



**IRGC to test new weapons in Persian Gulf drill** **2**



**Iran to restore its UNESCO-inscribed churches** **10**



**Persepolis striker Taremi wins IPL player of the year award** **15**



**Iran, UNESCO to celebrate 700th anniversary of “The Secret Rose Garden”** **16**

# €2.5b rail deal inked with Russia



See page 4

Iran's IDRO and Russia's Transmashholding agreed on joint production of passenger and cargo wagons in Tehran, July 31, 2017.

## Malaysia sees FTA with Iran signed by yearend

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Malaysia is expected to sign free trade agreement (FTA) with Iran by year-end, said International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan, Bernama reported.

In June, Iran and Malaysia signed a cooperation agreement in Tehran, preparing the ground to triple bilateral trade to around \$2 billion.

Iranian Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mahmoud Vaezi and Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry Mustapa Mohamed signed the agreement.

On the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Vaezi put the current value of trade between the two countries at around \$700 million.

In May 2016, a Malaysian trade delegation led by Dzulkifli Mahmud, the chief executive officer of Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation known as MATRADE, traveled to Iran for holding talks to expand bilateral relations.

During the visit, the CEO of MATRADE said that a preferential trade agreement will be signed for the expansion of relations between the two countries.

## Putin: U.S. must cut 755 diplomatic staff, more measures possible

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the United States would have to cut its diplomatic staff in Russia by 755 people and that Moscow could consider additional measures against Washington as a response to the new U.S. sanctions approved by Congress.

Moscow ordered the United States on Friday to cut hundreds of diplomatic staff and said it would seize two U.S. diplomatic properties after the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate overwhelmingly approved new sanctions on Russia. The White House said on Friday that U.S. President Donald Trump would sign the sanctions bill.

Putin said in an interview with Vesti TV released on Sunday that the United States would have to cut its diplomatic and technical staff by 755 people by September 1.

"Because more than 1,000 workers - diplomats and support staff - were working and are still working in Russia, 755 must stop their activity in the Russian Federation," he said.

The new U.S. sanctions were partly a response to conclusions by U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and to punish Russia further for its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. ➔13

## Qatar rebuts Saudi 'Hajj politicization' claim

Qatar's foreign minister has rebutted accusations by his Saudi regime counterpart that Qatar is trying to politicize the annual Islamic Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

Adel al-Jubeir, the House of Saud regime's foreign minister, appeared to accuse Qatar on Sunday of politicizing the issue and "declaring a war" against the kingdom by demanding the internationalization of the Hajj pilgrimage.

The claim was rejected by Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in an interview to Al Jazeera.

"Qatar never politicized the issue of Hajj," he said.

"It was Saudi Arabia trying to politicize the Hajj pilgrimage amid the Persian Gulf crisis."

"There has been no suggestion by any Qatari official about internationalizing the issue."

The Hajj is an annual pilgrimage to Mecca attended by hundreds of thousands of Muslims from around the world.

Jubeir was quoted by Al Arabiya's website as saying: "Qatar's demands to internationalize the holy sites is aggressive and a declaration of war against the kingdom ... We reserve the right to respond to anyone who is working on the internationalization of the holy sites."

### ■ Jubeir's statement

In a separate statement in the Bahraini capital of Manama on the same day, Jubeir denied what he called claims that Saudi Arabia was trying to politicize the Hajj.

"We reject attempts by Qatar to politicize the issue and consider it disrespectful to the Hajj and pilgrims," he said.

Qatar accused the House of Saud regime of politicizing the Hajj and addressed the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion on Saturday, expressing concern about obstacles facing Qataris who want to attend Hajj this year.

Qataris are allowed to go to Hajj by Saudi regime authorities, but they can access the country via only two designated airports: King Abdulaziz Airport in Jeddah and Prince Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Airport in Medina. ➔13

## Iraq's Muqtada al-Sadr visits Saudi Arabia, hold talks with crown prince

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iraq's top Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr has made a visit to Saudi Arabia, where he met Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other Saudi officials.

Saudi Press Agency reported on Sunday that Sadr met Mohammed bin Salman at the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, where they exchanged views on topics of mutual interests.

The influential cleric was greeted upon his arrival by Saudi's former ambassador Thamer al-Sabhan.

According to a statement released by Sadr's office ahead of his visit, the cleric had been invited to the kingdom.

"His Eminence Sayyed Muqtada al-Sadr, may God have mercy on him, goes to visit Saudi Arabia at an official invitation," the statement read.

Sadr last visited Saudi Arabia some 11

years ago.

"We have been very pleased with what we found to be a positive breakthrough in the Saudi-Iraqi relations, and we hope it is the beginning of the retreat of sectarian strife in the Arab-Islamic region," a statement from al-Sadr's office said, following the meeting in Jeddah.

According to Kurdistan24, during the meeting, Salman and Sadr discussed the future of Iraq and the impact of the upcoming referendum independence in the Iraqi Kurdistan. Both sides reportedly stressed the need

**Visit to Saudi Arabia, Iran's regional rival, comes despite Baghdad's friendly relations with Tehran.**

## Euro zone core inflation unexpectedly picks up in July

**BRUSSELS/FRANKFURT (Reuters)** — A key measure of euro zone inflation accelerated to a four-year high this month and euro zone unemployment fell to its lowest since 2009 in June, data showed on Monday, in two encouraging signs for the European Central Bank as it considers reducing its monetary stimulus.

The ECB is due to decide by the end of the month whether and how to extend its 2.3 trillion euros (\$2.70 trillion) quantitative easing program into 2018 and President Mario Draghi has cited sluggish core inflation and wage growth as reasons to be cautious.

Likely giving heart to ECB policymakers, core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, accelerated to 1.3 percent from 1.2 percent in June, Eurostat's flash estimate showed.

It was its highest level since August 2013 and confounded market expectations for a slowdown.

"Today's upside surprise in core inflation is likely to give the ECB some comfort, even though its level remains low," Morgan Stanley economist Daniele Antonucci said. "We expect a QE tapering announcement this autumn."

The European Union's statistics office estimated that headline growth in consumer prices in the euro zone was stable at 1.3 percent year-on-year in July, still far from the ECB's objective of just under 2 percent.

In a separate release, Eurostat said unemployment in the 19-country currency bloc dropped to its lowest level since 2009 at 9.1 percent, confirming a robust recovery in the currency bloc.

The jobless rate also went down in Italy and Spain, the two eurozone countries with the highest rates, excluding Greece for which fresh data were not available.

In Italy unemployment dropped to 11.1 percent in June from 11.3 percent in May, meaning that nearly 60,000 were added to the Italian workforce. In Spain, the rate fell to 17.1 percent from 17.3 percent.

One of the ECB's dilemmas is that a steady decline in unemployment is not translating into higher wages, a key driver of inflation.

## Israel stole sensitive al-Aqsa documents: Trust

Israel has reportedly stolen a large number of confidential documents belonging to al-Quds (Jerusalem) Islamic Waqf (Endowment) organization, which is trusted with controlling and managing the Islamic edifices on and around the al-Aqsa Mosque's compound.

Hassan Khater, the head of al-Quds International Center, said on Monday that the appropriation had taken place over three days that followed a reported shootout on July 14 near the site, which left two Israeli soldiers and three Palestinians dead. Israel fully closed off the compound after the alleged incident. ➔3

**Another Service Taken by 11th Government Dubbed "Hope and Prudence"**

**August 1, 2017**

Start of the Official Operation of Gas Transmission Line of "Damghan-Kiyasar-Sari-Neka", as Long as 170 km, Costing over 820 Billion Tomans, Important Infrastructure in Sustainable Supply of Gas in Northern Provinces of Country for "Development, Welfare and Protection of Environment"



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



### Leader to endorse Rouhani presidency on Thursday

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — In a ceremony on Thursday, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will officially authorize President Hassan Rouhani to take office for a second term, the IRIB reported.

Rouhani's swearing-in ceremony will be held in the parliament on Sunday.

Mohsen Haji Mirzaee, secretary of the cabinet, said on Monday that Tehran will be off on Sunday due to large number of foreign officials attending the inauguration ceremony.

Rouhani will then have two weeks to submit his new cabinet to the parliament for a vote of confidence.



### Russia may approve visa-free travel for Iranians

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Russian Federation's envoy to Tehran has said that Moscow will probably remove visa requirements for Iranian nationals over the next two months.

Levan Dzhagaryan made the announcement on Monday in an interview with Tasnim news agency.

Under a previous agreement, Iranian tourists, in groups of 5 to 50 people, can travel to Russia without an entry visa for a stay of up to 15 days.



### Iranian court rejects appeal by attackers of Saudi missions

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Ten people sentenced to jail for attacking the Saudi embassy in Tehran in 2016 have had their appeals against their convictions rejected, Press TV reported on Monday.

The Court of First Instance had examined the accusations leveled against 19 people in the case which has been lodged by Tehran Prosecutor's Office last year. One person was also tried in absentia.

Five of those tried were sentenced to six months in prison, while five others were handed down three-month sentences.



### Women unlikely to find place in next Rouhani cabinet: aide

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — President Rouhani's special aide for citizenship affairs has said the next administration seems to lack women as ministers.

"The president is not happy with the pressure he faces over the makeup of the cabinet," Elham Aminzadeh told ILNA in an interview published on Monday.

The same day, MP Fatemeh Hosseini said the future government should represent the voice of women.

Hosseini expressed regret that in 2017 the number of women occupying governmental posts has declined around the world.



### Zarif to visit Turkey for talks on Palestine

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is scheduled to travel to Turkey's Istanbul on Tuesday to attend an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on developments in al-Quds.

Bahram Qasemi, the spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry, said on Monday that Zarif is expected to discuss the latest developments regarding Palestine during the meeting, Mehr reported.

The OIC will hold an emergency meeting of its executive committee at the level of foreign ministers of its member states.



### Guardian Council thanks Zarif for defending election procedures

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council has thanked Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a recent interview with Bloomberg's Charlie Rose.

The thanks came from the councils' spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei by publishing a video of the interview on social media on Monday.

In the interview, Zarif had argued against the allegation that elections in Iran are "sham", saying Iranians in Tehran or Los Angeles would not have stayed in line for hours to vote for a sham.

# Time ripe to form intl. coalition against U.S.



Aboutalebi, a foreign policy expert, said based on what Trump has recently said, the U.S. administration will anyway claim a violation of the nuclear deal by Iran.

"The U.S. does not attach importance to implementation of the JCPOA and verifications of the IAEA [the International Atomic Energy Agency] and the country will take decisions outside the JCPOA," Aboutalebi pointed out.

According to the nuclear deal, Iran

is obliged to limit its nuclear activities in exchange for a termination of financial and economic sanctions. The deal went into effect in January 2016.

The International Atomic Energy Agency as the UN watchdog body is tasked to monitor the implementation of the nuclear deal between Iran and great powers. It has reported six times that Iran is abiding by the terms of the deal. The compliance was also confirmed by the UN Security Council in late

June.

"Two years after the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Secretary-General is immensely encouraged by the continued commitment by all participants to the agreement," Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman told the UN Security Council.

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate also approved a package of non-nuclear sanctions against Iran, a move which Tehran sees as an attempt by Washington to frighten away foreign investors.

The sanctions bill was passed by a 419-3 vote in the House and 97-2 in Senate.

Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, has said these moves show Washington's "continued animosity" with the Islamic Republic.

The U.S. State Department also released a media note on Friday claiming that the launching of a satellite-carrier rocket by Iran on Thursday was not consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

The Resolution 2231 endorsed the nuclear agreement signed between Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

## Armenia gives Iran safest, shortest access to Europe: Sargsyan

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Armenia is the "safest and shortest" gate for Iran to reach the European market, its President said in an interview with the Sharq daily published on Monday.

"For Iran, Armenia is the safest and shortest access to Europe," Serzh Sargsyan said.

"Today, Armenia keeps close economic relations with the European Union, and we are ready to pave the way for mutually beneficial cooperation (with Iran)."

Sargsyan further referred to his country's exports to the European market in compliance with Generalised Scheme of Preferences, an issue which can lure Iranian investors to "embark on economic activities in Armenia."

The GSP allows vulnerable developing countries to pay fewer or no duties on exports to the EU, giving them vital access to the EU market and contributing to their growth.

The scheme, at the same time, supports EU businesses' competitiveness by lowering the costs of imported components.

Armenia is the only Christian and one of the fifteen neighboring countries of Iran, with which Iran shares the shortest land border to the north, 36 kilometers.

"Over the past 25 years and since Armenia's independence, relations between the two countries have been growing in different political and economic areas," the president highlighted.

Unlike strong, friendly ties between Tehran and its mountainous, landlocked country of about 3.3 million people, trade is meager. In 2016, bilateral trade stood at nearly \$240 million.



Armenia's President Serzh Sargsyan

Sargsyan, who will visit Iran next week to participate in President Rouhani's inauguration for a second-four year term, expressed hoped that the visa waiver plan, which took force in April, will help strengthen the economic ties.

"I believe the visa waiver acts as a bridge between the two nations," he said, adding, "In the wake of the visa waiver, an increasing number of Iranian tourists are visiting Armenia."

Better infrastructural facilities and increasing flights are underway to encourage more tourist ties between the sides, he noted.

According to Kazem Sajadi, nearly 250,000 Iranian tourists visited Armenia in 2016, compared to 25,000 to 30,000 arrivals reported in previous years.

## IRGC to test new weapons in Persian Gulf drill

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Real Admiral Ali Fadavi, naval commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, said on Monday new weapons will be rolled out in upcoming war drills in the Persian Gulf.

"The Guard's naval force is in good conditions, exemplarily prepared, and tries to unveil its newest equipment in the upcoming exercises," Fadavi told reporters in the southern port city of Bushehr, which sits on the coasts of the

Persian Gulf.

The comments follow two incidents in the Persian Gulf between IRGC and U.S. navies last week, one on Tuesday and the other on Friday.

While the IRGC navy castigated the U.S. Navy for acting "provocatively" and "unprofessionally" in both incidents, the U.S. navy's Bahrain-based fifth fleet has claimed its encounters had been "safe and professional".

Years of hostility between Tehran and

Washington eased slightly near the end of the Obama administration, as sanctions imposed on Iran for its nuclear program were lifted under an international nuclear agreement.

However, Donald Trump's victory in 2016 U.S. presidential election gave new fuel to the long-standing enmity due to his periodic anti-Iran rhetoric and actions.

During his presidential campaign, Trump vowed that any Iranian vessels that harassed the U.S. navy in the Persian Gulf

would be "shot out of the water".

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.

"The Guards entirely controls the Persian Gulf as an international waterway, and its dominance and authority over the waterway is growing day by day given its increasing power," Fadavi said, implicitly hinting at the incidents.

## U.S. hopes Russia would change behavior towards Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said on Sunday that he hopes new sanctions on Russia would prompt Moscow to change behavior towards some issues including supporting Iran.

He said President Donald Trump and he remain very hopeful that they will see different behavior by the Russian government with regard to Ukraine and support for Iran and North Korea, Fox News reported.

The White House confirmed on Friday the sanctions on Russia. In retaliation, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the U.S. would have to cut 755 diplomatic

staff from Russia.

The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate also approved a package of sanctions against Iran on Tuesday and Thursday respectively.

The sanctions bill was passed by a 419-3 vote in the House and 97-2 in Senate.

Sanctions were introduced against Iran for its missile program, alleged human rights abuses and what the U.S. claims Iran's "destabilizing" role in the Middle East.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has downplayed the new move by Congress. However, he said Iran will surely retaliate.

## Senior foreign officials to attend Rouhani inauguration

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Senior officials from North Korea, China, Armenia, Qatar, Turkey, and Iraq among other countries are scheduled to attend the inauguration ceremony of Hassan Rouhani for a second four-year term as president.

The event will take place on August 5 at the parliament. Among the dignitaries at the ceremony will be President

of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea Kim Yong-nam, Chinese Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission He Lifeng, and Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan.

The European Union confirmed on Saturday that its chief diplomat Federica Mogherini will also attend the inauguration. Rouhani won an overwhelming majority in the May 19

ballot.

On the sidelines of the inaugural ceremony, the EU foreign policy chief is scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with a number of Iranian officials.

On August 3, a decree by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei will be handed to Rouhani to officially assign him his duties.



# China hits back at Trump criticism over North Korea

China hit back on Monday after the United States President Donald Trump tweeted he was “very disappointed” in China following Pyongyang’s latest missile test, saying the problem did not arise in China and that all sides need to work for a solution.

China has become increasingly frustrated with American and Japanese criticism that it should do more to rein in Pyongyang. China is North Korea’s closest ally, but Beijing is angry with its continued nuclear and missile tests.

North Korea said on Saturday it had conducted another successful test of an intercontinental ballistic missile that proved its ability to strike the U.S. mainland, drawing a sharp warning from Trump and a rebuke from China.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe spoke with Trump on Monday and agreed on the need for more action on North Korea just hours after the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations said Washington is “done talking about North Korea”.

A White House statement after the phone call said the two leaders “agreed that North Korea poses a grave and growing direct threat to the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and other countries near and far”.

It said Trump “reaffirmed our ironclad commitment” to defend Japan and South Korea from any attack, “using the full range of United States capabilities”.

Trump wrote on Twitter on Saturday after the missile test that he was “very disappointed” in China and that Beijing profits from U.S. trade but had done “nothing” for the United States with regards to North Korea, something he would not allow to continue.

China’s Foreign Ministry, in a statement sent to Reuters responding to Trump’s tweets, said the North Korean nuclear issue did not arise because of China and that everyone needed to work together to seek a resolution.

“All parties should have a correct understanding of this,” it said, adding the international community widely recognized China’s efforts to seek a resolution.

The essence of Sino-U.S. trade is mutual benefit and win-win, with a vast amount of facts proving the healthy development of business and trade ties is good for both countries, the ministry added.

Chinese Vice Commerce Minister Qian Keming, weighed in too, telling a news conference there was no link between the North Korea issue and China-U.S. trade.

“We think the North Korea nuclear issue and China-U.S. trade are issues that are in two completely different domains. They aren’t related. They should not be discussed together,” Qian said.

China, with which North Korea does the large majority of its trade, has repeatedly said it strictly follows United Nations resolutions on North Korea and has denounced unilateral U.S. sanctions as unhelpful.

Nikki Haley, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations,



said in a statement China must decide if it is willing to back imposing stronger UN sanctions on North Korea over Friday night’s long-range missile test, the North’s second this month.

Any new UN Security Council resolution “that does not significantly increase the international pressure on North Korea is of no value”, Haley said, adding that Japan and South Korea also needed to do more.

Abe told reporters after his conversation with Trump that repeated efforts by the international community to find a peaceful solution to the North Korean issue had yet to bear fruit in the face of Pyongyang’s unilateral “escalation”.

“International society, including Russia and China, need to take this seriously and increase pressure,” Abe said. He said Japan and the United States would take steps towards concrete action but did not give details.

Abe and Trump did not discuss military action against North Korea, nor what would constitute the crossing of a “red line” by Pyongyang, Deputy Chief Cabinet spokesman Koichi Hagiuda told reporters.

“Pyongyang is determined to develop its nuclear and missile program and does not care about military threats from the U.S. and South Korea,” state-run Chinese tabloid

the Global Times said on Monday.

“How could Chinese sanctions change the situation?” said the paper, which is published by the ruling Communist Party’s official People’s Daily.

China wants both balanced trade with the United States and lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, its official Xinhua news agency added in a commentary.

“However, to realize these goals, Beijing needs a more cooperative partner in the White House, not one who piles blame on China for the United States’ failures,” it added.

The United States flew two supersonic B-1B bombers over the Korean peninsula in a show of force on Sunday in response to the missile test and the July 3 launch of the “Hwasong-14” rocket, the Pentagon said. The bombers took off from a U.S. air base in Guam and were joined by Japanese and South Korean fighter jets during the exercise.

“North Korea remains the most urgent threat to regional stability,” Pacific Air Forces commander General Terrence J. O’Shaughnessy said in a statement.

“If called upon, we are ready to respond with rapid, lethal, and overwhelming force at a time and place of our choosing.”

(Source: Reuters)

## Jury to decide fate of CIA torture psychologists

A federal judge has ruled that a jury should decide whether two psychologists who helped design the United States Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) harsh interrogation methods used in the so-called war on terror should be held accountable for the suffering.

U.S. District Judge Justin Quackebush refused on Friday to immediately rule in favor of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which brought the lawsuit on behalf of three former detainees and argued that the psychologists were the architects of what became the CIA’s torture program after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The men were subjected to physical assaults and sleep deprivation, forced to stand for days in nappies with their arms chained overhead, doused with icy water and stuffed into boxes.

Quackebush said the evidence warrants a trial on the issues. The trial is set for September 5.

The case will move forward for the representatives of the estate of Gul Rahman, who was “starved, sleepless and freezing” before he died of hypothermia while chained in a

prison cell following extended interrogation.

Quackebush, however, said he has reservations about the evidence as it applies to the two living detainees: Suleiman Abdullah Salim and Mohamed Ahmed Ben Soud.

He said he would review the case and issue a written ruling regarding his position on the other two men.

He also granted the ACLU’s request to use at the trial the Senate Intelligence Committee Study on the CIA Detention and Interrogation Program, completed in 2012 and made public in 2014.

Quackebush closed the hearing by urging the lawyers to try to settle the case and avoid a costly trial.

He noted that the contract that psychologists James Mitchell and John Jessen had with the government indemnified them against any judgments.

The psychologists’ lawyers are being paid out of a pot of money provided by taxpayers and established in an indemnity contract.

Their lawyers argued that the psychologists should not be punished for the CIA’s

actions.

### ■ Torture techniques ‘architect’

When the CIA sought help with interrogating the agency’s first prisoner, Abu Zubaydah, a high-value detainee, Mitchell provided methods, lawyer Brian Paszamant told the judge.

Simply providing a memo does not make them guilty of aiding and abetting torture, he argued.

Didn’t Mitchell in his book “describe himself as the architect of the enhanced interrogation programme?” Quackebush asked.

“What does it mean to be an architect?” Paszamant responded.

The psychologist prepared a 2002 memo for the CIA, but had no control over what happened next, he said.

The CIA set up the prisons, chose the detainees, decided who conducted the interrogations and who was present, Paszamant said.

The psychologists designed the program for a high-value detainee and did not know the government would use it, he said.

“Everything was the absolute direct con-

trol of the U.S. government through the CIA,” another of the psychologists’ lawyers, Jim Smith, said.

There were five or six people present during the Zubaydah interrogations, Smith said, but only Mitchell and Jessen are being sued.

Dror Ladin, ACLU lawyer, said the psychologists were much more involved than simply writing a memo and then stepping away.

Mitchell’s vision of a successful program involved corrosive methods designed to instill fear and despair, Ladin said. They then became involved directly in the interrogation of Zubaydah, he said.

Jessen was directly involved in six interrogations of Rahman at the secret prison called Colbalt, Ladin said.

Even if they never saw or interrogated Salim or Ben Soud or any of the other detainees, they are liable under the law, Ladin said.

The two psychologists were paid \$81m for their help, Ladin said.

(Source: AP)

## Israel stole sensitive al-Aqsa documents: Trust

➔ The documents comprise title deeds proving the body’s ownership of a large number of immovable properties, as well as secret files bearing information on the mosque and religious courthouses, he said.

Khater said the papers feature data on around 90 percent of the properties lying in Jerusalem al-Quds’ Old City, where the compound is located, which could enable Tel Aviv to confiscate the properties upon misuse.

The closure of the compound drew sweeping international condemnation, forcing Tel Aviv to reopen the site. The regime, however, set up metal detectors at the entrances, prompting Palestinians to pray outside in protest. Israel finally lifted the detectors, but installed more cameras in the place.

During the recent crackdown, Israeli forces evicted the Endowment’s staffers, which the body had stationed there to conduct administrative duties.

Jewish settlers are regularly escorted by troops into the third holiest site in Islam, which is highly provocative to the



Palestinians.

According to latest figures, 15 Palestinians have been killed and about 1,400 others injured in the clashes that have ensued Tel Aviv’s introduction of the restrictions.

### ■ Muslim group blasts Israeli raid on media offices

Meantime, the Islamic Radios and Tel-

evisions Union (IRTVU) has categorically denounced an attack by Israeli forces on the offices of international media outlets in the occupied West Bank.

The Israeli forces raided the headquarters of the media production company, PalMedia, which includes the offices of Arab and international news outlets in Ramallah in the early hours of Saturday.

According to an IRTVU statement, troops stormed the offices of al-Manar, al-Alam, al-Quds, Russia Today and al-Mayadeen news channels as well as the media production company, PalMedia.

The union said the Israeli forces searched and damaged property after disabling CCTV cameras so that the attack would not be recorded.

The “brutal” raid, the IRTVU noted, proves Tel Aviv’s fears of freedom of expression and its intolerance toward the activities of independent media outlets which support Palestine and report realities in the occupied territories.

According to the statement, the Israeli forces also seized the media archives being kept in the offices.

Israeli forces launched a similar raid in al-Khalil (Hebron) city last week, the statement noted.

The union concluded the statement by pledging to provide all facilities to the Palestinian and Islamic media institutions in line with its duty to support the Palestinian people.

(Source: Press TV)

## ISIL claims deadly attack near Iraqi embassy in Kabul

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit has claimed responsibility for a suicide car bomb attack on the Iraqi embassy in Afghanistan’s capital, Kabul.

For several hours, fighters were holed up in a building close to the embassy in the city’s Shar-e-Naw district where a gun battle was under way.

Two fighters “attacked the Iraqi embassy building in the Afghan city of Kabul”, ISIL, said on Sunday in a statement released on their website “Amaq News Agency”, without providing further details.

Police confirmed the reports of the explosions but said they did not have further information.

“We heard two explosions near the Iraqi embassy and part of the building has been damaged,” Mohsen Negaresh, a witness, told Al Jazeera.

The Iraq embassy is located in a part of the city known as Shahr-e-Naw, which lies outside the so-called Green Zone where most foreign embassies and diplomatic missions are located and which is heavily fortified with a phalanx of guards and giant cement blast walls.

By comparison, the Iraqi embassy is located on a small street in a neighborhood dominated by markets and businesses.

The attack comes a week after at least 35 people were killed in a Taliban-claimed suicide attack on government workers in Kabul and underlines the precarious security in Afghanistan as the U.S. administration considers an overhaul of its policy in the region.

### ■ ‘No safe haven’ for ISIL

The United States forces in Afghanistan have repeatedly targeted ISIL, killing its head Abu Sayed and several senior advisers in a July 11 strike in Kunar, according to the Pentagon.

The decision to deploy the so-called Mother of All Bombs (MOAB) also targeted ISIL hideouts in Nangarhar province, according to the Afghan defense ministry, though fighting in the area has continued.

Pentagon officials say the group now numbers fewer than 1,000 in Afghanistan.

“We will be relentless in our campaign against ISIS-K. There are no safe havens in Afghanistan,” said General John Nicholson, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, in a statement Sunday confirming some of the deaths in the July 11 strike.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Al-Nusra Front terrorists set to depart Lebanon-Syria border zone

A convoy of buses has been deployed to Lebanon’s north-eastern border town of Arsal to transport members of the foreign-sponsored and Takfiri Jabhat Fateh al-Sham – previously known as the al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra) – terrorist group as well as refugees from Lebanon’s border region to Syria in exchange for imprisoned Hezbollah resistance fighters.

“Buses that will transport Nusra Front militants and their families have started arriving in Juroud Arsal,” the Hezbollah media bureau said in a statement on Monday.

The convoys came from Syrian territory and headed towards Lebanese army positions, it added.

The Hezbollah statement further noted that about 9,000 Fateh al-Sham terrorists and their relatives would leave for Syria’s militant-held northwestern province of Idlib under a ceasefire between the Lebanese resistance movement and the foreign-backed militants.

The first stage of the ceasefire, brokered by the national police and security force of Lebanon – Internal Security Forces Directorate, took effect on Sunday as both sides exchanged the bodies of fighters killed in clashes between them.

The next phase is expected to target a nearby enclave controlled by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists.

A Lebanese security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Fatah al-Sham will release eight Hezbollah members under the deal.

Three of the resistance fighters were kidnapped in recent days while another five have been held in Syria for quite a while.

The Lebanese Red Cross has taken part in logistical operations.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has been engaged in the ceasefire, is reportedly trying to reach refugees in Arsal, located 124 kilometers northeast of the Lebanese capital Beirut, to determine whether returns are voluntary.

“UNHCR believes that conditions for refugees to return in safety and dignity are not yet in place in Syria,” the UN refugee agency’s spokeswoman Lisa Abou Khaled said.

Hezbollah launched a major push on July 21 to clear both sides of Lebanon’s border with Syria of “armed terrorists.”

In August 2014, the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham and ISIL terrorist groups overran Arsal, killing a number of Lebanese forces. They took 30 soldiers hostage, most of whom have been released.

Since then, Hezbollah and the Lebanese military have been defending Lebanon on the country’s northeastern frontier against foreign-backed terrorist groups from neighboring Syria.

Hezbollah fighters have fended off several ISIL attacks inside Lebanon. They have also been providing assistance to Syrian army forces to counter the ongoing foreign-sponsored militancy.

The movement has accused Israel of supporting Takfiri terrorists operating in the Middle East.

Israel, which continues to occupy Lebanon’s Shebaa Farms and Syria’s Golan Heights, is widely reported to be offering medical help to Takfiri terrorists injured in Syria. In December 2015, British newspaper the Daily Mail said Israel had saved the lives of more than 2,000 Takfiri militants since 2013.

(Source: Press TV)



NEWS IN BRIEF



TEDPIX adds 42 points in a day

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange d e s k (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) gained 42 points to end Monday's trade at 81,533, Tasnim news agency reported.

As reported, 525 million shares worth 1.41 trillion rials (about \$37.2 million) were traded through 48,000 deals in the stock market.

Also, IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), gained 8.8 points to 929 on Monday, as 168 million securities worth 1.46 trillion rials (about \$38.5 million) were dealt.

German monthly retail sales rise more than expected in June

German monthly retail sales rose far more than expected in June, data showed on Monday, boosting expectations that private consumption will make a significant contribution to growth in Europe's largest economy this year.



The volatile indicator, which is often subject to revision, showed retail sales rose by 1.1 percent on the month in real terms, the Federal Statistics Office said. That compared with the Reuters consensus forecast for a 0.2 percent monthly rise and came after a rise of 0.5 percent in May.

On the year, sales rose by 1.5 percent in June. A Reuters poll had forecast an increase of 2.7 percent. Consumption has overtaken exports as the main driver of growth, supported by a robust labor market and low interest rates.

A survey last week showed already-buoyant German consumer sentiment continued to rise further heading into August.

(Source: Reuters)

Sanctions cut Qatar central bank's foreign reserves by \$10.4b in June

The Qatar central bank's net international reserves plunged by \$10.4 billion in June to \$24.4 billion because of economic sanctions imposed by other Arab states, central bank data showed on Sunday.

Reserves hit their lowest level in at least five years.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic and transport ties with Qatar on June 5, causing some banks and portfolio investment funds to pull money from the country, depleting the reserves.

However, Qatar's sovereign wealth fund is believed to have around \$180 billion or more of liquid foreign assets which could be used to replenish the central bank reserves when authorities decide that is necessary.

(Source: CNBC)

Car production helps Japanese industrial output rise 1.6%

Japan's industrial production in June rose 1.6 percent from the previous month, lifted by a recovery in passenger cars and other transport equipment, government data showed on Monday, with analysts predicting output will continue to grow.

The rise in production follows a revised 3.6 percent fall in May, with the seasonally adjusted index of output at factories and mines standing at 101.7 against the base of 100 for 2010, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said in a preliminary report.

Manufacturers polled in the survey said they expect output to rise 0.8 percent in July and increase 3.6 percent in August.

METI kept unchanged its basic assessment that industrial production shows signs of improving.

The rise in passenger vehicle production was rather the result of a steep fall the previous month — a double-digit decrease in the transport sector due mainly to a holiday period in early May — than anything else, a ministry official said.

The biggest contributor to the 1.6 percent rise in overall production in June was the transport machinery sector, up 4.2 percent, followed by the chemicals sector with a rise of 3.4 percent.

The pace of production increase accelerated in the April-June period, registering a rise of 1.9 percent from the previous three months, which had grown 0.2 percent. It was the fifth consecutive quarterly gain, according to the ministry.

Yoshimasa Maruyama, chief market economist at SMBC Nikko Securities Inc., said the expansion in industrial production is supported by a rise in exports in the manufacturing sector amid global economic recovery and a weaker yen, which makes goods produced in Japan more competitive abroad.

(Source: The Japan Times)

Rail deal worth €2.5b inked with Russia

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Russia signed d e s k a €2.5-billion deal on joint manufacturing of passenger and cargo wagons in Iran, IRIB reported.

The deal was inked between Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) and Russia's largest manufacturer of locomotives and rail equipment, Transmashholding, in Tehran on Monday.

Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh and Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi besides Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levan Dzhangaryan were present in the signing ceremony.

The two sides had signed a memorandum of



*Iranian Industry Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh (C), Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi (L), and Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levan Dzhangaryan (R) in the signing ceremony of Iran-Russia joint wagon manufacturing deal*

understanding (MOU) in this regard during the visit of an Iranian delegation led by IRDO Chairman Mansour Moazzami to Moscow in late March.

During the signing ceremony, Moazzami said a joint company will be established by the Iranian and Russian sides, in a way that its shares will be

held 80 percent by Russia and 20 percent by Iran. The Russian side will finance the project totally, he noted.

Iran needs 8,000-10,000 wagons annually, he said, adding that cooperation with Russia in this area is an opportunity for both countries.

Iran to hold pavilion in several Turkmen intl. exhibits

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran is d e s k going to hold pavilion in several Turkmen exhibitions set to be held in 2017, Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran reported.

According to the report, Iranian companies will be participating in Turkmen Construction 2017, OGT Expo 2017, an exhibition on the sidelines of TurkmenTel 2017 Conference, and Turkmen Energetika Exhibition which are scheduled to be held in the upcoming months in Ashgabat.

Turkmen Construction 2017, an international trade fair and conference for construction in Turkmenistan is scheduled to be held 24-26 August in Ashgabat.

The exhibition is an annual event that brings together renowned companies from all around the world to share knowledge and technology in construction industry.

Turkmenistan international oil & gas exhibition (OGT Expo 2017), which is set to be held 2-4 November in Ashgabat, is an international oil and gas exhibit that aims to encourage and strengthen international cooperation and investments in oil and gas industry.

11th International Conference on Telecommunications, Telemetry, Information Technologies and Broadcasting Equipment (TurkmenTel 2017) is another event scheduled for 3-4 October in Turkmenistan's capital. TurkmenTel is the annual meeting place for Turkmenistan's telecoms industry.

During 7-9 September, CCI Turkmenistan Building in Ashgabat will be hosting Turkmen Energetika Exhibition which is a three-day event showcasing products and services in power and renewable energy industry including photovoltaic, geothermal, wind power, tidal power and hydroelectric.

Tehran, Berlin ink joint statement on rail, maritime, ports co-op

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Germany signed d e s k a joint statement on cooperation in rail transport, maritime and ports industries, the portal of Iranian Transport Ministry reported on Monday.

According to the report, the statement was signed in Germany by Iranian Minister of Transport Abbas Akhoundi and German Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure Alexander Dobrindt during a meeting of Iran-Germany joint working group on rail, maritime and ports cooperation.

The Iranian minister was accompanied by his deputy, Asghar Fakhrieh Kashan, Managing Director of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO). Mohammad Saeidnejad as well as Saeid Mohammadzadeh, the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as



*Iranian Minister of Transport Abbas Akhoundi (R) and German Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure Alexander Dobrindt exchanging signed documents on transportation cooperation*

Asia stocks start data-heavy week with gains; dollar creeps up

**SINGAPORE (Reuters)** — Asian shares turned positive on Monday, shrugging off a new North Korean missile test as investors turned their attention to a raft of global economic data and earnings this week, while the dollar crept up but remained capped by U.S. political concerns.

European stocks look set for a muted start, with financial spreadbetter CMC Markets expecting Britain's FTSE 100, Germany's DAX and France's CAC 40 to all open little changed.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan reversed early losses to rise 0.25 percent.

Chinese shares rose, buoyed by several leading companies' forecasts for strong mid-year earnings. The blue-chip index and the Shanghai Composite both rose 0.6 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng climbed 1 percent to a two-year high.

That strong performance came despite a slip in official Chinese manufacturing and services purchasing managers' indices in July, although they stayed above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction on a monthly basis.

Investors remained wary after North Korea conducted a missile test late on Friday that it said proved its ability to strike the U.S. mainland. The U.S. responded by flying two bombers over the Korean peninsula on Sunday.

But early jitters dissipated somewhat, with the Korean won reversing losses. The

dollar was down 0.2 percent at 1,120.7 won, after jumping almost 0.7 percent on Friday. South Korea's KOSPI fell 0.2 percent.

Australian shares advanced 0.7 percent.

The perceived safe-haven Japanese yen strengthened, with the dollar shedding 0.15 percent to 110.545 yen, touching its weakest since mid-June.

"The geopolitical overhang will likely keep topside moves in check early in the week as the disorganized U.S. and China policy towards North Korea is not helping matters," Stephen Innes, head of Asia-Pacific trading at OANDA, wrote in a note. Japan's Nikkei was flat, with the firm yen offsetting news the country's industrial output rebounded in June from a decline in May.

On Wall Street on Friday, the S&P and Nasdaq indexes fell after earnings from companies including Amazon, Exxon Mobil and Starbucks disappointed.

But the Dow closed higher and set an intraday record, lifted by Chevron's strong earnings.

U.S. corporate results overall have come in better than expected for the second quarter. More than halfway through reporting season, S&P 500 companies are on track to have increased earnings by 10.8 percent, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

S&P E-mini futures were down almost 0.1 percent on Monday.

Petchem output to reach 56m tons by Mar. 2018: NPC director

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's d e s k annual production capacity of petrochemicals is estimated to reach 56 million tons by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018), posting a record for the second consecutive year, Shana quoted an official with the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) as saying.

Ali-Mohammad Bossaqzadeh, the production control director of NPC, put the country's petrochemical output at 51 million tons in the past calendar year, saying that using installed capacity of petrochemical production will be increased to 86 percent in this year.

The official further said that petrochemical output rose to 18 million tons in the country during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22) compared to the same period of time in the previous year.

He said 60 percent of Iran's petrochemical products have been exported and the rest 40 percent have been distributed in domestic market.

NPC plans to export 23 million tons of petrochemical products, worth \$11 billion, during the current calendar year.

Bossaqzadeh had previously announced that seven new petrochemical projects are planned to be implemented in the country by the end of current year.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the 13th edition of Iran Petrochemical Forum (IPF), which was held in Tehran on April 22 and 23, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said that the future of Iran's petrochemical industry is promising after the implementation of the nuclear deal (officially called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action which lifted sanction against Iran in January 2016).

RAI).

A handful of renowned German companies including Bombardier Inc., Roland Berger management consulting company and Siemens had also their representatives present in the meeting.

Speaking at the event, Dobrindt mentioned the two countries' great potentials for cooperation saying, "Both sides are ready for expansion of mutual cooperation in transportation sector."

Akhoundi for his part expressed satisfaction with the recent progresses in the two countries' relations and touched upon some of the recent MOUs signed between the two countries including the Tehran-Mashhad railway signaling project signed with Siemens.

Hot and cold: Euro zone grows but inflation slows

**BRUSSELS (Reuters)** — Data in the coming week should confirm the euro zone economy is running hot, after the IMF upgraded growth forecasts and Greece returned to the debt market, although inflation figures could throw cold water on ECB plans to start tightening policy.

Growth in the single currency area outstripped paltry expansion in the United States and Britain in the first quarter and the pace did not let up in the April-June period.

The euro zone may not be growth champion in the second quarter, after the U.S. rebounded to an annualized 2.6 percent thanks to consumer spending and business equipment investment. But it should again fare better than Britain, whose economy failed to build momentum.

A forecast expansion of 0.6 percent in the April-June period, equivalent to an annualized 2.4 percent, would be the third consecutive quarter in which the euro zone has grown at or above a half percentage point, for the first time since 2007-08.

"The global economy has been a jumbo jet running on just one engine for the last five, six years, the U.S., but now it seems there's more from the euro zone as well, with encouraging signs from Asia too," said James Knightley, chief international economist at ING.

Data on Friday showed the euro zone's second-largest economy, France, grew by 0.5 percent for a third successive quarter, while Spanish GDP returned to pre-crisis

levels with 0.9 percent expansion.

"Momentum is there. We're getting a broadening out of countries in terms of economic performance. It's not just the likes of Germany driving it all forward ... There does seem to be self-sustaining momentum," said Knightley.

Euro zone economic sentiment, as compiled by the European Commission, grew for a third straight month in July to a new 10-year high due to a pick-up of the dominant services sector. And confidence levels in all sectors, as well as for consumers, are far above historical averages.

The International Monetary Fund has hiked outlooks for China and the euro zone, while trimming those for the United States and Britain. The Fund said the euro zone's recovery was firming and becoming broad-based, with stronger domestic demand, although it warned of downside risks.

Stubborn inflation, Euro strength

Political risks seen at the start of the year ahead of elections in France and the Netherlands have diminished, while Greece has returned to the bond market after a three-year exile.

Five years ago, European Central Bank President Mario Draghi pledged to do "whatever it takes" to save the euro. His ultra-easy monetary policy is partly behind the robust economic recovery, showing more effect this year as growth in bank loans to the private sector hit a 10-year high in May.



# Asian imports of Iranian oil hit 14-month low

Imports of Iranian crude by major buyers in Asia fell for a second month in a row to a 14-month low in June, weighed down by sluggish purchases by China and Japan.

It is the first time that import volumes of Iranian crude by Asia's four main buyers have fallen for two straight months since Western sanctions against Tehran were lifted in January last year, leading to a spike in shipments.

China, India, South Korea and Japan together imported 1.46 million barrels per day (bpd) last month, down 15.2 percent on a year ago and the lowest amount since 1.32 million bpd in April last year, government and ship-tracking data showed.

The fall comes as Iran aims to raise oil output to around 4 million barrels per day by the end of the year from around 3.8 million bpd in recent months, and increases shipments to Europe.

For the first six months of 2017, purchases by Asia's main buyers were still up 21 percent on a year ago at 1.71 million bpd.

Iran was exempted from an agreement by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to reduce output by 1.2 million bpd, a victory for Tehran which has argued it needs to regain the market share it lost under Western sanctions over its nuclear program.

The latest data showed India's imports of Iranian crude rose more than 30 percent in the first three months of India's financial year in April-June.

Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said in mid-July that India's state refiners plan to buy less Iranian oil in 2017/18 compared with the last fiscal year due to commercial and operational considerations.



Japan's trade ministry on Monday released official data showing its Iranian imports fell for a second straight month last month.

NITC, Iran's leading oil tanker operator, said this month its shipments to Europe were increasing daily and

the company plans to upgrade its fleet to support expansion.

The following tables show Asia's Iran crude imports in bpd for last month and the year to date.

(Source: Reuters)

## Shell suspends Pernis refinery loadings after fire



Royal Dutch Shell suspended loadings of oil products from its Pernis refinery in the Netherlands following a fire at the plant, the company said in a statement to traders on Sunday.

Shell shut down most of its production at Pernis, Europe's largest refinery, after the fire at the 404,000 barrels per day plant late on Saturday caused a power outage.

The company said that no casualties were reported in the incident and the fire was under control, but it expected loadings to be suspended on Monday as well.

In a statement to traders in the re-

gion seen by Reuters, Shell said that "at this stage the extent of the damage is (being) investigated and we are unable to load product at the depot in Pernis."

"For now we work on the assumption that FCA (free carrier) loadings at depot Pernis will be interrupted until and including tomorrow so please take your necessary precautions."

The outage at the Rotterdam plant was likely to boost prices of oil products such as diesel, jet fuel and gasoline in northwest Europe, where refinery profits have risen in recent weeks due to other refinery issues in the region.

(Source: Reuters)

## Canadian heavy oil plugs gap left by OPEC, Latam



Canada's struggling oil market has found something of a lifeline as traders scramble for heavy crude due to OPEC production cuts and sinking Latin American output.

Output has fallen in Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and non-OPEC Latin American countries such as Mexico and Colombia, leading refiners as far away as China to look to Alberta's oil sands to fill the gap.

The interest has boosted the price for heavy Western Canada Select (WCS) oil, which is within range of its tightest discount to U.S. crude ever.

Canadian heavy oil is an easy sub-

stitute for Middle Eastern and Latin American grades, and the rising demand represents a rare bright spot for the oil sands, which have been hit hard by falling prices and the high cost to produce and blend Alberta's heavy, tar-like bitumen.

Gulf Coast refiners are paying more for Canadian production to replace these barrels, pushing the discount for Canadian oil delivered to the U.S. storage hub in Cushing, Oklahoma, to around \$5 a barrel below U.S. crude. At current levels that would put the outright price of WCS at Cushing at just under \$45 a barrel.

(Source: Reuters)

## U.S. shale is determined not to kill this rally

Oil prices moved closer to a two-month high on Friday, closing out the week with some of the strongest gains in 2017. Market sentiment has turned "cautiously optimistic," as Goldman Sachs put it, with rebalancing efforts starting to become more clear.

Crude oil inventories continue to decline, and the latest EIA figures show a massive 7.2 million-barrel drawdown for the week ending on July 21, suddenly plunging U.S. inventories back into the upper end of the five-year average range. Data from the past month or so has dispelled fears that the oil market was poised to suffer another meltdown, perhaps below \$40 per barrel.

Instead, Brent is back up above \$50 per barrel for the first time in two months, and WTI is hovering just below that range as well.

"While OPEC's production path remains uncertain, recent fundamental oil data have come in even better than we had expected," Goldman said in a research note last week. "If sustained, these trends would help achieve the normalization in inventories by early next year."

Goldman also says that inventories are declining not just in the U.S., but around the world. The investment bank says a combined 83 million barrels have been pulled out of storage in Europe, Singapore, Japan and the U.S.

The demand side of the equation also looks bullish, with the IEA having recently revised up its figures. Goldman says that the inventory declines will be "sustained" through the third quarter. With inventories already dipping into the very top of the five-year average range, more declines will



tighten the market significantly.

Goldman projects that continued drawdowns could push the oil futures market into a state of backwardation, which the bank has consistently said would be necessary in order to achieve the "rebalancing" that OPEC has long sought. Backwardation – a state in which near-term oil futures trade at a premium to contracts further out – would make storage uneconomical, forcing more rapid drawdowns. It would also scare away shale drilling to some degree, if drillers saw future-dated oil prices lower than they are today. Moreover, Wall Street might be reluctant to lend a lot of money to indebted shale drillers for the same reason, growing skittish if they see that prices might decline over the course of a year or two.

The shale industry has repeatedly drilled itself into a whole, deploying rigs at such a frenzied pace that they have killed off several oil price rebounds. This time, perhaps, might just be different. Investors are a bit more cautious, pressuring companies into slashing spending and improving profitability. Last week we saw a flurry of spending cuts, from Anadarko Petroleum, Whiting Petroleum, ConocoPhillips and Hess Corp. More are likely in the offing.

That occurred because many companies have questionable economics at today's oil prices, despite the boasts of so many shale executives over the past few years. "Most investors shared our view that U.S. onshore growth is unsustainable in the \$40-\$45 per barrels (/bbl) price environment and that

activity would need to be reduced to better balance corporate cash flows and" spending, according to analysts with investment firm Stifel. "Our end conclusion is we need less rigs and more capital discipline."

Other analysts have come to the same conclusion. "By prioritizing production growth over profitability and margins, investors and producers are at risk of killing their goose before it lays a golden egg," Benjamin Shattuck of Wood Mackenzie said in a recent report.

The latest oil price downturn in June might have finally sent the message to oil executives that the appearance of a sudden price rally should not be trusted. The EIA recently revised down its growth projects for U.S. oil production in 2018 from 10.0 million barrels per day to 9.9 mb/d.

Meanwhile, Goldman says that while the Permian Basin has been hot for a while, it is finally starting to differentiate itself from the rest of the shale industry, for two reasons. New frac sand mines are being proposed in close proximity to shale drillers in the Permian, which could lower well costs by as much as 5 percent, translating to lower breakeven prices by about \$1.50 to \$1.75 per barrel. Second, Goldman says productivity improvements in the Permian are likely to be at the upper end of its forecast 3 to 10 percent.

As such, Permian drillers will probably continue to proceed with their growth plans, although the exuberance with which they do it is starting to calm. Having been hit by so many false rallies, the shale industry is finally starting to show some restraint.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Iran says not obligated to give Farzad B gas field deal to India

Despite India willing to invest as much as \$11 billion to develop Iran's Farzad B gas field, the war of words between the two countries has only intensified with Tehran now saying that it is under no obligation to award the contract to India.

Iran has also made light of India's threat to import less crude oil from it, with its Parliament Energy Commission chief saying Iran could find other customers for its oil.

In May, Iran signed a basic agreement with Russia's Gazprom for development of the gas field which was discovered by a consortium of Indian state-run companies. This was seen as a retaliation against what Iran saw as a threat from India to cut purchase of Iranian oil if the commercial contract for Farzad B didn't happen.

Iranian lawmaker and spokesperson of Iran's Majlis Energy Commission Asadollah Gharekhani said last week that while India had been allowed to conduct technical surveys on Farzad B, giving India development rights was never a part of any agreement.

"In the past, it was decided that Iran and India jointly carry out (feasibility) studies on the Farzad B oil field. The studies have been conducted and have finished. However, no decision was made that would suggest the project to develop the field should necessarily be contracted out to India," Gharekhani was quoted as having told Iranian government's ICANA news agency.

"Under equal circumstances, this company (Indian consortium) could take priority. However, if there is a difference between the Indian company and other firms in terms of technology, technical knowhow and investment, Iran will, based on the independence and freedom that is has, choose the company which would best serve the country's national interests," he added.

On India's decision to buy less crude from Iran, the official said Iran had actually suffered losses by allowing New Delhi to pay for the purchase in Indian rupees.

India and Iran have failed to finalize a commercial contract for Farzad despite the optimism expressed by PM Narendra Modi and President Hassan Rouhani for the same when they met in Tehran last year.

(Source: The Times of India)

## Oil hits two-month high on tighter US market, Venezuela sanctions risk

Oil prices hit a two-month high on Monday, lifted by a tightening U.S. crude market and the threat of sanctions against OPEC-member Venezuela.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) futures briefly jumped over \$50 per barrel on Monday and were at \$49.97 per barrel at 0654 GMT, still up 25 cents, or 0.5 percent from their last close. That means that virtually the entire WTI curve has moved over \$50 per barrel.

Brent crude futures were at \$52.85 per barrel, up 33 cents or 0.6 percent. Prices hit \$52.90 per barrel earlier in the day, their highest since May 25.



The price rises put both crude benchmarks on track for a sixth consecutive session of gains.

Prices have risen around 10 percent since the last meeting of leading members by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other major producers, including Russia, when the group discussed potential measures to further tighten oil markets.

"U.S. inventories are showing massive drawdowns, Saudi Arabia seems intent on playing its role as the world's swing producer (and) impending sanctions on Venezuela by the U.S. will almost certainly be oil price-supportive," said Jeffrey Halley, analyst at futures brokerage OANDA.

The United States is considering imposing sanctions on Venezuela's vital oil sector in response to Sunday's election of a constitutional super-body that Washington has denounced as a "sham" vote.

But traders said the biggest price supporter was currently a tightening U.S. oil market.

"Strong increases in the price of oil ... (were) fuelled in large part by the substantial drawdowns in U.S. inventories over the past several weeks," said William O'Loughlin, analyst at Rivkin Securities.

U.S. crude inventories have fallen by 10 percent from their March peaks to 483.4 million barrels.

In production, U.S. output dipped by 0.2 percent to 9.41 million barrels per day (bpd) in the week to July 21, after rising by more than 10 percent since mid-2016.

Drilling for new U.S. production is also slowing, with just 10 rigs added in July, the fewest since May 2016.

The tighter market was also visible in the price curve, which shows backwardation in the front end.

Backwardation is a market condition in which prices for immediate delivery of a product are higher than those later on.

Brent prices for delivery in September are currently around 35 cents above those for October.

Despite the signs of a tighter market in the United States, supplies in China remain plentiful.

China's June crude inventories rose to the highest level since September 2016, marking the third month of gain, data from the official Xinhua News Agency showed.

Crude stocks rose 4 percent to 30.57 million tons (around 224 million barrels), while total oil products stockpiles inched up to 18.1 million tons.

(Source: Reuters)



## Britain en Marche?

By Bill Emmott

We live in a politically turbulent age. Parties barely a year old have recently swept to power in France and in the huge metropolitan area of Tokyo. A party less than five years old is leading opinion polls in Italy. A political neophyte is sitting in the White House, to the profound discomfort of establishment Republicans and Democrats. So where will the political earth shake next? The answer could be – indeed, should be – the United Kingdom.



Even as the UK faces the upheaval of Brexit, nobody is talking about remaking – much less replacing – the established political parties. Many deny that they would even consider such a thing. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair – a pro-European centrist innovator who won three general elections for his Labour Party in the 1990s – took great care in a recent article to stress that he is “not advocating a new Party.”

But Blair, or someone like him, should be doing just that. After all, while the British political system does put formidable barriers in the path of any new party, the chances of success are greater now than at any time in the last 40 years. In a political system still feeling the aftershocks of two major earthquakes – the June 2016 Brexit referendum and, a year later, the humiliating electoral setback of the Conservative Party that spearheaded it – there is a clear opportunity for newcomers.

Already, the Conservatives are locked in an internal battle that they can only try to obscure. In the Labour Party, too, rebellions are erupting. Now is the moment for a new party, styled after French President Emmanuel Macron’s “La République En Marche,” to capitalize on the division, disarray, and distrust in the established parties. Now is the moment for a photogenic young British man or woman to follow in the 39-year-old Macron’s footsteps, making history by casting aside the old guard.

### ■ A new party

Of course, as Blair suggested, Britain’s first-past-the-post electoral system, based on single-member constituencies, implies huge advantages for the established political parties. A new party could well find – after spending huge sums of money and energy, and perhaps even securing a sizable chunk of the vote in its debut general election – that its voters are spread too thinly across the country to deliver more than a handful of parliamentary seats.

That is what happened the last time a new centrist party entered the fray. In the early 1980s, four defectors from Labour, alarmed by their party’s leftward shift and anti-EU stance, created the Social Democratic Party. Capitalizing on the unpopularity of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s early economic policies, the new SDP – in alliance with the small Liberal Party – won 25% of the national vote in the 1983 general election. But they ended up with a mere 23 seats. It was all downhill from there.

That memory is discouraging political innovation today. Those in Labour who are deeply suspicious of the left-wing economic and foreign-policy stance of their popular leader, Jeremy Corbyn, still think the most sensible strategy is to be patient and, when the opportunity arises, to recapture their party. The same goes for Conservatives who think Brexit is leading the country to disaster.

But the history of the SDP can and should be read in a different way. At one point in 1982, the party was attracting the support of more than 50% of voters in opinion polls. Many senior Conservative figures were saying privately at the time that they thought the SDP was going to win the next election in a landslide.

Then came the Falklands War, which amounted to a major victory for Thatcher. So it was the Conservatives who ended up winning the 1983 election in a landslide – a result that launched the still-unpopular Labour’s long trudge back toward the political center.

Today, no major victory looks to be in the cards for Labour or the Conservatives. Moreover, the recent election – in which the Conservatives’ 20-point lead disappeared seemingly overnight, as voters, especially young people, threw their support behind Labour – suggests that British voters are up for grabs.

The recent election held another important lesson: Europe and Brexit is not the issue that British voters care about most today. Corbyn’s Labour ran on the same Brexit policy as May’s Conservatives. But on issues like jobs, hospitals, schools, and the welfare state, their approaches contrasted sharply.

To defeat the establishment parties, therefore, a new political movement would have to stand, first and foremost, for restoring public services, reviving the economy, and rebuilding trust. A strong relationship with the EU should be pitched as a means to advance these goals, not as a goal in itself.

In the next few months, an opportunity to create such a movement may well present itself. It depends, first, on whether leadership ambitions and divisions over Brexit consume the Conservative Party and, second, on whether the recent rebellion of more than 50 senior Labour members over Corbyn’s Brexit policy escalates.

Anyone considering such an opportunity should remember the Falklands, and wonder what the SDP might have become had Argentina not invaded. And they should recall the motto of the British special forces: “Who Dares Wins.”

(Source: project-syndicate.org)

# The EU, headed by France and Germany, could replace U.S. on Mideast

By Uri Savir

It is no secret that there is a considerable rift between the Donald Trump administration and the European Union. Trump fulfilled his election promises of an “America First” policy, objecting to globalization, regionalization, the European Union, free trade deals and climate change. He vehemently objects European immigration and refugee absorption policies. He does not hide his dislike of Europe’s strong women, namely German Chancellor Angela Merkel. On Syria he cooperates mainly with Russian President Vladimir Putin. On the Israeli-Palestinian issue, he largely works solo, in cooperation mainly with Egypt and the Persian Gulf Arab states. He has developed a better personal relationship with French President Emmanuel Macron, mainly in order to have a European partner on anti-terror issues.

### ■ Independent foreign policy

Brussels has witnessed a major shift in the EU-U.S. relationship in the respective outlooks on economic and security policies. A senior EU official close to Federica Mogherini, the European Union high commissioner for foreign affairs and security policy, told Al-Monitor that given the internal and external situation, Brussels is compelled to develop a more independent foreign policy, including on Middle Eastern issues. Following the Brexit, the EU is headed today mainly by a German-French alliance — Merkel and Macron. With the economic might and influence of the EU in the international arena, Brussels, Berlin and Paris are determined to run an effective and more independent foreign policy.

The senior EU official told Al-Monitor that Brussels is particularly concerned with the Israel-Palestinian issue on the backdrop of recent violence outbreaks in the aftermath of the July 14 terror attack near the Temple Mount. Mogherini has been consulting lately on this issue with the German, French and Italian leaderships. They are all concerned that violence will spiral out of control, turning into an armed intifada. Mogherini is also in constant contact with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, but the U.S. administration does not involve the EU in the ongoing efforts of its envoy Jason Greenblatt, except for periodic updates.



**Brussels has witnessed a major shift in the EU-U.S. relationship in the respective outlooks on economic and security policies.**

The way the EU sees the current situation, there is a real danger to the stability of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’ regime. Abbas is coming under considerable fire from Hamas in Gaza, from allies of his Fatah rival, Mohammed Dahlan, and from radical Fatah members in the West Bank. The pragmatic Arab countries offered Abbas only rhetoric support in these difficult times.

### ■ A prolonged crisis

Brussels foresees a prolonged crisis; not only in relation to the imminent events around Al-Aqsa Mosque, but also, and more so, concerning the general stalemate in the peace process. Adding to the developing crisis is the growing rift between Fatah and Hamas. In an attempt to support Abbas, the EU will enhance its economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority and keep an ongoing dialogue with the president.

Abbas met with Macron on July 5. Macron stuck to the traditional French position in favor of a two-state solution

based on the 1967 lines. With that, the EU official claimed that until the 2017 UN General Assembly meeting in September, Europe will not take any concrete initiative so it won’t be seen as disrupting the U.S. efforts. Also, no joint European foreign policy decision will be made until after the Sept. 24 German elections.

According to the official, one can assume that if the United States does not launch a regionally-backed two-state solution process, Merkel (assuming she wins as expected in the upcoming elections) and Macron, together with EU headquarters, will launch a European initiative on the terms of reference for a two-state solution and a peace conference to be convened in Brussels.

“We are committed not to let this year pass without a serious effort in favor of a two-state solution,” said the EU official. He added that the alternative is a grave deterioration into greater violence by the more...elements in Gaza and the

West Bank, which could indeed endanger Abbas’ regime. Brussels is holding constant dialogues on these issues with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Arab League.

According to a senior Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is certain that Trump will block such a European initiative. Speaking to Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity, he stated, “We see Europe as hostile to Israeli interests and pro-Palestinian. The European leadership is probably frustrated to have been marginalized by the Trump administration.”

On the other hand, a senior PLO official told Al-Monitor that Abbas will welcome such a European initiative and that the issue indeed came up in the meeting with Macron. The Palestinian leadership believes that the EU should never be underestimated, he argued.

Be that as it may, such a European initiative may be too little too late.

(Source: Al Monitor)

## Trump’s presidency is courting self-destruction

### The U.S. leader’s behavior draws criticism from friends and foes

In his first six months in office, President Donald Trump has offered sound and fury, and not much else. Any lingering hopes that he might grow into his role as commander-in-chief evaporated this week, a chaotic and self-destructive one even by the dismal standards of this presidency. Trump, a real estate tycoon who counts himself a leader of men, has proved incapable of wielding power responsibly. He publicly undermined his own attorney-general, one of his earliest and most loyal supporters. And he stood by while his newly appointed communications director Anthony Scaramucci waged a lewd real-time assault on Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff.

Karl Rove, the Texan conservative who orchestrated George W Bush’s successful presidential campaigns, offered his damning view. “If Mr Trump continues this self-destructive behavior, he will drown out his message and maybe even blast his presidency to bits before his first year in office is even out.” Mr Rove is far from alone on the Republican side warning Mr Trump that he is on a perilous course. Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina predicted there would be “hell to pay” if the president removed Jeff Sessions as attorney-general as a prelude to firing Robert Mueller, the independent counsel investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election. Mr Trump may well believe that he is above



**Trump, a real estate tycoon who counts himself a leader of men, has proved incapable of wielding power responsibly.**

the political fray, even above the law. His definition of executive privilege is generous, to say the least. This is deeply dangerous territory, not just for Mr Trump but for the American republic. Mr Trump is testing the constitutional system to destruction, not because of the

impropriety and profanity of aides such as Mr Scaramucci but because he fails to understand how the U.S. political system is supposed to work. His repeated failure to repeal the Affordable Care Act — a signature policy of his campaign — is a sign of how little sway he holds over fellow Republicans. The president has no right to change military policy by tweet. With the possible exception of China policy, every foray he has made on the global stage, from his withdrawal from the Paris climate change treaty to his clumsy interventions in the Persian Gulf and his equivocations on the NATO alliance, has damaged America’s standing. Once the indispensable partner, Trump’s America is now the country to circumvent.

This is a matter of profound regret. Yet in the darkest hour there are glimmers of hope: Republican men and women in the Senate, led by the indomitable John McCain, a war hero traduced by Mr Trump, standing firm; independent judges standing by the rule of law. Democrats and Republicans are starting to draw constitutional red lines. The big test will be the Mueller probe. At another more practical level, the question is whether Mr Trump is capable of achieving anything of note. Without a profound change in behavior and direction, his presidency is not sustainable.

(Source: FT)

## Hounding migrants in France

Nine months after the razing of a squalid migrant camp in Calais, France, known as “the Jungle,” where between 6,000 and 10,000 people were living, local authorities and President Emmanuel Macron’s government are determined to prevent a new camp from springing up. A new report charges that the police in Calais have abused some 500 migrants — nearly half of them minors — and harassed aid workers trying to help them.

“There’s nowhere else that I can think of where I’ve encountered to this extent the use of pepper spray on people who were sleeping and especially on sleeping children,” said Michael Bochenek of Human Rights Watch.

After France’s ombudsman for human rights, Jacques Toubon, demanded authorities end “violations of the most ele-

mentary fundamental rights” of migrants in Calais last month, the government of Macron instructed the local authorities to show “more humanity” and promised a new plan on migration. Part of the plan, presented by Prime Minister Edouard Philippe on July 12, is welcome: accelerating asylum determination and providing more help to approved refugees. But this is twinned with an aggressive effort to deport economic migrants ineligible for asylum and return asylum seekers — as is the European Union rule — to the first European country they entered.

In practice, this means Italy, where most of the migrants arriving in Europe via Libya first land. Italy is not happy, all the more so as it was excluded from Macron’s peace summit between the leaders of Libya’s main warring factions on Tues-

day.

Macron also promised on Thursday “new accommodation centers everywhere” for migrants. Never mind that sufficient funds have not been allocated, that there is stiff local resistance to new centers and that the migrants in Calais, those crossing the Italian border into southern France, or those sleeping outside an overloaded migrant center on the edge of Paris will probably not be eligible.

The rapporteur of France’s highest court recommended on Friday that the court reject the city of Calais’s and the French interior ministry’s appalling refusal to provide even water and toilets for migrants. Macron needs immediately to instruct local authorities to allow aid workers to do their jobs and to tell the interior minister, Gérard Collomb — who



ordered fresh units of riot police officers to Calais last month to treat the “abscess” of migrants threatening to settle down — that migrants are not an infection to be cleansed, but human beings who have a right to be treated with dignity and humanity.

(Source: The NYT)



# How Romney loyalists hijacked Trump's foreign policy

By Ron Maxwell

In 2015, as Trump's rise in the polls raised alarms among establishment Republicans, notable proponents of the neoconservative foreign policy began hedging their bets. Ready to back anyone but Trump, they laid plans for a fallback position in case their favored candidates, Jeb Bush or Marco Rubio, failed to stop Trump's populist insurgency. In public expressions and behind-the-scenes maneuvering, they supported Hillary Clinton over the rising Trump. These were die-hard globalists who had argued for every military intervention in the recent past (Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq 1, Afghanistan, Iraq 2, Libya, Syria, Yemen), and they would become the vanguard of the Never Trump counterinsurgency.

Mitt Romney positioned himself as the standard bearer for the Never Trump forces. As the most recent Republican presidential candidate, he was expected to become an insurmountable obstacle to Trump's hopes for the nomination with pronouncements such as the following: "Donald Trump tells us that he is very, very smart. I'm afraid that when it comes to foreign policy he is very, very not smart.... Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud."

Romney then hatched a plan to block Trump's path to the nomination: "Given the current delegate selection process, that means that I'd vote for Marco Rubio in Florida, for John Kasich in Ohio, and for Ted Cruz or whichever one of the other two contenders has the best chance of beating Mr. Trump in a given state."

Within hours of Trump's emergence as the putative Republican nominee, the Never Trump cadres initiated numerous rearguard actions designed to elect Clinton, whom they correctly saw as the candidate who would implement their neocon foreign policy of regime change, nation-building, humanitarian intervention, meddling in foreign civil wars and domestic affairs, spreading democracy, confronting Russia, maintaining America's state of perpetual covert and overt war, and requiring the continued presence of hundreds of thousands of troops in every corner of the globe costing billions of taxpayer dollars.

Romney and his Never Trump network even initiated a last-ditch plan in the event the polls narrowed: throw Utah to an independent candidate. In a close election, they reasoned, neutralizing Utah's electoral votes could foreclose an Electoral College majority, thus throwing the election into the U.S. House of Representatives. There, establishment loyalists of both parties might throw the victory to Clinton.

It was not to be. Although many issues influenced the race, certainly one was the antipathy American citizens held for the pointless nonstop wars perpetrated by Beltway political elites. To cite just two indicators, among many: South Carolina primary voters selected Trump over Jeb Bush even after Trump's over-the-top criticisms of his brother's decision to go to war in Iraq. A recent study described in the Kansas City Star reveals that Clinton

could have won the presidency if the burden of war was lower in key states. The headline: "Higher war casualties in key swing states may have swung November's presidential election away from Hillary Clinton."

Hardly anyone could miss Trump's style in victory. If he could have had a Triumphal Arch constructed at government expense on the Washington Mall, he would have done so, along with his own version of Hadrian's wall at the southern border. His ubiquitous post-campaign rallies are modern day equivalents of Caesars' triumphal processions through the streets of Rome.

And it wasn't surprising that the unlikely victor would summon the defeated Mitt Romney for what looked like rounds of public submission and humiliation. Romney was all too eager to oblige, proving once again that those who lust for power can be easily manipulated.

But through all of that, in thought, word, and deed, the highly networked neocons demonstrated their fierce devotion to the globalist, internationalist, interventionist cause. No amount of failure, death, destruction, or proliferation of failed states in the wake of their implemented strategies compelled a rethinking of their goals or a modification of their utopian theories.

While prominent neocon and establishment luminaries who derided Trump from the beginning couldn't expect seats at the Trump table, their lesser known minions infiltrated key precincts of Trump's transition teams. Their astute sponsors, the neocon bigwigs, knew the neophyte president could not know who was who in the political and policy firmament of Washington. Neocon cadres had had at least a quarter century to embed themselves into every nook and cranny of the federal bureaucracy—at State, Defense, national security

**Within weeks a pattern emerged in the new administration. Covert Never Trump Republicans were getting hired; proven and loyal Trump supporters were blocked.**

agencies, congressional offices, think tanks, nongovernment organizations, and the national media.

Within weeks a pattern emerged in the new administration. Covert Never Trump Republicans were getting hired; proven and loyal Trump supporters were blocked. Of course, notorious neocon Never Trumpers who had signed public letters knew they couldn't possibly enlist, so they resigned themselves to moving their protégés and acolytes into positions of influence and power. Occasionally they tried for direct access to appointments for themselves, but this was a heavier lift. Elliott Abrams was a case in point.

Rex Tillerson, formidably accomplished in global business, was nevertheless as much a neophyte as his boss when it came to navigating the policy terrain of the D.C. swamp. As is well known, in building his team he relied on those two neocon avatars, Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice, who had originally promoted his own candidacy for secretary of state. But Rice had been a



**Those who play the game by establishment rules are waived in. Those who would challenge the status quo are kept out.**

vocal part of the neocon Never Trump coalition. Her anti-Trump pronouncements included: "Donald Trump should not be president....He doesn't have the dignity and stature to be president." The Washington Post greeted her 2017 book, *Democracy: Stories from the Long Road to Freedom*, as "a repudiation of Trump's America First worldview."

Thus it wasn't surprising that Rice would introduce Elliott Abrams to Tillerson as an ideal candidate for State's No. 2 position. This would have placed a dyed-in-the-wool neocon hardliner at the very top of the State Department's hierarchy and given him the power to hire and fire all undersecretaries across the vast foreign policy empire. Rice, one of the architects of George W. Bush's failed policies of regime change and nation building, would have consolidated a direct line of influence into the highest reaches of the Trump foreign policy apparatus.

Not only was Abrams' entire career a refutation of Trump's America First foreign policy, but he had spent the previous eighteen months publicly bashing Trump in harsh terms. Cleverly, however, he had not signed either of the two Never Trump letters co-signed by most of the other neocon foreign policy elite. Abrams almost got the nod, except for a last-minute intervention by Trump adviser Steve Bannon, who was armed with every disparaging anti-Trump statement Abrams had made. Examples: "This is a question of character....He is not fit to sit in the chair of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln....his absolute unwillingness to learn anything about foreign policy.... Hillary would be better on foreign policy....I'm not going to vote for Trump...."

But Abrams' rejection was the exception. As a high profile globalist-interventionist he could not easily hide his antipathy toward the Trump doctrine. Others, whose track records and private comments were more easily obscured, were waived in by gatekeepers whose mission it was (and remains) to populate State, DoD, and national security agencies with establishment and neocon cadres, not with proven Trump supporters and adherents to his foreign policy.

But how did the gatekeepers get in? Romney may have disappeared from the headlines, but he never left the sidelines. His chess pieces were already on the board, occupying key squares and prepared to move.

Once the president opened the door to RNC chairman Reince Priebus as his chief of staff, to Rex Tillerson at State, to James Mattis as defense secretary, and to H. R. McMaster at NSC, the neocons just walked in. While each of these political and military luminaries may publicly support the president's policies and in some instances may sincerely want to see them implemented, their entire careers have been spent within the establishment and neocon elite. They don't know any other world view or any other people.

Donald Trump ran on an America First foreign policy, repeatedly deriding George W. Bush for invading Iraq in 2003. He criticized Clinton and Obama

for their military interventions in Libya and their support for regime change in Syria. He questioned the point of the endless Afghan war. He criticized the Beltway's hostile obsession with Russia while it ignored China's military buildup and economic threat to America.

Throughout the campaign Trump made abundantly clear his foreign policy ethos. If elected he would stop the policy of perpetual war, strengthen America's military, take care of U.S. veterans, focus particularly on annihilating the ISIS caliphate, protect the homeland from Islamist radicalism, and promote a carefully calibrated America First policy.

But, despite this clear record, according to Politico and other Beltway journals, the president has been entrenched in numerous White House and Pentagon meetings to sign off on globalist foreign policy goals, including escalating commitments to the war in Afghanistan. These presentations, conducted by H.R. McMaster and others, were basically arguments to continue the global status quo; in other words, a foreign policy that Clinton would have embraced. Brian Hook and Nadia Schadlow were two of the lesser known policy wonks who participated in these meetings, determining vital issues of war and peace.

Brian Hook, head of State Department policy planning, is an astute operative and member in good standing of the neocon elite. He's also a onetime foreign policy adviser to Romney and remains in close touch with him. Hook was one of the founders, along with Eliot Cohen and Eric Edelman, of the anti-Trump John Hay Initiative. Hook organized one of the Never Trump letters during the campaign, and his views are well-known, in part through a May 2016 piece by Julia Hoffe in Politico Magazine. A passage: "My wife said, 'never,'" said Brian Hook, looking pained and slicing the air with a long, pale hand. ....Even if you say you support him as the nominee," Hook says, "you go down the list of his positions and you see you disagree on every one."

One might wonder how a man such as Hook could become the director of policy planning and a senior adviser to Rex Tillerson, advising on all key foreign policy issues? The answer is: the Romney network.

Consider also the case of Margaret Peterlin, assigned as a Sherpa during the transition to guide Tillerson through the confirmation process. Another experienced Beltway insider, Peterlin promptly made herself indispensable to Tillerson and blocked anyone who wanted access to him, no matter how senior. Peterlin then brought Brian Hook onboard, a buddy from their Romney days, to serve as the brains for foreign policy while she was serving as the Gorgon-eyed chief of staff.

According to rumor, the two are now blocking White House personnel picks, particularly Trump loyalists, from appointments at State. At the same time, they are bringing aboard neocons such as Kurt Volker, executive director of the McCain Institute and notorious Russia hawk, and Wess Mitchell, president of the neocon Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA). As special representative for Ukraine negotiations, Volker is making proclamations to inflame the conflict and further entangle the United States.

(End of Part One)

## Middle East oil producing countries, collapse of crude oil price, selling the family heirlooms?

By Marwan Salamah

It seems the oil producing countries are beginning to sweat. It finally dawned upon them that their oil revenues are in trouble, and turbulent, if not perilous, financial times are ahead.

Venezuela is in shambles, Nigeria is thrashing to keep its head above water, Mexico is desperately trying to hedge its oil on the forward markets and the others are scratching their heads for bright ideas. It could still get a lot worse, and a few years ago, we warned that wars could be triggered.

As for the Middle East oil producing countries, their vast and growing welfare spending which has sustained their economies and polities has suddenly had the rug pulled from underneath it, and oil revenues have collapsed. And, after a period of denial, these countries are now scrambling to try change the direction of the oncoming hurricane.

One must admit, that their approach is innovative, but also risky. Most of the Middle East oil producers have drawn up ambitious restructuring plans to diversify their economies and wean their citizens off the welfare teat. And, as an extra measure, they coupled those plans with economic reform plans, which in essence, are austerity measures. Nevertheless, they remain plans and need to be continuously reassessed and amended. Rigid plans do not guarantee success.

To fund their diversification strategy away from oil, most of these countries have opted to sell assets. Not any assets, but their oil assets!

Abu Dhabi recently announced that it will be selling minority stakes in its downstream oil businesses, such as oil services, refineries, oil trading subsidiaries, tank farms, pipelines...etc. It will not, however sell any of its upstream, oil production operation. They justify this sale as a method to generate capital to fund its economic diversification plan, as well as boost its oil sales by incentivizing its customers, with a direct ownership interest, and hence buy more products and services.

Earlier, Oman had announced a, more or less, similar plan to sell off parts of its oil assets to attract foreign capital. One approach that it has taken is to sell part of its ownerships in companies listed on the Muscat stock exchange, starting with Salalah Methanol Co. This approach carries the added benefit of stimulating the local stock exchange which has been tepid for a while.

Much earlier, Saudi announced last year its ambitious diversification plan which will be funded by selling 5% of Aramco, its main oil producing company, and is expected to be initiated by the end of 2017 – subject to its valuation at a price

**No doubt the publicly announced plans, at least for Kuwait and Saudi, are ambitious and impressive. But, how realistic are they? Their details need to be transparently clarified.**

acceptable to both, the sellers and the potential buyers.

Kuwait, chose a different approach to the funding of its diversification plan. It figured that, as its present credit worthiness was high and interest rates low, it may as well borrow from the international markets – and worry later about servicing and repaying the loans.

This all may be fine and dandy, but – and a big 'But' for sure – what happens if the plans don't work? It is not like these countries have a comforting successful track record of prudent economic management. Oil has been in

play in these countries for 50 to 80 years. Never dreamed of, oil revenues have flowed into their coffers, but very little real development or diversification has taken place. Why would they imagine that they can pull off a great transformation in a mere 5 to 15 years?

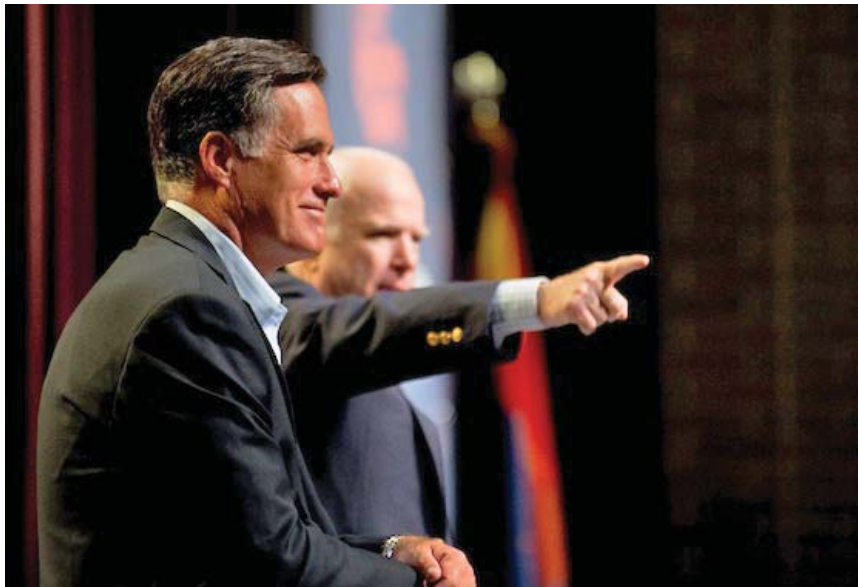
No doubt the publicly announced plans, at least for Kuwait and Saudi, are ambitious and impressive. But, how realistic are they? Their details (feasibility studies, numbers, cost benefit analysis, etc.) need to be transparently clarified.

Secondly, realism begets the question of how successful is the selling of the oil assets going to be. It certainly is not an easy task. It is far from a sellers' market (especially for a semi-distressed seller), the world economy is teetering, the oil business is in the doldrums and, above all, why would any foreigner in his right mind, use scarce capital to buy a tiny minority stake in a government majority-owned business, whose operation could be subject to fiat and government diktat?

Thirdly, the tendency of these countries to trigger, overnight, harsh austerity programs is akin to shooting yourself in the foot before taking the first step of economic development and diversification. Development and diversification presume the presence of a wide and equally robust economic players in the market. Classical austerity programs are more likely to stifle economic growth and increase income and wealth inequality – even by the IMF's reluctant admission.

Lastly, a nagging thought keeps popping its head, why would a far-sighted farmer sell part of his cow and forever lose part of the milk revenue. The Middle East oil producers can make do with their present income by reducing waste, extravagance, military spending and, as in the case of the farmer who upgrades his milk to such higher value products as cheese, butter and cream, and gets rid of the Ferrari in his garage. Similarly, these countries may be able to fund their economic diversification plans, albeit in form that is less ambitious than what they are imagining at present. Also, it may take little longer to realize, but the risks would be dramatically smaller, and more easily mitigated.

This discussion reminds us of the folklore tales about the self-made millionaire who, during his rise to success, stumbled and had to auction off his wife's gold and jewelry to fund his way back to the top. However, these tales make no mention of the thousands of businessmen who failed to rise, despite selling their wife's gold, and went on, to bankruptcy and poverty.



**Once the president opened the door to RNC chairman Reince Priebus as his chief of staff, to Rex Tillerson at State, to James Mattis as defense secretary, and to H. R. McMaster at NSC, the neocons just walked in.**



# Keeping Libya on the U.S. dashboard

By Khalifa Ghwell

Since the revolution in 2011, which was supported militarily by the United States, Libya has been ruled by divided governments. Today there are actually three governments attempting to govern simultaneously, one of which — the Government of National Salvation — I serve as prime minister. The lack of political unity has made our fight for stability and security against extremists that much harder.

Indeed, whatever hopes we have for democracy are at risk; representative government is a new concept here and it will not be legitimate in the eyes of our exhausted country unless we have functional institutions and can protect our people. To that end, it is crucial that America not forget us, but help us toward a political solution that reconciles our differences.

My first priority as prime minister has been to rid Libya of extremist elements, be it ISIS, Daesh, al Qaeda, Ansar al Sharia or whatever is the name of the day. As I have said on many occasions, fundamentalism and terrorism should be fought, as they betray the principles of Islam and the promise of a free and peaceful Libya. President Trump has recently said that he is prepared to support Libya in its fight against extremism and we welcome that and are ready to

partner in that fight.

We have created and trained special teams at the Misrata air base who report directly to me and have been deployed on countless missions against the terrorists and fought bravely in the successful purge of Daesh from Sirte. We have also established the Counterterrorism Service (CTS) which has exchanged important and crucial information and data with the U.S. and European intelligence agencies.

## ■ A national unity government

But as we fight, we must also renew our efforts to bring together a national unity government. Here, the international community has failed us. Immediately following the revolution, the U.S. and our European friends were cheered in the public squares of our towns and villages. But the task of building a functioning pluralistic government for people who suffered under a brutal dictatorship for generations was gravely underestimated.

The international community at that time faced its own problems of slow growth and political uncertainty and didn't engage Libya with the strong financial, political, and military support we needed.

The chaos that ensued has implications beyond our borders, best illustrated by the immigration crisis of thousands

from other countries beset by conflict and poverty transiting through Libya to Europe. Our inability to prevent this transit is simply due to our lack of a single unified and strong central government. The internal Libyan problem has become an international nightmare for Europe.

For these reasons, I am prepared to support international efforts to help us bring together a national unity government that takes into consideration the principles behind the revolution and brings fairness and opportunities for all regions and societal segments of our great country.

While this is no easy task, it must be done for the alternative of further chaos and fighting can no longer be tolerated or allowed. I do not desire or seek a role in this unity government, but rather to encourage it and to be a part of a new generation of Libyan leadership that is drawn from and returns to ordinary citizen life.

## ■ U.S. cannot impose on us

My caution to the U.S. and our other friends is that the unity solution cannot be perceived as a government imposed on us by the outside. Libya needs the support of indigenous and impartial broad-based groups such as the Libyan Political Agreement Committee that brings together leaders from all aspects of our society.

The LPA supports no political party or candidate but seeks to bring people together in common cause. We must be reminded that democracy is not simply an election; it needs to be nurtured by non-governmental organizations that work on behalf of Libya as well as by an independent press, an independent judiciary and civilian control over a national military.

Indeed, these features are the building blocks of a stable, functional, self-sufficient democracy. Unity will allow us at last to develop a national economic strategy that touches all segments of the population. One of my first tasks as prime minister was to establish the Strategic Projects Committee. This consisted of leaders from many industry sectors though out the whole of Libya.

This committee is charged with outlining and describing the immediate and necessary commercial opportunities needed to be exploited on urgent basis such as power generation, road and bridge repair, health and education infrastructure rebuilds and more. But we cannot encourage it, oversee it, finance it with a fragmented government. What's more we need a single sovereign nation to repatriate much of our frozen and stolen financial resources and to attract capital investments, especially from the U.S.

(Source: The Washington Times)

# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

## Apartment

Amazing Apt in Elahieh  
300 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., fully furn,  
peaceful area and amazing view,  
perfect location, **\$6500**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Amazing Luxury Apartment  
in Fereshteh  
200 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., 2 parkings, fully  
furn, large and beautiful, lobby,  
sauna, pool, Jacuzzi, gym saloon,  
**\$4200 per month**  
**Ms.Sara 09128103207**

Apt in Mahmoodieh  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, 320 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., lobby,  
spj, big balcony, fully furn,  
diplomatic, **\$6000**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in Jordan  
90 sq.m, 1 Bdrs., fully furn, lobby,  
parking, diplomatic,  
nice & cozy, **\$1800**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

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

## Villa

Villa in Darous  
duplex, 1200 sq.m built up, 1800  
land, 5 Bdrs., renovated,  
big saloon, semi furn, beautiful  
garden, pool, sauna, Jacuzzi  
**\$20000**  
**Suitable for Residency & Embassy**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

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

Villa apartment in Mahmoodieh  
good location, 120 sq.m with  
separate entrance, very close to the  
public transport, double gals  
windows, peaceful area, large  
garden, swimming pool, secured,  
servant and maid service available  
upon request  
**Only \$1900 suitable for  
foreigners and diplomats**  
**Ms.Sara 09128103207**

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



Holder of  
ISO 9001:2008  
ISO 10004:2012  
ISO 10002:2014

From Oxford Cert Universal

**Best Consultation,  
Best Services, Best Result**

Section Manager "Tina 09128440154"  
Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

**Hot Line: 28141**  
**info@parsdiplomatic.com**

## Building & Office

Whole Building in Farmanieh  
20 units, 60 Bdrs., several parking,  
semi furn, suitable for residency of  
big companies, renovated  
**Price negotiable**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Commercial Villa in Jordan  
duplex villa, 1000 sq.m, flat,  
completely renovated, green garden,  
outdoor pool, parking, good access  
to highway, **\$50000**  
**Suitable for foreign Companies**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

New Whole Building in Elahieh  
3 Apts with one duplex villa, 1200  
sq.m total, parking, luxury & modern  
**\$15000**  
**Suitable for Residency and Embassy**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Legal registered Offices in North &  
North-West  
available from 1400 sq.m each  
floor up to 800 sq.m, flat, open space  
**Suitable for  
International Companies**  
**Ms.Sara 09128103207**

New Whole Building in Aqdasieh  
6<sup>th</sup> floor, 12 units, Apts between 170  
sq.m to 250 sq.m with 3 Bdrs., Spj,  
parking, 2500 sq.m built up, 700  
sq.m land  
**Suitable for Embassy & Residency**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

## Ideal Offers

Apt in Zafaranieh  
220 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., fully furn, lobby,  
Spj, diplomatic tower  
**\$2800**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Office in Jordan  
110 sq.m to 240 sq.m, full of  
foreign companies, could be flat,  
parking lot with extra visitors  
parking, lobby, security, renovated,  
almost new  
**Price per each sq \$40**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Apt in Gheytharieh  
120 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., view of park,  
parking, full furn, diplomatic  
building **\$1200**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Office in Valiasr  
from 250 sq.m up to 7000 sq.m  
commercial office, ready for  
renting to foreign companies,  
lobby, parking lot, good access  
to highway  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

Luxury Apt in Jordan  
70 sq.m, 1 Bdr., good access,  
top floors, **\$1500**  
**Suitable for foreign Companies**  
**Ms.Diba: 09128103206**

مالکین محترم

ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آپارتمان،  
ویلا، مستغلات، اداری و تجاری) به ما بسپارید.

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

مالکین محترم املاک مبله و غیر مبله، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا و مستغلات  
شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شرکت های خارجی نیازمندیم.

مالکین محترم

ویلاهای شما را جهت اجاره به منزل سفیر و مدیران  
شرکت های بین المللی در مناطق شمالی تهران  
نیازمندیم.

**PARSIAN Real Estate**

**SHANON**  
Shanon\_zt@yahoo.com  
+989121907875  
Tel : 88510081

(\$4000) Mahmoodieh 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F  
(\$3200) Farmanieh 3bdrs, S/p, F.F  
(\$3600) Fereshteh 3bdrs, S/p, balcony, & F.F  
(\$1800) Jordan, 2bdrs, F.F  
(\$2200) Sa'adat abad 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, balcony, & F.F  
(\$6000) Elahieh Villa 5bdrs, 1400sq.m, yard  
(\$7000) Jordan bldg 10bdrs  
(\$10000) Darous bldg 10bdrs

**FIRST CHOICE REAL ESTATE**

Mr. Ghaniyadeh  
Nobody does it better

آژانس املاک انتخاب اول در خدمت شماست

TEL: 22041212 - 09121081212  
APARTMENT - VILLA - OFFICE  
PROPERTY@FIRSTCHOICECO.COM  
**WWW.FIRSTCHOICECO.COM**

**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

**www.DeltaHOME.ir**  
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

**HOME**  
Real Estate  
Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group  
(021) 88888865

**IRANIAHOME**

**Real Estate**  
**SH.LAVASANI**  
**09123103526**  
**Tel: 88888007**  
**Fax: 88675936**

Specialise dans la  
location de villas,  
appartements,  
ou bureaux pour  
une clientele  
essentiellement  
etrangere. Fichier  
tres riche a votre  
disposition.

**Mr. Ahrabi** (franco phone)  
**0919 2571076**

**TEHRANTIMES**  
Iran's Leading International Daily

Advertising Dept: times1979@gmail.com  
**430 51 450 - 430 51 405**



# Common workout injuries and how to avoid them

By Linda Melone

Not enough rest, too much too soon, repetitive motions and simple wear and tear can result in pain and injuries that put the kibosh on your workouts. In fact, a study of college athletes published in the Journal of Athletic Training shows overuse injuries (repetitive motions involved in sports and workout routines, such as long-distance running, swimming and rowing) account for nearly 30 percent of all injuries. Inflammation, general stress and tendinitis were the most common overuse injuries reported. High-speed, full-body-contact sports most often resulted in acute injuries. Here are the most common workout injuries, how they can occur and tips for staying safe.

## ■ 1. Ankle sprain

Twisting an ankle doesn't just happen running outdoors. Jogging on a treadmill can also result in an ankle sprain, says Cindy Trowbridge, Ph.D., associate professor of kinesiology at the University of Texas at Arlington. "The biggest problem running indoors on a treadmill is losing your focus and accidentally stepping half on and half off the treadmill while the belt's still moving." If you jump off the treadmill quickly, your ankle may roll in an unnatural direction. Running outside on uneven terrain or up and off curbs also increases the risk of an ankle sprain. HOW TO STAY SAFE: Most treadmills have a clip you attach to your clothes that stops the machine if you fall. Says Trowbridge, "If you run outdoors, stay on level sidewalks or at a park, versus running where you have to go up and down off a curb." Look for paved, even walkways because uneven terrain and potholes can be problems.

## ■ 2. Shin splints

Pain along the inner edge of your shinbone (tibia) may be a sign of medial tibial stress syndrome, more commonly known as shin splints. Common in runners, shin splints can also develop in exercisers who participate in running sports or jumping. "It's muscle inflammation and can occur even after just a couple of workouts," says associate professor of kinesiology Cindy Trowbridge, Ph.D. You're at greatest risk of shin splints if you've recently increased the intensity or frequency of your workouts. Uneven ground, running uphill or downhill or on hard asphalt also increases the risk of shin splints, as does wearing worn-out shoes. HOW TO STAY SAFE: Wearing proper shoes and gradually increasing your workout intensity (no more than 10 percent a week) goes a long way toward preventing shin splints, says Trowbridge. Also avoid running or jogging right away. Slowly warm up first by doing jumping jacks to get your blood moving and your muscles warm, she says.

## ■ 3. Low-back strains

A sudden, sharp twinge in your lower back during your workout could be a sign you've overdone it. "Squats or deadlifts with improper form wreaks havoc on the lower back," says associate professor of kinesiology Cindy Trowbridge, Ph.D. "You can suffer strains or, even worse, nerve compression and disk herniation." Twisting motions or sideways bends can also strain your lower back. HOW TO STAY SAFE: Beginners should first learn how to maintain a neutral back, says Trowbridge. To find your neutral spine, lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Your spine should touch the floor under your neck and lower back, which allows the natural curves of your back to absorb shock during exercise. "Get your form correct first before adding weight. Beginner weightlifters should do the leg press or hip sled first before trying squats." If you're unsure of proper form, ask a qualified personal trainer for advice.

## ■ 4. Rotator cuff injury

Four main muscles (supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor and subscapularis) comprise the rotator cuff which surrounds and stabilizes the shoulder joint. Shoulder pain when you reach behind you, overhead or out to the side may be a sign of a rotator cuff strain. "It typically results from repetitive overhead activity," says Luga Podesta, M.D., sports medi-



cine specialist at Podesta Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Institute. Activities such as swimming or throwing a ball and overhead shoulder movements like military presses can lead to rotator cuff strains when done repeatedly over time. HOW TO STAY SAFE: Strengthen your rotator cuff muscles as part of your upper-body program. Use good posture (a slouched posture makes you more prone to compression of the shoulder joint) and avoid repetitive overhead exercises with weight that's too heavy and lat pulldowns behind the neck -- do pull-downs in the front instead.

## ■ 5. Stress fractures

These tiny, hairline fractures are usually the result of too much too soon or repetitive jumping in one place, says Luga Podesta, M.D. The majority of stress fractures occur in the bones of the foot, heel or shin. Pain around the site of the fracture that worsens with exercising, standing or walking is a symptom of a stress fracture. The area may also swell. Sports like basketball and tennis also increase the risk of stress fractures -- as does osteoporosis. If left untreated, a stress fracture may not heal properly and can lead to chronic pain. HOW TO STAY SAFE: Start gradually. Try to progress by no more than five to 10 percent in exercise volume each week, says John P. Higgins, M.D., director of exercise physiology at Memorial Hermann at the Texas Medical Center. "For example, if you are jogging 10 miles a week, don't do more than 11 miles the next week. If you are doing 10 reps of 50-pound biceps curls this week, next week do 11 reps of 50 or 10 reps of 55 pounds." Cross-training can also help.

## ■ 6. IT band syndrome

An overuse injury common in runners and cyclists, iliotibial band syndrome (ITBS) occurs when the IT band, a ligament that runs along the outside of the thigh from the hip to the shin, becomes tight and inflamed. "Cycling can trigger this flare-up, which causes pain on the outside of the knee," says associate professor of kinesiology Cindy Trowbridge. This can also occur in runners who wear worn-out shoes, run on uneven or banked surfaces, run downhill, do the same run in the same direction too many times or simply from overuse as a result of running too many miles. HOW TO STAY SAFE: If you're a cyclist, make sure the seat height is appropriate -- not too high or low -- says Trowbridge. In a cycling class, ask the instructor to help you adjust the height of the seat as well as find the right location that places your torso in an ideal position. "You want to be able to just reach the bar without

feeling all bunched up," she says. Runners should do a short walking warm-up before starting to run and make sure they replace worn-out shoes. Also, avoid running on concrete and, if you run on a track, change directions regularly.

## ■ 7. Patellofemoral syndrome

Pain under the kneecap that worsens from running, walking down stairs or sitting with bent knees for long periods of time could be a sign of patellofemoral syndrome, also known as "runner's knee." You may also hear a crunching, creaking or grating sound. "You can get this from running, jumping or squatting," says Luga Podesta, M.D. A change like an increase in running mileage, can contribute to pain. Patellofemoral syndrome occurs when the bones in the lower leg are not lined up perfectly, which causes an abnormal gliding between the patella (kneecap) and femur (thigh bone). This misalignment can lead to wear and tear between the cartilage and surfaces of the bones, causing pain. HOW TO STAY SAFE: Keep knees healthy with exercises that strengthen quadriceps and hip flexors. Seated and lying leg raises are often prescribed for strengthening the quadriceps. Also avoid kneeling or squatting repeatedly.

(Source: [topfitnessmag.com](http://topfitnessmag.com))

## How to take care of your knees when you are very athletic

By Dan Harriman

The knees cause problems for many athletes. Nearly every sport engages your legs to a certain degree, which means the knee joints are also engaged. As an athlete, you naturally place more stress on your knees than a non-athlete. Consequently, you can develop knee problems in different ways. Injuries can occur from a fall or collision, as well as from repetitive movements, which result in injuries sustained over a relatively long period of time. Due to the high risk for knee problems, you should take special precautions to keep your knees healthy.

### ■ Step 1

Participate in low-impact sports when possible to reduce the amount of jarring on your knees. Avoid running on hard pavements, playing tennis on concrete, and doing other activities that place lots of stress on the knees, such as mogul skiing. All of these can lead to osteoarthritis, according to Dr. Donald M. Kastenbaum, vice chairman of orthopedic surgery at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City.

### ■ Step 2

Make a special effort to avoid high-impact sports when your primary sport places a lot of stress on your knees. Use the off-season to allow your knees to recuperate and try to engage only in athletic activities that greatly reduce the impact on your joints, such as swimming, elliptical training, bicycle riding and cross-country skiing.

### ■ Step 3

Rest your body as much as possible between athletic activities. Resting means abstaining from physical exercise when it is not necessary. Concentrate on working your upper body if you decide you must exercise between athletic activities. Avoid exercises such as squats, leg extensions, leg presses and lying leg curls.

### ■ Step 4

Apply ice packs to your knees on a regular basis between athletic activity to help keep reduce any pain and swelling from inflammation. Keep the ice pack wrapped in a towel and take it off after 20 minutes.

### ■ Step 5

Fasten a lightweight, breathable and self-adhesive compression wrap around your knees when physically active and when resting to keep fluids from collecting at the knee joint. Don't fasten the compression wrap around the knee too tightly. Ensure the wrap allows for proper circulation in your legs. Use the wraps to encourage stability at the joints and proper knee alignment with the legs.

### ■ Step 6

Keep your feet elevated when possible during rest to keep down swelling and prevent fluids from building up around the knees. Place your legs on a stack of pillows or blankets so that your legs are elevated at an angle that's above your waist. This allows for gravity to effectively drain fluids away from the knees. (Source: [livestrong.com](http://livestrong.com))

## An ode to sweat: 3 reasons you should embrace perspiration

By Sarah DiGiulio

Pit stains. A yoga mat that could double as a Slip 'N Slide. A sports bra you can wring out with ease. All these are things you should be grateful for—yes, grateful! Sure, sweat may be annoying on super hot days when you'd like to make it to work without looking like you just stepped out of the shower, but perspiration is a sign that your body is working just the way it should be.

When we get too hot, the body's temperature center in the hypothalamus sends a signal to the sweat glands to produce sweat, explains Barbara J. Holtzclaw, PhD, RN, FAAN, the associate dean for research at Oklahoma University. And it's the evaporation of that salty liquid on our skin that cools us down. Essentially, perspiration acts as the body's A.C. unit and keeps us from overheating.

If that isn't reason enough to start embracing sweat, read on. Because there are plenty of other reasons to get comfortable with your beautiful, glistening self—plus a few ways to make sweating it out a bit more comfortable:

### ■ 1. Most sweat doesn't stink.

Most people hate sweat because they think it smells. But guess what? Most perspiration is completely odorless.

Scorching, 90-degree days and intense yoga sessions activate eccrine sweat glands. And the sweat they produce is mostly made up of water and

electrolytes, neither of which smells, Holtzclaw explains. (Though some synthetic fabrics can trap body heat and interfere with the evaporation of sweat and produce an odor of their own, she notes.)

Smelly sweat comes from apocrine sweat glands, which are only activated when we're feeling stressed, anxious, fearful, or aroused. Because this type of sweat is thick and oily, it traps bacteria on the skin, resulting in an unpleasant odor, Holtzclaw explains.

### ■ 2. You produce exactly as much sweat as you should.

Remember, your body has your back: it's automatically producing sweat to keep you from overheating, and it knows just how much perspiration you need. But each person is different. The amount of eccrine sweat you produce on a particular day depends on a lot of factors, including the weather and the amount of sweat glands you have. If you're used to hot climates, your body adjusts to sweat more efficiently. However, if your body is used to a cool climate, you may produce more sweat in the heat, Holtzclaw says. So whether you're dripping in sweat or merely glistening, know that your body is only doing what's best for you, which is actually pretty awesome.

### ■ 3. Being totally sweat-free is risky.

You may have heard about people getting Botox injections or light wave treatments like MiraDry or MiraSmooth to help them sweat less. Though the

idea may sound appealing, proceed with caution, says James Mold, MD, a retired family medicine physician, and professor of medicine at Oklahoma University. Even though these treatments are FDA-approved, they may cause burning, itching, swelling and bruising that can last for weeks. Not to mention, long-term side effects are not yet clear, Mold says. "It's generally not a good idea to mess with Mother Nature or to have treatments for purely cosmetic reasons unless the benefits clearly outweigh the risks."

Still not quite ready to embrace perspiration?

Don't sweat it! Try these natural and healthy ways to stay dry:

- Layer with cotton. Unlike synthetic materials that trap heat without wicking away sweat, cotton absorbs sweat and dries quickly, making it an ideal base layer.
- Find your zen. If you're more worried about body odor than actual sweat, consider taking up meditation, yoga, or another calming practice. Stress tells the apocrine glands to secrete water and lipids, which is a feast for odor-causing bacteria.
- Avoid excess caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant, so when you have too much of it, it puts your body into flight-or-fight mode and causes your apocrine glands to go into overdrive. If you tend to get balmy after a few too many cups of iced coffee, take that as a sign it's time to dial back.

(Source: [prevention.com](http://prevention.com))

## “SHAHR” Welfare Complex, a Gem in Northern Iran

## Special Offer for Travelers Who Want to Enjoy a Trip in Northern Iran

In hot days of summer, travelers, who choose the coastal towns of Mazandaran Province for recreations alongside of the sea with breathtaking views, will experience a memorable days with their families in “**SHAHR**” Welfare Complex. Travelling to the northern cities of the country and visiting must-see sites and sceneries of the Caspian Sea is one of the first decisions taken by families for summer trips and holidays.

Meanwhile, most travelers prefer to use the coastal waters of Mazandaran Province to make unforgettable memories along with family or friends.

Among coastal cities of Mazandaran Province, Izadshahr is an ideal place for summer trips due to its favorable climatic condition. This city is located at 8 km West of Mahmoudabad and 7 km east of the Noor city in Mazandaran Province.

“**SHAHR**” Welfare Complex is one of the best welfare and recreational hubs in Izadshahr which is offered to the northern travelers. It has a beautiful residential and tourist area along with all amenities and facilities and can be considered as the most suitable option for staying a few days along the Caspian Sea.

This modern and newly-built complex is equipped with 188 seafront apartment units, constructed in seven floors with a unique view, located in a dreamy town for passengers and travelers special of ESKANO.

All units of this residential and welfare complex are equipped with two- and three-bedrooms, duplex, fully furnished (with stylish and classy furniture). It should be noted that the beachfront terrace has increased the attractions of the surrounding environment to a great extent.

Of the other amenities of this Complex, it should be referred to the private beach, a children's park, a football field, beach volleyball, basketball, Ping-Pong, a gym, a bike ride, a swimming pool, sauna and Jacuzzi as free of charge, etc.

On the other hand, senior managers of “**SHAHR**” Welfare Complex have considered special offer for government departments and organizations and can benefit from special discount within the framework of conclusion of a yearlong and/or long-term contract.



For more information about the facilities of this Complex and other units, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the following number: **01144536231, 01144536250 and/or 02144536093.**

“**SHAHR**” Welfare Complex's Address:  
**Golsar No. 3, Izadshahr, Noor, Mazandaran Province**





## Tehran set to host national crafts exhibit in August

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Wide-ranging Iranian d e s k handicrafts from every corner of the country will be put on show at the 28th National Crafts Exhibition, which will be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairground from August 23 to 29.



A craftswoman hand paints traditional Iranian potteries in an undated photo.

“Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Director Zahra Ahmadi pour has invited all ministers and senior officials to visit the exhibit,” CHTN quoted Pouya Mahmoudian, the director of the CHTHO Exports Department as saying on Saturday.

Craftspeople native to 31 provinces will promote their skills in various fields at the halls no. 14, 15 and 25 that are designated to the showcase, she added.

The event will touch upon woodwork, illuminated manuscript, miniature, textile printing, enamel, leatherwork, handwoven products, calligraphy, traditional musical instruments, metalwork, and marquetry, amongst a lavish patchwork of other works.

Over the past couple of years, dozens of high-quality Iranian handicrafts have been honored with the UNESCO Seal of Excellence.

## Iranian police seize pieces of prehistoric relics

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Iranian authorities have d e s k confiscated six pieces of prehistoric objects from a smuggler’s house in Gonbad-e Kavus, northern Golestan province.

“The seized objects are comprised of a figurine, two daggers and three bronze rings estimated to date back to 2800 years ago,” IRNA quoted Mahmoud Alifar, the police commander of Gonbad-e Kavus, as saying on Monday.

“An individual has been arrested in this regard and handed over to judiciary officials,” he added.

Gonbad-e Kavus is home to a UNESCO-inscribed brick tower that is of high architectural importance as an exemplar design of the early-Islamic-era architecture.



### ROUND THE GLOBE

#### Historic Centre of Morelia

The Historic Centre of Morelia is located in central Mexico, at the foot of the Sierra Madre Occidental and near the agricultural valley of Morelia-Querendaro.

Built in the 16th century according to a “checkerboard” layout, Morelia is an outstanding example of urban development combining town planning theories of Spain and the Mesoamerican experience.

Well suited to the slopes of the central hill of the valley, its streets follow the original layout. The city has major axes, numerous urban squares, of which the vast rectangular Zocalo Plaza, and gardens that create an open, airy ensemble with magnificent vistas of the surrounding hills.



A view of the Historic Centre of Morelia

The central part of the Historic Centre of Morelia includes 249 monuments of prime importance, of which 21 churches and 20 civil constructions, which crystallize the architectural history of the city. The sobriety of the urban townscape is enhanced by many Baroque facades characteristic of the religious foundations, including the cathedral and the churches of Santa Rosa, de las Monjas and Guadalupe. A

Although the majority of the monuments were erected in the 17th and 18th centuries, styles of earlier and later periods (Middle Ages, Renaissance and Neoclassicism) merge in the creation of the “Baroque Moreliano”. Together, they form a harmonious unity that reinforces the measured use of architectural elements in pink stone, the numerous arcades and imposing towers and cupolas covered with azulejos that dominate the city.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Iran to restore its UNESCO-inscribed churches

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — In line with d e s k the goal of jumpstarting the tourism industry, Iran has allotted some \$370,000 to the restoration of the UNESCO-inscribed churches that are located in northwest of the country.

“A sum of 14 billion rials (roughly \$370,000) will be channeled into restoration plans for the UNESCO-inscribed churches in Iran,” Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Deputy Director Mohammad-Hassan Talebian told IRNA on Sunday.

“The identity of historical churches [in the country] must be preserved and the cultural heritage organization makes efforts to promote them by the means of organizing religious ceremonies and conducting conservation projects,” Talebian added.

The official made the remarks during a visit to Qareh Klise (the Monastery of Saint Thaddeus), an ancient Armenian monastery that played host to a religious gathering by the Christians in a mountainous landscape of West Azarbaijan province, adjacent to the borders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey.

The organization also plans to document a total of 450 Armenian churches and 150 Assyrian ones, ILNA quoted Talebian as saying on Saturday.

Qareh Klise has always been a place of high spiritual value for Christians and other inhabitants in the region. Every summer, it hosts gatherings of pilgrims coming from Iran and Armenia to observe special religious ceremonies such as Holy Communion and baptism.



An undated photo released by IRNA depicts people visiting the UNESCO-inscribed Qareh Klise (the Monastery of Saint Thaddeus) in Iran's West Azarbaijan province.

Together with St. Stepanos Monastery and the Chapel of Dzordzor, St. Thaddeus was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage

list in 2008 under the title “Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran”.

UNESCO says these edifices are ex-

amples of outstanding universal value of the Armenian architectural and decorative traditions.

## Iran to repatriate historical relics to countries of origin

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Iran’s Cultural Heritage, d e s k Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization will return a centuries-old church bell to Turkey as the organization has adopted a policy to repatriate historical objects and relics to the countries of origin.

The decision was announced by CHTHO Deputy Director Mirhadi Qareseyyed-Romiani during his visit to an anthropology museum in Urmia, northwest Iran, where the bell was on display, Mehr reported on Saturday.

“The organization also seeks to repatriate all the cultural and historical assets of Iran that are being kept in other countries,” Mehr quoted Qareseyyed-Romiani as saying.

“The process of returning portable cultural and historical objects back to the country is going on with a rapid pace,” he asserted.

President Hassan Rouhani’s administration has avid-



CHTHO Deputy Director Mirhadi Qareseyyed-Romiani in an undated photo

## Airlines urged to cut ticket prices as cost of oil continues to fall

Consumer campaigners have accused airlines of ripping off passengers by failing to pass on the full saving of the fall in fuel prices.

They say the current low price of oil is not reflected in the cost charged by airlines. The row comes as around two million people headed overseas this weekend as the holiday season got underway.

The Conservative MP Michael Fabricant said that although the cost of flights has been falling over the past few years customers are still not seeing the full benefit of the fall in fuel costs over the same period.

“There’s a very real argument here to say that airline customers are being ripped off. The price of tickets must go down to reflect the fall in the price of fuel, but airlines are failing to pass on in full the savings they

are making as a result of falling fuel prices,” he said.

The price of crude oil has plummeted in the past three years, from \$115 per barrel in April 2014 to around \$50 per barrel this month - a fall of 56 percent.

Figures from the SkyScanner travel website show that between July 2015 and June this year the average cost of an economy ticket from the UK to all destinations fell from £351.70 to £328.36, a drop of 6.6 percent.

The average cost of an economy ticket from the UK to European destinations fell by 7.6 percent over the same period, from £151.17 to £139.54.

Mr Fabricant highlighted the case of a £1,380 flight from London to Sydney with Emirates, which includes a fuel surcharge of

£364.

He is now calling on Ministers to act to force those airlines which impose fuel surcharges to cut or even scrap them altogether.

Emma Coulthurst, travel expert from holiday price comparison site, TravelSupermarket.com said: “The last few three years have been some of the best for the airline industry in terms of profits; airlines have enjoyed huge cash piles since oil prices slid significantly in mid-2014. The airlines are quick to increase prices when oil prices increase. But, the same discounts have not seemed apparent in ticket prices when fuel prices have slid over the last few years.”

She added: “Airlines need to convince us that they are passing on savings to us.

ly been pursued recuperation of the country’s cultural heritage as over the past couple of years with several collections [of looted artifacts] were recovered from Italy, Belgium, the U.S. and several other countries, the official explained.

“... and we are now following the return of some earthenware relics from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The ones excavated from Persepolis and Chogha Mish archaeological site in Khuzestan Province.”

Last November, a total of 30 historical artifacts including early-Islamic era earthenware and jewelries were returned home after being smuggled into Italy in 2008.

In 2016, CHTHO publicized a call for assistance, asking Iranians abroad to inform the organization in case of tracing smuggled artifacts and antiquities of Iranian heritage.

These fuel surcharges - - and it is mainly the flag carriers who are to blame for them - make customers feel that the airline industry is taking advantage of them.”

Lufthansa said it scrapped its fuel surcharges around two years ago, and said competition between airlines was so “fierce” that passengers were benefitting from “very competitive prices”.

In a statement responding to Mr Fabricant, BA said: “All prices our customers see are inclusive of taxes and charges. We clearly identify the carrier imposed charge to our customers during the booking process on ba.com. The carrier imposed charge is not linked to fuel prices.”

Emirates did not respond to requests for comment.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## Tips for parents of children flying solo

Last week, an unaccompanied 15-year-old traveling from London to meet his grandparents in France was bumped from an oversold easyJet flight and essentially treated as an adult, left to deal with rebooking on his own, according to a report by the BBC.

Though the incident ended with the boy taking a flight 10 hours later, it underscores a weakness in a system designed to care for children unaccustomed to advocating for themselves.

Experts emphasize the importance of educating children before their trip.

“Even if it’s an older teen flying to soccer camp, they need to learn to speak up and explain that they’re 16 and on their own and can’t be stranded in an airport,” said Eileen Ogintz, who has the syndicated column and website Taking the Kids. “Play the what-if game. What if you’re canceled? What if you’re diverted? What if you’re stranded?”

Even when children are adequately prepared with those answers, the protocol for flying solo is not uniform. Because there are no Transportation Department regulations regarding travel by unaccompanied minors, airlines create their own policies, beginning with who can fly. Here are tips for familiarizing yourself with guidelines established by airlines.

### ■ Airline Requirements

Many American carriers offer services for children des-



igned solo fliers like select seats and airline escorts on and off the plane, and to connecting gates. Most airlines consider solo fliers from the ages of 5 to 15 as unaccompanied minors, though Southwest Airlines puts the upper limit at 11 and JetBlue Airways at 13. American Airlines and Delta Air Lines make the designation optional for children 15 to 17.

Not all flights are available to children traveling alone. Many carriers limit younger children to nonstop or direct flights. Delta allows 8- to 14-year-olds to make connections, assisted by an employee. American Airlines allows connecting services, with an escort between flights, at several of its busier airports, including its hubs in Chicago,

Dallas and New York.

### ■ Parental Considerations

At the airport check-in desk, parents with government-issued identification can obtain a pass that allows them to escort the minor to the gate. Some airlines require them to stay at the airport until the plane has taken off, and most experts advise doing so in case the plane experiences a mechanical problem or delay and must return to the terminal.

At the arrival airport, most airlines will similarly issue a gate pass to the person designated to pick up the minor, allowing the person to meet the child at the arrival gate. To better track unaccompanied minors, Delta has instituted a system that relies on bar-coded wristbands that are scanned at way points in the journey. The airline has said that it intends to make that data available to parents and custodians.

Experts recommend parents prepare children for flight as they would themselves, including sending them off with identification such as a birth certificate or a passport. Pack a water bottle to fill after passing through security; some form of entertainment, like books or a tablet computer with an extra battery booster; a fleece or sweater for chilly flights; and food.

“Send the equivalent of a school lunch,” Ms. Ogintz of Taking the Kids said. “Chances are there’s not much food.”

(Source: The New York Times)



# Flatworms can still detect light even after they've been decapitated

Using the flatworm's ability to survive and even regrow its head after decapitation, researchers have shown the animal will shy away from a light source even when it no longer has eyes.

And these eyes can do more than you think; the study also found that in spite of being little more than dimples with simple light-sensing nerves, those eyespots are capable of distinguishing between several colors.

A small team led by researchers from the National Center for Biological Sciences in Bangalore, India, made the discovery using a type of flatworm, or planarian, called *Schmidtea mediterranea*.

## ■ Biologist's dream

Planarians might be a biologist's dream, but for the rest of us they're fuel for nightmares.

Scientists have even managed to swap the heads of different flatworm species, which was then replaced as the body regrew its original species' head. Because clearly nature is a horror movie.

Since planarians have rather simple brains, this neat Wolverine-like talent makes them great subjects to study how nervous systems and body plans develop under different conditions.

In fact the flatworm's entire body is pretty basic. At the head end there are two small shadows designating light-de-



tecting structures we can think of as primitive eyes.

Unlike our eyes, though, the hollows lack the structures needed to focus detailed images, not to mention the computing power to process them.

## ■ Light stimuli

Instead, planarian eyes are pits with lined with cells that respond to light stimuli by messaging clumps of neurons we could generously call a brain.

Those light-sensitive tissues consist of

**The light-sensitive tissues consist of a pigmented cells that contain just one kind of opsin, or protein that turns a wavelength of radiation into something that a nerve will respond to.**

a pigmented cells that contain just one kind of opsin, or protein that turns a wavelength of radiation into something that a nerve will respond to.

As basic as they are, it's enough to tell the worms the direction bright light is coming from so they can hightail it away.

In a recent study on the animals, biologist Akash Gulyani from Bangalore's National Centre for Biological Sciences made a rather odd discovery.

If forced to choose between environments illuminated by green or blue light of equal intensities, the planarians showed a preference for the green space. When red is thrown into the mix, they'll opt for that colour.

Weirder still, they can distinguish between subtle differences in wavelengths just 25 nanometers apart.

Planarians might not be able to enjoy the Wizard of Oz in full technicolor, but managing to discern different colors with just one opsin and a simple network of brain cells reveals a clue about how its visual system functions.

It seems as if the animal best detects wavelengths that correspond with the colour blue. As the wavelengths move away from blue part of the spectrum, the flatworm perceives it as if it's getting darker, making greens and reds preferable.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## New 3-D imaging reveals how human cell nucleus organizes DNA and chromatin of its genome

Sixty-four years ago, James Watson and Francis Crick described the now-iconic double helix structure of DNA. In a new paper, published in the July 28, online issue of Science, a team of researchers at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine and the Salk Institute for Biological Studies describe development and application of new electron microscopic imaging tools and a selective stain for DNA to visualize the three-dimensional structure of chromatin -- a complex of molecules that helps pack six feet of DNA into each cell nucleus, construct chromosomes and control gene expression and DNA replication.

The "primary functions of chromatin are fundamental," said study co-lead Mark Ellisman, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Neurosciences and Bioengineering and director of the National Center for Microscopy and Imaging Research (NCMIR) at UC San Diego. "It efficiently packages DNA to fit inside the cell nucleus, making it possible for chromosomes and cells to divide and replicate safely and correctly. It's a basic, working element of life."

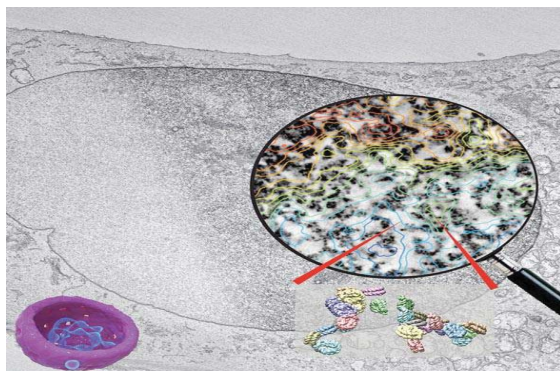
## ■ Structure of chromatin

The new findings and the methods developed allow

them help resolve an on-going, persistent debate about the actual structure of chromatin, long poorly understood. DNA wraps around complex structures called nucleosomes. This chain of disks was thought to organize into increasingly thicker fibers that progressively form what are seen as condensed chromosomes in dividing cells.

Ellisman, with co-senior author Clodagh O'Shea, Ph.D., an associate professor at Salk and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Faculty Scholar, and colleagues demonstrate that this model of hierarchical packing into thicker and thicker cables is not correct. They developed a new imaging approach called ChromEMT, which combines an advanced form of electron microscopy tomography, developed at NCMIR, with a new labeling method to selectively enhance electron scattering and thus the specific contrast associated with DNA to directly image within cells the threads of this important core element of the genome.

Ellisman said that it is now clear that the biological functions and activity of our genomes in the nucleus are not determined by linear DNA sequence information



alone. Instead, it is the local nucleosome structure combined with its global 3D organization in the nucleus that determines gene expression and cell fate. ChromEMT enables DNA and chromatin to be visualized across this critical set of biological and structural scales in single cells for the first time.

(Source: EurekAlert)

## Jellyfish crisps: The ready-salted treat making waves in the snacking world

It is the ultimate ready-salted crisp, even if it does come with a slight sting in the tail.

Scientists have invented jellyfish crisps, which they claim could provide a healthier alternative to deep fried varieties.

Jellyfish is already eaten as a delicacy in Asian countries, but currently the drying technique takes at least a month and leaves a gristly, stringy substance that has

never caught on in the West.

Now researchers in Denmark have discovered that by soaking jellyfish in alcohol and allowing it to evaporate, the creatures turn into paper-thin, crunchy discs which are similar in texture to a traditional potato crisp.

"Actually there is nothing new in eating jellyfish," said Miss Thorborg Pedersen. "It's an old tradition dating back more

than a thousand years in Asia. Jellyfish are a delicacy believe it or not.

"I researched how turn slimy jellyfish into a crispy jellyfish chip.

## ■ Different solutions

"Gels respond differently when put in different solutions. In alcohol some gels simply collapse, and that is exactly what we see a jellyfish doing. As the jellyfish

collapses, the water is extracted from it and its volume is reduced.

"After we let it evaporate a crispy jellyfish chip emerged, which we can eat."

Perhaps surprisingly, the desiccated jellyfish do not have much taste, but scientists believe that they could be flavored using different kinds of alcohol.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## IRANCELL High-Tech "5G" Unveils in Presence of ICT Minister

IRANCELL's high-tech Five-Generation dubbed "5G" technology was unveiled on July 19 in the presence of the Minister of Communications and Information Technology (ICT) Mahmoud Vaezi, the Public Relations Dept. of IRANCELL Company reported.

At the threshold of commissioning the 3rd phase of National Information Network, a number of 23 projects and salient achievements of IRANCELL Company were unveiled at the 3rd phase of this network in the presence of ICT minister, his deputies and senior managers at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (ICT).

ICT Minister was the first speaker at the unveiling ceremony of this giant project who said: "ICT infrastructures should be a bedrock for the development of industry and other fields."

Turning to the necessity of foreign investment in this sector, he said: "Technology should be taken into serious consideration in all fields."



With the coordination made in this regard, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (ICT) will take giant strides in line with materializing its objectives before termination of the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (to end March 20, 2018).

Chief Executive of IRANCELL Company Dezfuli was the next speaker who said: "Calculating domestic traffic with half tariffs is one of the salient achievements of National Information Network."

Turning to the pilot test of the first radio network based on G5 techniques, he said: "Today, giant step was taken in the field of information technology in the country, based on which, 5G technology was unveiled in the presence of ICT minister."

This giant project was tested in Oct. 2016 as pilot successfully, he said, adding: "For this purpose, we have established necessary cooperation with the academic centers, so that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was inked with one of IT service providers for the development of G-5 technology."

In the end, Chief Executive of IRANCELL Company Dezfuli seized this opportunity to express his special thanks to those officials who supported objectives of the company in launching this giant project.

## Iran Khodro Kermanshah Co. Launched

Iran Khodro Kermanshah Company with a nominal capacity of 30,000 units per annum and two working shifts launched in the presence of the first Vice President, Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, the Company's CEO and a group of senior managers of Iran Khodro Industrial Group.

The site is supposed to give a hand in boosting export volume of the mother company, IKCO.

In the first phase and in a single working shift, the annual production of 15,000 sets of Peugeot Pars is targeted; however the figure will increase by over 30,000 units, should the site run in two working shifts.

The executive procedures and operations had started in 2015, while the entire process of designing, manufacturing and installing the equipment were carried out without the help of foreign consultants, on the contrary with the efforts of engineers of IKCO and TAM.

During the inauguration ceremony, Vice-President Is'haq Jahangiri referred to automotive industry as one of the most important industries and emphasized, "We need to pay more attention to the pioneer industries, leading them to boost production; this will also drive the supply chain of these industries forward with better job opportunities."

The first Vice President also said that

the automotive industry of the country has taken long steps, claiming that the establishment of a joint venture company between an Iranian company and an international one was very positive, showing the industrialization in Iran's automotive industry has triggered.

As the next speaker, Mohammadreza Nematzadeh, Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade declared, "We have observed 20% production growth in automobile industry in the past four months compared to the same period last year and we predict the production target of 3 million cars will be achieved within a few years."

"The current production capacity of

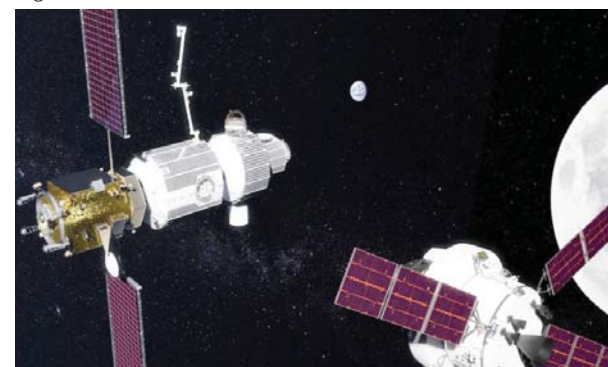
the site is 60 sets per day with Peugeot Pars rolling out the line in one working shift, but the capacity will gradually increase," said the Minister.

Given IKCO investment of 570 billion rials for launching this car production site, Iran Khodro Kermanshah CEO asserted, "In the first phase, an annual production capacity of 15,000 cars per a shift is predicted and this can result in 330 direct employments, should the capacity boost to 30,000 sets per year."

Located in a 30-hectare ground in Sahneh Industrial city, Iran Khodro Kermanshah products meet required quality standards, and can be exported to regional markets, especially Iraq.

## NASA seeks information on developing deep space gateway module

NASA is taking the next small step in the development of a proposed Deep Space Gateway in cislunar space by requesting information about one of its core modules.



A request for information (RFI), released by NASA July 17, seeks information from industry regarding their capabilities to build a Power and Propulsion Element (PPE), a module that will produce electrical power and provide chemical and electrical propulsion for the gateway.

As currently envisioned by NASA, the PPE would be the first element of the gateway, launched as a "co-manifested payload" on the first crewed Space Launch System launch, taking advantage of the additional payload capacity provided by the Block 1B version of the SLS. The PPE would go into what is known as a near rectilinear halo orbit around the moon within 100 days of launch.

The RFI describes the basic capabilities and requirements of the PPE as envisioned by NASA. The module would have a 15-year lifetime and be equipped with a solar electric propulsion system that uses xenon propellant, as well as chemical thrusters that use hydrazine. The module would weigh no more than 7,500 kilograms in order to be a co-manifested SLS payload, including a tank carrying 2,000 kilograms of xenon.

The PPE will produce electrical power, being able to transfer up to 24 kilowatts to other modules later added to the gateway. It will also support communications in several bands, as well as an optical communications demonstration payload.

In the RFI, NASA asks potential respondents their ability to produce the PPE, including a "conceptual schedule, rough order of magnitude engineering cost estimate, and recommended contract vehicle" for it. NASA expects to have the PPE delivered to the Kennedy Space Center for integration onto the SLS in December 2021, which would support a launch of the Exploration Mission 2 flight now expected for some time in 2022.

(Source: space.com)

## Chinese scientists created the largest virtual universe

A team of Chinese scientists put the world's faster supercomputer to the test by using it to create the biggest virtual universe. They're calling it a "warm-up exercise" for the machine called Sunway TaihuLight, which used 10 million CPU cores to crunch numbers for the simulation. According to South China Morning Post (SCMP), an English-language newspaper based in Hong Kong, Sunway's universe was five times bigger than the simulation ran by astrophysicists from the University of Zurich back in June. The downside was that it only lasted for an hour, whereas the Swiss simulation lasted 80.

Simulations of the cosmos can help astronomers look for the most promising regions of space to investigate and could shed light on its mysterious components, like dark matter and dark energy. The Chinese team's simulation, in particular, recreated the birth and early expansion of the universe, around tens of millions years after the Big Bang. Unfortunately, they had to stop after they reached that point: Team leader Gao Liang said the supercomputer had other clients in line that day.

(Source: Engadget)

## Room temperature molecular layer nanolaser opens up a lot of applications

Researchers have built a nanolaser that uses only a single molecular layer, placed on a thin silicon beam, which operates at room temperature.

Key to the new development is use of materials that can be laid down in single layers and efficiently amplify light (lasing action). Single layer nanolasers have been developed before, but they all had to be cooled to low temperatures using a cryogen like liquid nitrogen or liquid helium. Being able to operate at room temperatures (~77 F) opens up many possibilities for uses of these new lasers," Ning said.

The joint ASU-Tsinghua research team used a monolayer of molybdenum ditelluride integrated with a silicon nanobeam cavity for their device. By combining molybdenum ditelluride with silicon, which is the bedrock in semiconductor manufacturing and one of the best waveguide materials, the researchers were able to achieve lasing action without cooling, Ning said.

A laser needs two key pieces -- a gain medium that produces and amplifies photons, and a cavity that confines or traps photons. While such materials choices are easy for large lasers, they become more difficult at nanometer scales for nanolasers. Nanolasers are smaller than 100th of the thickness of the human hair and are expected to play important roles in future computer chips and a variety of light detection and sensing devices.

(Source: nextbigfuture.com)



## 2nd Goharshad Intl. Award to be granted to benevolent women

**W O M E N** TEHRAN — The 2nd Goharshad International Award is to be granted today to eight benevolent Muslim women from across the world.



The holy Iranian city of Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province, will host the award ceremony.

The award seeks to appreciate wise and philanthropic women who are devoted to Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam.

It pivots on different subjects as sacrifice and martyrdom, resistance and Islamic awareness, devotion and charity affairs, construction, medical and training affairs, scientific, research, art and cultural activities.

The women nominated for the award are active in different public-service sectors, including development, health, education, research, science, culture, art and management.

Goharshad (1387–1457), was the wife of Shah Rukh, the emperor of the Timurid Empire of Herat. She was an example of benevolent women, who stepped in the path to promote religion and Shia views, and Goharshad Mosque in the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS) is a symbol of this pious woman's benevolence and her devotion to infallible Imams.

## RECIPE OF THE WEEK

### Very chocolate ice cream



"This is a very rich, custard style ice cream with NO raw eggs!"

#### Ingredients:

3/4 cup sugar  
1 cup milk  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder  
3 egg yolk, lightly beaten  
2 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped  
2 cups heavy cream  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract Add

#### Directions:

Combine sugar, milk, salt, and cocoa powder in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly. Bring to a simmer. Place the egg yolks into a small bowl. Gradually stir in about 1/2 cup of the hot liquid and return to the saucepan. Heat until thickened, but do not boil. Remove from the heat, and stir in the chopped chocolate until chocolate is melted. Pour into a chilled bowl, and refrigerate for about two hours until cold, stirring occasionally.

When chocolate mixture has completely cooled, stir in the cream, and vanilla. Pour into an ice cream maker, and freeze according to manufacturer's directions.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### New Guy in Town II

A: Oh, Armand, thank you for such a **thoughtful** invitation! It's really very nice of you to invite us over for dinner, don't you think so, Ellen?

B: Oh, yes of course! We'd love to come over. Can I bring anything?

C: No, don't worry about it; I'll take care of everything. I'll see you tonight. Come with an **appetite**... I know I will!

B: I don't want go over to his place for dinner! He **gives me the creeps**. **Why on earth** did you accept?

A: Oh come on Ellen, it will be nice to **get to know** him. Besides, he's new to the neighborhood, and it would be rude to **decline** his invitation.

B: I guess so... You always **rope me into** things like this!

C: Ladies! Thank you for coming! You look delicious... I mean nice. Please come in.

A: Oh Armand! You are too kind!

B: How did I get myself into this...?

#### Key vocabulary

**thoughtful**: showing concern for the needs and feelings of other people

**appetite**: a physical desire of food

**give the creeps**: make someone to feel scared and uncomfortable

**why on earth**: expression to emphasize surprise or frustration

**get to know**: start to know, become familiar with someone

**decline**: say you will not or cannot do something

**rope into**: convince someone to do something

#### Supplementary vocabulary

**make yourself at home**: polite way to ask guests to make themselves comfortable

**hospitable**: being a friendly and caring host to the guests

**potluck**: a party that requires everybody to bring food

**housewarming**: a party to celebrate moving into a new home

(Source: [irlanguage.com](#))

# Trump supporter threatens Muslim women at Walmart



Hassan (center) said Hensley accused her of parking too close to her car.

ing the incident and would show the footage to police.

Hensley argued that she didn't care.

"Do you think the police care?" Hensley said in the video.

"She was like, 'police is not going to do nothing to you guys. They're not going to do nothing,'" Rowda Sowan, the third woman in the car told KVVR.

Hensley alleged that the girls' car was parked in a way that prevented her from getting into her own car. After ask-

ing them to move, she said they called her a "fat bitch" to which she informed them she was a Christian and asked them if they knew who Jesus was. As Hensley described the incident, one of the women "said fuck Jesus and I lost it!"

According to the Daily News, Hensley pointed to a bumper sticker supportive of President Donald Trump during her tirade.

Hensley eventually apologized on Facebook, before deleting her account.

## UN deputy chief vows to ensure displaced African women return home in dignity

The United Nations deputy chief Thursday wrapped up her visit to two African countries – Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – where she stressed the importance of women's participation in peace, security and development processes.

The final day's itinerary for Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed included a visit to the Mugunga camp for internally displaced persons, on the outskirts of Goma, which is the capital of North Kivu Province in restive eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Ms. Mohammed said that she is firmly resolved to ensure that women in the camp return home in "dignity and humanity, which is not a favor but a right," promising to embark on an advocacy initiative to finance the better settlement of the women as they return to their places

of origin.

She also commended the women at the camp for their involvement in small trade through micro-financing, which enabled them to meet the needs of their families.

Regarding the victims of sexual violence, she said: "These are our African women [and] we will take their voice out" to the international community and see what can be done to put an end to the scourge.

In the DRC, the deputy secretary-general also visited the women's economic and empowerment center and stressed that the mission was intended to "revitalize women's participation and leadership in peace, security and development"

The mission was also intended to seek the support of

the governor in the work of women in the provinces and to advocate for the implementation of legal texts in favor of gender equality, she said.

Ms. Mohammed began the trip on 18 July, which first took her to Nigeria. She was joined by the UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, as well as the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, and the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop.

This first-ever joint AU-UN high-level trip is the first of a two-part mission focused on women's meaningful participation in peace, security and development. A similar mission will cover two further countries later in the year.

(Source: [UN News Center](#))

## Number of UK women earning over £1m a year doubles over 5 years

The number of women earning more than £1m a year has doubled in the five years to 2014-15, but they are still outnumbered by men by a ratio of 10 to one.

Women make up 9.2 percent of those earning above £1m, according to an analysis of tax returns filed in 2014-15, and derived from a freedom of information request made to HM Revenue & Customs.

The figures, requested by Salisbury House Wealth, a financial adviser, show the number has doubled over five years, to 1,400, compared with 13,800 men.

"The [data] really clearly show the gulf between what men and women earn when you get those top jobs," said Sam Smethers, chief executive of The Fawcett Society, which promotes gender equality and women's rights.

"It's not that surprising but the difference is really stark when you look at the numbers."

The tax data also show that more women are becoming entrepreneurs. More than 1.6m women were self-employed in the first quarter of this year, compared with 1.2m in 2011.

In December 2015, the Chartered Management Institute submitted evidence to MPs that showed how women over 40 face a pay gap in management roles of 35 per-

cent. The average between men and women across all management roles, the CMI reported, stood at 22 percent.

"You can say it's incremental progress, but that's exactly what it is — incremental progress. It's far too slow," said Ann Francke, chief executive of the CMI.

Gender pay equality has made the news recently following the BBC's decision to publish the salaries of its top-earning presenters. Chris Evans, who earned the most, took home four times more than Claudia Winkleman, the highest paid woman on the list. Overall, women made up a third of the UK broadcaster's best paid, on-air talent.

The transparency is critical, said Ms Francke. "It is the first step towards the tipping point. You see that with the reaction to the BBC's disclosure — and we are going to see more 'BBC moments' in the months ahead."

By next April, all businesses with more than 250 employees must publish details of their company's gender pay gap, taking any bonuses into account.

Norway already publishes all tax returns online, and earlier this year Iceland mandated companies to prove they offer equal pay to staff.



"Greater transparency could mean that women will start asking themselves and their management if their contributions are actually inferior to those of men or simply undervalued," said Tamara Box, managing partner, EME, at Reed Smith, the law firm. "Obviously I believe that the latter is and must be the case."

Many observers reject the suggestion that women's salaries have been held

down by decisions to take time out to raise a family or work part-time.

"People can no longer use the excuse of people having families; it's not appropriate," said Katushka Giltsoff, senior adviser at The Miles Partnership, the executive search firm. "It's not about one's life, but about one's contribution to the business environment that's important."

(Source: [ft.com](#))

## 86% of trafficking victims in Colombia are women

Over 320 cases of human trafficking were reported in the country, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The Colombian authorities revealed Sunday that an alarming number of Colombian women were victims of human trafficking, a day that also marked the United Nations World Day against Human Trafficking.

Between 2012 and 2017, 328 cases of human trafficking were reported in the country, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC. Out of the total number of cases, 86.5 percent of those identified were women while 13.5 percent were men. Nearly 61 of reported cases were children and adolescents, the prosecutor's office reported.

"In the last five years, the registered victims came from Medellin, Bogota, Manizales, Armenia, Pereira and Cali, and the main destinations of exploitation abroad were Dominican Republic, China, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Argentina, Panama, Paraguay and the United Arab Emirates," according to the Colombian High Commission on Human Rights.

"Our best action to protect and prevent is to stop indifference."



"Today we put an end to human trafficking."

The Colombian government wants to use law 1069, the national anti-trafficking law, to help protect victims and lower the rates of human trafficking. The law consists of several provisions like emergency trafficking victim protection and assistance, educational services, medical and psychological assessments, clothing and

hygiene kits, housing, transportation, legal advice, issuance of travel and identity documents, and repatriation, job training, and job search assistance.

The government removed "a legal requirement for victims to file a complaint against their traffickers before receiving assistance," the U.S. State Department's 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report stated. The government also designated the Interagency Committee for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons, ICFTP to design policies, analyze results, and recommend actions.

But according to the U.S. State Department report, even though Colombia has made significant leaps in combating trafficking in the country, it "failed to fund the national anti-trafficking strategy, reduced funding for specialized NGOs, and long-term care for trafficking victims remained insufficient."

Article 188 A of the penal code prohibits all forms of trafficking and prescribes punishments of 13 to 23 years in prison plus fines up to 1,500 times the monthly minimum wage, penalties that are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape.

(Source: [telesurtv.net](#))



# Putin: U.S. must cut 755 diplomatic staff, more measures possible

Russia expulsions won't deter U.S. 'commitment to allies': Pence

➔ Russia's response suggested it had set aside initial hopes of better ties with Washington under Trump, something the Republican president, before he was elected, had said he wanted to achieve.

A federal law enforcement investigation and multiple U.S. congressional probes looking into the possibility that Trump's campaign colluded with Russia have made it harder for Trump to open a new chapter with Putin. Russia denies it interfered in the election and Trump has said there was no collusion.

Moscow said on Friday that the United States had until September 1 to reduce its diplomatic staff in Russia to 455 people, matching the number of Russian diplomats left in the United States after Washington expelled 35 Russians in December.

On Friday, an official at the U.S. Embassy, who did not wish to be identified, said the embassy employed about 1,100 diplomatic and support staff in Russia, including Russian and U.S. citizens.

The State Department declined to comment on the exact number of embassy and consular staff in Russia.

But a U.S. State Department official called Russia's action "a regrettable and uncalled-for act."

"We are assessing the impact of such a limitation and how we will respond to it," the official said on condition of anonymity.



nymity.

As of 2013, the U.S. mission in Russia, including the Moscow embassy and consulates in St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and Vladivostok, employed 1,279 staff, according to a State Department Inspector General's report that year. That included 934 "locally employed" staff and 301 U.S. "direct-hire" staff, from 35 U.S. government agencies, the report said.

That breakdown suggested the actual number of Americans forced to leave Russia would be far less than 755.

"We don't (sic) have 755 American diplomats in Russia," said Michael McFaul, a former U.S. ambassador to Russia, in a

post on Twitter on Sunday.

The cuts would likely affect how quickly the United States is able to process Russian applications for U.S. visas, McFaul said.

"If these cuts are real, Russians should expect to wait weeks if not months to get visas to come to U.S.," he said.

Putin said Russia could take more measures against the United States, but not at the moment.

"I am against it as of today," Putin said in the interview with Vesti TV.

He repeated that the U.S. sanctions were a step to worsening relations between the two countries.

"We were waiting for quite a long time that maybe something would change for the better, were holding out hope that the situation would change somehow. But it appears that even if it changes someday it will not change soon," Putin said.

He said Moscow and Washington were achieving results on cooperation, however, even "in this quite difficult situation." The creation of the southern de-escalation zone in Syria showed a concrete result of the joint work between the two countries, Putin said.

■ **Pence: Russia expulsions won't deter U.S. 'commitment to allies'**

The development follows as U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said on Monday Moscow's demand that Washington cut 755 American diplomatic staff in Russia will not lessen the U.S. commitment to its allies.

"We hope for better days, for better relations with Russia but recent diplomatic action taken by Moscow will not deter the commitment of the United States of America to our security, the security of our allies and the security of freedom loving nations around the world," Pence said in Estonia after meeting with the leaders of the three Baltic states.

At a news conference, Pence said he had passed on a "simple message" from President Donald Trump to the three countries: "We are with you."

(Source: agencies)

## Maduro claims Constituent Assembly election victory

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has claimed victory in an election to pick a controversial new constitution-writing body that prompted deadly violence and international condemnation.

Venezuela's National Electoral Council announced on Sunday that more than eight million people voted to grant Maduro's ruling Socialist Party virtually unlimited powers with a Constituent Assembly.

The turnout was more than double the estimates of both the government's political opponents and independent experts.

"We have a Constituent Assembly," Maduro said in a speech to hundreds of supporters in central Caracas after the electoral authority put the voter turnout at 41.5 percent.

"It is the biggest vote the revolution has ever scored in its 18-year history."

Maduro was referring to the year his mentor Hugo Chavez came to power.

The voting started at 6am local time on Sunday with almost 20 million Venezuelans registered to cast their ballots, according to Telesur, a pro-government pan-Latin American media network.

The final count was met with mockery and anger from members of the opposition, who said they believed between two million and three million people voted.

The opposition parties had boycotted the polls, which they say is aimed at consolidating Maduro's power.

Al Jazeera's Lucia Newman, reporting from Caracas, said: "This [turnout] is something that the government clearly needed to show legitimacy for this election."

She said that the opposition had predicted the government would come up with an elevated figure and they are disputing the large turnout announced.

"The actual numbers, whatever they may be, will certainly be a bone of contention for some time to come," she said.

■ **Sad and bloody day**

Earlier in the day, at least 10 people, including an election candidate, were killed as anti-Maduro protesters clashed with the police.

Shootings at protests killed a 13-year-old and a 17-year-old in the western state of Tachira. A soldier was also shot dead there.

The death toll included a 30-year-old regional leader of a youth opposition party in the northeast town of Cumana and two protesters in the western state of Merida.

Anti-Maduro activists wearing hoods or masks erected barricades on roads and scuffles broke out with security forces who moved in quickly to disperse the demonstrators.

"The 'emperor' Donald Trump wanted to halt the Venezuelan people's right to vote," Maduro said as he voted at 6am in a low-income area of Caracas.

Maduro, elected in 2013, has faced months of protests for presiding over a debilitating economic crisis that has seen high inflation rate and shortages of food and other basic amenities.

He pressed ahead with the vote to create the all-powerful constituent assembly or temporary parliament despite U.S. sanctions and months of violence which has claimed the lives of around 120 people.

The opposition called for new protests on Monday and Wednesday against the inauguration of the Constituent Assembly.

"We do not recognize this fraudulent process," Henrique Capriles, a senior opposition leader, said on Sunday at the close of the controversial election, which was marred by violence.

Capriles spoke of a "black day" and blamed what he termed Maduro's "sick ambition".

Al Jazeera's Newman said it was a "sad and bloody day in Venezuela".

She said that half a dozen protesters with bullet wounds were taken to neighboring Colombia for



treatment.

■ **Foreign opposition**

Meantime, several regional governments, including the United States, have voiced opposition to the controversial election.

The U.S. condemned the election and threatened to impose new "strong and swift" sanctions.

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, on Sunday called the election a "sham" and "step towards dictatorship", adding that the U.S. will not accept "illegitimate government".

To show the scale of public anger, the Venezuelan opposition earlier this month organized an unofficial referendum over Maduro's plan.

More than seven million voters rejected the constituent assembly and voted in favor of early elections.

The opposition's bid last year to hold a recall referendum against Maduro was rejected, regional elections have been postponed and Maduro has repeatedly ignored the opposition-controlled Congress.

Javier Farje, a Latin America political analyst, says Maduro's government is not going to rewrite the constitution but is going to "introduce nine reforms in the current constitution".

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Qatar rebuts Saudi 'Hajj politicization' claim

➔ The citizens of Qatar who are abroad will have to return to the country, during the Hajj period at the end of August and beginning of September, to be able to enter Saudi Arabia by way of one of the designated airports.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) has said Qatar Airways flights are banned even for pilgrims during the Hajj period.

The land border with Saudi Arabia has been closed since June 5, preventing pilgrims from reaching Saudi Arabia through land.

The fact that Qatari diplomatic missions

in Saudi Arabia are also closed means there is no authority to appeal to for Qataris in case issues come up during Hajj.

The moves are designed "to set obstacles for the pilgrims from Qatar to Mecca", according to Qatar's Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf).

■ **Registrations reach 20,000**

Elsewhere, Ali Sultan al-Misfiry, director of Hajj and Umrah department at Awqaf said the number of registrations by national and resident pilgrims had reached 20,000.

"Many of these registrants have joined Hajj campaign to begin their holy ritual.



However, then the Saudi ministry's refusal to communicate and to provide safety guarantees led to the apprehension of the pilgrims," Misfiry said, according to Qatari news media.

The House of Saud regime, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt and Bahrain previously issued a list of 13 demands for Qatar, which included curtailing its support for the Muslim Brotherhood, shutting down the Doha-based Al Jazeera channel, closing a Turkish military base and downgrading its relations with Persian Gulf power house Iran.

On Sunday, foreign ministers of the four countries said they were ready for dialogue with Qatar if it showed willingness to tackle their demands and "fights terrorism".

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Iraq's Muqtada al-Sadr makes rare Saudi visit

Iraq's influential Shia Leader Muqtada al-Sadr has made a rare visit to Saudi Arabia, where he met Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other officials.

Sadr's office released a statement on Sunday, saying he had been invited to the kingdom.

He was greeted by Thamer al-Sabhan, the House of Saud regime's former ambassador to Iraq, on his arrival in the kingdom on Sunday.

Sadr, who last visited Saudi Arabia in 2006, attended "discussions of common interest" during his trip to the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, Saudi regime state news agency SPA reported.

"We have been very pleased with what we found to be

a positive breakthrough in the Saudi-Iraqi relations, and we hope it is the beginning of the retreat of sectarian strife in the Arab-Islamic region," a statement from Sadr's office said.

Iraq and Saudi Arabia agreed last month to set up a coordination council to upgrade strategic ties as part of an attempt to heal troubled relations between the neighbors.

The House of Saud regime reopened its embassy in Baghdad in 2015 following a 25-year break.

In February this year, Adel al-Jubeir made a rare visit to Baghdad, marking the first official visit by a Saudi regime foreign minister to Iraq since 1990.

Iraq lies on the fault line between the region's power house Iran and Arab Persian Gulf states.

## 'Time for talk is over', U.S. warns North Korea

The United States is "done talking about North Korea" and China must decide if it is willing to back imposing stronger United Nations sanctions on North Korea over its two long-range missile tests this month, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said on Sunday.

Haley said in a statement that any new UN Security Council resolution "that does not significantly increase the international pressure on North Korea is of no value".

The U.S. flew two supersonic B-1B bombers as a show of force after Pyongyang fired a second intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on Friday.

"China must decide whether it is finally willing to take this vital step. The time for talk is over," she said.

The Chinese mission to the UN did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The U.S. has been in talks with China, North Korea's ally, on a draft UN Security Council resolution to impose stronger sanctions on North Korea. Haley gave China a draft text after North Korea's July 4 ICBM test.

Haley said last Tuesday that the U.S. had been making progress with China.

Meanwhile, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Monday he spoke with U.S. President Donald Trump by phone and that they agreed on the need to take further action on North Korea.

Abe told reporters that he praised Trump's commitment on North Korea and that he would make the utmost efforts to protect the Japanese public.

■ **Missile program**

Some diplomats had expected the U.S., Japan and South Korea to ask for the 15-member UN Security Council to meet on Monday over the test. Haley said that the U.S. saw "no point in having an emergency session if it produces nothing of consequence".

Such a meeting would have set the stage for a likely showdown between the U.S. and Russia over whether Friday's launch was a long-range rocket test. It was unclear if any other Security Council members, such as Japan, planned to request a meeting.

Diplomats say China and Russia only view a long-range missile test or nuclear weapon test as a trigger for further possible UN Security Council sanctions.

The Pentagon and South Korean military believe Friday's test was an ICBM. However, a Russian Defense Ministry official said Moscow's data indicated it was only a medium-range missile.

The U.S. and Russia have waged rival campaigns at the Security Council over the type of ballistic missile fired by North Korea on July 4. Western powers said it was an ICBM, while Russia said it was medium-range.

North Korea has been under UN sanctions since 2006 over its ballistic missile and nuclear programs and the Security Council has ratcheted up the measures in response to five nuclear weapons tests and two long-range missile launches.

Haley has said some options to strengthen UN sanctions were to restrict the flow of oil to North Korea's military and weapons programs, increasing air and maritime restrictions and imposing sanctions on senior officials.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Germany urges EU countermeasures against U.S. over Russia sanctions

Germany says the new sanctions proposed by the United States lawmakers against Russia are in breach of international law, asking the European Union to take countermeasures against the bans, which could also affect European businesses.

Brigitte Zypries, the German economy minister, told the Funke Mediengruppe newspaper on Monday that Berlin considers the new anti-Russia bans approved by U.S. Congressmen "as being against international law plain and simple."

German leaders and businessmen have expressed concerns that the new U.S. measures could prevent German companies from working on pipeline projects deemed essential to the country's energy security.

The economy minister further said "it is important the European Commission now looks into countermeasures," adding, however, that the EU should refrain from a "trade war" with the U.S.

Earlier, the European Commission had warned the U.S. that imposing fresh sanctions against Russia without the consent of the top world leaders could have "unintended consequences."

In this regard, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker warned in an interview with The Financial Times that "the measures could impact a potentially large number of European companies doing legitimate business under EU measures with Russian entities in the railways, financial, shipping or mining sectors, among others."

Juncker said Brussels was preparing to take countermeasures against the anti-Russia draft law "within days."

The U.S. lawmakers proposed a raft of sanctions against Russia over the crisis in Ukraine and the reunification of the Crimean Peninsula with the Russian Federation.

The U.S. and its European allies accuse Moscow of having a role in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and view Crimea's reunion with Russia as "annexation" of the territory. The Kremlin has strongly rejected the claims.

In December, the then U.S. president, Barack Obama, broadened the sanctions over allegations of Russia meddling to change the course of the presidential race in favor of Donald Trump.

The latest sanctions are an extension of the previous ones. Russia has vowed reciprocity.

(Source: DPA)



## Barcelona consider reporting PSG over 222m euros Neymar deal

Barcelona expect Neymar to return to training on Wednesday, but are ready to push for a Financial Fair Play investigation if Paris St-Germain pay the 222m euros (£198m) release clause for the Brazil forward.



The 25-year-old continues to be linked with a move to the Ligue 1 club and is due to return from China on Tuesday.

Reports said the player was due in Qatar this week for a PSG medical.

Barca chief Josep Maria Bartomeu said last week that Neymar would be staying.

His comments came after reports that PSG had triggered the release clause, which would be a world record fee for a player.

Should that sum be offered, the 24-time Spanish champions will ask Uefa to consider whether the French club would be in breach of FFP regulations.

The rules, first implemented during the 2011-12 season, stipulate that European clubs cannot spend more than they earned.

PSG, supported by a Qatar fund, were punished in 2014 for breach of FFP. Their £167m commercial contract with the Qatar Tourism Authority was deemed to have an unfair value by Uefa's independent investigation panel.

They were given a £20m fine, their spending was capped to £49m and they competed in the 2014-15 Champions League with just 21 players instead of the usual 25.

FFP regulations - updated in June 2015 - state that clubs will be investigated if the owner - through a commercial sponsor he is related to - pumps more than 30% of the club's revenue into a team.

(Source: BBC)

## I never said I'm retiring - Cassano to play on after latest U-turn

Antonio Cassano has confirmed he intends to play on, seemingly performing a U-turn on his retirement for the third time in three weeks, as the bizarre saga of the veteran striker's short-term future continues.

The former Italy international signed for Serie A side Verona on July 10 but eight days later told club officials he wanted to retire, only to change his mind hours later.

Cassano then appeared to reassess his future again when he left Verona a week into a training camp, using his wife Carolina Marcialis' Twitter account to confirm his retirement from the game.

However, the 35-year-old, whose former teams include Real Madrid, AC Milan and Inter, is now seeking fresh opportunities and will also consider offers from outside of Serie A, with top-flight club Genoa and Serie B side Virtus Entella among the teams reportedly interested.

"When I spoke with Hellas, I never said 'I'm retiring,'" Cassano told La Stampa. "I would challenge anybody who claims the opposite."

"Other things have been written, but the truth is this: when we terminated my contract, they asked about inserting a compensation clause in the event that I found another club."

"I accepted. It has nothing to do with homesickness. I definitely want to continue and I have more than a few ideas, but no offers. The main thing is I enjoy myself, like I always have done in my career."

(Source: CalcioMercato)

## Ronaldinho gets hat stolen during visit to Honduras

Ronaldinho took part in a friendly match in Honduras on Sunday during a visit which saw him greeted by hundreds of fans outside the stadium and at a shopping mall.

The Barcelona legend played one half each for Honduran club sides Real Espana and Motagua during an exhibition game at the National Stadium in Tegucigalpa.

Following the game, which was described by organizers as a 'match for peace', Ronaldinho was mobbed by locals as he visited a shopping mall with one supporter in particular getting a little too close for comfort.

Led by a number of security personnel, Ronaldinho was seen struggling to wade through a crowd of adoring fans who chanted his name.

And one opportunistic fan managed to nab a memorable souvenir, by grabbing Ronaldinho's beanie hat right off his head after a brief tug of war.

The retired footballer initially turned round to confront the thief but was eventually ushered on by a security officer who diffused the situation.

Ronaldinho had earlier told a press conference in Honduras that he plans to open up football schools around the world.

"I am old, it is difficult to stop playing football because it is what we love most," said Ronaldinho. "I want to spend time doing other things to contribute like football schools."

The 37-year-old has been named as an ambassador for Barcelona for a period of ten years and last month featured for the Catalan giants in a legends match against Manchester United.

He also weighed in over Neymar's potential transfer from Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain, advising his compatriot to 'follow his heart and be happy, do what his heart tells him'.

(Source: Sun)

# Cristiano Ronaldo declines to speak to media after giving evidence

Football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo appeared in court on Monday after state prosecutors accused the four-time World Footballer of the Year of siphoning millions of euros, earned from picture rights, past Spanish authorities between 2011 and 2014.

A stage was set up and a throng of international media was waiting for the 32-year-old to speak having given his evidence, but Ronaldo headed straight home after 90 minutes in a court in Pozuelo de Alarcon, a wealthy suburb of Madrid where he lives.

Inaki Torres of Gestifute, Ronaldo's agent's company, stated that a press statement would be released soon.

Ronaldo is accused of having evaded 14.7 million euros (\$17.3 million) in tax via a shell company based in the British Virgin Islands and another in Ireland, known for low corporate tax rates.

Prosecutors allege Ronaldo voluntarily took "advantage of a company structure created in 2010 to hide income generated in Spain from his image rights from tax authorities".

Ronaldo has consistently said his "conscience is clear", and was reportedly so upset that he threatened to leave Spain.

Should Ronaldo admit to wrongdoing and pay 50 million euros in returned taxes, fines and interest, his sentence would likely be reduced. Since extending his contract last November until 2021, Ronaldo is the highest paid sports star in the world with 79 million euros earned in 2016-2017, according to Forbes.

Ronaldo is not the only high profile football star to have been accused of tax fraud recently in Spain. Bar-



celona forward Lionel Messi was sentenced in May to 21 months in jail, though local media reported a month later that he is unlikely to serve time behind bars.

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho also is

accused of defrauding Spanish authorities to the tune of 3.3 million euros during 2011 and 2012, while coach of Real Madrid.

(Source: Deutsche Welle )

## AC Milan enter race to re-sign Zlatan Ibrahimovic



AC Milan will challenge Manchester United for the signing of Zlatan Ibrahimovic once the player recovers from his knee injury, according to reports in Italy on Monday.

The Serie A big-spenders have earmarked Ibrahimovic as a potential January arrival given the likelihood that he will be sidelined until the new year, and Italian daily Tuttosport claim the Swede is considering a return.

The 35-year-old played for two seasons at the San Siro, making his loan spell in 2010 permanent the following year, and the striker scored 51 goals in 77 appearances.

Ibrahimovic was sold to Paris Saint-Germain for £15.7million in 2012, and having won silverware throughout his career, the Swede may be tempted to spearhead the new era at Milan under Chinese ownership.

Tuttosport report that Ibrahimovic's wife, Helena Seger, has retained a strong affinity with Milan, meaning a return to the city in the twilight of his career cannot be ruled out. Ibrahimovic has turned down the chance to play with LA Galaxy in America's MLS, but the development comes after United manager Jose Mourinho hinted that the star could be set for a return to Old Trafford.

United did not extend Ibrahimovic's deal, worth £367,640 a week, at the end of last season after he suffered

cruciate knee ligament damage in April.

That will likely keep him out of action until 2018 but, while discussing the merits of signing Romelu Lukaku for an initial £75million, Mourinho suggested the Swede could wear a United shirt again.

The Portuguese said last week ahead his side's 1-0 defeat by Barcelona in Landover: 'We spent big money on a striker because, with strikers, you either spend or you don't get.

'And we spent because of what happened to Zlatan and we can not allow ourselves to be without an important, strong striker for the first six months of the season.'

That Ibrahimovic has any chance of playing again was viewed as astonishing by the American-based knee specialist Dr Fu, who hopes to conduct research on his body after retirement. Milan have been the most activate club in Europe having recruited 10 players at a cost of over £150million during the close season.

Andre Silva and Leonardo Bonucci were marquee signings, and Ibrahimovic would add extra gloss to what has been a major summer overhaul. Another facet that could work in Milan's favor for a deal to bring the former Sweden international back to Italy is that his agent, Mino Raiola, was involved in Gianluigi Donnarumma's contract extension this summer.

(Source: Daily Mail)

## Vettel in fine fettle for F1's August break



Sebastian Vettel will enjoy Formula One's August break as championship leader but the Ferrari driver knows the job is only half done and it will not get any easier in the months ahead.

The German, a four-times world champion with Red Bull, is unlikely to spend the vacation fretting about his future, however.

Out of contract at the end of the season, Vettel's comments after winning in Hungary on Sunday did not sound like those of a man expecting anything other than a continued spell at Maranello.

Reports in Italy have already suggested that Ferrari, the sport's most successful and glamorous team, will confirm both Vettel and Finnish team mate Kimi Raikkonen at their home Italian Grand Prix in September.

Vettel has now won four of 11 races this season, making 2017 his best season with Ferrari, and has led the championship from day one in Australia.

He is 14 points clear of Lewis Hamilton, who shared the lead with him briefly after China in April but gifted Vettel three extra points on Sunday by handing back third place to his Mercedes team mate Valtteri Bottas.

Vettel does not have to worry about such displays of sportsmanship, the 30-year-old a clear number one at Fer-

rari, and can be single-minded about the remaining nine rounds.

"It's what I dream about, to be honest. I want to win so that's where you want to be," he told reporters on Sunday when asked whether the season so far had been more than he could have dreamed of after a barren 2016.

"The mission has been to get back to the top so obviously we had a great year, I'm only two and a half years in with the team," he added.

"Over the winter I think we were the team that made the least noise... I was very happy that we just worked, we just kept to ourselves and did the job. We have a great car."

Hungary, a slow circuit like Monaco where Ferrari also excelled, is very different from the next two high-speed races — Spa in Belgium and the flat out blast of Italy's venerable Monza circuit.

Mercedes dominated in similar circumstances at Silverstone, where Hamilton savored a home win, and the Briton can hope to level the points tally by the end of the first week of September.

He too will go away to recharge his batteries for the battle ahead, ready to deny Vettel a fifth title and secure his own fourth.

(Source: Reuters)

## Usain Bolt departure great for rivals, bad for athletics

Usain Bolt's rivals will, for once, be glad to see the back of a man who has dominated global sprinting for the last decade but the sport of athletics will be far less enthusiastic about bidding a final farewell to the charismatic Jamaican.

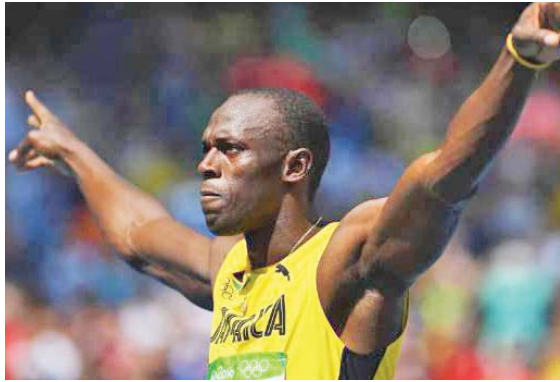
Bolt has completed the sprint double at the last three Olympics and had he not been disqualified ahead of the 100 meters final at Daegu in 2011, the 30-year-old could have matched that feat at the last four world championships.

In an era blighted by doping scandals, the Jamaican has almost single-handedly kept the sport afloat but his commanding reign will come to an end when he retires after next month's world championships, finally allowing other sprinters a look-in.

In the simple matter of who will take his place at the top of the 100 meters podium either at or after London, Canada's Olympic sprint medalist Andre de Grasse appears to be just ahead of the pack as the leading candidate.

"(De Grasse) shows up when it counts. That's the mark of a veteran. Even though he has been in the sport not too long," Justin Gatlin, Olympic gold medalist in 2004 and runner-up behind Bolt in Rio last year, told Reuters.

South Africa also has a new generation of stars, led by Akani Simbine and Thando Roto, although with their national championships taking place in March, peaking



twice in one season could hinder their hopes of victory in London.

"It's difficult to be running fast in March and having to peak for your nationals and still find a way to be ready at the middle of August," former 200m world champion Ato Boldon told Reuters.

The door could also open for the United States, a traditional sprint powerhouse but largely forgotten as a threat for a decade since Gatlin and Tyson Gay tested positive for illegal drugs.

However, Christian Coleman put himself on the map when he ran 9.82 seconds, the fastest time this year,

during the U.S. collegiate championships, while Trayvon Bromell won bronze at the world championships two years ago aged just 20.

..... Something Special

But whether any athlete can come close to matching Bolt's dominance and charisma is a different matter.

"You would have to have someone who is dominating, no one is doing that," said Michael Johnson, former Olympic champion in the 200 meters and 400 meters.

"You would have to have someone who has something special he has in terms of personality," the American told Reuters.

"In track and field, after I left, it wasn't like somebody just stepped in. It was eight years before Bolt came along.

Johnson is one of those who feel the sport needs to work harder at promoting itself rather than waiting for a "new Bolt" to burst on the scene.

"I don't think the sport should depend on that," he said.

"If the federations don't want to have to promote the sport itself, want to just ride the coattails of a great athlete, yeah it's going to be hard.

"It's a great sport right here in front of all of us, if we would just promote that, but that takes some work. It's not that easy."

(Source: Reuters)



# Persepolis striker Taremi wins IPL player of the year award

**S P O R T S TEHRAN** — Persepolis striker Mehdi Taremi has been named the player of the year of Iran Professional League (IPL) for the second season in a row.

In the ceremony held in the Tehran's Milad Tower Sunday night, Taremi was named as the best player of the 16th edition of the Iran Professional League.

Taremi was also named as top scorer of the IPL with 18 goals.

Persepolis defender Jalal Hosseini was named the best defender of the year.

Persepolis custodian Alireza Beiranvand collected the IPL best goalkeeper of the year.

Esteghlal's Omid Ebrahimi was chosen as the best midfielder of the year.

Branko Ivankovic was named as the coach of the year for leading Persepolis to IPL title.

Alireza Faghani won the award of the best referee of the year.

Persepolis were named the best team of the year.

Iranian Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Masoud Soltanifar, President of Iran Football Federation Mehdi Taj and top sports officials attended the ceremony.



## Adel Gholami expelled from Iran volleyball team after bust-up with teammate

**S P O R T S TEHRAN** — Adel Gholami, Iran's volleyball middle blocker, stormed out of the training following a bust-up with teammate Mohammad Mousavi.

The two players were involved in a verbal conflict on Monday and Gholami immediately left the training.

Iran coach Igor Kolakovic has invited Ali Shafiei to the national team as a replacement for Gholami.

"Gholami is dismissed from the na-

tional team of Iran as he violates the rules and left trainings without the permission of Igor," Iran's Volleyball Federation wrote on its twitter.

The Iranian team are preparing for 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship qualification in Ardabil.

The competition will be held from August 10 to 14 in the Iranian city with participation of China, Japan, South Korea, Qatar and Iran.

## Iran to face China for Asian Volleyball Championship fifth place

**S P O R T S TEHRAN** — Iran to meet China on Tuesday in the 2017 Asian Men's Senior Volleyball Championship fifth place.

Juan Cichello's boys defeated Australia 3-2(17-25, 18-25, 25-21, 25-19, 16-14) in the 5th-8th semifinals on Monday.

Iran have fielded a U23 squad in their final 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).

It is being held at the Tridharma Petrochemical Sports Stadium of Gresik, East Java, Indonesia from 24 July to 1 August 2017. It is the second time that the Indonesia hosts the tournament after the 2007 Asian Championship.



effectively clinching the Iranian champions place in the competition's last eight.

The 29-year-old, who was also named MVP at the AFC Futsal Championship Uzbekistan 2016 after helping Iran win an 11th title, made all the difference again in Giti Pasand's second group victory against Shriker Osaka, snatching a crucial winner in the dying seconds of the match.

Emerging quickly as the master of the late show, Hassanzadeh demonstrated his knack for late goals in the semi-finals against Al Rayyan, securing his side's place in the final with another 40th minute strike.

But perhaps his most significant contribution was the telepathic partnership forged with Ahmad Esmaeilpour.

The deadly duo were arguably the heart, soul and mind of Giti Pasand's engine, most evident during the final when the pair orchestrated the Iranians' second-half comeback against Bluewave Chonburi in the final.

Defeat though has not dampened Hassanzadeh's spirits, as the Iranian has set his sights on clinching the ultimate prize.

"I am not finished. You can be sure to expect more from me. I still want to win and compete in the world's best competitions.

"Of course, I want to come back here and win again like we did in 2013. But ultimately, my ambition is to do well for the Islamic Republic of Iran and hopefully win the next FIFA Futsal World Cup."

(Source: AFC)

## Jones, Blind punished for breach of UEFA doping regulations

Phil Jones has been banned for two matches and Daley Blind fined by UEFA after the Manchester United pair were found guilty of breaching the governing body's doping regulations after the Europa League final in May.

Jones was found to be verbally abusive toward a doping control officer after he was requested to attend drug-testing after the final in Stockholm on May 24, and will now miss the UEFA Super Cup match against Real Madrid next week and United's first Champions League group stage match in September. He has

also been fined €5,000.

UEFA charged Blind with violation and non-compliance with Article 6.05, which states that "every player designated to undergo as doping control is personally responsible for reporting immediately to the doping control station as notified."

Press Association Sport reported that Blind was reluctant to take a test as requested because he wanted to celebrate with his teammates, whose 2-0 victory over Ajax ensured their qualification for this season's Champions League. He was

fined €5,000.

There is no suggestion that either player was guilty of doping.

United have been fined €10,000 over the rule breaches. The club are reported to be aware of UEFA's decisions, and have three days to appeal against them. However, have not yet indicated to UEFA whether they will or not.

Blind played the full 90 minutes against his old club Ajax, while Jones was an unused substitute in Sweden.

United manager Jose Mourinho's defensive options in continental compe-

tion had already been depleted after UEFA gave Eric Bailly an additional two-match ban for his sending-off against Celta Vigo earlier in the Europa League campaign.

Bailly had already missed the final in Stockholm, but now also misses the Super Cup and United's opening Champions League group stage match.

Mourinho moved to increase United's depth at the back by signing Sweden international Victor Lindelof earlier this summer from Benfica.

(Source: Soccernet)

## Rakitic claims Clasico referee insulted him three times

Barcelona midfielder Ivan Rakitic has said referee Jair Marrufo "insulted me quite strongly" during the weekend's 3-2 Clasico win over Real Madrid in Miami.

Rakitic, who scored his side's second goal, was seen having what appeared to be heated exchanges with Marrufo as Barca defeated their rivals thanks to a second-half winner.

He told reporters: "People who know me are aware that it is difficult to wind me up, but the referee did."

"He insulted me quite strongly three times. I usually have a lot of respect for them [officials] -- but when they don't show it to me, I don't like it."

Rakitic said he felt Barcelona had enjoyed a "positive" tour to the United States, but said the victory over Real

did not necessarily prove anything.

"We will see if we are better than Madrid," he said. "This was a friendly game, but a victory always gives confidence."

He added that the forthcoming Spanish Super Cup game between the rivals "will be different as we will be playing for a trophy, which is what is important."

(Source: ESPN)

## Marco Octavio appointed Iran's beach soccer coach

**TEHRAN** — Marco Octavio Simoes Barbosa has been named as new head coach of Iran beach soccer coach.



The Brazilian coach will take charge of the Iranian team for the fourth time.

Octavio was appointed as Iran coach in 2007 on a one-year contract and returned to Persian Gulf country in 2010.

He was named as Team Melli coach for the third time in 2012.

Under guidance of Octavio, Iran won Beach Soccer Inter-continental Cup in 2013.

His coaching ability did not go unnoticed in Asia and he was given a job in United Arab Emirates before assuming the Chinese controls in 2006. He masterminded China's rebuilding process and did take the East Asians to the level where they were capable to compete against the continent's best.

Marco Octavio replaced Mohammad Hossein Mirshamsi in Iran beach soccer team.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Boxing president resigns after 27 Years

Head of Iran Boxing Federation Ahmad Nategh-Nouri resigned from his post after 28 years on Monday.

Nategh-Nouri was appointed as head of Iran Boxing Amateur Federation in 1989.

He stepped down as his post and Iranian Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Masoud Soltanifar has asked him to serve as an honorary president.

The 80-year-old was Iran's longest-serving president.

Director General of Youth Affairs and Sports Office in Sistan and Baluchestan Province Hossein Thori is a candidate to replace Nategh-Nouri.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Iran win 34 medals in 2017 Summer Deaflympics

Iranian sport squad managed to collect 34 medals including five gold, nine silver and 20 bronze medals in 2017 Summer Deaflympics which was held in Samsun, Turkey, it was announced on Monday.

The Iranian sport squad ranked seventh in the competitions.

Meanwhile, Russia, Ukraine, South Korea, Turkey, China and Japan ranked first to sixth respectively in the competition.

The 23rd Summer Deaflympics kicked off with the attendance of 197 Iranian deaf athletes in 13 sport fields on July 18. The competitions wrapped up on July 30.

## Muay Thai boxers earn two silver medals in World Games

Iranian Muay Thai boxers have made use of a wide array of striking and clinching techniques at the 2017 World Games in Poland, and managed to take home two silver medals t the international multi-sport event.



On Sunday, Ali Zarrinfar lost to his Ukrainian opponent Igor Liubchenko in the final contest of the 63.5-kilogram weight category in the western Polish city of Wroclaw, and picked up the silver medal.

Masoud Minaei also faced a representative from Thailand in the minus 71-kilogram, and lost the fight to earn a silver.

Muay Thai is a combat sport of Thailand, which uses stand-up striking along with various clinching techniques.

It includes combat on shins and is known as "the art of eight limbs."

Muay Thai is characterized by the combined use of fists, elbows, knees, shins, being associated with a good physical preparation that makes a full-contact fighter very efficient.

The 2017 World Games, commonly known as Wroclaw 2017, kicked off in Wroclaw, Poland, on July 20 and wrapped up on July 30. A total of 3,234 athletes from 104 nations participated in the multi-sport event.

(Source: Press TV)



# Actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya receives urban filmfest lifetime award

**A R T TEHRAN** — Fatemeh d e s k Motamed-Arya, the star of acclaimed drama “The Blue-Veiled”, was honored for her lifetime achievements during the opening ceremony of the 6th International Urban Film Festival at Tehran’s Garden Art Museum on Sunday.

“I am happy to be honored in this festival as an individual who is doing cultural activities, everybody would have been this much happy if she was me,” Motamed-Arya said after accepting her award from director Puran Derakhshandeh.

Motamed-Arya expressed her hope that she along with her colleagues can help resolve difficulties in Tehran and have a share in reaching peace in the city.

The ceremony was followed by the unveiling of a portrait of Motamed-Arya.

A tribute was also paid to the late film producer Habibollah Kasesaz, who died of cancer on July 19 at the age of 55.

Winners of several side sections of the festival were also honored at the opening ceremony.

The festival will be screening films in two national and international categories at Tehran’s Mellat Cinema Complex until August 5.



6th International Urban Actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya (L) stands next to her portrait unveiled at the opening ceremony of Filmmaker Puran Derakhshandeh (R) and actress Merila Zarei. 2017, 31 Film Festival at Tehran's Garden Art Museum on July (are also seen onstage. (Mehr/Masud Saki

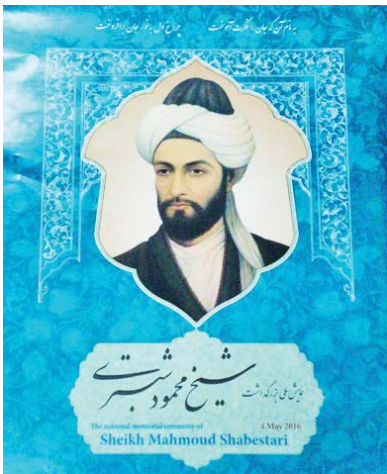
## Iran, UNESCO to celebrate 700th anniversary of “The Secret Rose Garden”

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iran d e s k and UNESCO will jointly celebrate the 700th anniversary of the composing of “The Secret Rose Garden” (Gulshan-i Raz), a collection of poems by Iranian mystic and poet Sa’d-ud-Din Mahmud Shabistari (1288–1340), Iran’s Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) announced on Sunday.

“The book contains moral standards for the world,” CHTHO official Farhad Nazari said in a press release.

“The book was written to instill moral into humanity and also to help people achieve a balance between their souls and bodies, as well as to prevent extremism, violence and damage to the environment,” he added.

He said that the Republic of Azerbaijan also will collaborate in organizing the celebration and added that so far, over 40 books have



been written about “The Secret Rose Garden”, which also known as “The Mystic Rose Garden”.

According to Nazari, the book has previously been translated into English, French, German, Turkish and Urdu.

The report gave no more details about the celebration.

## Maryam Ronaq among Business Club’s ambassadors to Frankfurt Book Fair

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — The d e s k Business Club of the Frankfurt Book Fair has picked Maryam Ronaq, a publishing specialist from Iran, as one of its 2017 ambassadors.

There are ten other ambassadors coming from Brazil, France, India, Ukraine, Egypt and several other countries, the club has announced on its website.

Ronaq is the co-founder and vice president of Farmanesh Publications, a Tehran-based publishing company focused on publishing professional and educational books in the fields of human resource management and administrative law.

The Business Club is a shortcut to new business – connecting the visitors to relevant networks, career-changing knowledge and VIP services, so that the time in Frankfurt would be both more pleasant and successful.

The club also offers an all-round package of services and a book fair



Maryam Ronaq in an undated photo.

experience with added value. In a central location, it provides exclusive options for meetings, a quiet working area, inspiring events and many networking opportunities.

The Frankfurt Book Fair will take place from October 11 to 15.

## Angelina Jolie says child casting story is false, upsetting

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Angelina Jolie says accounts of her casting process for children to appear in her film “First They Killed My Father” are false and upsetting. An excerpt from a Vanity Fair profile of the director sparked backlash online earlier this week from people who criticized the methods as being cruel and exploitative.

Adapted from Loung Ung’s memoir, the biographical drama centers on her childhood under the brutal Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. Jolie co-wrote and directed the film, which she talked about in a recent Vanity Fair profile.

The article described a scene in which casting directors in their attempt to find a child actress to play the lead role presented money to impoverished children only to take it away from them as an acting exercise.

Jolie and producer Rithy Panh issued joint statements Sunday responding to the outrage and refuting claims that the production was exploitative through a representative from Netflix, which is producing and distributing the film.

“I am upset that a pretend exercise in an improvisation, from an actual scene in the film, has been written about as if it was a real scenario. The suggestion that real money was taken from a child during an audition is false and upsetting,” Jolie said. “I would be outraged myself if this had happened.”

Jolie said parents, guardians and doctors were on set daily to care for the children and “make sure that no one was in any way hurt by participating in the recreation of such a painful part of their country’s history.”

Panh, who himself is a survivor of the Khmer Rouge, added that casting “was done in the most sensitive way possible.”

He described a process that was informed both by families’ preferences and NGO (non-governmental organization) guidelines in which the children understood that they would be acting out a scene.

“The children were not tricked or entrapped, as some have suggested,” Panh said. “They understood very well that this was acting, and make believe.”

The Vanity Fair article went into more detail about the production than the one paragraph that circulated on Twitter, which sparked the initial outrage.

A representative from Vanity Fair issued a statement Sunday saying that author Evgenia Peretz “clearly describes what happened during the casting process as a game” and “that the filmmakers went to extraordinary lengths to be sensitive in addressing the psychological stresses on the cast and crew that were inevitable in making a movie about the genocide carried out in Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge.”

## “Dunkirk” conquers “Emoji,” “Atomic Blonde” at box office

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — “The Emoji Movie” survived negative reviews but couldn’t conquer “Dunkirk”, which had enough fight left to conquer the box office for a second weekend in a row.

Down only 44 percent from its first weekend, director Christopher Nolan’s World War II film earned \$28.1 million to take first place, according to studio estimates on Sunday. “Dunkirk” has grossed \$102.8 million domestically to date.

Sony Pictures Animation’s “The Emoji Movie” finished second with \$25.7 million. The film featuring the voices of T.J. Miller and Anna Faris as anthropomorphized emojis got pummeled by critics. It’s currently resting at a dismal 8 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, but audiences still turned out.

“It’s great when the critics and audiences are in sync but in the end it comes down to: Has the film reached the intended audience?” said Adrian Smith, Sony’s president of domestic distribution. “Seeing these results, it clearly has.”

Sony is expecting the film, which cost an estimated \$50 million to produce, to play well for the rest of the summer.

The divide between reviews and a film’s success has been a continuing topic this summer, as some films, such as “Baywatch”, capsized under poor reviews, and others like “The Emoji Movie” seemed immune.

“Kids don’t care about reviews, and there is a severe lack of family films in the marketplace,” said Paul Dergarabedian, a senior media analyst for comScore.

But “The Emoji Movie” also fell at the box office throughout the weekend after a strong Friday when it placed No. 1, which Dergarabedian thinks could be



Actor Tom Hardy arrives for the world premiere of Dunkirk in London, Britain, July 13, 2017.

due to negative word of mouth on social media. By contrast, the extremely well-reviewed “Dunkirk” rose throughout the weekend.

Also holding on quite well is Universal Pictures R-rated comedy “Girls Trip”, which fell a miniscule 36 percent from its debut weekend to take third place with \$20.1 million.

Even in weekend two, “Girls Trip” beat out the splashy new Charlize Theron actioner “Atomic Blonde”, distributed by Universal’s boutique label Focus Features. “Atomic Blonde” opened in fourth with \$18.6 million.

“We think it’s a really solid opening for the movie and think that the film is going to have a nice long life at the box office for the summer,” said Lisa Bunnell, president of distribution for Focus Features.

Theron produced and stars in the film about a

## British tulle artist Benjamin Shine launches New York exhibit

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Artist Benjamin Shine hopes the launch of a new installation featuring his signature tulle fabrics in a New York department store window display at Bergdorf Goodman will inspire passersby to pause and self-reflect.

The exhibition, titled “Seeing Through The Material”, consists of five individual installations, each created by manipulating a single length of tulle – a lightweight, fine, silklike fabric – and exploring ideas of invisibility, solidity and flux.

“I love making anything out of one piece,” Shine said in a recent interview at his studio in Chelsea.

“Tulle was one of those fabrics that was always just floating about – literally floating about in my studio,” he said.

The British designer, who uses the material to create colorful ethereal portraits, landscapes and more, says the exhibit also questions the relationship between the superficial and spiritual.

Shine, who studied fashion design at Central Saint

British spy on a mission in Berlin near the end of the Cold War. It cost an estimated \$30 million to produce. While reviews were generally positive, audiences gave the film a middling B CinemaScore, which could affect its word-of-mouth potential.

In fifth place was “Spider-Man: Homecoming” now in its fourth weekend in theater. The new web-slinger added \$13.5 million which bumped its domestic total to \$278.4 million.

“Homecoming” has now officially passed both “Amazing Spider-Man” movies at the North American box office, although it is still lagging significantly behind the Tobey Maguire “Spider-Man” films.

While the summer box office remains down from last year, audiences are still turning out for some of the buzzy specialty releases. Annapurna Pictures rolled out the Kathryn Bigelow film “Detroit”, about an incident during the 1967 riots, a week before its nationwide launch in 20 theaters in 10 markets including Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, Baltimore and Atlanta.

“We were doing early word of mouth screenings, and they were very strong. People were hanging in the lobby of theaters after talking and talking. We decided to kick-start the conversation early,” Annapurna distribution president Erik Lomis said. “We’re really excited to launch this picture.”

“Detroit” earned a strong \$365,455 from the limited launch.

Also playing well in limited release is the Al Gore-led climate change documentary “An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power”, which took in \$130,000 from four locations.

Martins in London and has worked with fashion houses including John Galiano and Givenchy, said he spends roughly 50 to 100 hours working on each piece of his art.

“People are actually taking the time to look at the work and see it as art more than just a window display of some sort,” Shine said, adding the hard work has paid off as he had hoped it would.

“That’s been really lovely.”

The exhibition is currently on display until Aug. 3.