it.

■ Uncertain future

While the halo is a certainty for next year, Alonso's future at his current team McLaren is far from settled.

"I haven't made a decision yet," said Alonso.

"I'm talking to McLaren, of course, because it's my team and I think we have unfinished business together to win in F1." The once mighty McLaren have had three disastrous seasons since renewing their partnership with Honda in 2015.

With just one top 10 finish this season from 10 races — Alonso finished ninth at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in June — time is running out for McLaren to convince their star driver to stay for another season.

"(My decision will be based) on how competitive we will be," the Spaniard said.

"Everyone will have their opinion about what we need to be competitive. I have mine, which I will not share now. If that happens, I will consider, for sure, to stay and win with McLaren.

(Source: CNN)

Team Melli to move down one place at FIFA Ranking

Iran will drop one place in the FIFA ranking which will be published on Aug. 10.

Team Melli will drop one place to 24th but remains the top-ranked Asian team, well ahead of Australia (44th) and South Korea (47th).

Brazil will return to the top of the FIFA Ranking next month, while both Switzerland and Poland will continue their remarkable rise upwards.

Brazil briefly lost the No. 1 position earlier this month after Germany won the Confederations Cup. But the two nations will swap positions again when the new Ranking is published on Aug. 10 as Germany will lose points due to rolling historical results being devalued.

Argentina will remain in third but the big surprise sees Switzerland move up a place to fourth — the last time they were as high was in April 1994 — and Poland climb one to fifth to yet again set a best-ever ranking place.

Both Switzerland and Poland have benefitted from hugely successful World Cup qualifying campaigns, with the Swiss boasting a 100 percent record and the Poles dropping just two points from their six qualifiers.

What has also helped greatly is limiting the number of international friendlies, which only lower the average ranking score and not improve it, with both having played just one since June 2016.

Compare that to nations more used to being near the top end of the Ranking, with France having played five friendlies, Italy and Spain four, and Portugal and England three — every time they play a friendly it benefits Switzerland and Poland.

Poland are now in a very strong position to be seeded in December's World Cup finals draw as one of the top 7 in the FIFA Ranking in October, while Switzerland could also join them if they win their remaining four qualifying matches.

Netherlands, meanwhile, slump to a new record low by falling four further places to 36th — they were fifth just two years ago.

There are few other moves at the top end of the rank-



ing, with the CONCACAF Gold Cup the only competition of note taking place.

Mexico, who made it to the semifinals of the Gold Cup, climb two places to 14th and their best position for over a year to remain the top-ranked nation from the confederations.

United States, who beat Jamaica in the final to win the competition, climb nine places to 26th with Costa Rica, the other losing semifinalists, up five into 21st. Jamaica's fine Gold Cup campaign sees them soar 18 places into 58th — they would have been up to 44th had they won

the tournament.

Egypt also continue to lead the way in Africa (25th, down 1), with Congo DR two places further back and Senegal in 31st.

AUGUST FIFA RANKING TOP 20

1. Brazil, 2. Germany, 3. Argentina, 4. Switzerland, 5. Poland, 6. Portugal, 7. Chile, 8. Colombia, 9. Belgium, 10. France, 11. Spain, 12. Italy, 13. England, 14. Mexico, 15. Peru, 16. Croatia, 17. Uruguay, 18. Wales, 19. Sweden, 20. Iceland

(Source: ESPN)

Nikkhah Bahrami joins Chinese club Jiangsu Tongxi



S P O R T S Iranian small forward Samad Nikkhah Bahrami joined Chinese club Jiangsu Tongxi.

The 34-year-old basketball player has already played for Chinese clubs Fujian SBS Sturgeons, Zhejiang Golden Bulls and Guangzhou Long-Lions.

Nikkhah Bahrami has joined Jiangsu Tongxi on a one-year contract but the details of the contract have

not been revealed.

Jiangsu Tongxi or Tongxi Monkey King is a Chinese professional basketball team based in Changzhou, Jiangsu, which plays in the Southern Division of the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA).

The club joined the league ahead of the 2014-15 CBA season, after spending its first seven campaigns at the lower levels of the country's basketball hierarchy.

Iran to play Indonesia at Asian Men's Volleyball Championship quarters



S P O R T S Iran will face Indonesia at the 19th Asian Men's Volleyball Championship quarter-final on Sunday.

The Iranian volleyball team defeated Australia 3-1 (25-11, 25-19, 22-25, 25-17) on Saturday in Pool F.

Iran have fielded U23 team as part of preparation for the next month's FIVB Volleyball Men's U23 World Championship in Cairo, Egypt.

The 2017 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship is the 19th edition of the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship, the biennial international men's volleyball championship of Asia organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC).

The event is being held in Surabaya, Indonesia from 24 July to 1 August 2017. It is the second time that Indonesia hosts the tournament after the 2007 Asian Championship.

Giti Pasand's coach Alireza Afzal eyes historic second title

Ho Chi Minh City: In a repeat of the 2013 decider, Sanaye Giti Pasand will face Bluewave Chonburi in the AFC Futsal Club Championship Vietnam 2017 final on Sunday.

In a captivating final in Nagoya, Japan, four years ago, the night belonged to the Thais as they beat their opponents 4-1 on penalties.

When quizzed on the lessons learnt from that September night, Giti Pasand head coach Alireza Afzal was ardent in his response.

"I am not thinking about what happened four years ago. That is history. Tomorrow is a different game," said Afzal, before sending a reminder that his side won the title in 2012.

After 11 days of gruelling competition, Bluewave Chonburi enter the final boasting the competition's best offensive and defensive record.

The Thai side have scored an astonishing 24, five more than the competition's second best goal scorers - Thai Son Nam — and that is despite playing a game less in the group stage.

"Yes, that is their strength. They are a very disciplined team, with a good defence and can pose a threat in attack through their patient play. But we are confident of our own abilities."

Similar to his opposite number, the 43-year-old said his in-depth knowledge of his team's opponents will work to Giti Pasand's advantage.



"We know them very well. I have personally worked with their foreign player who used to play for Giti Pasand when we won the title in 2012," added Afzal, referring to Brazilian Rudimar Venancio (Xapa).

Giti Pasand will also have to be wary of Jirawat Sornwichian, who hit a hat-trick in the 6-0 win over home favourites Thai Son Nam in the semi-finals on Friday.

"We have been analysing them for some time now, and we believe that we have done enough homework to get the victory."

"As I said right from the start of the competition, we came here with only one intention - to win the title. We are a big club and it is important for us, for Iranian futsal, that we become champions for the second time. We will be the only Iranian club to achieve this so it will be history for us."

(Source: AFC)

Ahmad Esmailpour vows to end five-year wait

Ho Chi Minh City: Having amassed virtually every accolade in Asian futsal, Islamic Republic of Iran's Ahmad Esmailpour is arguably one of the most recognisable faces in the game.

The 28-year-old elevated his continental calibre to world stardom when he added the FIFA Futsal World Cup Bronze Ball award to his glistening trophy cabinet.

Eight months later, from Colombia to Vietnam, Sanaye Giti Pasand's No.10 still possesses the same steeling focus and determination, as he grabbed a brace to steer his side to a 4-2 victory over Qatar's Al Rayyan in the 2017 AFC Futsal Club Championship Vietnam semi-finals on Friday.

"It was not an easy match. Some people might say we are favourites but the level of competition is improving every single year, which means it gets harder every year. But for me, I welcome this challenge. Success never comes easy. I know I have to work hard to be at my best every single time."

There are few in the competition who can match Ahmad Esmailpour's pristine record. Beginning with the competition's inaugural final in 2010, the Iranian rallied to an impressive streak of four successive finals, winning two titles, first with Foolad Mahan in 2010, before clinching Giti Pasand's solitary title in 2012 where he finished as the tournament's top-scorer.

"Yes, I still remember that year. It was a very special moment and competition, one that ranks in my all-time best



memories. Everything was perfect, the team were excellent, the atmosphere, the results. I still remember it very clearly like it was yesterday," said the towering figure with a big grin.

"But 2012 is a very long time ago. Our fans have been very patient with us. This is the time, now is the time to win this competition again. Having played in a championship team, I rate this group of current teammates up there with the best."

Like a true legend of the game, Esmailpour continues to exude a sense of ambition and drive synonymous throughout his career, suggesting there are new heights yet to scale: "If we want a chance to be the best ever, then we need to win this competition to close the gap with Nagoya, who have three titles. They are not here this time so this is the perfect chance to win."

"But it all starts with our second title win this Sunday. That is the priority, without a doubt."

(Source: AFC)

Rezaei claims bronze at ICF Canoe Sprint Junior World Championships

S P O R T S The Iranian canoer Mohammad Nabi Rezaei won a bronze medal at the 2017 ICF Canoe Sprint Junior and U23 World Championships on Saturday.

Rezaei finished in third place in the C1 Jun Men 1000 with a time of 04:51.536 minutes.

Russian Ian Kavaliauskas won the gold medal, clocking 04:45.596 minutes.

Roberts Lagzdins from Latvia won the silver medal with a time of 04:49.964 minutes.

The championships got underway in Pitesti, Romania.

Some 14 Iranian male and female athletes are participating in the event.



Iran to send 24 athletes to World Para Athletics Junior Championships

Iran will participate at the first World Para Athletics Junior Championships with 24 sportsmen and sportswomen.

The competition will be held in Nottwil, Switzerland, from 3-6 August.

"We really don't know anything about our rivals in the competition but it can be a good opportunity for us to prepare for the 2018 Para Asian Games and 2020 Paralympic Games," Iran coach Mostafa Bahrami said.

The Iranian delegation will travel to Nottwil on Sunday.

The aim of the new event is to provide the first step in the development pathway for young international class athletes towards regional and World Championships, as well as the Paralympic Games.

The Championships will cater for two age groups - youth athletes aged between 14 and 17 years and junior athletes aged between 18 and 19 years.

The event will be staged at Sport Arena, Nottwil, the venue that has hosted an IPC Athletics Grand Prix for the last two years.

(Source: Paralympic.ir)

Sanat Naft edge Past Esteghlal

Sanat Naft football team defeated Esteghlal 1-0 in the first week of the Iran Professional League (IPL) on Friday.

Karrar Jassim scored the only goal of the match from the penalty spot in the 18th minute in Abadan's Takhti Stadium.

Elsewhere, Sepahan was held to a 1-1 draw by Saipa in Isfahan, newly promoted Pars Jonoubi Jam defeated its host Gostaresh Foolad 4-1, and Paykan drew 1-1 with Padideh.

On Thursday, IPL titleholder Persepolis defeated Foolad 2-0, Siahjamegan drew 2-2 with Zob Ahan, Naft Tehran defeated newly-promoted Sepidrood Rasht 2-1, and Esteghlal Khuzestan edged past Tractor Sazi 1-0.

(Source: Tasnim)

Referees to judge at AFC U16 C'ship qualifiers

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC), in a letter, has officially invited three Iranian referees to make presence at the upcoming AFC U-16 Championship 2018 qualifiers.

The prestigious continental event will be attended by some 45 Member Associations who have been divided into two zones of WEST (West, South and Central) with 23 teams and EAST (East and ASEAN) with 22 teams. Both zones will have a total of five groups.

During the official draw at AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, the were drawn into five groups of five teams and five groups of four teams.

Accordingly, Bijan Heidari and Alireza Ildorum will umpire Group G qualifiers to be hosted Thailand who has been seeded against Laos, Timor-Leste, Northern Mariana Islands and Indonesia.

Also, Hassan Akrami and Arman As'adi will be referees to qualifiers in Group I to be competed in Mongolia whose rivals are Cambodia, Australia and Vietnam.

Group H competitions will also be attended by Peyman Heidari as referee and Saeid Ghasemi as assistant referee. Group H comprises Korea Republic, China, the Philippines and host Myanmar.

Defending champions Iraq, have been grouped with India, Palestine and Nepal who will host the qualifiers in Group D, while the Islamic Republic of Iran - last year's runners-up - are scheduled to meet Kyrgyz Republic, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Bhutan in Group C.

Elsewhere, two-time champions and 2016 semi-finalists DPR Korea, will face Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, Macau and Brunei Darussalam in Group F, with Japan, who also reached last year's semi-finals drawn in Group J, along with Singapore, Malaysia and Guam.

The ten group winners and five best second-placed teams will advance to the final stage of the tournament, along with the host Member Association.

The AFC U-16 Championship 2018 qualifiers are set to take place from September 16 to 24, 2017.

(Source: MNA)

Artist traces goats' place in history of Iranian culture

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — The Paris-based Iranian painter Raheleh Roshandel intends to familiarize visitors to her new collection "Iranian Goats" with the place of the animal in the history of Iranian culture.

Twenty works from the series that features goats in Iranian mythology, nomad life and some other fields were put on display in an exhibition at Tehran's Shokuh Gallery in mid-July.

In her research about goats in Persian culture and visits to the Louvre Museum, Roshandel has traced Iranians' interest in goat motifs created on ancient Iranian artifacts and architecture, she told the Tehran Times in a recent interview.

"I found out that people were superstitious in those days and that the goat was a symbol of protection and livelihood. They used to engrave goat motifs on the walls to keep their shelters safe from the devil. The goat was the symbol of an angel that helped them in difficulty and I wanted to reintroduce it again and cause people to remember this ancient tradition," she explained.

"What was important for me is to turn the goat into a world symbol and let others know the story behind it," she said with a bright smile.

The artist, who has been living in Paris over the past ten years, suggested that every house would be beautiful with a symbol of the goat, a painting or a little sculpture or drawing of a goat as it is the symbol of livelihood in Persian culture.

"As an artist, I want to show off the good things in our culture. I think any visitor with any type of taste should not pass by the goats on display in my exhibits. That is, I want any person of taste who cares to do so and wants to have one at home to stop by and look at the works," she said.



Painter Raheleh Roshandel poses in an exhibition of her works at Shokuh Gallery in Tehran on July 14, 2017.



A painting from Raheleh Roshandel's series "Iranian Goats"

She noted that her exhibit featured works made with acrylic and ink, and the next ones would come out with new materials. "The goats will be painted in various styles like real, surreal, cubism and many other styles."

On choosing Iran for her first exhibit, she said, "The culture is rooted in my country, so it was a great honor for me to showcase the collection first in my own country. The series will later go to France and other countries to let visitors know that it belongs to Iran."

She also pointed to her childhood memories and said that her first pet was a goat.

In her next collections, she plans to focus on girls and goats as well as Persian proverbs on goats.

The artist also explained that her paintings are totally

abstract with no previous drawings.

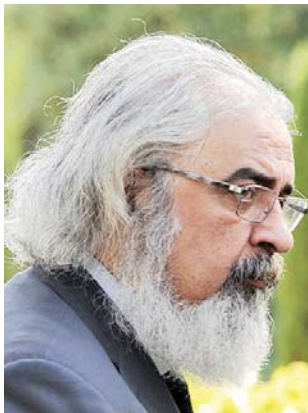
"I simultaneously conceive the artworks and apply the colors. The paintings are my personal perception. That is, I deem myself a lady from the Achaemenid era who wants to keep the devil away from home and then I begin to paint that goat. I actually consider myself an artist from those years," she added.

Roshandel said, "There were those who have worked on goats and made paintings of them, but my emphasis on goats has been of greater significance."

She also noted that goat motifs will inspire all the collections she will create in the future. "I will preserve the ancient symbol of the goat with new elements in new and different situations."

Writer Media Kashigar dies at 61

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Writer and translator Media Kashigar died of pulmonary disease in Tehran's Imam Khomeini Hospital on Saturday. He was 61.



"Forgotten Memories from the Future" and "Dark Room" are among the noteworthy credits of the writer.

He also translated several works by famous writers into Persian including works by Albert Camus, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and Eugene Ionesco.

Kashigar was the founder of the Valda Awards, an award given to novel and short story writers.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Allen Ginsberg's poems published in Persian

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A selection of American poet and writer Allen Ginsberg's haikus, poems and quotes has recently been published in Persian in a book titled "American Pieces".

Translator Farid Qadami selected the collection for the book, which was released by Fas-e Panjom Publications in Tehran.



Iranian Artists Forum to review "Valderama"

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Abbas Amini's drama "Valderama" will be screened at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Sunday.

The screening will be followed by a review session by the film director, the film producer Majid Barzegar and Iranian critic Keivan Kasirian.

The film is about the 15-year-old Valderama, so called by the townsfolk for his long curly hair resembling the former Brazilian soccer star Carlos Valderrama, who is trying to obtain the ID card he's never been able to have.

England Lost: sardonic Mick Jagger releases two songs responding to Brexit

LONDON (Reuters) — Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger has released two politically charged songs targeting what he sees as the uncertainty and surrealism permeating politics in the age of Brexit and Donald Trump.

One song, titled "England Lost", represents Jagger's mocking take on Britain's split from the European Union. The second, "Get a Grip", describes an "upside down" world full of "lunatics and clowns".

Jagger, 74, said on Facebook he had started writing the songs a few weeks ago in his first solo work since 2011.

The first song is told through the metaphor of a soccer fan who has watched England lose at a match he did not want to go to in the first place.

"I went to see England but it wasn't there/ I think I lost it down the back of my chair/ I think I'm losing my imagination/ I'm tired of talking about immigration."

Later he adds: "Had a girl in Lisbon, a girl in Rome/ Now I'll have to stay at home/ So lock the shutters, bolt the doors/London's gonna be like Singapore."

In the second song, Jagger rails against people stuffing their pockets and being on the take. The final line of the verse is a dig at what critics say is the British government's approach to Brexit: to both have its cake and eat it.

Formed in London in 1962, the Rolling Stones are credited with being one of the most influential bands in rock and roll, releasing 30 studio albums.

Jagger said he had been motivated to write the songs because of the "anxiety, unknowability of the changing political situation".

"We obviously have a lot of problems. So am I politically optimistic? ... No," Jagger said.

Behnam Safavi returns home after surgery in Germany

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian pop singer Behnam Safavi returned home last Tuesday after brain surgery in Germany.

"Behnam Safavi has returned to pursue medical treatment in his homeland after a successful operation performed by Professor [Majid] Samii and his team in Hanover," his publicist, Reza Foadian, told the Persian service of MNA on Friday.

This was the second time that Safavi had a brain surgery. He underwent surgery in 2015 for the first time to remove a tumor from his brain. However, he left Iran few weeks ago to undergo another operation as the tumor recrudesced.

"The tumor has been totally removed and we are awaiting his triumphant return to the stage," Foadian noted.

Safavi's latest single song "You



A poster for Behnam Safavi's latest single song "You Don't Care"

Don't Care" was released in some Persian websites on Friday.

The 34-year-old singer's debut album, "Be My Love", was released in October 2009 and a song by the same name from the collection soon became a smash hit at that time.

Racially charged "Detroit" is story that needed telling, Bigelow says

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — As a white filmmaker from Northern California, Oscar-winning director Kathryn Bigelow was aware she may not be the "perfect person" to bring the racially charged story behind the 1967 Detroit riots to the big screen.

But the resonance of Bigelow's "Detroit" with the present-day Black Lives Matter movement, fueled by police slaying's of unarmed black men and women in the last three years, was too powerful for her to ignore.

"Am I the right person to tell the story? Absolutely not. Am I the perfect person to tell this story? Absolutely not. But it's a really important story that needs to be told, and that was my overriding motivator," Bigelow told Reuters on Wednesday.

"Detroit", which opened in major U.S. cities on Friday and the rest of the country next week, follows events in the summer of 1967 when tensions between black Detroit residents and a predominantly white police force erupted into major riots.

It focuses on the little-known events of one night at the Algiers Motel, where white police officers shot three young black men after hours of psychological and physical abuse of a wider group of black men and two white women.

The director said she wanted to "invite an audience to en-



Director and producer Kathryn Bigelow is interviewed at the premiere of "Zero Dark Thirty" at the Dolby theatre in Hollywood, California December 10, 2012. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

gage with this on a human scale," putting people right inside the palpable tension and fear within the hotel.

Bigelow, 65, was the first woman to win an Oscar for directing with her 2008 Iraq war movie "The Hurt Locker".

Her take on "Detroit" has earned strong reviews and praise, with many movie critics calling it timely but painful to watch.

Playing with fire: Czech artist creates steel portraits with flame

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (Reuters) — Czech artist Ladislav Vlana has swapped his brush for a blowtorch as he 'paints' with fire to create artworks that change according to lighting.

Vlana's self-titled metallurgic painting technique results in surprisingly delicate and detailed pieces, mostly portraits or figures, with oxyacetylene torches.

The 40-year-old artist begins by painting a draft upon a steel surface and then carves, sharpens and polishes the basic image into it before putting a flame to the engraving which alters its color, depending on the temperature. This process gives the piece its unique appearance.

"I am painting using fire instead of a paintbrush. I am extracting the colors from

inside the steel with heat and fire."

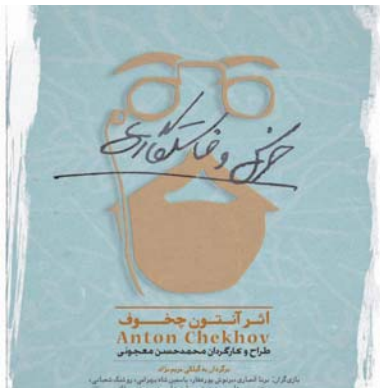
The appearance of each painting is affected by the light reflected onto the metal's surface. By creating shapes within the metal, it manipulates the light to emphasize the unique 'brushstrokes' the fire has molded.

"The picture placed on the same place looks different in the morning and in

evening depending on the light changing", he said.

Each piece takes Vlana weeks to complete, some have sold for up to 8,000 euro (\$9,400). He spent 15 years perfecting the technique, through trial and error.

In addition to his fireworks, he also paints watercolors, illustrates children's books and creates sculptures.



into a short and comical act to demonstrate how close the relationship between anger and passion can be.

Borna Ansari, Barnush Purgaffari, Roshanak Shabani and Mahyar Nedai are the main members of the cast for both plays that will remain on stage until August 10.

Official details of the killings inside the Algiers Motel do not exist, so Bigelow relied heavily on accounts of the survivors, especially a woman named Julie Delaney, who was on the film set every day.

"I was able to feel fairly confident that there was a heightened degree of authenticity and it closely aligned with her memory of the situation, even though it was very emotional," she said.

She first heard about the Algiers Motel incident in 2014, during civil unrest in Ferguson, Missouri, after unarmed black teenager Michael Brown was fatally shot by a white police officer. Brown's death sparked nationwide marches and the Black Lives Matter movement that protests police treatment of minorities.

Though the events in "Detroit" occurred a half-century ago, "it certainly speaks to the severity of the situation because we still have yet so far to go in order to somehow see a meaningful conversation about race in this country," Bigelow said.

She welcomes the positive reaction to the film so far, saying it is "almost a relief" that the Algiers Motel incident has been brought to light.

"This story, this tragedy, this atrocity, the executions of these three young men - their deaths are no longer a secret," she said.