



**Iranian trade delegation to visit Spain in late Sept. 4**



**Iran's 50th nature school inaugurated 12**



**IPC lauds Iranian Paralympians Siamand Rahman, Zahra Nemati 15**



**Rastak, Aylan to celebrate Iran's National Day at Astana Expo 16**

# Zarif, al-Jubeir in rare handshake



See page 2

## Rouhani receives Leader's authorization for second term

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — In a ceremony today, Hassan Rouhani is to be authorized as president for a second term by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. The ceremony, which will be held at the Imam Khomeini Hussainia in Tehran, will be attended by the Parliament speaker, Judiciary chief and other senior military and governmental dignitaries.

Rouhani's swearing-in ceremony will also be held on Saturday in Parliament, where high-profile delegations from around the world would attend the event. The oath of office will be administered by Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani.

According to reports, the level of foreign dignitaries taking part in Rouhani's inauguration would be "unprecedented".

Facing a strong challenge from principlist Ebrahim Raisi at the May 19 presidential election, Rouhani ultimately managed to secure more than 23 million (57%) of the votes, winning the election in a landslide.

In the 2013 presidential election, when he ran for office for the first time, Rouhani promised to revive the economy and remove the nuclear sanctions.

According to the Rouhani administration, all nuclear-related sanctions have been lifted after his foreign policy team, headed by Mohammad Javad Zarif, secured a historic nuclear agreement with six world powers.

## Qatar's defense minister: Future of PGCC in doubt

Qatar's defense minister has said that the future of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) could be in doubt if the House of Saud regime-led group continues its partial blockade on Qatar.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Khalid bin Mohammed al-Attiyah said an ongoing political stalemate is not helping anyone involved in the crisis.

"The more we wait, the longer [the crisis] is prolonged, I think it will aggravate the relation more and more," he said.

Al-Attiyah also said that if Persian Gulf countries "stay in the stalemate situation, [the PGCC] will be jeopardized", adding that he believes "the wisdom of [Kuwait]

Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah] will not let it go this far".

Sheikh Sabah has been trying to mediate a resolution in a major fallout in the region, since the House of Saud regime, Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) cut diplomatic, commercial and transport links with Qatar on June 5.

The four Persian Gulf states accuse Doha of supporting "terrorism", an allegation Qatar has repeatedly rejected as "baseless".

**Qatar calls for dialogue**

Al-Attiyah also said that he believes there are some signs of movement to resolve the crisis. →13

## Tillerson admits 'differences' with Trump on nuclear deal

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson acknowledged on Tuesday he and President Trump "have differences" on the nuclear deal with Iran, but claimed the Islamic republic was violating the spirit of the agreement with its activities.

According to the Atlantic, Tillerson, at a news conference at the State Department, described his relationship with Trump as "good" and said he felt "comfortable telling him my views."

"He and I have differences of views on things like JCPOA and how we should use it," he said, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. "But, I think, if we're not having those differences, I'm not sure I'm serving him."

According to the JCPOA, Iran is obliged to limit its nuclear activities in exchange for

termination of financial and economic sanctions.

The International Atomic energy Agency, as the UN watchdog body tasked to monitor Iran's compliance with the terms of the JCPOA, has confirmed six times that Tehran has fully honored its commitments under the deal.

The deal signed in July 2015 went into force in January 2016.

At issue is the deal Iran signed in 2015 with the United States, Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the European Union, under which it agreed to freeze its nuclear program in return for the lifting of economic and financial sanctions. Under U.S. law, the administration must inform Congress every 90 days whether Iran is still complying with the agreement. Trump, who as presidential candidate

called the deal "the worst" ever, certified—for the second time—last month that Iran was in compliance. He later told The Wall Street Journal: "If it was up to me, I would have had them noncompliant 180 days ago." Trump added he "would be surprised if they [Iran] were in compliance" in September, the next time he is scheduled to decide on the issue.

But Tillerson, speaking at the State Department, said the U.S. was working with "the other parties to that agreement, our European allies in particular, to ensure we are fully enforcing all aspects of that agreement." He said the JCPOA "dealt with a very small slice" of Iran's actions, and "ignored all of their other (what he called) detrimental activities in the region," citing the Islamic republic's ballistic-missile program, and its actions in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere.

## Ex-Swedish PM: Trump causes Europe meltdown if he blows up Iran deal

Writing in the Washington Post, Carl Bildt, the former Swedish prime minister, has warned if U.S. President Donald Trump revokes the July 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran he "will also trigger a meltdown with Europe".

Following is an excerpt of the article published on August 1:

According to reports, President Trump was having "a bit of a meltdown" when his advisers could not present him with a plan for scuttling the nuclear deal with Iran.

Trump (with extreme reluctance) had to note

that Iran is indeed honoring its part of the deal. But he has sent his advisers back to the drawing board and asked them to produce a plan to blow up the deal within a couple of months.

Unraveling the Iran deal would indeed be dangerous. It would produce significantly more than just "a bit of a meltdown" in the Oval Office.

No one doubts that Iran is honoring its part of the agreement. It has accepted the most intrusive set of inspections we have seen in any international agreement.

However, now Trump wants out of the

nuclear deal. His latest tactic seems to be to claim that places all over Iran need sudden and intrusive inspections. Of course, the international community and Iran balk at this, being aware of the game being played. Trump, in reaction, could then be inclined to say that the deal is over and war is on the horizon.

At some point, we might even see Secretary of State Rex Tillerson stumbling through some dramatic presentation to the UN Security Council. It's cut-and-paste from the road to the Iraq War. →13



**ARTICLE**  
**By Chris Cook**  
political analyst

## Energy as a service?

U.S. presidents have promoted the idea of American 'energy independence' for decades as a solution to the geopolitical issues that led to volatile energy prices — meaning the U.S. would produce enough energy to supply itself without having to rely on foreign exports. President Trump's major 'Energy Week' speech on 29 June 2017 scrapped that line in favor of what he called it "energy dominance." This is an historic change in U.S. foreign policy doctrine and language.

Historically the U.S. policy aim has been for Energy Independence whereby the U.S. becomes independent of foreign energy producers. However, we heard from President Trump for the first time a new U.S. rhetoric of Energy Dominance. What exactly this consists of was not made clear by the President but it appears that the U.S. now aims to dominate global energy market pricing through the export of shale oil and gas.

I find it useful to view President Trump's actions as though he is the Chief Executive Officer of U.S. Incorporated, and through that lens Trump's Chief Operating Officer (and one of the authors of Trump's speech) is Gary Cohn, Trump's chief economic adviser, who is formerly President and COO of Goldman Sachs, with decades of trading experience at the highest level.

**The ICE Age**

Towards the tail end of the Dot Com boom in 2000, Gary Cohn had dinner with his counterpart at Morgan Stanley, John Shapiro, and they hatched an audacious plan to take control of the global oil market through the creation of a new global electronic market platform.

The two investment banks acquired a moribund mid-American electronic trading system and its dynamic founder (Intercontinental Exchange - ICE) — and then recruited key oil market players (including BP Shell & Total) who agreed to provide trading liquidity in exchange for a share of ICE equity ownership. More ICE market participants were then rapidly signed up, and after an abortive effort to acquire the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), →4



**ARTICLE**  
**By Seyed Hossein Mousavian**  
Princeton University  
Researcher

## Trump's options on the nuclear deal with Iran

While President Donald Trump's State Department has twice now certified Iranian compliance with the July 2015 nuclear deal, there are indications that Trump is intent on scuttling his predecessor's signature foreign policy achievement.

However, the conundrum for the White House and its allies is that withdrawing from the deal — known officially as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA — when Iran is fully complying with its obligations according to all objective observers cannot be done without isolating the United States. "You want the breakup of this deal to be about Iran. You don't want it to be about the United States, because we want our allies with us," Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee chairman and a prominent JCPOA critic, said.

Notably, Trump has already tasked a team in the White House with presenting him with an option to not re-certify Iranian compliance at the next review in September, and he has said that he "personally" believes Iran will be found "noncompliant."

An informed source in Washington who asked to remain anonymous told Al-Monitor that the White House is seeking ways to accuse Iran of technical noncompliance and material breaches of the deal, such as pressuring the International Atomic Energy Agency into demanding access to sensitive military facilities in Iran and using an Iranian rejection as a pretext for withdrawing from the deal; renegotiating the deal to get zero uranium enrichment in Iran or make the current limits on the Iranian nuclear program permanent; and trying to validate a 2016 German intelligence report claiming Iran continued "illegal proliferation-sensitive procurement activities," despite the fact it was already dismissed by the Barack Obama administration and independent experts.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))



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## Bodies of fallen soldiers returned home after three decades

Bodies of 48 Iranian soldiers recently recovered some 30 years after the end of the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988) were returned home on Wednesday from the Shalamchah border crossing in the southwestern province of Khuzestan.

Three decades after the war, there are still a number of Iranian soldiers unaccounted for with ongoing efforts to find them.

Half a million from both sides is estimated to have lost in the war.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Names of some of Rouhani's men in next government revealed

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The names of some **d e s k** of President Rouhani's next cabinet have been disclosed.

In a meeting of the high-ranking officials of the current administration on Tuesday night, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh will again be the nominee for oil minister, according to SHANA.

Minister of Labor and Welfare Ali Rabiee was also be named for the same position.

Justice Minister Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi, who had also attended the last cabinet session, said he will be replaced.



Astana expert talks on Syria postponed

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — An expert-level meeting **d e s k** of the Astana talks on Syria arranged for August 1-2 was postponed a few days.

A plenary of the fifth Astana talks decided on Wednesday that the next meeting to be held in the coming days in Tehran, the Iran Students News Agency reported.

The sixth version of the talks is scheduled to be held in the last week of August in the Kazakh capital.



Iran denies arrival of EU commissioner in Tehran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Rumors about arrival **d e s k** of Andrus Ansip, the European commissioner for digital single market, in Iran are totally false and baseless, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, Fars news agency claimed Ansip had arrived at the Imam Khomeini Airport on July 27, without coordination and necessary protocols, which caused his wandering in the airport for several hours. The report said that his trip to Tehran was totally without noise.



Majlis to discuss details of anti-U.S. measure on Sunday

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Majlis is going to **d e s k** start discussing the details of a general plan to counter the United States sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Majlis is tasked with attending to the details, the committee's spokesman Kamal Dehqani told ISNA on Wednesday.

A legislature to devise ways to counter the United States' sanctions was drafted by the Majlis two weeks earlier.



Iraq's senior officials to attend Rouhani's oath-taking ceremony

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iraq's senior officials are **d e s k** going to attend President Hassan Rouhani's swearing-in ceremony on August 5, Iran's envoy in Baghdad said.

According to Iraj Masjedi, Iraqi President Fuad Masum, Iraq's Chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council Ammar Hakim and Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri are expected to attend the event, IRNA reported.

Over 100 foreign delegations, including heads of state and other top officials, are scheduled to participate in Rouhani's oath-taking ceremony.



To-be Tehran mayor says proposal on way

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Ali Najafi, **d e s k** who has the highest chance to be elected as the mayor of Tehran, has said he will deliver his proposal for the management of the capital to the 21-member city council.

Speaking on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Najafi said he will present his plan on Saturday, ISNA reported.

On July 30, media outlets said the new city council had elected Najafi as the new mayor of the metropolis of Tehran.

Najafi, a mathematician, has served as economic advisor to President Rouhani, director of the Management and Planning Organization, education minister, and other posts.

# Zarif, al-Jubeir in rare handshake

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN**

**d e s k** Mohammad Javad Zarif, the head of Iran's diplomacy apparatus, and his Saudi counterpart Adel al-Jubeir shook hands on Tuesday, a one-of-a-kind moment in relations between the rival nations in years.

The two greeted each other at an extraordinary meeting in Istanbul of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on recent tensions in the occupied city of al-Quds.

Also, the two top diplomats seized the opportunity to hold brief talks after the rare handshake.

Zarif explained that the move was within "diplomatic conventions" and a sign of his "mutual respect and long-standing friendship with Jubeir".

"Although the Islamic Republic does not agree with many policies of the government of Saudi Arabia, it has always been our policy to be on good terms with our neighbors," Zarif told reporters in Tehran on Wednesday.

"Our neighbors have always been our priority, and that will be the case with the next administration, as well," Zarif added, a reference to President Rouhani's next government in which he will most likely retain his post as chief diplomat.

The Saudi side has not reacted to the handshake.

Iran, Saudi Arabia have been locked in a list of disagreements, unseen in three decades. The handshaking between the top diplomats could be the precursor event to something really dramatic, a thaw in strained relations.

Since 2011 when popular protests in Syria turned into civil war, Tehran and Saudi Arabia have been hurtling toward brinkmanship, risking a direct confrontation in an already volatile region.

While Tehran is a vocal backer of Syria's President Bashar al-Assad in a battleground fought by numerous sides, Riyadh has



**Zarif says: Although the Islamic Republic does not agree with many policies of the government of Saudi Arabia, it has always been our policy to be on good terms with our neighbors.**

acted the otherwise, demanding him step down.

Subsequent stumbling points have widened the rift. Riyadh's anger over Iran's nuclear program and the 2015 deal with world powers was barely concealed due to concerns that the accord could increase Tehran's ability to spread its influence.

The fears played out in the execution of a prominent Shiite cleric, Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, by Riyadh just two weeks before the implementation of the nuclear accord in January 2016.

Sheikh Nimr was an outspoken critic of the Saudi monarchy and was adopted as a symbolic leader by Shiite protesters in several Persian Gulf countries during the Arab Spring uprisings.

The execution prompted protesters

in Tehran and Mashhad to ransack Saudi diplomatic posts.

Following the storming, Riyadh cut all diplomatic ties with Tehran, giving Iranian diplomats in Saudi Arabia 48 hours to leave the country with the impasse still smoldering.

The development kicked off a new round of sparring between the two regional rivals.

The unprecedented mutual vitriol has negated efforts so far to resolve a Hajj stampede in 2015, during which 464 Iranian pilgrims were killed. Iran cancelled participation in Hajj 2016, blaming Saudi mismanagement for the cancellation.

Media reports said Riyadh has recently expressed readiness to discuss the stampede subject with Iran.

## U.S. seeking to exit nuclear deal at Iran's expense: Shamkhani

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN**

**d e s k** Iran's Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani has said that the U.S. seeks to pull out of the nuclear deal at the expense of Iran, but Iran will not give Donald Trump this opportunity.

"But of course it does not mean keeping the JCPOA [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] at any cost," he told the Hamshahri newspaper in an interview published on Wednesday.

He said that the JCPOA is valid only if all signatories to it continue to fulfill their commitments.

Shamkhani said that the reason behind the United States' "anger" towards Iran is its failure to change Iran's principled policy toward the Middle East.

He also said that the U.S. hegemonic policies can be countered through reliance on "national power and capabilities".

Elsewhere, he said that the nuclear deal has had



no effect in reducing the animosity between Iran and the U.S.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the

United States, Britain, France, China and Russia - finalized the text of the JCPOA in July 2015. The deal went into effect in January 2016.

According to the nuclear deal, referred to as the JCPOA, financial and economic sanctions against Iran must be terminated in exchange for limits on Tehran's nuclear activities.

Trump is facing opposition within his own inner circle about his stance toward the nuclear agreement.

At a press conference on Tuesday, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson acknowledged he and Trump "have differences" on the nuclear deal.

"He and I have differences of views on things like JCPOA and how we should use it," he said.

The International Atomic energy Agency, as the UN watchdog body tasked to monitor Iran's compliance with the terms of the JCPOA, has confirmed six times that Tehran has fully honored its commitments to the deal.

## Arms cache discovered in Kermanshah province



**POLITICS** **TEHRAN**

**d e s k** Mohammad Hossein Sadeghi, the public prosecutor of Kermanshah Province, has announced that border forces have discovered 60 holstered pistols in Sarpol-e Zahab, saying the gun owners fled to Iraq.

"The suspects, after being chased, fled across the border into Iraq," Sadeghi said.

Sarpol-e Zahab, a city in western Kermanshah Province, is close to the Iraqi border.

Due to its border with war-torn Iraq, Kermanshah has been used by Daesh (ISIS) affiliates to smuggle arms and ammunition into Iran.

In June, Intelligence Minister Seyyed

Mahmoud Alavi reported that Iranian security forces had "succeeded to deal a drastic blow to a terrorist outfit in possession of a very large arms cache."

Iran has increased its counterterrorism operations across the country after two terrorist attacks in Tehran on June 7.

The gunmen mounted almost simultaneous assaults on Iran's Parliament and the mausoleum Imam Khomeini, killing 17 people and injuring over 50 others. Daesh claimed responsibility for the assaults.

Weeks ago, the chief prosecutor Kermanshah, Ne'mat Sadeqi, said security forces had rounded up over 50 elements linked to terrorist groups in the province after terrorist attacks in Tehran.

## Tehran condemns terrorist blast in Afghanistan



**POLITICS** **TEHRAN**

**d e s k** Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Wednesday condemned a terrorist attack in the Afghan city of Herat which have left at least 29 people killed and 64 others injured.

The explosion happened at Jawadia mosque in Herat on Tuesday.

"After decades of suffering and pain by the innocent Afghan people, it is the time for the regional countries and the international bodies to stand beside the Afghan government and people and show determination to end the current violent situation," he stated.

He added that the Iranian government and people will stand

beside the Afghan people.

Qassemi offered condolences to the Afghan people, government and families of the victims over the "brutal" act.

Some of the injured are said to be in critical condition.

According to Guardian, officials said there were two attackers - one a suicide bomber and another who threw grenades at worshippers.

"Two attackers entered the mosque and started shooting and throwing grenades at people," said Mohammad Adi, a worshipper at the mosque who was injured in the attack and taken to hospital.

There was no claim of responsibility.

## Trump signs sanctions bill against Russia, Iran

U.S. President Donald Trump has signed into law a bill that imposes new sanctions against Russia, Iran and North Korea, according to a White House official.

Trump had signed the bill behind closed doors and away from the cameras, two White House sources said Wednesday.

In signing it, Trump avoided the humiliating prospect of Congress overriding his veto, the White House sources said. The president had privately opposed the measures

and his aides had lobbied against them.

Congress passed the new sanctions package last week to create limits for Trump to lift sanctions on Moscow.

The bill imposes tough additional sanctions against Russia over alleged meddling in last year's U.S. presidential election and its reunification with Crimea in 2014.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered over 755 US diplomats to leave the country after Congress passed the bill.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov warned Sunday that more retaliatory moves would come if the bill was signed into law.

The bill includes new sanctions on Iran over its ballistic missile program and "continued support for terrorism."

The anti-Iran sanctions come following two sets of sanctions that were rolled out in February and May by the U.S. Treasury Department over Iran's missile program.

(Source: Press TV)



# Funerals, protests for Herat mosque bombing victims

## Suicide attack hits NATO convoy in Kandahar

Afghans have once again lost their faith in the police and security services after a pair of suicide attackers killed at least 29 Shia worshippers in the western province of Herat.

Tuesday's blast, which no group has yet claimed, comes amid a spate of nationwide assaults over 48 hours.

Most recently, a Taliban attack on Wednesday against NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) troops in Kandahar has caused casualties, though no death toll has been announced.

Deadly violence was also reported on Tuesday in Helmand province and Paktia.

On Monday, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists, claimed responsibility for a suicide blast at the Iraqi embassy in Kabul that killed at least two Afghan guards.

Protests were planned for Wednesday after funerals for some of the victims of Tuesday's attack at the popular Jawadya mosque.

Jilani Farhad, a spokesman for Herat's governor, said he feared the death toll could rise, given the gravity of some of the injuries sustained by more than 60 people.

Before blowing themselves up, two attackers fired on private guards outside the mosque in Herat city and then shot at crowds of worshippers.

Police and the guard did not "shoot back", eyewitness and activist Mohammed Jawad Amid told Al Jazeera.

"People started screaming and running out. All eyes were on the police and the security guards who did not shoot back when asked. They said they were not authorised to do so," Amid said, adding that there were four attackers - two of whom managed to escape.

"The police also escaped the scene," he said.

Angry locals clashed with the police and set a checkpoint on fire after the attack, venting their frustrations over what they said was a weak police response.

Herat city on Wednesday morning was quiet with security forces and police officials patrolling the streets.

Funerals are expected to take place in the afternoon, followed by demonstrations demanding better security.



Jawad, the protest organiser, said both Shia and Sunni Muslims are preparing to attend the rally.

"Herat is united. When the injured were brought to the hospital, many Sunnis volunteered to donate blood," he said.

"Everyone is angry. It's not about Shia or Sunni, no one cares about this at the moment. We are all a target for these terrorists."

### ■ Suicide attack hits NATO convoy in Kandahar

Elsewhere, a suicide bomber rammed a vehicle filled with explosives into a convoy of foreign forces on Wednesday in Afghanistan's southern province of Kandahar, officials said.

"At around noon a car bomb targeted a convoy of foreign forces in Daman area of Kandahar," said provincial police spokesman Zia Durrani.

NATO confirmed in a statement that the convoy was attacked and did "cause casualties".

Resolute Support did not identify the nationality of the troops attacked, nor if they were killed or injured.

Taliban spokesman, Qari Yusuf Ahmadi, claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it took place near an Afghan intelligence quick reaction force base in the Shor Andam area of Daman district.

Eyewitnesses said two foreign vehicles in the area were on fire.

The combined United States and NATO troop contingent currently in Afghanistan is about 13,500 troops.

The Trump administration is deciding whether to send about 4,000 or more U.S. soldiers to Afghanistan in an attempt to stem Taliban gains.

(Source: agencies)

## Israel could soon launch new round of 'nasty' actions in Quds: Palestine FM

The Palestinian foreign minister has warned that Israel could go for another round of "nasty" actions aimed at changing the status quo of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, which recently witnessed deadly tensions sparked by the regime's restrictive measures there.

Riyad al-Maliki made the remarks in an address to an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on al-Aqsa in the Turkish city of Istanbul on Tuesday.

Tensions erupted in East al-Quds (Jerusalem) after a deadly shootout on July 14 outside the Noble Sanctuary (Haram al-Sharif), which Jews call Temple Mount.

Using the gunfight as a pretext, Israel set up metal detectors and surveillance cameras at entrances to the al-Aqsa compound.

Palestinians held protests and complained that the bans were meant to expand the regime's control over the highly-sensitive site.

On July 24, Tel Aviv backed down in the face of violent clashes and removed all the restrictions at the al-Aqsa compound, but tensions still remain high there.

Maliki described Israel's decision to remove the devices at the al-Aqsa gates as a "small victory in the long battle for freedom."

"We know that Netanyahu is not going to accept defeat and he will try again and again with different methods and different means to impose his own status-quo over the Haram al-Sharif and al-Quds. We have to be prepared for the next round which could come very soon and could be very nasty," he added.

### ■ Turkey urges Palestine state recognition

"We should show our support to the Palestinians, who have been living under Israeli

occupation for fifty years, millions of them who had to leave their home, not just with our dry words, but with our actions," he told the OIC meeting.

The top Turkish diplomat further expressed hope that the recent tensions at the al-Aqsa compound won't be repeated, saying, "We should all be very careful against provocations. No bans or limitations, including the age restrictions to the Temple Mount cannot be accepted."

Israel seized East al-Quds (Jerusalem) in the 1967 Six-Day War. It later annexed the Palestinian territory in a move that has never been recognized internationally.

### ■ Al-Quds 'an Arab, Islamic site'

Meantime, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, whose country is the custodian of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, described al-Quds as "an Arab, Islamic holy site," warning Israel against putting regional security at risk through its provocative actions.

"Instead of gambling with the security of the region and with the right of the people to live safely and in stability, Israel should work on achieving peace that leads to the establishment of the independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital," he added.

### ■ OIC vows to defend al-Aqsa

In its final communiqué issued on Tuesday, the OIC expressed its determination to defend the al-Aqsa Mosque compound from all threats posed by Israel and denounced the premeditated Israeli attempts to alter the site's status quo.

It further stressed "the Palestinian right to full sovereignty over the city of al-Quds al-Sharif as the capital of the state of Palestine."

"The Committee condemns the banning of Palestinian Muslims and Christians from

their natural right to worship in the holy sites in al-Quds al-Sharif, through employing collective punishment measures, and the use of lethal and excessive force against peaceful Palestinian worshippers," it pointed out.

Additionally, OIC Secretary General Yousef al-Othaimeen called on OIC member states to provide the necessary international protection to the Palestinian people and assume their responsibility to end Israeli aggressions and infractions in al-Quds (Jerusalem).

"The continuation of open Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in al-Quds places singular and collective responsibility on the shoulder of OIC Member States so that they can take measures to confront these challenges," he said.

### ■ 'U.S. silence on settlements, two-state solution encouraging Israel's apartheid policies'

Elsewhere, Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat has denounced the United States President Donald Trump's administration over his silence on the expansion of settlements in the occupied territories as well as failure to prop up the so-called two-state solution, stressing that such a conduct has encouraged the Israeli regime to continue its "apartheid" policies.

"The fact the U.S. administration did not declare the final goal of the peace process is to achieve two states on the basis of the 1967 borders, and its silence regarding the intensification of Israeli colonial settlement activities, are interpreted by the Israeli government as an opportunity to destroy the two-state solution and replace it with one state with two systems," Erekat, who is also the Secretary General of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said on Tuesday.

He added that the American administration perceived silence is an "obstacle" to a

new round of so-called peace negotiations between Palestinians and the Israeli regime.

Since the inauguration of Trump in January, the regime in Tel Aviv has stepped up its construction of settler units on occupied Palestinian land in a blatant violation of international law.

Less than a month before Trump took office, the United Nations Security Council had adopted Resolution 2334, calling on Israel to "immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem" al-Quds.

About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state, with East al-Quds as its capital.

The last round of Israeli-Palestinian talks collapsed in 2014. Among the major sticking points in those negotiations was Israel's continued settlement expansion on Palestinian territories.

Trump backtracked on Washington's support for a "two-state solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict earlier this year, saying he would support any solution favored by both sides.

"Looking at two-state or one-state, I like the one that both parties like. I'm very happy with the one both parties like. I can live with either one," the U.S. president said during a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington on February 15.

Trump has also vowed to fulfill his campaign pledge to move the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to the occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem).

(Source: Press TV)

China has rejected Japanese protests to its oil and gas prospecting in the East China Sea, saying the operations occur in areas "indisputably" under its jurisdiction.

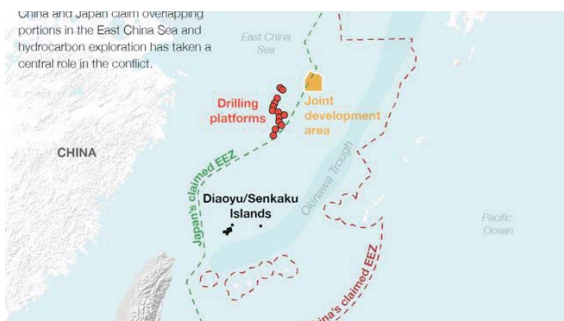
Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said on Tuesday Japan had lodged a protest with China over its apparent deployment of drilling rigs near the median line separating the two countries' economic zones in the East China Sea.

Japan also urged China to swiftly resume stalled negotiations to cooperate over oil and gas resources in the area. Those talks began in 2008 but broke down two years later amid rising tensions.

Both countries claim the East China Sea islands which are controlled by Japan. Tokyo says China has built oil and gas extracting structures on its side of the median line, which may siphon off resources from beneath the Japanese side.

A Japanese government official said on Tuesday that China's mobile drilling ships had been spotted in the region, and were believed to have been boring for gas.

It was "extremely regrettable that China is unilateral-



ly continuing its development activity" near the median line, Japan's top government spokesperson Yoshihide Suga told reporters.

China's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday dismissed the remarks, saying "the so-called issue of 'unilateral exploitation' does not exist."

"China's oil and gas activities in the East China Sea are all located in maritime areas indisputably under Chinese

jurisdiction," it was quoted as saying.

The gas field reportedly lies in an area where both countries' exclusive economic zones (EEZs) overlap but they bitterly disagree on how it should be demarcated.

While Japan says the median line between the two nations should mark the limits of their respective EEZs, China insists the border should be drawn closer to Japan, taking into account the continental shelf and other features of the ocean.

On Wednesday, China's Foreign Ministry said it rejected the idea of a median line, calling it "Japan's unilateral proposition."

With tensions rising in the East China Sea, a sea-food-packed body of water through which nearly \$5 trillion in trade flows each year, the United States has waded into the dispute.

The U.S. President Donald Trump pledged earlier this year that the U.S. would rally behind Japan in a possible serious showdown with China.

(Source: Press TV)

## Tillerson: U.S. not seeking regime change in North Korea

The United States State Secretary Rex Tillerson has said Washington is not trying to topple Kim Jong-un's regime in North Korea, but Pyongyang must halt its nuclear missile program.

"We do not seek a regime change. We do not seek the collapse of the regime. We do not seek an accelerated reunification of the peninsula," he said during a press conference in Washington, DC.

"We do not seek an excuse to send our military north of the 38th parallel. And we're trying to convey that to the North Koreans. We are not your enemy. We're not your threat, but you are presenting an unacceptable threat to us, and we have to respond."

Reviewing his six months in office, Tillerson said the U.S. would be willing to talk to the North Korea if it accepts to disarm.

"We don't think having a dialogue where the North Koreans come to the table assuming they're going to maintain their nuclear weapons is productive," he said.

But he sought to reassure the isolated regime that it does not need a nuclear arsenal to defend itself from a U.S. attack.

### ■ China's role

Meantime, U.S. President Donald Trump has demanded that China, North Korea's neighbor and biggest trade partner, rein in its nuclear ambitions - angrily tweeting over the weekend that Beijing is not doing enough.

But here too, Tillerson was more diplomatic.

"We certainly don't blame the Chinese for the situation in North Korea," he said.

"Only the North Koreans are to blame for this situation, but we do believe China has a special and unique relationship, because of this significant economic activity, to influence the North Korean regime in ways that no one else can."

Tillerson's views on North Korea and its close ally, China, is in sharp contrast to the U.S. envoy to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, who on Sunday asked Beijing to decide on tougher UN sanctions on North Korea over its two long-range missile tests last month.

"China must decide whether it is finally willing to take this vital step. The time for talk is over," she said.

Last week, Kim boasted that North Korea could attack any target in the U.S. after carrying out its latest intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said Trump was ready to launch a devastating military attack if diplomacy failed to stop the nuclear missile threat.

Trump has also spoken to its ally Japan over the latest North Korean missile test.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Qatar announces 5 bn euro order for warships from Italy

Qatar has concluded a 5 billion euro (\$5.91 billion) deal with Italy for seven navy vessels, the Qatari foreign minister said on Wednesday, part of a military cooperation agreement between the two countries.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani made the announcement at a news conference with his Italian counterpart Angelino Alfano in Doha after talks about efforts to end a rift between Qatar and four Persian Gulf Arab states.

"I am pleased to announce the conclusion of a deal between the Qatari Emiri Naval Forces to buy seven naval units from Italy in the context of the joint military cooperation between the two countries," Sheikh Mohammed said.

He said the deal was estimated at 5 billion euros but gave no further details and did not name the companies involved.

In June last year Italy's state-controlled shipbuilder Fincantieri said it had signed a 4-billion-euro agreement to build ships for Qatar.

At the time Fincantieri said it would supply the Persian Gulf Arab state with four corvette warships, two support vessels and an amphibious landing platform dock, along with support services in Qatar for 15 years after delivery.

All the ships will be built in Italian shipyards, with construction starting in 2018, it said. Italian defense company Leonardo would supply electronics and weapons systems for the ships and receive around a third of the value of the deal, a company official said at the time.

Qatar is embroiled in a dispute with the House of Saud regime, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, which accuse it of supporting terrorism a charge Doha denies.

(Source: Daily Star)

## Militants, families transported from Lebanon to Syria under truce deal: report

Buses carrying some 7,800 militants and their families have reportedly left Lebanon's highlands of Aarsal for Syria under a ceasefire deal reached between the Hezbollah resistance movement and terrorists operating in the region.

Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) reported that the buses headed to the Syrian town of Flita on Wednesday under the supervision of the Lebanese General Security and the army as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The transfer was made possible under the truce agreement struck last week between Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah and the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham Takfiri terrorist group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra), which included the release of resistance prisoners and the transfer of Syria militants back home.

Al-Nusra ringleader Abu Malek al-Tali was among those sent to Syria on Wednesday, the report added.

The buses had arrived in Aarsal on Monday and Tuesday, but the transfer was delayed as Beirut dismissed the militants' demands.

Major General Abbas Ibrahim, head of Lebanon's General Security, said the demands included the release of prisoners held in a Lebanese jail and safe passage out of the country for some people wanted by Beirut.

(Source: Press TV)



NEWS IN BRIEF



**Iranian trade delegation to visit Spain in late Sept.**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) plans to dispatch a trade delegation to Spain 24-28 September, ICCIMA portal reported.

Headed by ICCIMA chairman Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, the delegation will be comprised of entrepreneurs and businessmen active in a variety of areas including railways and rail industries, food and agriculture, renewable energy, petrochemicals, pharmaceutical and medical industries, banking and insurance, automotive and manufacturing as well as industrial machinery.



**Iran exports \$142m of machinery in 3 months**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran exported \$142 million of industrial machinery during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- June 21, 2017), the official website of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) quoted the organization's Head Mojtaba Khosrotaj as saying on Wednesday.

Making the remarks on the sidelines of his visit to the ATMAK-iFarm (2017) exhibition, Khosrotaj, who is also the deputy of Iranian minister of industry, added that from the exported machinery, \$6 million belonged to exports of agricultural machinery.

International Exhibition of ATMAK-iFarm- Farming & Gardening, Machinery & Tools and Irrigation, Livestock & Poultry, Inputs and Systems & Related Services & Industries- was being held from July 30- August 2, 2017 at Shah-e-Aftab Tehran International Exhibition Center.

Global air freight demand in first-half strongest in 7 years – IATA

Demand for global air freight rose 11 percent in June, lifting first-half growth to the highest since 2010, due to a surge in global trade, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said on Wednesday.

"Air cargo is flying high on the back of a stronger global economy. Demand is growing at a faster pace than at any time since the Global Financial Crisis," said IATA Chief Executive, Alexandre de Juniac.



New global export orders remained close to a six-year high, IATA added.

Air freight demand, measured in freight ton kilometers, climbed 10.4 percent for the first half.

Available capacity rose 5.2 percent in June. Earlier on Wednesday, German airline Lufthansa raised its forecast for its air freight unit. *(Source: Reuters)*

Asia's third largest economy braces for rate cut to battle low inflation

The Reserve Bank of India was widely expected to cut its main policy rate to the lowest in the more than six years on Wednesday to battle low inflation — a common sticking point for policymakers globally.

A Reuters poll found that 40 out of 56 economists expected the RBI to cut its repo rate by 25 basis points to 6 percent on Wednesday. That is the lowest rate India has seen since November 2010, according to Reuters.

Inflation in Asia's third largest economy has missed forecasts for the last six to seven months, noted DBS economist Radhika Rao. The latest data showed inflation slipped to 1.54 percent in June due to a slump in food prices, below RBI's 2 to 3.5 percent target for the April-September period.

"Domestic factors are likely to be given a higher weightage in swaying the decision, compared to global factors," Rao wrote in a Wednesday note ahead of RBI's decision.

"The policy committee is expected to shed its innate bias to be cautious and lower rates. ... Odds for further easing will arise if the other inflation catalysts — better growth, farm loan waivers and imported pressures — turn out to be more benign than assumed," she added.

The RBI has held its repo rate at 6.25 percent since October 2016. Lowering the benchmark again will also allow the central bank to steer growth at a time when the country was coming to terms with the new goods and services tax (GST), economists said.

GST, India's largest tax reform thus far, hit factory activity last month. The country's manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) slipped into contraction territory in July in the largest month-on-month decline since November 2008.

Although many economists saw that slide in PMI as temporary, some warned that growth prospects for the year were still dampened by soaring bad debt in the economy.

"A lot of people are asking: will a rate cut actually help growth? And my answer is: yes and no. No, if that's the only step we take, but yes if you have a rate cut along with other steps taken to restore the banking sector to health," Pranjudi Bhandari, HSBC's chief India economist, said on CNBC's "Capital Connection." *(Source: cnbc)*

Asian technology stocks just hit 17-year peaks

Asian technology stocks hit 17-year peaks and Wall Street's Dow index looked set to break 22,000 points later on Wednesday, as blockbuster earnings from Apple rippled out to component makers globally.

Shares in the world's most valuable company surged 6% after-hours to a record of more than \$159 each, taking its market capitalization above \$830 billion.

That should help carry the Dow through the 22,000 mark when trading resumes in New York. E-Mini futures for the Dow were up 0.2 percent despite a lower Europe as disappointing results from Societe Generale and Commerzbank weighed on the bank stocks.

Apple reported better-than-expected iPhone sales, revenue, and earnings per share and signaled its upcoming 10th-anniversary phone is on schedule.

It helped dispel one of the few nagging doubts of the corporate earnings season so far—that Amazon's lackluster results last week might have revealed some tiredness among the giant U.S. tech and internet stocks that have been driving the stock market rally all year.

Oman in talks with banks about loan and bond

Oman is talking to international banks about raising more funds through a loan and bonds as the sultanate seeks to replenish budget coffers hit hard by low oil prices, sources familiar with the matter said on Wednesday.

The discussions are at an early stage and the government has not issued an official request for proposals, the sources said.

Oman's ministry of finance did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A potential solution would be for Oman to take a five-year loan initially followed by bonds with maturities of five and 10 years, one of the sources said.

The sultanate has already raised \$7 billion from international bonds this year. It issued a triple-tranche \$5 billion conventional bond in March and a \$2 billion sukuk, or Islamic bond, in May.

International demand for both transactions was high, with the conventional



"It is all about Apple," said Naeem Aslam chief market analyst at Think Markets. "The firm comfortably topped its forecast and produced stellar numbers for its revenue and profit."

Among Asia's Apple suppliers, LG Innnotek jumped 10 percent and SK Hy-

nix, the world's second-biggest memory chip maker, rose 3.8 percent.

Murata Manufacturing firmed 4.9 percent and Taiyo Yuden 4.4 percent, helping Tokyo's Nikkei up 0.47 percent.

The MSCI tech index for Asia also climbed 0.9 percent to ground not trod

Upward pressure on British shop prices eases, for now

Prices in British shops fell slightly faster in July than a month before but are likely to pick up again later this year, according to a British Retail Consortium survey published on Wednesday.

Prices had fallen at their slowest annual rate in four years in June, at 0.3 percent, but in July deflation reverted back to the levels seen in May, with prices falling by 0.4 percent.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the British Retail Consortium, said the July figure brings "the march of overall shop prices towards inflationary territory to a halt, for now at least".

The drop in the value of the pound after last year's Brexit vote has pushed up prices, putting the Bank of England on alert as it considers whether to raise its record-low interest rates.

Food prices - pushed up by a weaker pound and its impact on the cost of imports - rose by 1.2 percent in July compared with a year earlier, slower than a 1.4 percent rise the month before.

since early 2000, bringing its gains for the year to a heady 40 percent.

Those gains balanced losses in basic materials and energy to leave MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan steady near its highest since late 2007.

There was a note of caution over reports that U.S. President Donald Trump was close to a decision on how to respond to what he considers China's unfair trade practices.

Tepid U.S. inflation along with political turmoil in Washington has lessened the possibility of another Federal Reserve rate hike this year, lowering bond yields across the globe.

Improving data in other major economies has also served to push the greenback down nearly 11 percent from January peaks, benefiting commodities and emerging markets.

A swathe of manufacturing surveys (PMIs) out on Tuesday had underlined how the improvement in activity had broadened out from the United States to Asia and Europe.

*(Source: The Fortune)*

Energy as a service?

**1 →** ICE made the members of London's International Petroleum Exchange an offer they could not refuse: either sell your exchange to us, or we will cease to use your exchange.

Meanwhile in the North Sea, the new flow of BP's Forties grade of crude oil was added to the declining flow of crude oil from Shell's Brent field which had become the preferred benchmark for the global oil price, and the improved contract soon left behind the U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) price as a purely domestic U.S. benchmark price.

Oil as an Asset

Over the 15 years that followed this ICE energy market coup, the oil market price ceased to be set on the basis of oil priced as a useful commodity. Instead oil became financialised through being priced as an asset class, as risk averse investors invested in oil through passive funds as a means of protecting the value of their savings from inflation.

The sheer scale of the oil market's departure from reality is demonstrated by the astonishing fact that in the two years from mid-2007 to mid-2009 while the oil price on the ICE casino gyrated from \$80 to \$147 to \$35 and back to \$80 per barrel, physical oil market demand in the real world varied by less than 3%.

At this point President Obama – a Wall Street President – came to office and began the market strategy I term the Big Long.

The Big Long

Saudi capital was invested in the oil market via a fund using the same prepay instruments with which Enron successfully defrauded creditors and investors for a decade. The effect was that the Saudis lent dollars to the U.S. in exchange for borrowing (purchase and resale) oil stored in the U.S. In this way the Obama administration was able to inflate and maintain the oil price above \$80/barrel, subject to Saudi agreement to supply oil if necessary to limit the U.S. gasoline price. Meanwhile Saudi petrodollars continued to fund the U.S. deficit as they had since 1974.

As a result of an oil price maintained between \$80 to \$120/bbl the U.S. was able within 3 years not only to increase oil production by 5m barrels per day but also to reduce oil product use by 2m bpd. So by 2015 the U.S. found themselves – as was Obama's intention – free of reliance on Saudi Arabia for the first time in 44 years. Meanwhile the U.S. pivoted towards the last remaining undeveloped low cost reserves in Iraq and Iran, while developing and safeguarding Qatari LNG production.

I believe that a Clinton administration would have largely continued Obama's strategy (of which a great deal more could be written), but the unexpected victory of President Trump in November 2016 changed everything.

Energy Dominance

On 30th June the BWAVE formula which Saudi Arabia had used for over a decade to price European oil (and against which all other destinations were then priced) ceased operation.

This formula was based on a daily weighted average of trading in the ICE BFOE (Brent, Forties, Ekofisk, Oseberg) futures contract. The BWAVE methodology allowed market price support through High Frequency Trading on the ICE electronic market system. However, the underlying physical market was always subject to the trading games played by oil companies such as BP and Statoil in particular which often led to excessive volatility.

So on 1st July 2017 Saudi Arabia switched from BWAVE pricing to the daily ICE Brent/BFOE Futures settlement price instead, which now enables the U.S. WTI market tail to wag the global Brent/BFOE physical market dog.

In my analysis, the intention of the U.S. is to print dollars as necessary to fund new shale oil and gas production. The calculation is that even if shale oil investors go bankrupt (as many did after the 2014 price crash) the banks will still have debt secured against intrinsically valuable oil, which the Fed will then if necessary swap for dollars via the Quantitative Easing programme.

The proposal to appoint Gary Cohn as the next chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank is probably related to this.

In a nutshell, I believe U.S. Incorporated intends to monetise not only U.S. reserves of oil, but also the reserves of what is essentially a new subsidiary of U.S. Incorporated – Saudi Arabia Inc, with a new and youthful Chief Executive Officer, Mohammad bin Salman (Mbs).

The aim of the U.S. Energy Dominance strategy appears to be for the U.S. to rebase the dollar firmly upon oil, and to create a two tier oil market in which U.S. antagonists such as Iran and Russia participate on inferior terms if at all.

Why Energy Dominance Will Fail

As the former Saudi oil minister Yamani said, the Stone Age did not end for lack of stones and the Oil Age is not ending for lack of oil but for the simple reason that the energy return on energy invested (EROEI) to produce a barrel of oil is in a secular decline.

Although the narrative used by the Saudis to rationalise their strategy has changed from market share to cutting oil inventory, both of these explanations are merely outcomes of a Saudi strategy to maximise dollar profits by sophisticated cheating invisible to the market.

However, it is said that sunshine is the best disinfectant and new tools are now bringing transparency to the oil market. Tanker Trackers demonstrate the fact that oil tankers can't run, and they can't hide. Tanker Trackers data indicates that China has added over 800m barrels of oil to inventory since 2013.

Indeed, in four months to June 2017 China has added to reserves at the rate of 1.5m barrels per day, which sheds a different light on the market and the Saudi inventory narrative. According to Samir Madani of Tanker Trackers, China's inventory has now reached a level between 80% and 90% of capacity at which it becomes difficult for operational reasons to accommodate more oil

So it appears to me that any attempt by

the U.S. to support the oil price at current levels for long enough to facilitate the Saudi Aramco IPO will fail as China ceases to act as Buyer of Last Resort.

Energy First

What should be the response of the rest of the oil market to such an audacious 'America First' U.S. strategy of Energy Dominance?

One approach could be for Iran and Iraq to jointly create a Middle East oil price benchmark as my colleague and I recommended to Iran's late Central Bank Governor Nourbakhsh in 2001 and which led in 2004 to the abortive and almost mythical Kish Oil Bourse.

But the oil market has moved on to a point approaching 'Peak Demand' and my recommendation to Iran, her neighbours and other Eurasian countries is to deploy what Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh terms Energy Diplomacy.

The rationale for energy diplomacy is simple: it does not matter what ideological or religious differences exist between nations, it will always make sense to cooperate to conserve finite resources such as water and fossil fuels.

I believe that the time is now ripe for new global energy institutions such as an Energy Clearing Union to be founded as a framework for generic energy swaps and energy credits.

So rather than destructive America First policies or an avaricious EU First policy, or simply self-defeating Iran, Russia or China First policies perhaps we will see Energy First – by which I mean a transition from a global market paradigm of oil and gas as a commodity to a new market paradigm of energy as a service, and from dollar or euro economics to energy economics.

*Chris Cook was a market regulator at the Association of Futures Brokers & Dealers, and then at the International Petroleum Exchange (latterly as a Director). Mr. Cook's now works mainly in Scotland, with Nordic Enterprise Trust, to develop new partnership-based enterprise models, and related financial products and services.*



# Who needs \$100 oil? Majors making more cash at \$50, Goldman says

Oil majors are raking in more cash now than they did in the heyday of \$100 oil, according to Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

Integrated giants like BP Plc and Royal Dutch Shell Plc have adapted to lower prices by cutting costs and improving operations, analysts at the bank including Michele Della Vigna said in a research note Wednesday. European majors made more cash during the first half of this year, when Brent averaged \$52 a barrel, than they did in the first half of 2014 when prices were \$109.

Back then, high oil prices had caused executives to overreach on projects, leading to delays, cost overruns and inefficiency, Goldman said. Those projects are coming online now, producing more revenue, while companies have tightened their belts and divested some assets to reduce debt burdens.

"Simplification, standardization and deflation are repositioning the oil industry for better profitability and cash generation in the current environment than in 2013-14 when the oil price was above \$100 a barrel," the analysts said.

In the second quarter, Europe's big oil companies generated enough cash from operations to cover 91 percent of their capital expenses and dividends, showing that they're close to being able to fund shareholder payments with business-generated revenue, according to Goldman. That will give companies the ability to stop paying dividends by issuing new stock, which has diluted major European energy shares by 3 to 13 percent since 2014.

Projects starting up to the advantage of their now-frugal parents include Chevron Corp.'s \$54 billion



Gorgon liquefied natural gas behemoth in Australia and Eni SpA's Kashagan field in Kazakhstan among others.

Next year, dividends from big European energy firms are expected yield 6 percent, backed by an es-

timated 6 percent free cash flow yield, Goldman said. That compares to an estimated 3.6 percent dividend yield for the STOXX Europe 600 Index as a whole, according to the report.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Russian oil output down 307,600 bpd



Russian oil output is down 307,600 barrels per day, compared to October levels, according to the country's oil minister.

"At the end of July 2017, the reduction of oil production stood at 307,600 barrels a day as compared to October 2016," Minister Alexander Novak told reporters. "Therefore Russia is meeting its obligations on lowering production."

Novak was referring to the promise Moscow made to OPEC and 10 other NOPEC nations in November to cut production by 300,000 bpd in an effort to rebalance oil supply with demand.

A week ago, Novak had said Russian cuts totaled 308,000 bpd in June.

OPEC and non-member partners agreed to extend the agreement through March 2018 in late May, but the news has not translated to substantially higher barrel prices. High output from Libya, Nigeria, and the United States has offset the intended effect of

the cartel's production cuts. Nigeria recently announced its intention to limit output at 1.8 million, once its national production recovers to that level later this year.

Oil prices are doing better now than they were in June, when they reached a seven-month low below \$45. At the time of this article's writing, Brent traded down 2.75 percent at \$51.27.

Novak also previously emphasized that over the last six months, global crude oil supply has shrunk by 350 million barrels thanks to OPEC's production reduction deal. The minister spoke at a summit in St. Petersburg tasked to track the progress of the agreement.

Compliance to the output cuts on the OPEC side has been above 100 percent for the past few months, though export levels amongst Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran have fluctuated in the fight to keep market share as American distributors carve out their own customer base.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Libya crude floods market again as OPEC fights to restrict flows



Libya's crude shipments jumped to a new three-year high last month, dealing a fresh blow to OPEC and allied oil-producing nations as they battle to restrict a global supply surplus that's depressing prices for the commodity.

The North African nation shipped about 865,000 barrels a day of crude in July, tanker tracking data compiled by Bloomberg show. That was a gain of 11 percent from June, which was already the highest since at least July 2014.

The pace at which Libya can revive crude sales is critical for the oil market because, along with Nigeria, the nation wasn't bound by Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries supply restrictions that helped limit supply this year. Domestic conflicts mean the two nations can pump at will while other producer states are depriving themselves of export revenues. Nigeria is also boosting output as a militant campaign is quelled.

Libya's revival "hurts OPEC's efforts to re-balance the oil market," said Carsten

Fritsch, an analyst at Commerzbank AG. It comes at a time when other countries that agreed to curb production are starting to comply less strictly with the accord, he said.

The total output from OPEC members in July rose 210,000 barrels a day from June to reach 32.87 million barrels a day, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Libya led the gains. An expected crude-price recovery has failed to materialize since January, the start point for when OPEC, along with non-member nations including Russia, agreed to restrict collective output by about 1.8 million barrels a day.

It may be a challenge for Libya to maintain its current rate of exports, according to Torbjorn Kjus, chief oil analyst at DNB Bank ASA.

"It would be a surprise if they could keep production stable," he said, adding that there are still too many groups and people battling for a share of the country's oil sales.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Global gas market may be the one place where the little guy wins

The failure of a \$27 billion project last week may offer a lesson to natural gas exporters: Go small or go home.

With a global glut dragging down prices, liquefied natural gas suppliers including Cheniere Energy Inc. and Tellurian Inc. are looking to build smaller and cheaper. Such projects - a third of the size and a fraction of the cost of most existing terminals - offer a competitive edge for supplying emerging markets like the Middle East and Latin America, where customers are seeking intermittent deliveries of small amounts of the heating fuel.

Petrolin Nasional Bhd's decision last week to scrap plans for the \$27 billion facility in Canada stemmed from low gas prices. Energy companies haven't moved forward with a major new LNG production plant since the end of 2014. Instead, they are funding smaller ventures such as Coral LNG in Mozambique and Woodfibre LNG in Canada, neither costing more than \$10 billion. Ophir Energy Plc plans to sanction Fortuna LNG, a small floating facility off the coast of Equatorial Guinea, this year.

The demise of the Canadian project was "a reflection of the world that we are in," said Ira Joseph, head of global gas and power at PIRA Energy in New York. "The

market is already crowded with projects, demand is more fragmented, and there are smaller types of buyers" that need smaller sellers.

Cheniere, which began liquefying and exporting U.S. natural gas from a massive facility in Louisiana last year, is exploring building smaller-scale projects. The rush to send gas supplies to international buyers has led to an overabundance of the fuel, which is shipped via tankers that can be measured in U.S. football fields. Global LNG supply is forecast to exceed demand by 48 percent in 2020, said Anastacia Dialynas, a New York-based analyst with Bloomberg New Energy Finance who sees the glut persisting until 2026.

Meanwhile, Japan and Korea, the world's biggest LNG customers, are no longer the only game in town. Small buyers including Pakistan, Egypt and Jordan are making up an increasing share of the global market. They'll account for 30 percent of demand by 2030, up from 19 percent last year, according to BNEF.

### ■ Smaller market

In addition, spot LNG prices in Northeast Asia have plunged 46 percent to \$5.85 per million British thermal units in the past three years, according to industry publica-



tion World Gas Intelligence. U.S. benchmark natural gas prices are down 26 percent over the same period and U.K. front-month gas fell 7 percent.

"You need to come to the market with a solution that can cost-wise compete in a market where the price is \$5 to \$6," said Sveinung Stohle, chief executive officer of Hoegh LNG Holdings Ltd., a developer of floating LNG terminals.

Some exporters are heading offshore in a bid to cut costs. Petronas in April became the first to produce LNG from a small-scale, floating terminal. Royal Dutch Shell Plc plans to ship gas from a similarly small project off Australia's coast next year.

In the U.S., Kinder Morgan Inc. is developing a \$2 billion gas export project in

## Oil down 1 percent on surprise rise in U.S. inventories, high OPEC output

Oil retreated from this week's eight-week highs above \$52 a barrel on Wednesday, following a bearish combination of rising U.S. inventories, an outage at a major European refinery and increasing OPEC production.

Brent crude futures were down 11 cents at \$51.67 a barrel by 0856 GMT, having touched a session low of \$51.18. The price hit \$52.93 on Monday, its highest since late May.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude also fell 11 cents, to \$49.05 a barrel.

Both contracts dropped sharply the previous day after Royal Dutch Shell said its 400,000-barrels-per-day (bpd) Pernis refinery in the Netherlands would remain offline for at least the next couple of weeks following a fire.

Adding to the pressure from Europe's largest refinery being out of action was an unexpected rise of 1.8 million barrels in U.S. crude inventories, which dented bulls' hopes that recent inventory draws signified a tightening U.S. market.

"Along with a bout of profit-taking, the fresh slide in prices was triggered by reports that Europe's largest refinery will be shut until at least the second half of August," PVM Oil Associates strategist Stephen Brennock said.

Production from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries hit a 2017 high of 33 million bpd in July, despite the group's pledge to restrict output along with other non-OPEC producers, including Russia, by 1.8 million bpd between January this year and March 2018.

"OPEC output numbers in July were at eight-month highs - not good," said Matt Stanley, a fuel broker at Freight Investor Services in Dubai.

The Economist Intelligence Unit said "there is no guarantee that further cuts will be sufficient to rebalance the over-supplied global oil market".

Energy consultancy Douglas Westwood reckons this year's oil market will be slightly undersupplied but that the glut will return next year, and last to 2021.

"Oversupply will actually return in 2018. This is due to the start-up of fields sanctioned prior to the downturn," said Steve Robertson, head of research for the firm's Global Oilfield Services.

Likely acting as a further lid on prices is that, according to U.S. bank Goldman Sachs, second-quarter company results had shown that oil majors "are adapting to \$50 per barrel oil prices and can afford to pay dividends in cash" at that level.

(Source: Reuters)

## Goldman, Tennenbaum buy Singapore-based solar power company Conergy

U.S. private equity funds Tennenbaum Capital Partners LLC (TCP) and Goldman Sachs BDC (GSBD) have bought solar energy company Conergy Asia & ME Pte Ltd and its subsidiaries, Conergy said on Wednesday.

Kawa Solar Holdings sold Conergy to the funds for an undisclosed sum in a transaction that closed on Tuesday, Singapore-headquartered Conergy said in a statement.

"TCP's and GSBD's extensive experience and access to capital will strengthen Conergy's financial position, enhance our capabilities, and allow us to pursue new business opportunities in the region and execute our plans for growth in Australia, the emerging markets of Southeast Asia and Japan," Alexander Lenz, Chief Executive Officer of Conergy, said in a statement.

Conergy builds, operates and manages solar power plants in Japan, Australia, Thailand, the Philippines, Myanmar and Germany. The company said it has installed almost 2 gigawatts of solar power capacity globally.

"This acquisition offers us and GSBD a unique opportunity to work closely with one of the industry's most experienced solar firms and to participate in the Asia Pacific market - one of the most attractive solar markets in the world today," Rajneesh Vig, managing partner of Tennenbaum Capital Partners, said.

TCP, headquartered in Los Angeles, is an alternative investment management firm while Goldman Sachs BDC is a business development company managed by Goldman Sachs Asset Management.

(Source: Reuters)

## China-Japan oil, gas field dispute flares up again

China has rejected Japanese protests to its oil and gas prospecting in the East China Sea, saying the operations occur in areas "indisputably" under its jurisdiction.

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said Tuesday said Japan had lodged a protest with China over its apparent deployment of drilling rigs near the median line separating the two countries' economic zones in the East China Sea.

Japan also urged China to swiftly resume stalled negotiations to cooperate over oil and gas resources in the area. Those talks began in 2008 but broke down two years later amid rising tensions.

Both countries claim the East China Sea islands which are controlled by Japan. Tokyo says China has built oil and gas extracting structures on its side of the median line, which may siphon off resources from beneath the Japanese side.

A Japanese government official said Tuesday China's mobile drilling ships had been spotted in the region, and were believed to have been boring for gas.

It was "extremely regrettable that China is unilaterally continuing its development activity" near the median line, Japan's top government spokesperson Yoshihide Suga told reporters.

China's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday dismissed the remarks, saying "the so-called issue of 'unilateral exploitation' does not exist".

"China's oil and gas activities in the East China Sea are all located in maritime areas indisputably under Chinese jurisdiction," it was quoted as saying.

(Source: Press TV)



## Is Uganda really a ‘refugee paradise’?

By Julie Schiltz

In April the Dutch public broadcasting agency NOS published a story on Uganda the “refugee paradise”. The article was titled: “Welcome refugee! Uganda welcomes you with open arms!” A South Sudanese colleague frowned after reading the translated article. “How can they see this as paradise?” he asked. “Don’t they know that people who are here are the ones who are not able to go somewhere else? Live in the city, or perhaps another country? There is no such thing as a paradise here.”

Uganda’s refugee policy has received much media coverage in recent months. The country is currently hosting around 1.2 million refugees from neighboring South Sudan, which is involved in a brutal, and endless, civil war. While a number of critical articles were also published on the difficulties that South Sudanese refugees have been facing, most of the coverage has focused on Uganda’s hospitality. The range of superlatives used to describe the openness of both the government and the population of Uganda was especially eye-catching. Articles were, for example, titled “Uganda’s example to the world”, “Uganda may be best place in the world to be a refugee”, “Uganda’s lesson in how to treat refugees” and so on.

This euphoric coverage obscures a not-so-paradise-like reality. It serves a range of political agendas but it does not help the refugees’ situation. Uganda’s refugee policy is indeed progressive and open, and the country’s attitude may be remarkable in light of the high degree of resistance that refugees experience in other parts of the world today.

In Uganda, refugees are given small plots of land on which to build houses and cultivate crops, and they are allowed to work and move freely within the country. Because of this basic premise, Uganda’s refugee policy has been lauded as one of the most progressive in the world. But what happens in reality is not as exemplary as has been reported in the media.

The north of Uganda, where most settlements for South Sudanese refugees are based, is characterized by structural underdevelopment and poverty. As a result, the presence of refugees, and the humanitarian aid which comes with it, leads in a number of areas to serious tensions.

Incidents have been reported in which refugees were attacked by the local population, for example when collecting firewood. Locals have disguised themselves as refugees to access the relief aid, which is considered an “illegal and criminal” activity.

Incidents have also been reported in which refugees were allowed to rent or use land for cultivation, but were forced to give it back to the host community when the yield was ready. In urban areas, clashes have emerged in a university between refugee students and “local” students. Anecdotal, for sure - but so are many of the success stories which appeared in the press in recent months. In Lamwo, one of the districts currently receiving new arrivals, the local population has tried to stop the relocation of refugees on its land. This region has an exceptionally high unemployment rate and the government’s decision to allow refugees to gain lawful employment has led to the fear that the refugees will take away the scarce jobs.

### ■ Asylum policy

First, this narrative is politically useful for different groups in Western countries. On the one hand, it allows Western governments to push forward with the externalization of their asylum policy. For example, the EU’s emergency trust fund for Africa is already aiming to externalize the bloc’s asylum policy and to tackle migration “at the roots”.

Uganda’s success story allows it to show that African countries are also able to host refugees, which in turn supports European efforts to withhold migrants and refugees before they reach EU borders. On the other hand, this positive narrative strengthens the hands of people pushing for a more liberal and open refugee policy in the West: “Look, if this poor country in Africa can host all these refugees, we should certainly do it!”

Such one-sided success stories, depicting Uganda’s refugee policy as an example to the world, hamper a critical questioning and a debate about durable solutions for the fundamental problems South Sudanese refugees are facing.

Second, the story also comes in handy for Uganda. At best, the country can be described as a “hybrid” democratic regime. This success story allows it to deflect attention from its semi-authoritarian tendencies, as shown in the regime’s recent efforts to abolish presidential term limits (effectively allowing a presidency for life), or neglect the international call for an independent investigation into the army’s behavior in a conflict in Western Uganda.

Third, the Ugandan success story is crucial for NGOs and humanitarian aid agencies. They use stories like this one to raise much-needed funds for the victims of the South Sudanese crisis.

All these hidden interests naturally make it difficult for journalists to tell a nuanced story about refugee experiences in Uganda. But, the way journalists obtain stories about Uganda’s refugee policy is also part of the problem.

### ■ Humanitarian organizations

Much of the reporting on this issue is done through press trips organized by embassies or humanitarian organizations. This kind of hit-and-run journalism consists of a number of pre-arranged field visits and interviews, highlighting the positive work of the organization and Uganda’s refugee policy.

So, presenting Uganda’s refugee policy as a success story benefits all actors concerned and makes journalists’ jobs a lot easier. But how is this narrative affecting the refugees?

It is true that Uganda and the humanitarian organizations working in the region are making an enormous effort to host the refugees. But they are not offering long-term solutions and the refugees’ future in Uganda is still in question. The humanitarian agencies will eventually scale down their efforts and leave, and the refugees won’t be able to survive solely by cultivating the small plots of land given to them by the government. These lands are too small to provide a decent living and the local population still officially owns them. As a result, refugees are constantly feeling uncertain about their future in the country for good reason.

Such one-sided success stories, depicting Uganda’s refugee policy as an example to the world, hamper a critical questioning and a debate about durable solutions for the fundamental problems that South Sudanese refugees are facing. Also, such rosy presentations may be particularly offensive for the people whose harsh reality is buried under superlatives. So maybe instead of praising Uganda it is time to ask questions: Why is Uganda’s refugee policy so progressive? Who wins, and who loses? And what does this refugee policy mean in practice, in the experiences of the refugees and host communities who are subject to it?

(Source: Aljazeera)

# Trump’s biggest nightmare? China and Russia’s newfound friendship

By David A.andelman

There was a frightening new guest at the party that marked Russia’s Navy Day celebrations this past weekend -- perhaps representing the greatest single global challenge for President Donald Trump.

Chinese warships joined the parade of Russian naval vessels in the sea off the Port of Kronstadt in St. Petersburg as President Vladimir Putin looked on proudly.

All were fresh from the first stage of Joint Sea 2017, a Russian-Chinese naval exercise that Chinese media boasted included live-firing of big guns in the Baltic Sea, which borders five of America’s NATO allies, and was designed at least in part to showcase the cream of both nations’ seaborne military might.

At the same time, China was staging its own military parade in Beijing as President Xi Jinping watched while dressed in the green camouflage uniform of the People’s Liberation Army. Some 12,000 officers and men, accompanied by tanks, long-range missile launchers, jet fighters and other new, modern weaponry, moved past.

All this display of military muscle was just the latest and most visible -- though perhaps least appreciated -- headache for Trump in world trouble spots, from Syria to North Korea.

China pivoting to Russia at this moment in time cannot be a good thing on any number of levels. The sudden alliance of these nations in the face of pressure from Trump suggests that those headaches are not going get any easier to solve anytime soon.

### ■ Joint efforts

These joint efforts -- coinciding with the United States, Japan and South Korea staging their own maneuvers close to both China and North Korea -- suggest that both China and Russia had arrived at a newfound independence in the face of American challenges.

Moreover, their allies in Syria and North Korea will now realize they have two potent counterweights to their efforts to chart their own potentially deadly courses.

North Korea has relied for decades on the assistance of China, particularly on an economic level, to prop up its failing and utterly despotic regime while counting as well on the neutrality of Russia, with which it shares a sliver of its northern frontier.

Indeed, North Korean territory is barely 100 miles from the main Siberian port of Vladivostok, where Russia happened to stage the eastern tranche of its Naval Day exercises last weekend.

At the same time, additional Naval Day exercises were taking place at the huge Russian air and naval base at Tartus in Syria on the eastern Mediterranean, which Russian media reported included six warships.



**All this display of military muscle was just the latest and most visible -- though perhaps least appreciated -- headache for Trump in world trouble spots, from Syria to North Korea.**

This will have only given comfort to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, whose regime is being propped up by Russian air and naval power, much of it based in Tartus.

### ■ Putin’s principal reasons

One of Putin’s principal reasons for backing Assad’s alleged attacks on the rebellion that has challenged him is to maintain this single toehold in the Mediterranean -- central to the strategic position of NATO and America in Europe and the Middle East.

China and Russia for years have propped up diplomatically and economically both North Korea and Syria -- often exercising their vetoes in the UN Security Council to beat back Western challenges to their allies’ more outrageous actions.

That the two powers are joining forces can only give comfort to North Korea and Syria, knowing that it will now be even harder for the United States to influence their actions.

This new reality should not have come as a surprise.

On June 7, Chinese Defense Minister

Chang Wanquan met his Russian counterpart, Sergey Shoigu, during a summit in Kazakhstan of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a 20-year-old military and political grouping of China, Russia and other former Soviet Asian republics.

Shoigu proposed signing a comprehensive military cooperation agreement between Russia and China.

And sure enough, three weeks later, Xi stopped by Moscow en route to the G20 summit in Germany, where he confirmed that such an agreement had been signed, along with \$10 billion worth of other agreements, as both leaders grinned and shook hands.

So, with Russia now firmly in its corner, and the 2,615-mile frontier the two nations share thoroughly secure, how much further will China go in defying Trump? How long might Beijing stay quiet on further pressures against Kim Jong Un’s headlong dash toward a nuclear arsenal and intercontinental ballistic missiles?

At present, North Korea poses no real threat to China. And it won’t until its present government collapses and large

numbers of North Koreans pour across the 880-mile border that the two nations share, or nuclear war breaks out, threatening to rain destruction on the millions of Chinese clustered in major cities within a 100-mile nuclear blast radius around Pyongyang, the North Korean capital.

Both of these unlikely scenarios will have at least slightly restrained China’s actions in the past. But now, with a military ally in Russia, its independence may know even fewer bounds.

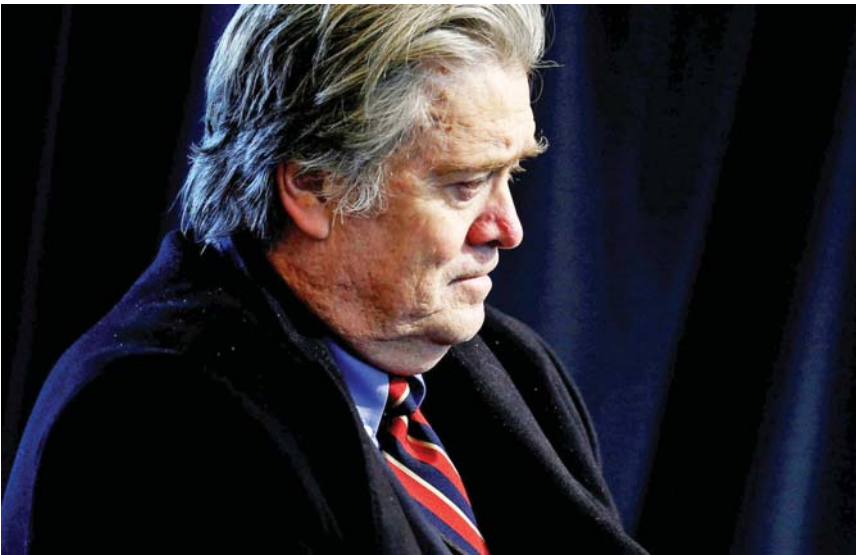
This must be taken into consideration before Trump or Congress considers how the United States tightens the screws on China -- or Russia for that matter.

After the latest expulsions and sanctions engineered by Washington and Moscow, it’s hardly likely that Trump will be able to use any goodwill from Putin to influence Chinese rhetoric or activities over North Korea.

Now, Trump must reflect carefully how truly potent a combined Sino-Russian alliance may be as a counter to any moves he might consider going forward.

(Source: CNN)

## Time for Stephen Bannon to start worrying?



**Last week Trump channeled his ire at Bannon through the Mooch’s potty mouth, whose barking-mad phone call to The New Yorker — I’m paraphrasing mightily here — impugned Bannon as a self-promoter exploiting the president to “build his own brand.”**

least seems to represent fealty to what Trump voters said they wanted.

He also seems, at times, a voice for sanity, although in the Trump White House that’s a relative term. He objected to Trump’s untimely firing of James Comey, the FBI director; warned Trump against continuing his abusive campaign against Sessions; and opposed

Scaramucci’s appointment, saying Trump needed a professional, not another inexperienced loyalist, to guide a press shop whose “messaging” consists mostly of post-tweet babble.

### ■ Policy matters

On policy matters, Bannon opposes further troop commitments to Afghanistan, and he has urged that taxes on the

incomes of the wealthiest Americans remain high as part of any comprehensive tax reform.

Bannon “understands the base more than anybody else in the building, and may be the only person in the building who’s thinking three or four moves ahead,” says Barry Bennett, a former adviser to the Trump campaign who makes a nice living offering public relations counsel to Trump’s Twitter targets, like the government of Qatar. “He is very keyed into middle-class America. In the White House he may be their only advocate.”

But as the Chinese idiom goes, the shot hits the bird that pokes its head out. Last week Trump channeled his ire at Bannon through the Mooch’s potty mouth, whose barking-mad phone call to The New Yorker — I’m paraphrasing mightily here — impugned Bannon as a self-promoter exploiting the president to “build his own brand.”

Trump’s departed Mini-Me probably didn’t come up with that characterization on his own. Now that Reince Priebus, the fired chief of staff with whom he’d had an alliance of sorts, is gone, Bannon might be worrying about his future, too.

Bannon is a wily operator who’s dodged many Trump tirades. A former naval officer, he gets along with Kelly, the Marine Corps general who mowed down the Mooch. But given Trump’s weakness, vanity and plain incompetence, there are limits to how much Bannon, who helped birth this dysfunctional presidency, can do to fix it.

(Source: The NYT)



# Did Hillary scapegoat Russia to save her campaign?

By Mike Whitney

The "Russia hacking" flap has nothing to do with Russia and nothing to do with hacking. The story is basically a DNC invention that was concocted to mitigate the political fallout from the nearly 50,000 emails that WikiLeaks planned to publish on July 22, 2016, just 3 days before the Democratic National Convention. That's what this is really all about. Russia didn't hack anything, it's a big diversion that was conjured up on-the-fly to keep Hillary's bandwagon from going down in flames.

Put yourself in Hillary's shoes for a minute. She knew the deluge was coming and she knew it was going to be bad. (According to Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, DNC contractor CrowdStrike claimed to find evidence of Russian malware on DNC servers just three days after WikiLeaks announced that it was about "about to publish "emails related to Hillary Clinton." Clearly, that was no coincidence. The plan to blame Russia was already underway.) Hillary knew that the emails were going to expose the DNC's efforts to rig the primaries and torpedo Bernie Sanders campaign, and she knew that the media was going to have a field-day dissecting the private communications word by word on cable news or splashing them across the headlines for weeks on end. It was going to be excruciating. She knew that, they all knew that.

And how would her supporters react when they discovered that their party leaders and presidential candidate were actively involved in sabotaging the democratic process and subverting the primaries? That wasn't going to go over well with voters in Poughkeepsie, now was it? Maybe she'd see her public approval ratings slip even more. Maybe she'd nosedive in the polls or lose the election outright, she didn't know. No one knew. All they knew was that she was in trouble. Big trouble.

So she reacted exactly the way you'd expect Hillary to react, she hit the panic button. In fact, they all freaked out, every-one of them including Podesta and the rest of the DNC honchoes. Once they figured that their presidential bid could go up in smoke, they decided to act preemptively, pull out all the stops and "Go Big".

That's where Russia comes into the picture. The DNC brass (with help from allies at the CIA) decided to conjure up a story so fantastic that, well, it had to be true, after all, that's what the 17 intel agencies said, right? And so did the elite media including the New York Times, the Washington Post and CNN. They can't all be wrong, can they? Sure, they goofed-up on Saddam's WMDs, and Iran's imaginary nukes program, and Assad's fictional chemical weapons attack, but, hey, every-one makes mistakes, right? And, besides, have I told you how evil Putin is lately and how much he reminds me of Adolph Hitler? (sarcasm)

In any event, they settled on Russia mainly because Russia had rolled back Washington's imperial project in both Ukraine and Syria, so the media was already in full demonetization-mode and ready to go. All the DNC needed to do was utter the words "Russia meddling" and they'd be off to the races.

Does any of this sound even remote-

ly believable? Former CIA analyst, Ray McGovern seems to think so, because he expounded a very similar scenario about a month ago in an interview on YouTube. Check it out:

Ray McGovern- "What did Hillary do? ...Hillary gathered her war council together and one fellow says, "I know what we can do. We'll blame it on the Russians."

And someone else says, "But it wasn't the Russians it was WikiLeaks."

(Guy number 1 says)"Well, that's a twofer. We hate them both equally , so we'll say WikiLeaks is working with the Russians."

(Ray McGovern) That was two days before the convention.

And someone else says, "What would the rationale be?"

(Guy number 2 says) "C'mon, the Russians clearly want Trump to win."

(Number 1) "But what about the major media?"

(Number 2) "Well, the major media really want Hillary to win, so if we get the major media on board, well, we really got it wired."

(Ray McGovern again) "And if you watch the coverage since the WikiLeaks leak, two days before the convention, the media content was not 'how did Hillary steal the election' but 'How did the Russians do it?'"

He's right, isn't he? Hillary and Co. pulled off the whole ruse without a hitch. The media focused on the "Russia meddling" angle, and the calculating Ms. Clinton slipped away with nary a scratch. It's amazing!

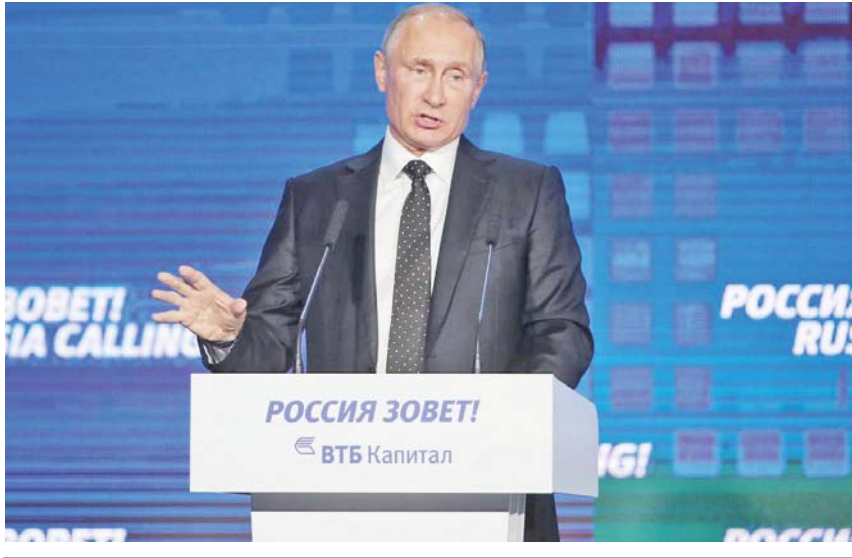
But there was one glitch to the 'Blame Russia' scheme. There was no hard evidence of Russian involvement. And, now, 10 months into multiple investigations of Russian hacking, there's still no evidence. How can that be?



Well, for one thing, the FBI was never given access to the DNC computers.

Let me repeat that: In the biggest and most politically-explosive investigation in more than a decade, an investigation that has obvious national security implications- alleged cyber-espionage by a hostile foreign power, alleged collusion by high-ranking officials in the current administration, alleged treason or collusion on part of the Chief Executive, and the possible impeachment of a sitting president- the FBI has not yet secured or examined the servers that may or may not provide compelling forensic evidence of cyber-intrusion by Russia.

Why? Why would the FBI accept the analysis of some flunky organization that no one has ever heard of before (Crowd-



**In any event, they settled on Russia mainly because Russia had rolled back Washington's imperial project in both Ukraine and Syria, so the media was already in full demonetization-mode and raring to go.**

strike) rather than use all the tools at their disposal to thoroughly investigate whether or not the hacking actually took place or not? Isn't that their job?

Yes damn right it is. The reason the FBI never insisted on examining the DNC servers, is because they knew the story was baloney from the get go. Otherwise they would have kicked down the doors at the DNC, seized the computers through brute force, and arrested anyone who tried to stop them. Those computers are Exhibit A in the Trial of the Century. They should be under lock and key at FBI Headquarters not collecting cobwebs in the basement of the DNC-HQ. The fact that

Inside Job?"

"Independent cyber-investigators have now ...come up with verifiable evidence from metadata found in the record of the alleged Russian hack. They found that the purported "hack" of the DNC ... was not a hack...(but) originated with a copy ...by an insider. The data was leaked after being doctored with a cut-and-paste job to implicate Russia....

Key among the findings of the independent forensic investigations is the conclusion that the DNC data was copied onto a storage device at a speed that far exceeds an Internet capability for a remote hack. Of equal importance, the forensics show that the copying and doctoring were performed on the East coast of the U.S." ("Was the "Russian Hack" an Inside Job?", CounterPunch)

Capisce? There was no hack. Someone working inside the DNC (a disgruntled employee?) -who had access to the computers, and who worked on the East Coast- copied the data onto a storage device and transferred it to WikiLeaks. That's what you call a "leak" not a "hack". There was no hack. Russia was not involved. The official narrative is bullshit. End of story.

Naturally, the MSM has completely ignored the VIPS report just as they ignored Sy Hersh's brilliant article that proved that Assad DID NOT launch a chemical weapons attack in Syria. That bit of information has been locked out of the MSM coverage altogether as it doesn't jibe with Washington's "Assad must go" policy. So too, McGovern's "verifiable forensic evidence" that the Russians did not hack the DNC servers will likely be consigned to the memory hole like every other inconvenient factoid that doesn't fit with Washington's foreign policy objectives.

The fact that the FBI has not seized the DNC computers is just one of many glaring omissions in this farcical investigation, but there are others too. Like this: Did you know that there are two eyewitnesses in the case that have not yet been questioned? That's right, there are two people who claim to know the identity of the person who gave the stolen emails to WikiLeaks; Julian Assange and Craig Murray.

Murray, who is the former UK ambassador to Uzbekistan and a human rights activist, claims he met the person who took the emails from the DNC in a wooded area in Washington DC last year. In other words, Murray can settle this matter once and for all and put an end to this year-long witch-hunt that has consumed the media and Capital Hill, prevented the Congress from conducting the people's business, and increased the probability of a conflagration with nuclear-armed Russia.

But here's the problem: The FBI has never interviewed Murray or made any effort to interview him. It's like he doesn't exist. In other words, we have a credible witness who can positively identify the person who leaked the emails, gave them to WikiLeaks and set off a political firestorm that has engulfed the Capital and the country for the last year, and the FBI hasn't interviewed him?

Will someone explain that to me, please?

That's why I remain convinced that the Russia hacking story is pure, unalloyed bunkum. There's not a word of truth to any of it.

(Source: Counterpunch)

## Playing both sides against the middle: Saudi engages with Iraqi Shias

By James M. Dorsey

Saudi Arabia, with the Islamic State on the ropes in Iraq, is forging ties to Iraqi Shia leaders and offering to help fund reconstruction of Mosul and other predominantly Sunni Muslim cities that were devastated in the military campaign against the jihadist group.

The Saudi outreach to Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and controversial Shia scholar, politician and militia leader Moqtada al-Sadr, who last week held rare talks in Jeddah with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, aims to contain significant Iranian influence in Iraq. Mr. Al-Sadr is widely seen as having balanced his strong sense of nationalism with his relations with Iran. It was his first visit to the kingdom in more than a decade.

Mr. Al-Sadr's visit was a far cry from the days not so long ago when as a firebrand he railed against the kingdom, prompting an Iraqi poet to declare that "with Moqtada's help we will destroy Saudi Arabia."

Mr. Al-Sadr, who has criticized powerful Iranian-sponsored Shia militias fighting the Islamic State alongside the Iraqi army as well as Iran's backing of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, was preceded by Mr. Al-Abadi who was received in the kingdom in June despite having voiced days before his visit opposition to the two-month-old Saudi-UAE led diplomatic and economic boycott of Qatar.

Rivalry with Iran is one of the core issues in the Persian Gulf crisis. The Saudi-UAE alliance has demanded that Qatar curtail its relations with Iran, with which it shares the world's largest gas field.

The Saudi outreach also signals a rare Saudi recognition that Iranian influence is a fact in a vicious proxy war that so far has been largely fought by the kingdom as a zero-sum-game. The proxy war prompted Saudi Arabia's ill-fated military intervention in Yemen that has brought Yemen to the brink of the abyss as it battles famine and epidemics, aggravated Syria's brutal civil war, and sparked sectarian tensions across the Muslim world.

Ibrahim al-Marie, a retired Saudi colonel and Riyadh-based security analyst, voiced Saudi expectations of its outreach when he noted that "the significant improvement in Saudi-Iraqi relations, official and non-official, doesn't mean that Iran's domination of Iraq has decreased or will decrease. Dealing with all political currents in the Arab world is expected from a country of the kingdom's size and stature."



The Saudi outreach, despite Saudi Arabia's designation of Iranian-backed Lebanese militia Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, constitutes the second time in six months that the kingdom has opted for engagement rather than confrontation.

Saudi Arabia in February reversed its cancellation of \$3 billion in military aid to Lebanon, where Hezbollah is one of the country's foremost political forces and part of the government; appointed a new ambassador; rescinded its advice to Saudis not to visit Lebanon, a popular Saudi tourism destination; increased flights to Beirut by its national carrier; and welcomed Lebanese President Michel Aoun, a Christian ally of Hezbollah, on a visit to the kingdom.

Prince Mohammed reached out to Mr. Al-Sadr as the kingdom's security forces were cracking down on activists in the predominantly Shia, oil-rich Eastern Province. The Saudi interior ministry reported earlier this week that a police officer was killed and six others injured when their patrol was attacked in the town of Al Awamiyah. Al Awamiyah was home to Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, the Shia scholar whose execution in early 2016 sparked a rupture in Saudi-Iranian diplomatic relations.

Canada, which sold \$15 billion worth of armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia, last week launched an investigation into claims that they had been employed in crackdowns on Shias. The investigation was based on videos released by Saudi human rights activists that purported to show the use of Canadian vehicles in past crackdowns in the Eastern Province rather than the current operation in Al Awamiyah.

Saudi engagement with Iraqi leaders comes in advance of Iraqi provincial and parliamentary elections scheduled for next year. Mr. Al-Sadr's visit to Jeddah took on added significance because of his opposition to Mr. Al-Abadi's rival, former Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki, who is widely seen as a major Iranian asset. The visit raised questions of what role Mr. Al-Sadr may want to play in countering Iranian influence in cooperation with the kingdom.

Messrs. Al-Sadr and Al-Abadi hope that Saudi Arabia will not only help in funding reconstruction of predominantly Sunni Muslim cities that have been left in ruins by the campaign against the Islamic State, but also in building bridges to a community that feels that it has been marginalized since the 2003 overthrow of Saddam Hussein's minority Sunni regime. They believe that Saudi Arabia will be able to leverage not only its financial muscle but also the fact that many Iraqi Sunni tribes share a common lineage with Saudi clans.

Mosul, Iraq's second largest city prior to its takeover by the Islamic State in 2014, has been virtually destroyed. Its infrastructure will have to be rebuilt from scratch at an estimated cost of tens of billions of dollars. Rebuilding other cities ravaged by the anti-Islamic State campaign has been slow to get off the ground.

Some optimists suggest that there may be more to Saudi moves. They hold out the possibility that Prince Mohammed is looking for a back channel to Iran, a role Mr. Al-Sadr could fulfil as one of the few Iraqi Shia politicians who has reasonable relations with both the Islamic republic and the kingdom. More likely, however, Prince Mohammed sees an opportunity to exploit differences within the Iraqi Shia community towards Iran and the government's need of help in forging bridges to its Sunni citizens.

"One thing is for sure. The Saudis did not invite a major Iraqi Shia cleric to Jeddah just to inquire after his health," quipped Middle East scholar Juan Cole.

**Hillary and Co. pulled off the whole ruse without a hitch. The media focused on the "Russia meddling" angle, and the calculating Ms. Clinton slipped away with nary a scratch. It's amazing!**



# Rwanda's forever president

By Bert Ingelaere

There is an election in Rwanda on Friday, but its outcome already is nearly certain: President Paul Kagame will win a third seven-year term. Elections there are not a contest for power. They are the ritual confirmation of the power in place.

Mr. Kagame generally wins by margins that would make a dictator proud: In 2010, he scored some 93 percent of the vote. He is the only ruler most Rwandans born since the 1994 genocide know. The Rwandans who remember leaders before him have reason to wonder if they will ever see another: The state's mighty security apparatus is quietly eloquent, with all those soldiers and police officers routinely patrolling both city streets and the countryside.

Mr. Kagame is up against two innocuous candidates after the national election commission disqualified Diane Rwigara, his strongest opponent, and two other independent contenders. The opposition leader Victoire Ingabire, who was placed under house arrest in the lead-up to the 2010 election, is now in jail serving a dubious 15-year sentence for threatening state security, among other things. Journalists have also been

intimidated and stifled; Freedom House categorizes Rwanda as "not free."

Mr. Kagame wasn't supposed to run this time because he would be coming up against the two-term limit set by the Constitution. But in 2015 the government proposed an amendment and had it sanctioned in a referendum (roundly criticized by human rights groups), opening the way for Mr. Kagame to stand for re-election this year — and again until 2034.

## ■ Third mandate in presidency

Burundi was condemned internationally in 2015 after President Pierre Nkurunziza flouted term limits to run for a third mandate. Last year, President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo skirted term restrictions by simply delaying the next election, triggering protests and then a crackdown that led to sanctions against his government. Yet nothing of the sort has happened to Mr. Kagame or his administration despite its ploys to keep him in power basically unchallenged.

Why? Because Mr. Kagame has been masterful at deflecting criticism of his illiberalism by pointing to Rwanda's economic performance. The country is touted as a model: The government claims that the economy grew

by an average of about 8 percent a year between 2001 and 2014, and that the rate of poverty dropped from nearly 57 percent in 2006 to less than 40 percent in 2014. Neither Mr. Nkurunziza nor Mr. Kabila could proffer such results.

Mr. Kagame's supporters, in Rwanda and beyond, sing to his tune. In a way, they have to. Western donors and international organizations may well prefer democratic values to big-man politics. But having poured great sums of money into Rwanda since the 1994 genocide, they want to be impressed by the headway Mr. Kagame claims to have made — on economic growth and poverty reduction, but also maternal health care and the prosecution of suspected mass killers. Asia has tigers; now Africa has found its lion. Many want to believe that while Mr. Kagame may have been cutting corners on democracy, he has delivered on development.

Consider poverty reduction. Back in 2005, I was stationed in Rwanda with a World Bank team, working on a large-scale study of poverty. Six months into it, after we had collected hundreds of survey questionnaires about the well-being of ordinary Rwandans and conducted hundreds of discussions with villagers, the Rwandan security forces

seized half of our files on the pretext that our research's design was tainted by "genocide ideology" — a vague notion supposedly something like sectarianism that the government often invokes to criminalize what it sees as challenges to its authority. After lengthy negotiations between World Bank and Rwandan officials, the project was abandoned. We never determined what the poverty trends were: The information we had collected was destroyed before it could be analyzed.

Matters have hardly improved. Major studies can only be carried out by the Rwandan authorities or under their close supervision. Independent researchers have come to question the government's methodology for analyzing data.

## ■ Poverty rate

Officially, the poverty rate decreased by nearly 6 percentage points between 2011 and 2014. But Filip Reyntjens, a Rwanda expert at the University of Antwerp, has argued that it might actually have increased by about 6 percentage points during that period. Several articles published by the Review of African Political Economy also challenge Rwanda's official poverty figures, as well as its G.D.P. growth rates. →13

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# Why is frozen lemon therapy so good for your health?

We have often mentioned the wonderful benefits of drinking lukewarm water with lemon in the mornings, but did you know there are also medicinal qualities in frozen lemon? It is a very popular technique where we can take full advantage of all the properties this healthy fruit can provide.

The frozen lemon therapy's main secret is being able to use, in a simple and delicious way, the part of the lemon that can do so much for our health: the rind or peel. Do you want to know how? We will explain below.

## ■ Why is the frozen lemon therapy so beneficial?

In the first place we must explain why it is called the frozen lemon therapy. Many people suffering from cancer usually use this remedy as a "complement" to their chemotherapy sessions. The reason is based on lemons' antioxidant power to fight the malignant cells and in its ability to protect the natural defenses. These cancer patients undergo, as you know, some very aggressive treatments that seriously attack the immunological system.

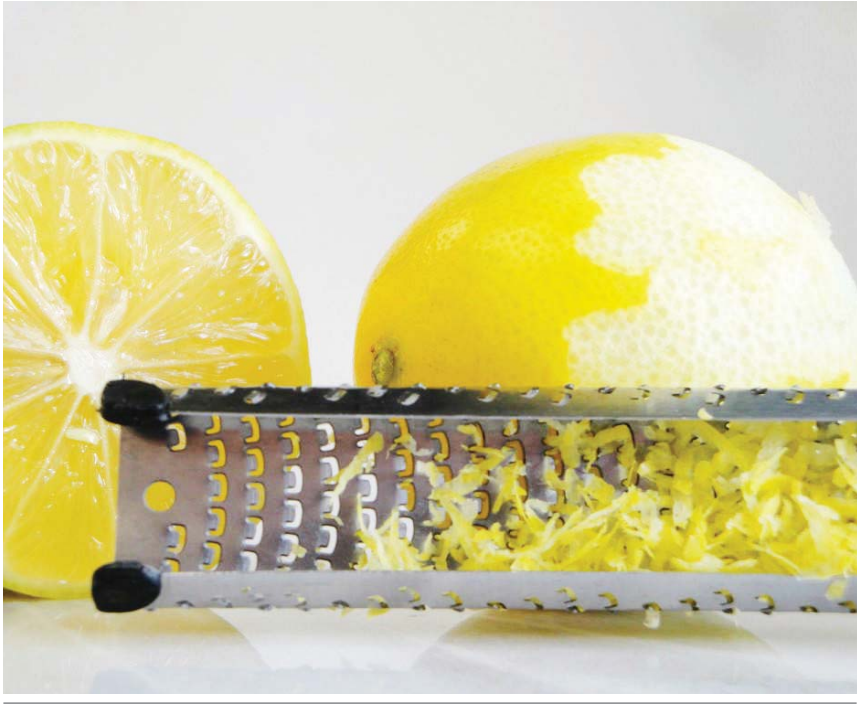
Thus, it is a very useful treatment in these cases. However, we cannot say this is a 100% effective anticancer remedy; it is, as we've said, a complementary therapy that can help in these cases, both to prevent tumors and to counteract the effects of chemotherapy.

However, the anticancer power of frozen lemon is not its only virtue. We will explain a few more. Why don't you try them?

1. A natural treasure of vitamins  
The lemon peel has at least 10 times more vitamins than its juice! It is really interesting to know that it is in its own outer layer of this medicinal fruit where its best virtues are hidden, those that usually escape us because we do not consume it, we always throw out the peel and only retain the juice.

Do you want to know what types of vitamins the frozen lemon therapy is going to help you get?

- Pectin
- Vitamin C



**The lemon peel has at least 10 times more vitamins than its juice! It is really interesting to know that it is in its own outer layer of this medicinal fruit where its best virtues are hidden.**

- Flavonoids like tangerine
- More than 22 different compounds capable of slowing cell oxidation.

2. Protect and strengthen the immunological system

This is wonderful. The frozen lemon therapy is going to fight many of the daily illnesses to which we are constantly exposed, such as the classic cold, infections, flus... There are many people that prepare themselves, for example, with rich infusions from the lemon peel, but it is important to know that by cooking the lemon it loses up to 40% of its properties. On the other hand, if it is frozen, we conserve all of its benefits and it is easy to consume. And it's also delicious!

3. Frozen lemon to lose weight  
As you know, the lemon is a very useful fruit to help detox the body

and also to fight the presence of lipids in the blood that cause bad cholesterol, and which are stored as fat in our body. According to what nutritionists tell us, it would be good to consume about 75 grams (2.65 ounces) of lemon each day to help lose weight in a healthy way, always accompanying this with a healthy diet. Why not try it?

## ■ How do you prepare frozen lemon?

Lemon, knife and grater  
Preparing your frozen lemon therapy is so simple that you will not be able to go without this natural remedy in your daily routine, and not only because it is easy to prepare but because of its flavor and the original dishes you can prepare with it. Take note of what you need to do:

## ■ What do I need?

- 2 lemons
- A grater

## ■ How do I prepare it?

It is as simple as placing 2 lemons in your freezer for one entire day. There is nothing secret about that. Some prepare to cut them in two or three parts beforehand, to make it easier to grate them afterward, but it is recommended to freeze them whole.

## ■ How do I consume my frozen lemons?

### ■ Yoghurt with fruit

As we have indicated before, it is ideal to consume 75 grams (2.65 ounces) of frozen lemon each day. To do this, what you will do is grate the lemons once they are completely frozen, in order to consume all of them. Immediately you will notice its natural fragrance and you can include them in your dishes to give an original touch with is really delicious. We will provide you with a few simple examples of how you can consume them:

- Include 25 grams (0.8 ounces) of frozen grated lemon in natural yoghurt without sugar.
- Add 25 grams (0.8 ounces) of frozen grated lemon to your salad for lunch, where you can include spinach, nuts, fresh cheese, a few pieces of salmon and a few cherry tomatoes.
- You can add frozen grated lemon to any of your fresh infusions, such as a chilled green tea or another chilled natural drink, ideal for the mid-afternoon.

.. Frozen lemon also combines well in any fruit salad that you make. Such as, for example, a delicious option is to prepare a bowl of chopped pineapple, three strawberries, half a kiwi, chopped nuts and about 25 grams (0.8 ounces) of frozen grated lemon on top.

The frozen lemon technique helps us, as you can see, to make use of the benefits of the rind or peel, which we usually throw out. Remember that, from now on, you no longer have an excuse: you and your family can now enjoy an "iron" health thanks to this simple remedy. Why not put two lemons in your freezer today?

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

## Pear-shaped women benefit from better health, finds study

By Olivia Petter

Women who have more fat in their hips and thighs are at a lower risk of heart attacks, strokes and diabetes, a new study had found.

Published by the journal Cell Metabolism, the research shows that having a bit of extra fat in a woman's lower half acts as a sponge and stops fat from travelling to the internal organs thus, acting as a protectant for the heart and lungs.

The pear-shaped body type is far superior in health terms than the apple-shaped figure, whereby fat is predominantly stored around the middle and can subsequently release potentially harmful chemicals into the bloodstream more easily.

The evidence applied to both men and women, however, scientists found that the protective properties of hip and thigh fat is more prominent in pre-menopausal women, who naturally store more fat in the lower halves of their bodies than men.

However, the research showed that this protectant was less effective in women who were already overweight, as the fat levels in their hearts and lungs were already too high.

Lead author Dr Norbert Stefan, who specialised in diabetes at the University of Tübingen in Germany, explained that it's better for people who are at a normal weight to be pear shaped than apple-shaped because the hips and thighs "offer safe storage" for fat cells.

The results were acquired through MRI scans and regular health checks which monitored fat distribution.

Known as subcutaneous fat, the extra weight on our hips and thighs differs vastly from that which settles in our abdomen, known as visceral fat. The latter releases harmful chemicals that severely inhibit our cardiovascular health.

This releases fatty acids into the blood which can lead to high cholesterol, insulin resistance and diabetes.

Recent data reported in the journal Menopause found that black women have 20 per cent less subcutaneous fat than white women, who were more susceptible to visceral fat.

"For black women, higher visceral fat is a determining factor for heart fat, whereas with white women, overall adiposity is the factor," lead author Samar El Khoudary, PhD told MedPage Today.

"It kind of highlights the importance of considering race and location for heart fat," he noted.

(Source: [The Independent](#))

## Signs it's time to ditch your doctor

By Maya Brown-Zimmerman

As patients with chronic illness, we're well-accustomed to going to the doctor. Many of us have had great medical teams, but I know we've all had the experience of seeing a medical professional and leaving upset. Obviously, communication is a two-way street and we need to do our part as patients, as well as have reasonable expectations for our providers. Sometimes though, it becomes necessary to fire a doctor and move on.

## ■ Here are some hints it might be time to change doctors:

**1)** Your doctor is unapologetic about a mistake. Doctors are humans and therefore mistakes are going to happen. If your doctor seems distressed about the error and changes how they operate to guard against another mistake, great! But if your doctor can't understand why you're upset, downplays the error or your feelings, and doesn't make any relevant changes, it may be time to give them the pink slip.

**2)** Your doctor routinely keeps you waiting past your appointment time and you don't get your fair share of time. I have a couple of doctors who I know will run late, because they give their undivided attention to every patient. I'm ok waiting an hour, because I know I won't be rushed when it's my turn. But if your doctor is keeping you waiting without reason, that shows a lack of respect for your time.

**3)** Your doctor can't seem to remember basic facts about your treatment. Doctors have a lot of patients, so of course they aren't going to remember every detail about your life. But if it's been a few months and your doctor is still asking why you take beta blockers, or suggests cutting out dairy every appointment, when they're the ones who discovered your child had a dairy intolerance in the first place, well, Houston, we have a problem.

**4)** Your doctor is inaccessible after hours. I get that doctors don't typically get paid for talking on the phone, but if it's urgent, there should be a mechanism for getting help. I had an instance where we were about to go out of town and I had a question about my son's medication. I was told my doctor's policy was that questions about medication were only answered in-office: period. Now how to get help after hours is a question I ask when interviewing potential doctors.

**5)** Your doctor is not knowledgeable about your condition and unwilling to learn. I have Marfan syndrome, a rare connective tissue disorder. I don't expect every doctor I come in contact with to be an expert, or even to know what it is. But, if we're going to be partners in keeping me healthy they have got to be willing to learn: from me, experts in the field, and from our national foundation.

**6)** Your doctor is dismissive of your concerns. If you have a question, you deserve to have it answered honestly. You know your body the best, and medical professionals should respect that. For example, a friend of mine ran into trouble when a doctor insisted on ordering a drug she'd reported caused her to stop breathing because the doctor didn't believe that was a possible side effect. Whether it's over a major issue like that, or something less serious, mutual respect is an important aspect of the patient-caregiver relationship.

Are there things I've missed? Have you ever fired a doctor?

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

## Bananas and cinnamon can help you sleep

Food is an important factor in getting deep sleep. Check out the incredible benefits of bananas and cinnamon for sleep, and learn how to make a delicious, natural banana cinnamon tea.

Life moves faster with each passing day. Never ending work days mean that many people end up taking work home.

Fortunately, many have realized the importance of taking care of themselves. They've learned to set aside some time each day for their own health.

The problem is that when it comes time to sleep, we still have high levels of stress. As you probably already know, stress definitely doesn't help you sleep.

That's why it's important to remember that food not only affects our shape, it also affects all of our body's internal functions.

This means that there are products that relax us and others that energize us. Because of this, we recommend including the former in your diet, especially in the evening.

Today, we want to talk to you about bananas and cinnamon.

Bananas and cinnamon have gotten a lot of negative attention. In part, this is due to their sweet flavor. This appetizing flavor makes us think of both the fruit and the spice as foods that make us gain weight.

As a result, many take them out of our diet. However, that's making a big mistake.

Believe it or not, cinnamon can help us get rid of fat. Meanwhile, bananas help us to activate our muscles to help them when we work out.

## ■ How bananas can help us sleep

You've probably seen tennis players eating bananas between matches. The reason is because of their magnesium and potassium. These minerals prevent cramping and provide the body with energy.

The magnesium and potassium found in bananas prevent spasms while practicing a difficult sport. This is because they eliminate muscle tension.

However, their benefits go much farther than that. They also regulate blood pressure and eliminate harmful substances that accumulate in your body.

If that wasn't enough, it also encourages the production of serotonin and melatonin. These are fundamental substances for sleep. They also produce pleasure and sleepiness.

Serotonin and melatonin are great substances to have in our bodies. When they are present, they start to diminish the presence of cortisol and with



**Cinnamon can help us get rid of fat and is a good substitute for sugar. Meanwhile, bananas help us to activate our muscles to help them when we work out.**

it, anxiety. All of this makes bananas a great ally in getting deep sleep.

If you're looking for a delicious and healthy addition, we suggest combining a banana with cinnamon.

## ■ How cinnamon aids sleep

Believe it or not, cinnamon is ideal to get rid of sugar present in foods. This makes it a perfect companion for bananas.

Also, it eases digestion, which is very helpful in getting sleep. After all, if you have a heavy stomach or suffer from heartburn, it's almost impossible to sleep.

To add to this, cinnamon helps circulation and regulates blood pressure. This helps us to relax easier.

As you can see, this spice increases the effects of bananas. It also counters the negative effects of bananas at the same time. So, you can eat bananas with cinnamon without fear of gaining weight or diabetes.

Remember, doctors recommend eating cinnamon to treat diabetes, coronary, and vascular problems.

Let's look at some delicious recipes with these two healthy ingredients.

## ■ Bananas and cinnamon tea

This is a very easy recipe.

## ■ Ingredients

- 1 banana
- ½ to 1 tablespoon of cinnamon (depending on your taste)
- 1 quart of water

## ■ Preparation

- Put water on to boil in a saucepan while preparing the rest of the ingredients.
- Leave the peel on the banana. Wash it as well as possible to remove any of the products it has been treated with.
- Cut off both tips of the banana.
- Put it in the boiling water with the peel on. Let it steep for 15 to 20 minutes.
- After 20 minutes, turn off the heat and strain the mixture.
- Add the amount of cinnamon you have chosen.

Thanks to this simple process, this tea made from bananas and cinnamon will come in handy for getting deep sleep. It's best if you drink it one hour before going to bed.

Pair it with a relaxing activity. In a little bit of time you'll notice it's effects. You will be able to start your day with the energy you need.

Want to give it a shot? Tell us how it worked for you!

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



## Mostowfi al-Mamalek garden made national heritage site

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — The historical Mostowfi al-Mamalek garden in northern Mazandaran province has recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Director Zahra Ahmadipour made the announcement through a letter to Mazandaran Governor General Rabi Falahe-Jelodar, ISNA reported on Tuesday.



A view of Mostowfi al-Mamalek garden with its historical mansion in the foreground

Situated near the city of Babol, the garden is named after Mirza Hasan Ashtiani, an Iranian politician commonly known by the bestow title Mostowfi al-Mamalek.

The property embraces a late Qajar-era (1789–1925) mansion - a temporary residence for Mostowfi al-Mamalek who served as prime minister on six occasions from 1910 to 1927.

The genuine concept of the Persian Garden interweaves natural elements with manmade components to embody an idea of creating a paradise on Earth by the means of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.

## Indonesia's June foreign tourist arrival growth accelerates

**JAKARTA (Reuters)** — Indonesia's foreign tourist arrivals rose 16.17 percent to 910,931 in June from a year earlier, the statistics bureau said on Tuesday.

The increase was up from May's 11.5 percent annual rise.

The total number of foreign visitors, including those passing through Indonesia's borders from neighboring countries and foreign workers with permits for less than one year, in June was 1.1 million, up nearly 32 percent on year.

## Saudi crown prince announces plan for Red Sea tourism project

**RIYADH (Reuters)** — Saudi Arabia plans to develop resorts on about 50 islands off the kingdom's Red Sea coast backed by its Public Investment Fund (PIF), according to a statement carried by state news agency SPA on Tuesday.

The Red Sea Project, to be built between the cities of Amlaj and al-Jawh, will offer a nature reserve, diving in coral reefs and heritage sites. It will break ground in the third quarter of 2019 and complete its first phase in the fourth quarter of 2022.

## ROUND THE GLOBE Venice and its lagoon

Founded in the 5th century and spread over 118 small islands, Venice became a major maritime power in the 10th century. The whole city is an extraordinary architectural masterpiece in which even the smallest building contains works by some of the world's greatest artists such as Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and others.

The UNESCO World Heritage property comprises the city of Venice and its lagoon situated in the Veneto Region of Northeast Italy. In this lagoon covering 50,000 km², nature and history have been closely linked since the 5th century when Venetian populations, to escape barbarian raids, found refuge on the sandy islands of Torcello, Jesolo and Malamocco.



These temporary settlements gradually became permanent and the initial refuge of the land-dwelling peasants and fishermen became a maritime power. Over the centuries, during the entire period of the expansion of Venice, when it was obliged to defend its trading markets against the commercial undertakings of the Arabs, the Genoese and the Ottoman Turks, Venice never ceased to consolidate its position in the lagoon.

Human interventions show high technical and creative skills in the realization of the hydraulic and architectural works in the lagoon area. The unique cultural heritage accumulated in the lagoon over the centuries is attested by the discovery of important archaeological settlements in the Altino area and other sites on the mainland, which were important communication and trade hubs.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Ganjali Khan complex evokes everyday life in Safavid-era Iran

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — With its lavishly decorated structures and abundant wax dummies clad in indigenous outfits, the historical Ganjali Khan complex evokes traditions, culture and everyday life in Iran during Safavid dynasty.

Located in Kerman, southern Iran, the complex is composed of a madrasa, a mosque, a caravanserai, a bathhouse, or hammam, a water reservoir and a labyrinth bazaar, all centered on a large public square.

Covering an area of 11,000 square meters, the compound was built upon the order of Ganjali Khan who governed Kerman and some neighboring areas during the late 16th to early 17th centuries under Safavid Shah Abbas I (r. 1571-1629).

With an entrance at the northeastern corner of the square, the mosque though is small in size enjoys elaborate tilework and arabesque designs. It boasts a gilt-pattern inner dome and honeycomb windows.

The hammam has been repurposed into an anthropology-like museum in which wax dummies illustrate the workings of a traditional bathhouse. There is also a display case of antique washing utensils.

The bazaar is ornamented with exquisite plasterwork and wall paintings that are well-preserved although they are roughly 400 years old.

The caravanserai is based on the four-ivan typology, with guest rooms constructed around a courtyard. Shah Abbas I (1571-1629) is credited with building a network of caravanserais across Iran during the much later Safavid dynasty.

### ■ Under tourists' eyes:

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

### 'Interesting waxworks, fascinating tiles'

The waxworks clearly illustrate the activities which took place in the old hammam: including a rather chubby chap being cleaned! However, the tiles are beautiful and surprisingly includes figures of both men and women. (Jane\_9758 from the UK; visited April 2017)

### '17th century complex, well preserved'

Within the bazaar, it contains a caravanserai and a hammam. Beautifully preserved, the hamam shows through life-size mannequins the life in a bath in Safavid times. Recommended. (Stefano M. from Malaysia; visited April 2016)

### 'Nice hamam-museum in great surroundings'

The hamam-museum is very well restored, a must-see in Kerman.

Even better is the atmosphere of the great bazaar that is around and follows to the Masjid Jameh, one of the best experiences in the whole Iran. (Marek L. from Czech Republic; visited November 2016)

### 'Interesting cultural place'

It is a really interesting place to visit if you go to Kerman. You get to see the Iranian culture which is very different. There are statues of men to show how this place used to be. (Ehsan-Reznov from Afghanistan; visited February 2016)

### 'Absolutely gorgeous'

The complex consists of traditional hammam, masjid, bazar, caravanserai, ...

This is the old town center of Kerman, so a visit to Kerman will not be complete without visiting this beautiful buildings and getting a sense of old time downtown.

From all the sights on offer in this complex, I recommend to visit the male traditional hammam. The hammam is restored very nicely. There are signs and

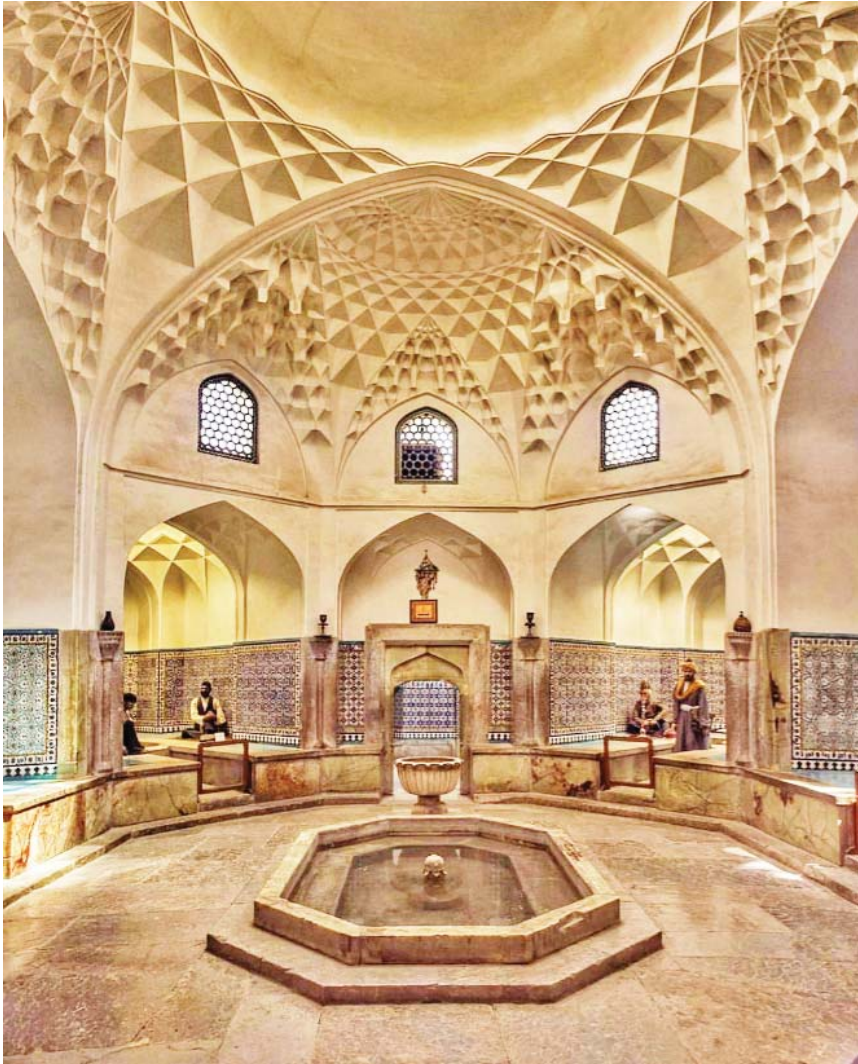


Photo depicts a traditional bathhouse, part of the Ganjali Khan complex in Kerman, southern Iran

mannequins explaining and showing how bathing was done years ago. The blue tiling of the inside is gorgeous. Also

all the copper hammam accessories on display... (Hoda J. from the UK; visited March 2016)

## ICCIMA to stage startup demo on tourism

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) will host its 4th startup demo on tourism in Tehran on August 6, in a bid to commercialize technological ideas that may buttress travel sector of the country.

A selection of eight Iranian startup businesses will attend the event, which will revolve around virtual tourism, handicrafts, hospitality and recreational facilities as dominant themes.

Back in June, Iman Mehdizadeh, the secretary of the event, said "We have decided to fulfill technology needs [in tourism sector] through indigenous approaches and methods and startups are the best

option in this regard."

Recognizing the necessities for promoting tourism as well as introducing talented designers and innovators to investors in this field are amongst the main goals the event pursues, Mehdizadeh added.

The startup demo is organized under the auspices of the Pardis Technology Park, the private sector and in close collaboration with the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization.

Iran has launched extensive plans to bolster its tourism sector. Under its 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

## Barcelona anti-tourism activists vandalize bikes and bus

The youth wing of a Catalan political party has posted a video of its members vandalizing bicycles, days after it slashed the tires of a tour bus near FC Barcelona's stadium and sprayed the windscreen with the slogan "Tourism kills neighborhoods".

Arran, the youth wing of the radical CUP (Popular Unity Candidacy) party, has claimed responsibility for the anti-tourism campaign. CUP, which is propping up the centre-right nationalist Catalan government, has been criticized over its refusal to condemn the attacks.

Santi Vila, the Barcelona city councilor in charge of business, said the CUP was "making a big mistake", adding that Arran's campaign harmed the image of Barcelona and Catalonia and "won't help the cause of independence".

The CUP had remained silent until the

video of the bicycle attacks emerged on Tuesday. Then Mireia Boya, a CUP member of the Catalan parliament, dismissed Vila's "neo-liberalism", saying it amounted to "pure economic violence".

"We are constantly asked to repudiate violence when the violence is provoked by the Catalan government," Boya said.

Laura Flores, a spokesperson for Arran, said the vandalism was "a response to the violence we face every day. The street must be allowed to speak, it's the only place where we can fight".

The most recent attacks were against tourist bicycles that are locked to public bike racks and that users can release via an app.

The scheme is a sore point among the city's cyclists and many have complained that public facilities paid for by taxpayers are being used for profit. There are insufficient

bike racks in the city and cyclists are fined if they lock their bikes to railings or lamp-posts.

It followed the attack last week on the tour bus at Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium in which passengers, many of them with young children, believed they were being attacked by terrorists.

One said he was expecting someone to come armed with a gun or a knife and was relieved when it turned out they were just painting graffiti.

Although the bus attack took place last Thursday it did not come to light until Friday. The delay prompted former Barcelona mayor Xavier Trias to accuse the incumbent, Ada Colau, of a cover-up.

"Covering up acts of vandalism is the same as justifying them," he said.

Colau tweeted soon after the bus attack



An undated photo shows a circle of foreign and domestic visitors to the ruins of Persepolis, a UNESCO World Heritage site in southern Iran.

that "protesting against tourism should never mean intimidating people".

Colau has made herself unpopular with the industry after she introduced a moratorium on new hotels and cracked down on illegal holiday apartments in response to growing disquiet over tourism in the city, which has grown exponentially in recent years.

In the past year there have been a series of protests as residents complain that massive tourism and rising rents are driving them out of their city. Several hotels have been paint-bombed this year and anti-tourist graffiti has appeared in many parts of the city.

The tour bus company, which carries 5.3 million passengers a year, estimated the damage to the bus at €1,842 (£1,600).

(Source: The Guardian)

## Where sand dunes and camels in Japan evoke the Sahara

By Motoko Rich

Shortly after I posted a picture on Instagram from the sand dunes of Tottori on the west coast of Japan, a friend from Brooklyn commented, "Where is this?"

The subtext: This could not possibly be Japan, right?

With its steep hills of creamy golden sand and vast expanses ruffled into scalloped patterns by the wind, Tottori evokes a scene out of the Sahara. There are even camels to ride.

Although these dunes are not the largest in Japan (those are in Aomori, in the north, and used for military exercises), the sand dunes of Tottori are the largest that are accessible to visitors.

But even in Japan, the dunes are more famous for their literary connotations than as a travel destination. They were the setting for Kobo Abe's classic novel "The Woman in the Dunes," but among Japanese tourists, Tottori, the least-populated region in Japan, ranks just 43rd among 47 prefectures in attracting visitors.

That makes it a very relaxing place for a getaway.



The sand dunes of Tottori, on the west coast of Japan, are the largest that are accessible to visitors.

We live in Tokyo, a city of immense crowds and towering buildings. But when I took a walk with my daughter along the dunes, it was easy to leave behind any sign of other people.

One reason for Tottori's absence of tourists is its relative isolation. While Japan's system of shinkansen, or bullet trains, makes travel around the country extremely convenient, no lines stop in Tottori. But it is just over an hour by plane from Tokyo Haneda Airport, and there is a convenient bus that connects the airport in Tottori to the center of the modest city...

The dunes are protected as a national park, and there is no charge to climb them. It's a great workout for the thighs — in some places the sand reaches 165 feet. As in many places we go in Japan, I was impressed by the number of fit elderly people who could keep up with the rest of us...

For sand boarding, you get a board, a helmet and about two minutes of instruction in how to bend your knees, grab your thighs and slide down a steep slope that bottoms out at the ocean. My son and husband caught on quickly, though they both had some spectacular wipeouts that left their faces covered in sand...

(Source: The New York Times)



# Scientists just revealed a hidden secret about the sun's inner core

The innermost region of the Sun is hidden from our eyes, and it looks like this stealth has enabled the core to conceal a massive secret.

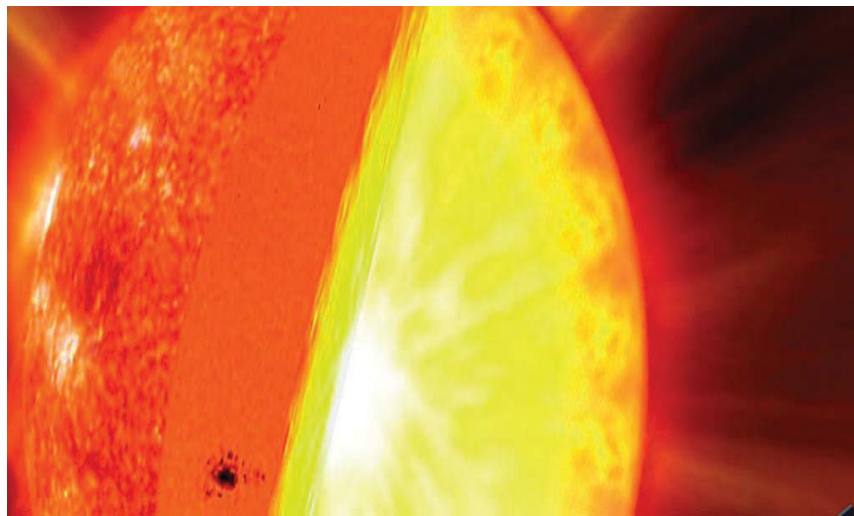
For the first time, scientists have been able to accurately measure the rotation of the solar core, revealing that it doesn't turn at the same speed as the surface – but rotates nearly four times faster.

While researchers had considered the possibility that the Sun's core rotation might not keep pace with its outer face, up until now there was no way of knowing for sure – and many assumed the whole Sun turned as one, like an integrated merry-go-round.

But the latest data, sourced by the ESA and NASA's Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO), provides the first evidence of a kind of low-frequency gravity wave (g-wave, not the same thing as gravitational waves) reverberating through the Sun, which turned out to be the key to capturing the core's rotation.

"We've been searching for these elusive g-waves in our Sun for over 40 years, and although earlier attempts have hinted at detections, none were definitive," says astronomer Eric Fossat from the Côte d'Azur Observatory in France.

"Finally, we have discovered how to unambiguously extract their signature."



■ **High-frequency waves**

Up until now, scientists have been able to measure higher-frequency waves, called pressure or primary waves (p-waves), which pass through the upper layers of the Sun and are easily detected on the solar surface.

By contrast, g-waves oscillate deep in the solar interior, and while they can tell us about the behavior of the core, they have no clear signature at the surface.

The "solar oscillations studied so far are all sound waves, but there should also be gravity waves in the Sun," Fossat

**The "solar oscillations studied so far are all sound waves, but there should also be gravity waves in the Sun," Fossat explains.**

explains, "with up-and-down, as well as horizontal motions like waves in the sea."

## ■ Analyzing g-mode

Using some 16 years' worth of SOHO observational data, the researchers were able to isolate a kind of g-wave called a g-mode, by analyzing how long it takes a sound wave to travel through the Sun and back to the surface again: a trip known to be 4 hours, 7 minutes.

By combing through the readings, they uncovered a series of modulations – like a sloshing motion of underwater waves – that showed them how g-waves were shaking the Sun's core.

The results suggest that the Sun's core rotates in full about once per week, which is almost four times as fast as the solar surface and intermediate layers, which vary: rotating in 25 days at the equator, and 35 days at the poles.

"This is certainly the biggest result of SOHO in the last decade, and one of SOHO's all-time top discoveries," says Bernhard Fleck, SOHO project scientist from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

As for how this rotational discrepancy came about, the researchers' best guess is that it's a throwback to the Sun's very beginnings.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Scientists identify first flowering plant from 40m years ago

A 140 million-year-old bloom bearing a striking resemblance to a water lily was the mother (and father) of every flowering plant living today, scientists believe.

No fossils of the flower have been found, but scientists inferred what it must have looked like after analyzing a mass of botanical data.

The first angiosperm, or flowering plant, had a simple arrangement of layered petals and contained both male and female reproductive organs, according to the study.

Flowering plants evolved relatively recently during the age of the dinosaurs, brightening up a drab planet previously dominated by ferns, horsetails and mosses.

## ■ Effect on ecosystems

Their appearance had a dramatic effect on ecosystems and the climate and drove the rapid evolution of pollinating insects. Today, angiosperms represent 90% of all land plants and are vital to the survival of terrestrial life.

However, few fossils of the earliest flowers exist and their origins are still poorly understood.

For the new study, scientists led by Dr. Herve Sauquet, from the University of Paris-Sud in France, combined models of flower evolution with information from a huge database of present-day floral traits.

A picture of their reconstructed primeval flower appears in the latest issue of the journal Nature Communications.

In outward appearance, the ancient flower looks similar to a water lily. Its key feature is multiple whorls of petal-like structures arranged in sets of three.

Within the flower head were (male) stamens that shed pollen towards the center and a spiral of raised (female) carpels. The male and female organs were separated from one another.

## ■ Living species

The researchers wrote: "In spite of similarities with some extant (present day) flowers, there is no living species that shares this exact combination of characters."

The whorled petal pattern challenged the belief of many experts that spiraled petals evolved first and later



gave rise to whorled structures. It suggested that the reverse was true, and whorls came first.

The team concluded: The "origin of the angiosperm flower remains among the most difficult and most important unresolved topics in evolutionary biology.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## Tehran Advanced Research Development Center Launches Summer School in Khatam Varsity

The Institute "For Development of Advanced Research in Tehran" is tantamount to a qualitative island and at the international level.

The "Summer School" was held at Khatam University on Monday and Tuesday July 31 and August 1 at the initiative taken by Tehran Advanced Research Development Center.

The "Summer School" was held with the subject of "International Trade", the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

It should be noted that three summer schools will be held in the current and next months in Khatam University with the subjects of "International Trade" in Economy, checking concurrent system (in Computer Science) and Energy Economy. Like previous year, these summer schools are presented by the leading and distinguished university lecturers from worldly renowned and reputable universities such as Stanford, Cambridge, MIT, and Geneva. Indiana, Libre de Bruxells universities, etc.

Dr. Majid Qassemi Chief Executive of Bank Pasargad and Chancellor of Khatam University was the first speaker who expressed his satisfaction on the vehement interest of youth and young adults to study sciences and said: "The Summer School is the initiator of activities of Tehran Advanced Research Development Center and is tantamount to a qualitative island



according to the international level set up in Khatam University."

Relying upon its Iranian talents and elites across the world, this prestigious academic center is of the top and leading universities in the region, he said, adding: "With the coordination made in this regard, this academic center will join world's most prestigious academic centers."

The meeting was held with the aim of organizing the future of the country and giant steps have thus far been taken at this academic center in order to be a regional hub using distinguished domestic and foreign thinkers and scientists, he maintained.

Turning to the subject of "International Trade" as the first course of Summer School in the current Iranian

calendar year in 1396 (started March 21, 2017, he said: "International Trade has experienced an increasing growth trend in half a century ago while volume of economic productions has doubled in the last three decades. In addition, volume of international exchanges has been quadrupled."

In the same direction, world production chain has intertwined increasingly, he said, adding: "Treaties, agreements and international trade organizations have a strong role in world's trade relations."

In the end, Dr. Majid Qassemi Chief Executive of Bank Pasargad and Chancellor of Khatam University said: "It is hoped that pertinent shortfalls and weaknesses will be settled by focusing on the International Trade sector."

Dr. Fatemeh Dadashian the Director General of the Nongovernmental Higher Education Office of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology was the next speaker who pointed to the education as a bedrock for the sustainable development and said: "We are very glad that the private sector has been empowered in line with realizing objectives of resistance economy along with the government."

Khatam University has paved suitable way for the transfer of experienced and technical knowhow, so that youth and young adults can be considered as good-will ambassadors for this subject, she ended.

## BIM Plays a Leading Role in Realizing Objectives of Resistance Economy

Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM) plays an important role in materializing objectives of resistance economy.

Representative of people of Sanandaj, Divandarreh and Kamyaran constituencies in the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iranian Parliament also called Majlis) pointed to the activities and performances of Bank of Industry and Mine in recent years and said: "Bank of Industry and Mine is a development bank which

has thus far played an important role in the improvement of economic and production situation coupled with the generation of employment opportunities."

Due to its high potential in booming small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the country, Bank of Industry and Mine has shown excellent performance than other banks in the current year named after the "Resistance Economy, Production and Job Creation", he

maintained.

Turning to the current problems facing production sector in the country, he said: "Currently, there are many problems and bottlenecks on the way of booming production in the country, so that many economic enterprises have been shut down due to lack of revolving capital."

He, who is member of Plan and Budget Commission in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, said: "Reducing ad-

ministrative bureaucracy process, paying more attention to the industrial and production plans in less developed and disadvantaged provinces coupled with facilitating pertinent activities are of the salient activities of the bank."

In the end, he expressed his special thanks to the chief executive of Bank of Industry and Mine Eng. Afkhami who managed to create a considerable change at this bank.



GOLGOHAR Mining & Industrial Company was introduced an exemplary industrial and production unit in Kerman Province, Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

For this purpose, a grand ceremony was held on Thursday July 27 on the occasion of Day of Industry and Mine, held at the amphitheater of Kerman Province Chamber of Commerce, and salient activities and performance of GOLGOHAR Mining & Industrial Company, regarded as one of the largest mining and industrial companies in the country, was appreciated deservedly.

It is worth mentioning that a Plaque of Honor was awarded to Eng. Iman Atiqi Chief Executive of this in-

dustrial and mining company for his unflinching efforts taken in this regard.

The company constructed large development projects in the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (started March 20, 2017), he said, adding: "Construction operation of some development projects of the company is underway."

Of the most important development projects of the company, it can be referred to: designing 1st mega module of Sponge Iron (DRI) Production Plant, GOLGOHAR Steel and Iron Development Company and also GOHARAN Combined Cycle Power Plant with the production capacity of 332MW electricity, etc.

## Strong and elastic spider silk can help retrain nerves to grow after damage

Spiders may have an invaluable role to play in repairing extensive nerve injuries, according to Christine Radtke, a professor of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Austria's MedUni Vienna/Vienna General Hospital. In trials, Radtke has been using the impressively strong spider silk of the golden orb-weaver spider from Tanzania to help heal extensive nerve injuries of more than five centimeters in length.

"Spider silk is very strong, but also very elastic, which aren't common properties to find together," Radtke told Digital Trends.

The microsurgical technique Radtke has helped develop involves filling veins with spider silk as a sort of longitudinal guide structure. "If you're missing a piece of nerve so that there is a gap, the remaining nerve will have to cross it by growing," she continued. "However, in order for the nerve to find the right way to grow it needs a guidance structure."

Unfortunately, most materials have the effect of inhibiting nerve growth. Spider silk, on the other hand, is a material that nerves love. They will attach to it, and then follows the fibers directly. It's like a rose trellis."

In an animal trial, this technique was shown to be capable of repairing nerve damage of distances up to six centimeters, in such a way that the nerve grew back correctly over nine months. During this time, the spider silk guidance structure broke down naturally, without causing any kind of negative reaction.

(Source: Digital Trends)

## Scientists turn to big data in hunt for minerals, oil and gas

Scientists searching for everything from oil and gas to copper and gold are adopting techniques used by companies such as Netflix or Amazon to sift through vast amounts of data, a study showed on Tuesday.

The method has already helped to discover 10 carbon-bearing minerals and could be widely applied to exploration, they wrote in the journal American Mineralogist. "Big data points to new minerals, new deposits," they wrote of the findings.

The technique goes beyond traditional geology by amassing data about how and where minerals have formed, for instance by the cooling of lava after volcanic eruptions. The data can then be used to help find other deposits.

"Minerals occur on Earth in clusters," said Robert Hazen, executive director of the Deep Carbon Observatory at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington and an author of the study.

"When you see minerals together it's very like the way that humans interact in social networks such as Facebook," he said.

Hazen said the technique was also like Amazon, which recommends books based on a client's previous orders, or by media streaming company Netflix, which proposes movies based on a customer's past viewing habits.

"They are using vast amounts of data and make correlations that you could never make," he told Reuters.

(Source: Reuters)

## Genome sequencing shows spiders, scorpions share ancestor

In collaboration with scientists from the UK, Europe, Japan and the United States, researchers at the Human Genome Sequencing Center at Baylor College of Medicine have discovered a whole genome duplication during the evolution of spiders and scorpions. The study appears in BMC Biology.



Researchers have long been studying spiders and scorpions for both applied reasons, such as studying venom components for pharmaceuticals and silks for materials science, and for basic questions such as the reasons for the evolution and to understand the development and ecological success of this diverse group of carnivorous organisms.

As part of a pilot project for the i5K, a project to study the genomes of 5,000 arthropod species, the Human Genome Sequencing Center analyzed the genome of the house spider Parasteatoda tepidariorum – a model species studied in laboratories – and the Arizona bark scorpion Centruroides sculpturatus, – the most venomous scorpion in North America.

Analysis of these genomes revealed that spiders and scorpions evolved from a shared ancestor more than 400 million years ago, which made new copies of all of the genes in its genome, a process called whole genome duplication. Such an event is one of the largest evolutionary changes that can happen to a genome and is relatively rare during animal evolution.

Dr. Stephen Richards, associate professor in the Human Genome Sequencing Center, who led the genome sequencing at Baylor, said, "It is tremendously exciting to see rapid progress in our molecular understanding of a species that we coexist with on planet earth. Spider genome analysis is particularly tricky, and we believe this is one of the highest quality spider genomes to date."

(Source: EurekAlert)



## Iranian students win medals at Intl. Biology Olympiad

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian students succeeded in **d e s k** winning several medals at the 28th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) which was held in the United Kingdom on July 23-30.

Mohammadjavad Meghrazhi and Alireza Darziramandi both won gold medals, Moein Qasemi earned a silver medal and Shaqayeq Khanmohammadi received a bronze medal.



IBO is an association that organizes a yearly biology competition for secondary school students, who are winners of their respective National Biology Olympiad.

Their skills in tackling biological problems, and dealing with biological experiments are tested. Interest in biology, inventiveness, creativity and perseverance are necessary.

In bringing together gifted students, the IBO competition tries to challenge and stimulate these students to expand their talents and to promote their career as scientists.

A very important point is gathering young people from over the world in an open, friendly and peaceful mind.

Every participating country sends four students. They are accompanied by two team leaders who represent the country.

It should be noted that Iran will host the IBO 2018.

## Panda in French zoo expecting twins, Chinese experts on hand to help

A giant panda in France's Beauval zoo is expected to give birth to twins in the next few days under the watchful eye of two Chinese birthing specialists, the zoo said on Tuesday.

"We're expecting twins," said Delphine Debord, the zoo's communications director. "An ultrasound today confirmed it."

Huan Huan and her partner Yuan Zi came to France on loan from China in 2012, their arrival hailed as a sign of warming diplomatic ties between Paris and Beijing.

While an adult female panda can weigh up to 125 kilograms (275 pounds), a baby panda weighs barely 120 grams (4 ounces) at birth.

A team of 15 people, including two Chinese carers, vets and an animal behavior specialist will be on hand to assist the delicate birth at the zoo near the city of Tours. The new-borns will be placed in an incubator.

"In the wild, a panda mom doesn't raise two babies," Debord said. "They will be handed to Huan Huan one after the other for feeding."

Huan Huan and Yuan Zi, whose names translate as "Joy" and "Podgy" respectively, are due to stay in France until 2022 before being returned to China. Their offspring will stay in France until the age of two or three.

(Source: Reuters)

## LEARN ENGLISH Household Chores

A: Kevin, what is this **mess**? It looks like a pigsty in here! Clean this up!

B: Ok dad, I will do it in a minute, let me just finish this level of this game.

A: No,I said now! Plus, you are **grounded**, you're not allowed to play video games. I want you to make your bed, do the laundry and then come downstairs and **sweep** the floors.

B: That's so unfair!

A: You have to **pull your weight** around here young man. My house, my rules.

B: But I already **mopped** the floors, **dusted** the furniture and **vacuumed** the rugs!

A: That's great, but you still have work to do, so get to it.

### ■ Key Vocabulary

**mess**: disorder

**grounded**: to be punished and not allowed to go outside

**sweep**: to clean the floor with a broom or brush

**pull your weight**: to help or collaborate in the household

**dust**: to remove dust and dirt

**mop**: to clean the floor with water and a mop

**vacuum**: to use an electric device to suction dust and dirt

### ■ Supplementary Vocabulary

**wax**: to put a greasy substance on a surface to make it shiny

**polish**: to make smooth and shiny by rubbing or chemical action.

**take out the trash**: action of taking the trash outside to be collected

**do the dishes**: to wash the dishes

**iron**: action of using a hot flat surface to remove wrinkles from clothes

(Source: irlanguage.ir)



Have an idea?  
Be in touch!  
lifestyle.tehrantimes@gmail.com

# Iran's 50th nature school inaugurated

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — The 50th **d e s k** nature school across Iran was inaugurated at Tehran's Pardisan Park on Tuesday.

"The increase of urbanization and industrialization leads to several mental and physical injuries and diseases including depression and unhappiness in people especially children," the chief of the Department of Environment Masoumeh Ebtekar said during the inauguration ceremony.

She referred to the creation of nature schools as a way to promote the feeling of happiness among people living in urban areas.

Mahmoud Darvish, an official at the Department of Environment, said for his part that children aging 3 to 12 can enroll in the schools.

The creation and expansion of nature schools is in line with the 20-year national development plan (ending in



2025) with the goal of creating about 1.5 million job opportunities in the country, he added.

The schools aim at improving the youngsters' environmental literacy, knowledge and understanding of the environment and the circumstances and conditions affecting it.

Taking 17 mobile nature schools nationwide into account, there are currently 50 nature schools up and running in the provinces of Tehran, Hamedan, Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, Mazandaran, Gilan, Golestan, Fars, Yazd, East Azarbaijan, Kermanshah, and Kordestan.

Nature school is not interfering with the normal school operating under Education Ministry's supervision, rather it is a place for the children to spend their free time, enjoy environmental activities there with their parents, and get in touch with nature.

## Scientists concerned over 'potentially deadly' fungus identification app

A photo recognition app designed to help foragers identify wild mushrooms has been condemned by scientists as "potentially deadly".

Mushroom – the new mobile app – uses photographic and artificial intelligence in an attempt to distinguish between different mushroom varieties in the wild, but some scientists are concerned over the app's accuracy.

According to mycologists (those who study fungi) and seasoned foragers, it isn't always easy to tell poisonous and edible varieties apart without close inspection.

"I can photograph and *Agaricus campestris*" said expert forager, Cab Davidson via Twitter, "they're indistinguishable. Only one can hospitalize you."

Environmental scientist, Grant Williamson added to the Twitter debate by calling Mushroom, "the most potentially deadly app I've ever seen."

As noted by appcreator - NicholasSheriff - Mushroom is still in its beta stage, and struggles to correctly identify

several species of mushroom. This means it could end up mistaking poisonous mushrooms for edible ones. If such is the case, mushroom-picking could be made dangerous for several foraging enthusiasts.

Amanita phalloides – known also as "the death cap" – are becoming increasingly common across Europe and North America, which makes the app's potential to cause harm more alarming to sceptics.

Death caps are easily mistaken for edible species due to their pleasant taste and rose-like aroma, but are estimated to pack enough toxins to kill a human in just 30g.

Fourteen people were reported to have fallen ill last year due to mushroom poisoning in Northern California, with three requiring liver transplants.

In 2013, a gardener in Bridgewater suffered organ failure after cooking them into soup. Some scientists have warned against using the app exclusively when out exploring, for fear it may result in similar poisonings.

## How to throw stuff away without any regret

By Leon Ho

trying to determine usefulness of an item:

- Exaggerating or over-emphasizing its need in the future.
- Underestimating the cost and space it takes up.

- Ignoring the storage cost.

But here's a way out.

### ■ The declutter formula

The best acronym to move past this is using the framework RFASR:

- Recency — "When was the last time I used this?"
- Frequency — "How often do I use this?"

- Acquisition Cost — "How difficult/expensive is it to get this?"
- Storage Cost — "How much space and maintenance cost is it tied to?"

- Retrieve Cost — "What costs are associated with retrieving it or it becoming outdated?"

As you ask yourself these questions, plug in this equation:

- R (Low) + F (Low) + AC (Low) +SC (High) + RC (High) = Not Worth It

For example, a typical declutter scenario for many families is clothes, which often flows like this:

- Recency: "I last wore this over two years ago."

- Frequency: "Even back then, I didn't wear it a lot"

- Acquisition Cost: "I could order something similar online in the next five minutes."

- Storage Cost: "This and similar items are taking up 3/4 of my closet."
- Retrieve Cost: "It's so two years ago, too..."

In such a situation, you get rid of the clothing. It's not going to add value or usefulness in the future.

If there's an emotional attachment (e.g. a gift from someone you care about) try to remember this: when it was presented as a gift, it already achieved its primary goal. Two or more years later, it's just clothing taking up space. That doesn't change the connection to the gift or the person who gifted it.

While the declutter formula can help you get rid of the stuff you have already collected and help you decide whether you should collect or buy things, there's always a dilemma when you want something more than you need it.

To combat it, consider waiting a week to make the purchase. In the week, think about that equation and think about the relative degree of want and need. If you decide to purchase the new item, get rid of one item at your house. One in and one out is a relatively simple rule here.

### ■ The hidden perk of decluttering

The real value of the declutter formula is more than saving money and space. It is also saving you mental energy.

There's a massive amount of mental energy involved in organizing and cleaning old clothes and items, or even preparing yourself to do it. There's also a large amount of mental energy involved in ignoring what you need to do, which is a common tactic of those with clutter. Think about this: if I hand you a white piece of paper with a large black dot and say "Don't think about the dot," you will have to try hard not to think of that black dot. That's plenty of energy spent on trying not to think of the dot.

It's the same with getting your house in shape. You know all that clutter is there. You know you need to declutter. But you keep finding ways to ignore or procrastinate on it, and that's actually reducing your attention and priority away from where it should be.

The best way to re-focus on what matters to you and reduce distractions is by repeatedly applying the formula, you'll have a house full of (a) things you like and (b) things that are valuable to you. That's a huge win in the decluttering game.

(Source: Lifehack)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Majlis mulling to ease passport rules for women

The Iranian parliament (Majlis) is considering a bill that would facilitate the procedure of passport issuance for female athletes, scientists, and traders, IRNA reported on Friday.

"Following some problems created for female athletes for taking part in international competitions, an amendment to the Article 18 proposed to the Majlis, which would facilitate the exit of women from the country," Iranian female lawmaker Parvaneh Salahshouri previously said.

She said that leaving the country for medical treatment is also included in the bill, however it is proposed just in urgent situation.

## ENGLISH PROVERB

### Waste not, want not

- **Explanation:** if you never waste anything, you will have is when you need it
- **For example:** Sam never let his leftovers spoil in the refrigerator but made sure to eat them. "Waste not, want not," he said.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Work through

- **Meaning:** deal with, resolve a problem, often emotional
- **For example:** It took him a long time to work through his anger after he lost his job.

## ENGLISH IDIOM

### Walk on air

- **Explanation:** when you are happy or excited because of a pleasant event that makes you feel as if you were floating, you are walking on air
- **For example:** Sophie has been walking on air since her painting won first prize.

## طرح اصلاح گذرنامه برای خروج زنان از کشور در مجلس

### بررسی می‌شود

به گزارش روز جمعه خبرگزاری ایرنا طرح اصلاح گذرنامه برای تسهیل در خروج زنان فعال در حوزه های مختلف ورزشی، اقتصادی و علمی از کشور اکنون در مجلس شورای اسلامی بررسی می شود.

پروانه سلحشوری رئیس فراکسیون زنان مجلس شورای اسلامی نیز پیشتر گفته بود در پی بروز مشکلاتی برای برخی بانوان ورزشکار برای شرکت در مسابقات بین المللی طرح اصلاح ماده ۱۸ قانون گذرنامه تدوین و تقدیم مجلس شد که براساس خروج زنان از کشور را تسهیل خواهد کرد.

وی گفت: البته در این طرح موارد اضطرار تعریف شده و خروج از کشور برای معالجه نیز در این زمره پیش بینی شده است.



# Pakistan must detach self from U.S.: Imran Khan

Pakistani opposition leader Imran Khan says Islamabad needs to detach itself from the United States and pull out of the "war on terror" in order to achieve prosperity and peace.

The former cricket star told The Guardian on Tuesday that he was confident that his party would win parliamentary elections next year and that he would become prime minister. Pakistan's Supreme Court dismissed former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from office in a verdict on Friday over corruption allegations. The Pakistani parliament has picked Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, an ally of Sharif, to hold the prime ministerial position until the elections.

"Sadly, our ruling elite took dollars from the Americans and went into this war [on terror]," Khan said. "It has created such hatred in our society. It has created turmoil."

Khan said he was ready to change Pakistan's international relations.

■ **'Completely against receiving aid from U.S.'**

He said he believed that Washington's support for Pakistan's military had "en-



slaved" the country and that, if it were up to him, Islamabad would reject U.S. aid entirely.

"Aid cripples the country," Khan said. "It enslaves the country. You are dictated decisions from abroad. I'm completely against this."

He also said he would boost civilian rule in the country as prime minister.

Pakistan has witnessed a decades-long tug-of-war between its military and civilian government, a fractious relationship that Khan said he would be able to amend.

"I firmly believe that the army should not have a role in running the government," Khan said. "The constitution gives me that power."

"I will stand up for what I believe is in the interest of Pakistan. It doesn't mean I am anti-anyone," he added.

He said sending troops into the tribal areas to fight fellow Pakistanis on behalf of the U.S. "is madness."

Relations between Pakistan and the U.S. have been frayed over the past decade, with U.S. officials constantly accusing Pakistan of what they term as its unwillingness to act against the Pakistan-based Haqqani network.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump announced last month that it was withholding \$50 million in military aid to Pakistan over its failure to crack down on the militants.

Khan's political party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), holds a fraction of the seats held by the ruling party, Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N). Nevertheless, Khan believes his party runs a chance of winning the elections next year.

(Source: Press TV)

## Saudis blocking fuel to UN aid planes in Yemen



The United Nations has said that the House of Saud regime is blocking jet fuel delivery to planes trying to deliver humanitarian aid to Yemen's capital city Sana'a.

According to the UN's country director of the UN Development Program, Auke Lootsma, on Tuesday, the global body operates two aid flights into Sana'a from Amman and Djibouti, which due to lack of fuel get stranded in Yemeni capital.

"We have difficulties obtaining permission from the coalition and from the government of Yemen to transport this jet fuel to Sana'a to facilitate these flights," he said.

The fuel must arrive in Sana'a via the port city of Aden which is in control of Riyadh. The Saudis have repeatedly

been accused of blocking aid to Yemen.

Lootsma also announced an outbreak of meningitis in Yemen, which is already suffering from a cholera epidemic and is at the risk of famine.

He noted that the situation in the country is "very bleak" and several new cases of meningitis have been detected in Yemen.

The House of Saud regime has been leading the campaign against Yemen to reinstate the former government and crush the Ansarullah (Houthi) movement. The campaign has seriously damaged the country's infrastructure. Local Yemeni sources have put the death toll from the Saudi regime war at over 12,000, including many women and children.

(Source: Press TV)

## Saudis building beach resorts on Red Sea



The House of Saudi regime has started a huge development program aimed at turning 50 islands and other locations on the Red Sea into luxury resorts, as part of attempts to diversify the kingdom's economy, as oil prices drop.

A promotional photo released by Riyadh showing some 200 kilometers of Saudi's western coastline that is due to be turned into tourist attractions.

Construction of the project is set to begin in 2019. The first phase will include construction a new airport plus several luxury hotels and residences.

The project is part of the so-called Vision 2030 plan which is spearheaded by Saudi regime Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman who claims it will be capable of transforming the country

economically by the year 2030.

He says it is aimed at ending Saudi regime's "addiction" to oil, and it envisaged raising non-oil revenues from 43.6 billion dollars in 2015 to 267 billion dollars by 2030.

Riyadh is currently dealing with economic struggles brought on by a budget deficit of nearly \$100 billion in 2015 caused by a sharp slump in oil prices as well as Riyadh's rising military expenditure, a large amount of which is being funneled into its military campaign against Yemen.

The campaign, which lacks any international mandate and has faced increasing criticism, has claimed the lives of more than 12,000 people, most of them civilians.

(Source: Press TV)

## Saudi Arabia seeks to end U.S. lawsuits over 9/11 attacks

The House of Saud regime has asked a United States judge to dismiss 25 lawsuits filed against it in relation to its alleged support of the September 11, 2001 attacks, court documents filed late on Monday afternoon show.

In a filing in the U.S. District Court in Manhattan, lawyers representing the Saudi regime claim the plaintiffs - who represent thousands of victims who died and were injured in the attacks, as well as businesses and insurers - cannot prove the Persian Gulf state supported the al-Qaeda-affiliated men who hijacked and crashed planes into New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon outside Washington, and a Pennsylvania field. Nearly 3,000 people died in the attacks.

The House of Saud regime also claimed it deserved sovereign immunity.

James Kreindler, a lawyer representing those killed in the September 11 attacks, told Reuters news agency the filing was "expected ... We have tons of allegations of what many Saudis and the country's alter ego charities did. Saudi Arabia cannot hide from the facts."

Saudi regime's lawyers introduced several exhibits which they say support their claims. One such exhibit was an executive summary from the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) dated to 2005, which says there was no evidence that Saudi Arabia supported the attackers.

But doubt has long circled over claims that the Saudi regime wasn't involved. It is known that 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens, and several met with Saudi

nationals with ties to their government, such as Omar al-Bayoumi, a Saudi national who has connections to Saudi diplomats.

A trove of declassified documents suggested evidence of collusion between the hijackers and Saudi Arabia described as "chilling" by investigators.

Congress initiated an inquiry on November 27, 2002 into the attacks. A report totaling over 1,000 pages was published in 2004. There were 28 pages left out of the report on the orders of former President George W. Bush, which became a source of controversy.

These pages were finally made public in July 2016, though no definitive answers arose, and further possible ties between al-Qaeda and the Saudi embassy in the U.S. were uncovered, as phone numbers saved in the phone of an al-Qaeda operative captured in Pakistan were linked to Saudi consulates in the U.S.

Former Senator Bob Graham, the co-chair of Congress's 9/11 Joint Inquiry and one of the voices alleging the Saudis and the hijackers were connected, told Politico he no longer called the U.S. government's actions a "cover-up". That would be "a passive activity. What they're doing now I call aggressive deception."

The 25 cases were previously in danger of being thrown out, due to a legal inability for U.S. citizens to sue foreign governments for support of extremist.

Then, in 2015, lawmakers introduced the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA), which made



possible legal action against states that support terrorists who commit violent acts on U.S. soil.

Then-President Barack Obama attempted to veto the bill after months of Saudi regime threats and lobbying, but the U.S. Congress overrode Obama's veto in 2016. The override was widely praised as a step towards justice for the victims of the deadliest attack on U.S. soil in history by much of the U.S. public.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs have until October 2 to file documents in opposition to the motion.

Lawyers on both sides declined Al Jazeera's request for comment.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Australia asks why MP Khalil Eideh was denied U.S. entry

Australia's government has called on the United States to explain why a politician with dual Australian-Syrian citizenship was refused entry last week.

Victoria state Member of Parliament (MP) Khalil Eideh, a 62-year-old who was born in Lebanon to Syrian parents, was travelling with other politicians on government business when he was prevented from flying from Vancouver, Canada, to Denver, Colorado.

"At the foreign minister's request, Australia's embassy in Washington made ur-

gent inquiries of the U.S. authorities as to what happened, and why Mr. Eideh was refused entry to the United States last week," Foreign Minister Julie Bishop's office said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The U.S. authorities are following up on our request for information."

Having returned to his hometown of Melbourne on Saturday, Eideh told reporters that he had been "discriminated against".

"I'm very, very disappointed and frustrated," he added.

Eideh said he had a U.S. visa and was given no explanation for why he was denied entry.

"To me it is unacceptable, because I'm representing the Australian people, the Victorian people," he said.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

Eideh had a U.S. visa and was part of a group of Victoria politicians examining the effectiveness of drug laws and regulations in Europe and North America.

The U.S. President Donald Trump's Muslim ban went into partial effect in June.

Under the ban, visitors from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen must prove they have a "bona fide relationship" to a U.S. person or entity to be allowed entry to the U.S.

The ban has faced a number of court challenges since a revised version was announced by the Trump administration in March.

(Source: AP)

## Qatar's defense minister: Future of PGCC in doubt

■ **'Qatar, since day one, was calling for dialogue and I think today this language is prevailing in the PGCC,'** he said.

"We all support his highness Sheikh Sabah of Kuwait and we trust his wisdom. I think is the direction we are seeing this go now."

Al-Attiyah's statements came two days after the foreign ministers of the Saudi regime-led group met in the Bahraini capital of Manama.

At the meeting on Sunday, the four countries said they will only enter dialogue if Doha agrees to certain demands and "fights terror".

"The four countries are ready for dialogue with Qatar with the condition that it announces its sincere willingness to stop funding terrorism and extremism and its commitment to not interfere in other countries' foreign affairs and respond to the 13 demands," Bahrain's Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed al-Khalifa said after the meeting with his counterparts.

On June 22, the Saudi regime-led group issued a 13-point list of demands, which included the shutdown of Al Jazeera, limiting ties with Iran and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the country, as a prerequisite to lift the sanctions.

Qatar has vehemently rejected the demands, and said the sanctions imposed by the four countries were violating international laws.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Ex-Swedish PM: Trump causes Europe meltdown if he blows up Iran deal

■ **'Europe would certainly not go along with this, for one because it would risk undercutting the elaborate inspections systems that the agreement depends on. But primarily because Europe has seen that the deal actually works — if anything, it's the United States that is behaving questionably — and Europe has absolutely zero appetite for a new cascade of conflicts in a region on its doorstep.'**

There could be some applauding a collapse of the deal, notably the hard-liners in Iran who were as opposed to the deal as Trump evidently is. Confrontation with the United States would make it easier for them to harden the system against a society in which most the younger generation is clearly moving in a more liberal direction on policy in general. As any visitor to Tehran can testify, Iran is among the most Western-like societies in the region. It's certainly not an easy place to contend with; it's a self-conscious society and a system with deep traditions of how to deal with the outside world. Its economy is at the moment the most dynamic in the region, and it boasts an impressive base of talent and technology.

But there is more to the picture than that. With the United States walking out of the Paris climate accord, cutting UN funding and sowing doubts about NATO and other trade commitments, the Iran agreement isn't about Iran alone. It's about upholding confidence in the international order.

So, if Trump pursues a meltdown with Iran, he will also trigger a meltdown with Europe. Another one, to be precise.

## Court acquits two ex-PMs over protester deaths in 2008

Two former Thai prime ministers have been cleared of abuse of power in a case involving an anti-government protest in 2008 that turned deadly.

Thailand's highest court in Bangkok on Wednesday acquitted Somchai Wongsawat, his then-deputy Chavalit Yongchaiyudh and two former police officials.

They had been accused of authorizing the police to use force against protesters who had blockaded the National Assembly building. A pitched battle erupted, injuring several hundred people and causing two deaths.

A judge said the court could not conclude the injuries protesters sustained were from police weapons and grenades, according to the AP news agency.

■ **Thaksin's brother-in-law**

Somchai is the brother-in-law of another former prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, whose removal in a 2006 coup triggered sometimes-violent battles for political power in Thailand.

Thaksin's supporters see the various criminal cases against him and his allies as attempts to erase his influence from Thai political life.

Somchai thanked the court after its verdict and said he was grateful there was still justice in the country. Chavalit - who served as premier in the nineties - did not comment. They could have faced up to 10 years in prison if they had been convicted.

The ruling, however, angered a small group of protesters outside the court, some of them participants in the October 2008 protest. One woman shouted "Let them all get terrible diseases that can't be cured and die painful deaths!" as Somchai walked away.

(Source: agencies)

## Rwanda's forever president

■ **'I'm of the view that expanding individual freedoms is essential, not incidental, to a country's long-term development. As Angus Deaton, a Nobel laureate in economics, said to a Rwandan minister in 2015, "improvements in public health can never be truly secure in nondemocratic states."** But I concede that Rwanda has made remarkable economic progress since facing near-total destruction in 1994, and that some think it is still worth debating the merits of trade-offs between democracy and development.

Whatever one thinks of these issues, however, everyone should be concerned that the Kagame government has been fudging, hiding or selectively presenting the raw facts of its economic record. Rwanda may be forgoing democracy for development only to wind up with no democracy and far less development than many think.

(Source: The New York Times)



## Ronaldo hits out after court appearance in tax case

Cristiano Ronaldo has hit out at the ‘insects’ that attack him after his court appearance over tax allegations.

The 32-year-old forward made a 90-minute appearance to answer questions from Judge Monica Gomez Ferrer on Monday in Madrid to determine whether he committed tax fraud worth almost €15m.

He later shunned the waiting media – who were not allowed inside the court room – when leaving but took to social media that evening.

The Real Madrid forward posted on Instagram: “What bothers people is my glow. Insects only attack lights that shine.”

Media outlets in Spain also reported that Ronaldo implied during his appearance in court that it was only because of his status that he was being investigated.

“I am only here because my name is Cristiano Ronaldo,” he told the judge, newspaper El Mundo reported.

His representatives said Ronaldo told the judge he had always filed his tax returns and “never had the intention of evading taxes”.

Lionel Messi was found guilty of defrauding €4.1m in taxes last year, fined €3.6m and sentenced to 21 months in prison. However, the jail term was later suspended.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Forever a Roma star - Totti’s final shirt sent into space

Francesco Totti may have retired, but he will always be a star for Roma after a replica of his final iconic number 10 jersey was launched into space.

After 28 years, 786 competitive matches, 307 goals and one Serie A title, Totti brought his one-club career to a close at the end of last season.

His final appearance for the Giallorossi was a 3-2 victory over Genoa on May 28.

The 40-year-old will remain at the Stadio Olimpico in a directorial capacity, but in recognition of his stellar efforts on the pitch Roma launched a replica of his final shirt out of the atmosphere.

Totti gave his ascent for the stunt, which came to fruition on Tuesday with his jersey loaded onto the rocket ‘Vega’ that was launched in French Guiana by space travel organisation Avio.

(Source: Sky Sports)

## Barcelona focus on €180 star to replace Neymar

Barcelona are focussing on signing Kylian M’Bappe to replace Neymar, according to the latest news from France.

Barcelona have, according to Le10Sport, already contacted Kylian M’Bappe’s family. The 18-year-old’s father is known to play a key role in his son’s decisions.

Barcelona have also spoken to Monaco, especially vice-president Vadim Vasilyev. The French outlet claim that M’Bappe is now the Catalans’ first priority - one made more urgent by Neymar’s imminent departure for Paris.

M’Bappe scored 26 goals in all comps last season and has attracted the interest of Real Madrid, PSG and half the Premier League.

He himself is unsure as to what to do. Initially, it looked like Real Madrid had taken a decisive lead. Monaco themselves don’t want to sell to PSG - which explains why they’ve rejected some monstrous bids, and raised M’Bappe’s price to €180 million.

PSG’s objective is, according to the source, to build its own MSN around Cavani. The alternative to M’Bappe would be Alexis Sanchez.

(Source: Calciomercato)

## Montella: ‘No deadline for new striker’

Milan Coach Vincenzo Montella assures they don’t have to hurry to sign a new striker.

The Rossoneri were interested in both Alvaro Morata and Andrea Belotti, but the Spaniard moved to Chelsea and Belotti will remain at Toro.

Other targets include Nikola Kalinic and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, but so far no deal has been agreed.

“We’ve stopped for a moment after working so hard [on the transfer market],” Montella explained in his Press conference ahead of the CSU Craiova game.

“We don’t have all this hurry, we’re attentive. There’s no deadline.”

Two of the summer’s signings, André Silva and Hakan Calhanoglu have been introduced slowly, but Montella assured there are no issues.

“André Silva? The lad is doing well, we know he needs to grow because he’s just arrived. Yesterday he had a small problem with his finger, I’ll evaluate whether to play him.

“It’s normal for there to be competition at a big club, a great player has to deal with these situations. There’s no rush, and he has to adapt.

(Source: Football Italia)

# Neymar tells Barcelona he is leaving: club



Neymar’s record-breaking 222 million euros transfer to French side Paris Saint-Germain moved a step closer on Wednesday when Barcelona said he had informed them of his intention to leave.

His move to PSG has been heavily flagged in European media but has yet to be completed.

“The player Neymar Jr, accompanied by his father and agent, has informed FC Barcelona this morning of his decision to leave the club in a meeting held at the club’s offices,” Barcelona said in a statement.

“The club refer to the buy-out clause of his existing contract which as of 1 July totals 222 million euros.”

Earlier the 25-year-old arrived at the club’s training ground to tell team mates he was moving to Paris, Catalan radio RAC1 reported. The Brazilian striker left the training area minutes later, it said, with the club confirming on Twitter that he had been given permission not to train.

In October, the player signed a new Barcelona contract until 2021 in which his buy-out clause was raised to more than double the biggest transfer fee in soccer history.

In an interview published on Wednesday, the president of the national football league, Javier Tebas, said the league would not accept payment by PSG to trigger the release

clause. It would potentially be in breach of UEFA Financial Fair Play rules, he told Spanish sports newspaper AS.

However, UEFA told Reuters on Wednesday that no complaint had been received, adding that European football’s governing body would not block any potential deal in advance.

“UEFA will look into the details of this transfer in due course to ensure PSG are compliant with FFP requirements,” the UEFA statement said.

“The transfer of Neymar to PSG will have an effect on the club finances over several years but the impact of such an operation cannot be judged in advance, notably as PSG could well sell several players for a significant amount.

“We shall therefore only make calculations at the end and make sure that they respect the rules.”

PSG are one of the world’s richest clubs following their 2012 takeover by Qatar Sports Investments, an arm of Qatar’s sovereign wealth fund, which has transformed their fortunes.

Under the fair play rules - which Andrea Traverso, UEFA’s FFP project leader, was last week quoted by Italian newspaper Gazzetta dello Sport as saying PSG were currently following - a club’s wage bill must not exceed 70

percent of its revenue.

PSG’s 2015/16 revenue came to 521 million euros, according to Deloitte’s Football Money League report issued in January.

550,000 Euros a Week?

Media sources across Europe reported that Neymar will now head to Paris to continue negotiations on a potential six-year deal worth more than 550,000 euros a week. The striker only arrived back in Spain on Tuesday after trips to China and the Middle East.

Neymar has been active on social media, sharing an excerpt from the New Testament (Philippians 4:11) on Instagram which said “I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content ...whether living in plenty or in want.”

A PSG spokesman declined to comment.

Neymar signed for Barcelona from Brazilian side Santos for 57.1 million euros in 2013, although it was later revealed the cost was closer to 100 million euros.

(Source: Reuters)

## Nigeria: Iheanacho faces two-year jail term in U.S.

Manchester City striker Kelechi Iheanacho, 20, who completed medical at Leicester City yesterday is facing problems in the U.S. after allegations were made against him that he may have misled a court in Pennsylvania.

With the medical concluded, it now appears that Iheanacho’s switch to Leicester City is almost a done deal with just some paperwork left to complete the transfer believed to be worth around £25 million.

Iheanacho was linked with a move to West Ham and other Premier League clubs before Leicester, the 2016 English champions who parade Nigerians Ahmed Musa and Wilfred Ndidi, stepped in.

But the transfer to Leicester could be marred following the legal battles with his previous representatives, American-based First Eleven Management, after pulling out of a contract with them two years ago to sign with Stellar, who look after Real Madrid’s Gareth Bale.

Iheanacho filed pleadings that denied he knew or spent time with Henry Galeano, who separately claims he is his former agent.

He was alleged to have claimed he believed Galeano was an alias used by First Eleven Management co-owner Robert Zanicky.

New Yorker Galeano was the company’s registered FIFA-licensed agent.

UK’s SunSport and the American court have been handed a series of photos and



documents that will require an explanation from the Nigerian international.

The crucial legal question for Iheanacho will be whether he did more than merely meet Galeano or happened to be with him on occasions. It certainly seems clear they at least met.

Some of the pictures Galeano has filed before the court showed Iheanacho by his side as he signed a new Manchester City contract shortly after his 18th birthday in October 2014.

The legal position is further complicated because Galeano — in a signed and sworn affidavit submitted to the court — claims he spent “hundreds of hours” with the player.

(Source: all Africa)

## Bale threatens Man Utd transfer if overlooked by Zidane

REAL MADRID star Gareth Bale is reportedly threatening to join Manchester United if Zinedine Zidane fails to give him the chance to overcome his injury woes.

Express Sport understands Manchester United are willing to wait until next season to sign Bale, whose position at Real Madrid has grown in uncertainty in recent months.

The Wales international was limited to just 26 appearances last term, with hamstring and calf injuries derailing his campaign.

But, even though he regained his fitness in time for the Champions League final win over Juventus, Zinedine Zidane opted to play Isco instead.

With talk rife that Real will land Monaco superstar Kylian Mbappe, some reports have speculated Manchester United could yet sign Bale this transfer window.

The 28-year-old is likely to be the fall guy should Mbappe arrive.

And Spanish outlet Diario Gol claim he is threatening to join United THIS month if Zidane overlooks him at the start of the campaign.

He is supposedly calling for the chance to prove himself, knowing that regular game time can see him hit top form once again.

Bale is aware of United’s interest and knows that, if he makes the move to Old Trafford, then he would have the title of club talisman.

The Red Devils’ determination to sign



Bale dates back to Sir Aex Ferguson’s time in charge.

The Scot himself admitted in 2011 that he tried to sign him when he was in the Southampton academy, but was never given permission by the Saints to speak with him.

“We tried to sign him from [Southampton] as a 17-year-old,” he said.

“But it never got to the stage of talking to the player. They didn’t accept our offer and I think they must have alerted Tottenham.

“I don’t know the full circumstances but, listen, you try to get the best deal you can. We made a good offer but they turned it down.”

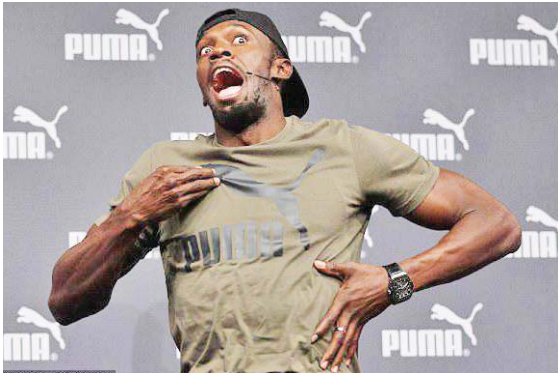
(Source: Express)

## Usain Bolt ‘confident and ready’ ahead of London farewell

Just in the unlikely case that the world of athletics did not know what they will be missing once Usain Bolt walks away in less than two weeks, the Jamaican superstar’s final eve-of-race news conference rammed home the message on Tuesday.

These events have become part and parcel of every global championship and though Tuesday’s version in east London lacked the dancing girl razzmatazz of his Rio welcome last year, it scored heavily on nostalgia as every aspect of his stellar career was raked over anew. As always, journalists and TV crews, around 400 of them, from every corner of the world packed every available space and strained their arms in desperation to get their question answered by the great man, who playfully castigated one half of the auditorium for not giving him an enthusiastic enough welcome.

Bolt is an old hand of course and rolled out all the familiar answers, but always with grace. His proudest moment was winning the world junior title on home soil as a 15-year-old while his most satisfying performance was his 200 metres world record run in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where he poured all his concentration into getting the mark he had always wanted, having earlier danced over the line when winning the 100m. He explained how his motivation to keep putting his body through such a punishing regime was renewed each year by resetting his goals - with one often created for him by a casually “disrespectful” remark



from one of his opponents.

His target in London is clear – to sign off with a fourth 100m title and a fifth 4x100m relay gold – taking his world haul to 13 to add to his eight Olympic golds - and then head off to play football with his friends and have fun.

“I’m ready. If I show up at a championships you know I’m fully confident and ready to go. I ran 9.95 in Monaco so it shows I’m going in the right direction. Going through the rounds always helps me and it’s then about who can keep their nerve.”

“It’s go time, so let’s go.”

The London Stadium, where he successfully defended

his sprint double in the 2012 Olympics, will rise to acclaim him when he settles into his blocks for the last time on Saturday night.

Then, other than the relay a week later, he will be gone, leaving the sport without the man who has been its focal point for a decade.

Tuesday’s event included big screen “farewell and thanks” messages from the likes of actors Samuel L. Jackson and Idris Elba, former France footballer Thierry Henry, model Cara Delevingne and India cricket captain Virat Kohli, underlining his status as probably the world’s most famous and arguably most admired sportsman. Bolt, who turns 31 later this month, looked moved by the images, saying: “It’s just brilliant that people in other disciplines respect what you do as they know the work you have to do.”

British TV had screened his “I am Bolt” film on Monday night, which opened a window on the rarely seen battles he has had to go through to overcome so many injuries and was a testament to his willingness to work himself back into shape year after year.

That is one thing he will not miss, and although he thrives on the pressure of the big race, he says he is looking forward to watching the next one from the sidelines. “Oh yeah, sitting down, talking about it, no pressure,” he said. “The next championship should be fun.

(Source: Eurosport)



# IPC lauds Iranian Paralympians Siamand Rahman, Zahra Nemati

Rio 2016 was Latin America's first Paralympic Games, the best ever in terms of athletic performance, the second biggest in terms of paying ticket holders and an obvious choice for the top spot in the Americas Paralympic Committee's (APC) top 20 moments in history.

"Marvellous Cariocas, you warmly embraced these Games and took the athletes to your hearts. You made the Paralympics your Games, the People's Games, and we will forever cherish our time spent with you," said International Paralympic Committee (IPC) President Sir Philip Craven at the Closing Ceremony at the iconic Maracana Stadium.

The 2016 Paralympics attracted 2.15 million spectators, reached close to one billion through the IPC's digital media, were the most broadcasted in history and were covered across different media outlets in a record 154 countries.

Iran's Paralympic champion archer Zahra Nemati, who competed at the Olympics as well, said: "The people of Brazil have been very kind to me during the Olympics and the Paralympics.

"They have been really nice and special the way they treated me. All I have been trying to do is use this energy I have been getting from them to put it in my sport."

Rio 2016 featured 22 sports, two more than at London 2012, with canoe and triathlon making their Paralympic debut. A total of 4,328 athletes from 159 countries, plus an Independent Paralympic Athletes Team, competed. A record 1,670 female athletes participated.

"Rio 2016 was an unforgettable experience for me. I could even hear the people cheering for me when I was underwater. It was incredible," said Brazil's most decorated Paralympian and swimming legend Daniel Dias.

China topped the medals table for a fourth consecutive Paralympics, followed by Great Britain, Ukraine, USA and Australia, who complete the top-five. A total



of 83 countries won at least one medal, the most in Paralympic history.

Cape Verde, Mozambique, Qatar and Uganda won their maiden Paralympic medals. At the same time, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Uzbekistan and Vietnam took top honours for the first time.

Belarus' swimmer Ihar Boki left Rio as the Games' most decorated athlete with six golds and one bronze.

On the track, USA's Tatyana McFadden sealed four golds and two silvers. In powerlifting, Iran's Siamand Rahman made history by becoming the first Paralympian to lift over 300kg.

Also, Great Britain's Sarah Storey and New Zealand's Sophie Pascoe became the most decorated Paralympic athletes from their countries, in Rio.

(Source: Paralympic)

## Iran know rivals at FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship qualification



**S P O R T S** Iran have been drawn in Pool B of the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship qualification.

The Iranian team have been pitted against Thailand, South Korean North Korea, Vietnam and Thailand.

Team Melli will kick off the competition with a match against powerhouse Thailand on September 20.

The competition will be held at the Nakhon Pathom Sports Center Gymna-

sium in Nakhon Pathom from September 20 to 24.

Pool A consists of China, Kazakhstan, Chinese Taipei, Australia and Fiji.

The Asian section of the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship qualification acts as qualifiers for the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship, to be held in Japan, for national teams which are members of the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC).

## Iran three-athlete team to travel to London on Thursday



Iran's three-athlete contingent will travel to London, England on Thursday to take part at the IAAF World Championships 2017.

The prestigious competition will be held from August 4 to 13 at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

The IAAF World Championships London 2017 will bring a record 2038 athletes from 205 teams to the British capital.

Hassan Keyhani will participate at

the world's 3000 Meters Steeplechase for the first time.

Discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi and sprinter Hassan Taftian are also representing Iran in the event.

Taftian, Iran's national record holder at 10.04, held off Asian record holder Femi Ogunode by a scant 0.01 in 10.25 to capture his country's first title in the Asian Athletics Championships in early July.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Indonesian club sacks 'bad' Carlton Cole

Former England striker Carlton Cole was sacked by his Indonesian club Persib Bandung on Wednesday after failing to score during the 2017 season.

The ex-West Ham United front man was given limited opportunities, playing in only five matches, often as a substitute.

With his former Premier League rival Peter Odemwingie shining -- he's the equal top scorer with 13 goals for top-of-the-table Madura United -- patience has run out with the 33-year-old who joined at the start of the season along with ex-Chelsea midfielder Michael Essien.

"We have decided to let [Cole] go because he has failed to perform as expected," manager Umuh Muchtar told DPA.

"Maybe he was injured before joining but he wasn't honest about it."

Earlier in the week, Muchtar had elaborated on his issues with Cole.

"It's the management's decision to dismiss him, we will have a new player in the second round of the season," the Persib boss said, according to Sky Sports.

"He plays very badly compared to the other [foreign players] who have joined Persib. He had the worst performance."

Persib, 2014 Indonesian champions, are 14th on the Liga 1 table, with 21 points from 17 matches.



Before his dismissal, Cole had lashed out on social media at Muchtar, and complained that he had not been treated fairly.

"I have only started two games out of, I think, 16 games, because he has not wanted to play me," Cole said.

"So I have come on three times and I have only started two games. Me and Michael Essien, we didn't have a pre-season, so we have had to try and play catch up.

"We are in a bad position anyway, so he is just trying to point fingers, [rather than blame] his bad management."

According to reports, Cole's import spot could be taken by an unnamed Brazilian striker, playing in the second tier in Portugal.

(Source: Soccer.net)

## Messi posts farewell message to Neymar

Lionel Messi bid farewell to Neymar after Barcelona confirmed that the Brazil star has told the club of his desire to move to Paris Saint-Germain.

Neymar turned up at Barca's training ground on Wednesday but did not train with Ernesto Valverde's squad, instead signalling his intention to leave before saying goodbye to his teammates.

Barca have since released a statement referring PSG to the 25-year-old's €222 million buyout clause and saying it must be paid in full.

Following the news, Messi wrote on Instagram: "It was an enormous pleasure to have shared these years with you Neymar, friend. I wish you a lot of luck in the next stage of your life. See you."

He ended the message with "TKM," short for "te quiero mucho" or "love you a lot."

Neymar joined Barca in 2013, saying one of the reasons was the chance to play alongside and learn from Messi, who has been voted the world's best player five times.

Along with Luis Suarez, who signed from Liverpool in 2014, they formed the formidable "MSN" attack, leading Barca to a Treble in 2015 and scoring 364 goals between them across three seasons.

However, Neymar's desire to step out of Messi's shadow and stake his own claim for being the world's best player is reported to be one of the motives behind his desire to move to Paris.

After leaving the club's training



ground on Wednesday, he headed to the offices at Camp Nou with his father and his friends, where he held a meeting with high-ranking club directors.

COPE journalist Helena Condis reported on Wednesday afternoon that Neymar was heading for London, with Wagner Ribeiro -- who is no longer officially Neymar's agent but still does work for his father's company, N&N Consulting -- telling her the buyout clause could be deposited as early as this afternoon.

La Liga president Javier Tebas, though, had earlier said the Spanish league will not accept the money for the buyout clause and vowed to complain about PSG to UEFA and the European Union for what he feels are clear breaches of financial fair play.

(Source: Soccer.net)

## Jamaican sprinter says dopers must stop or athletics 'will die'

Usain Bolt says athletes who dope must "stop or the sport will die" as he prepares to race for the final time in his illustrious career.

Bolt, an eight-time Olympic champion and icon of world sport, will retire after this month's World Championships.

The Jamaican, 30, will run in the 100m and 4x100m at the Worlds, which begin in London on Friday.

"Hopefully athletes will see what's going on and what they need to do to help the sport move forward," he said.

Referring to the McLaren report, which uncovered evidence of a Russian state-sponsored doping programme, he added: "Personally I think we were at rock bottom. After the scandal on Russia I don't think it gets any worse than that.

"Over the years we're doing a better job, it's getting clean and we're catching up to a lot of athletes. There's an understanding that if you cheat you will get caught. Over time the sport will get better.

"I said a couple of years ago it had to get really bad, when there's nowhere else to go but up. Doping is always a bad thing and it's never pleasant because you put in the hard work and the sport starts going forward and then you have other guys bringing it back, it's hard.

"It's going in the right direction so hopefully it will continue in that direction."

(Source: BBC)

## Olympic silver medalist Gail Emms struggling to make ends meet

Olympic badminton silver medalist Gail Emms has admitted she is "feeling lost" and increasingly struggling to cope since retiring from her sport in 2008.

In a candid post on the women's sports website The Mixed Zone, Emms revealed that she has been rejected for a series of jobs and forced to sell personal items on eBay in order to make ends meet.

The Olympic medallist wrote: "I am feeling lost and with no direction, no purpose, no career, no identity and who the hell do I go to?"

Emms won Olympic silver at Athens in 2004 with mixed doubles partner Nathan Robertson, and the pair also claimed the world title in Madrid in 2006. But having turned 40 last month, she decided to publish personal details of her plight and called for more to be done to assist former athletes facing mental health issues in retirement.

"I have a big pile of them now. Letters from my bank to say I have missed yet another payment... and every time I open them, it is another reminder that I feel like I'm failing," Emms continued. "That I, Gail Emms, Olympic silver medallist, am a failure.

"As anyone else in my financial situation will testify, it hurts. I cry a lot and do what I can to make the payment, sell stuff on eBay and hope there is enough work next month."

Emms said she has been rejected for a series of positions, including many in the sports industry, and questioned whether there is enough after-care in place for athletes in retirement.

(Source: PA)

## Kimiko Date set to play in Japan Women's Open tennis at 46

**TOKYO (Reuters)** — Former world number four Kimiko Date has been invited to play in next month's Japan Women's Open barely a fortnight before she turns 47, the Japan Tennis Association said on Wednesday.

The Kyoto native had been awarded a sponsors' invite for the Sept. 11-17 event at Tokyo's Ariake Tennis Forest Park, Kyodo news reported.

Date, who initially retired in 1996 but returned to competition in 2008, spent 16 months on the sidelines following a couple of knee surgeries before launching another comeback in May.

A four-time winner of the tournament when it was known as the Japan Open, Date will be joined by compatriots Naomi Osaka, Nao Hibino, Risa Ozaki and Misaki Doi in this year's edition of the tournament.

Date won her first Japan Open title in 1992, the same year defending champion Christina McHale of the United States was born.

## Federer to launch hardcourt campaign in Montreal

Grand slam king Roger Federer will kick off his North American hardcourt campaign and build up to the U.S. Open by competing at the Rogers Cup in Montreal, the Swiss confirmed on Tuesday.

"I'm happy to be coming back to Montreal, as I have not had the chance to play there for many years," said Federer in a statement released by Tennis Canada.

"This 2017 season has been very exciting and I am really looking forward to being back on the court on the ATP Tour."

Federer will be seeking his third Rogers Cup title but first in Montreal, where he has not competed since 2011 in the tournament that alternates between Montreal and Toronto, where he registered his previous wins in 2004 and 2006.

It has been a magical season for the 35-year-old Swiss highlighted by the 18th and 19th grand slam titles of his career at the Australian Open and Wimbledon, extending his all-time men's record haul.

"We are celebrating today and the celebrations will continue over the next few days especially since Federer will celebrate his birthday with us on August 8," said tournament director Eugene Lapierre.

The Rogers Cup runs from Aug 6-13.

(Source: Reuters)



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## Amir Naderi's "Monte" hits silver screens in Tehran

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The U.S.-based Iranian filmmaker Amir Naderi's 2016 movie "Monte" is currently on screen at Tehran's Art and Experience Cinemas dedicated to screening art films.

Starring Andrea Sartoretti and Claudia Potenza the 105-minute drama was filmed in Italy in the mountainous regions of Alto Adige and Friuli.



A poster for Iranian filmmaker Amir Naderi's movies "Monte"

The film tells the story of a man who makes every attempt to bring the sunlight into his village, where his family is barely able to survive because of the prevailing darkness.

Naderi, whose 1985 movie "The Runner" attracted worldwide attention, received the Jaeger-LeCoultre Glory to the Filmmaker Award, an honor that is given to original and innovative contributors to contemporary cinema, at the 73rd Venice Film Festival in September 2016.

He was also honored with the Camillo Marino lifetime achievement award at the 41st edition of the Laceno d'Oro Film Festival in December 2016.

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

### Calligraphy

■ An exhibition titled "The Preface of Love" will showcase calligraphy works by Ali-Ashraf Sandoqabadi at Taraneh Baran Gallery from August 4 to 14.

The gallery is located at 27 Ladan Alley, Pol-e Rumi St. off Shariati St.

■ Calligraphic painter Ebrahim Vafai will put on display his latest collection in an exhibition named "Experience" at Kaveh Gallery from August 4 to 9.

The gallery can be found at 26 Taibad Alley, Parvin St. off Zafar St.

### Photo

■ An exhibition of photos titled "Hymns to the Silence" will hang works by Hadi Azari, Puria Honarmand, Mahsa Imani, Soheila Shams, Sahar Mokhtari and several other photographers at Hepta Gallery from August 4 to 16.

The gallery is located at 3 Nishahr Dead End, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ Photos by Zohreh Zarfam will be on display in an exhibition at Shalman Gallery from August 4 to 6.

The gallery is located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St. off Mirdamad Blvd.

### Painting

■ A collection of paintings by Motahareh Vakili will be showcased in an exhibition entitled "Passing of a Dream" at Kabiri Gallery from August 4 to 9.

The gallery can be found at 60 South Dibaji St.

■ Farda Gallery will be hosting an exhibition of paintings by Fareshteh Veisi from August 4 to 10.

The gallery is located at 2 Araabi Alley, Hosseini St., off Karim Khan Ave.

## Stephen King's "The Dark Tower" film premieres in New York

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — U.S. author Stephen King played a key role in translating his book series "The Dark Tower" into a Hollywood film, director Nikolaj Arcel said at the film's premiere on Monday.

The fantasy movie follows the eight-book series in crafting the classic story of good versus evil.

Gunslinger Roland Deschain, played by actor Idris Elba, battles his nemesis, the Man in Black, who is determined to destroy the Dark Tower, which holds their universe together.

# Rastak, Aylan to celebrate Iran's National Day at Astana Expo

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian bands Rastak and the Aylan Children Dance Group will celebrate Iran's National Day at Astana Expo 2017 on August 4.

Rastak, a folk music ensemble led by tar virtuoso Si-amak Sepehri, is scheduled to perform a repertoire of regional Iranian music, while Aylan will give a performance of Azarbaijani dance and music at the expo, some Persian news agencies announced on Wednesday.

Over 100 countries are currently presenting exhibitions under the theme of Future Energy at the Astana Expo 2017.

## Armenia's Hafez Association holds meeting for Persian language learners



Iranian MPs, diplomats and some Armenian students of the Persian language pose at the Embassy of Iran in Yerevan, Armenia on August 1, 2017.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Hafez Association in the Armenian capital of Yerevan organized a meeting of its learners of the Persian language on Tuesday.

A group of Iranian MPs and diplomats, and some Armenian cultural officials also attended the meeting, the Iranian reported on Wednesday.

"One of Iran's main concern is to stimulate the development of the Persian language in Armenia," Iranian Ambassador Seyyed Kazem Sajjadi said at the meeting.

He said that the Iranian Embassy has received numerous requests from Armenian officials to organize Persian language courses in Armenia.

"The embassy has helped establish some educational centers for the Persian language, but due to the

lack of funds, the embassy could not meet all the requests," he added.

George Ebrahimi, the director of the Hafez Association, thanked Sajjadi for organizing a tour of Iranian cities for the students of the center.

The association is a non-governmental organization that was established in 2015 to promote the Persian language in Armenian schools and academic centers.

The director of the Education and Research Committee of the Iranian Parliament, Mohammad-Mehdi Zahedi, said that development of the Persian language in Armenia can help the cultural relations between the two countries expand.

He also added that the students can play a key role in the expansion of ties in cultural areas as well as in political and economic fields.

# Discovery gains female advertising audience with Scripps deal

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Discovery Communications Inc, whose nature and science TV channels attract mostly male viewers, will reach more women and diversify its advertising revenue through its acquisition of Scripps Networks Interactive Inc, advertisers said on Tuesday.

Scripps' channels, such as Home and Garden TV, have about twice as many female viewers as male in the 18 to 34 age range, a coveted group for advertisers, according to Nielsen data. The majority of the Discovery Channel's viewers in that age group are male.

Discovery's \$11.9 billion deal to acquire Scripps, announced on Monday, is expected to boost the media company's negotiating leverage as it seeks new audiences.

Discovery's ad revenue, which did not grow in the second quarter from a year ago, may benefit from Scripps' clout with advertisers, Discovery Chief Executive David Zaslav told analysts on an earnings call on Monday.

Scripps' programming is well-received internationally, and Discovery had already been buying its content in Latin America, Zaslav said on the call. "And if we see market share gain, that'll translate very quickly to real advertising value for us

## "Harry Potter" author Rowling apologizes over Trump tweets

**LONDON (Reuters)** — "Harry Potter" author J.K. Rowling has apologized to the family of a wheelchair-bound boy for tweets in which she accused U.S. President Donald Trump of ignoring his proffered hand at a media event.

Rowling branded Trump a "monster of narcissism" after footage of a July 24 news conference on healthcare showed the president seemingly ignoring the three-year-old's hand, but shaking other people's as he left the event.

Footage of Trump's entrance to the event, however, showed the president stop to greet the boy and have a brief exchange before he began speaking.

Saying she had discovered that what she had seen was not an accurate representation of the encounter, Rowling tweeted: "I very clearly projected my own sensitivities around the issue of disabled people being overlooked or ignored onto the images I saw".

The author's apology was directed

at the boy and his family, and made no mention of Trump.

Rowling, who has over 11 million Twitter followers, is frequently critical of Trump and his administration on her social media feed.

In the three days that elapsed between her original tweets on July 28 and her apology, Rowling had been the subject of online criticism, much of it from Trump supporters, for her comments on the incident.

## "Fun Mom Dinner" cast says film mirrors real bonds between mothers

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — A raunchy comedy about four women on a night out that takes an unexpected turn resembles real life connections that mothers form with each other after having children, the lead actresses of "Fun Mom Dinner" said.

"Fun Mom Dinner," out in U.S. theaters

on Friday, stars Toni Collette, Bridget Everett, Molly Shannon and Katie Aselton as moms with kids in the same preschool class.

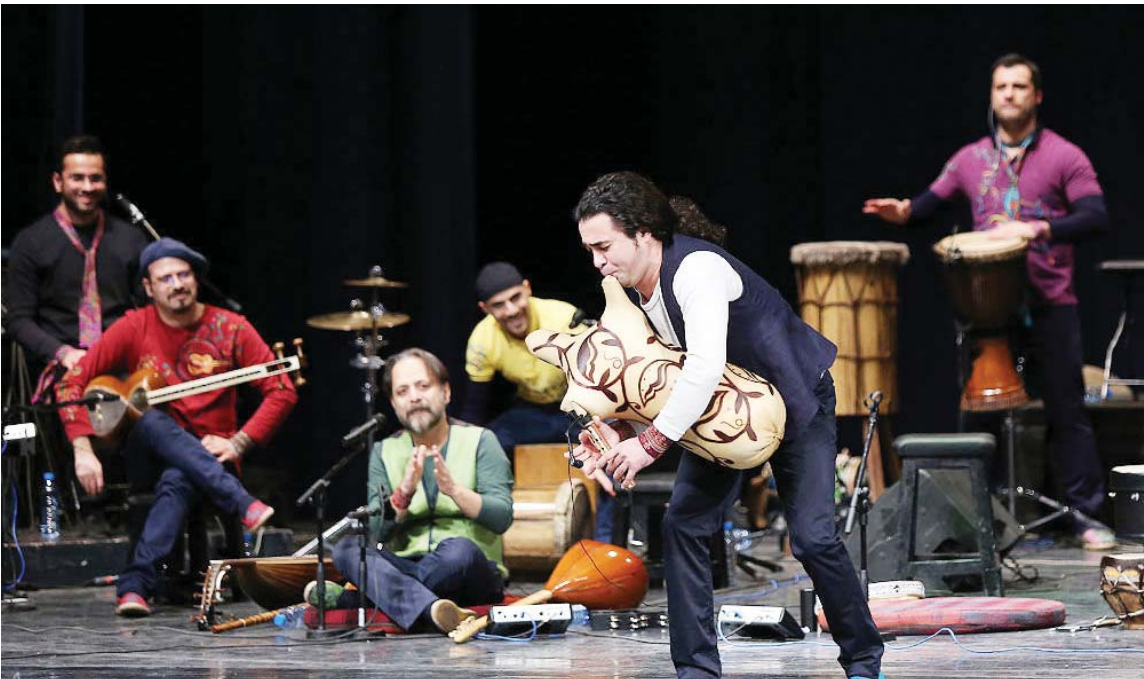
The foursome's night out begins with some gossip and tapas, and quickly spirals into an alcohol-fueled, weed-filled outing that makes them appreciate motherhood.

"I think it is wanting to find a group of people who you can commiserate with and also support each other and wanting to find someone with a similar situation," Aselton said in an interview.

"If your friends aren't naturally moms already at that point, you end up reaching

out to people that you wouldn't maybe normally reach out to ... that can sometimes create these incredible bonds," she added.

Directed by Alethea Jones and written by Julie Rudd, the film boasts a female-led team that the actresses said led to a unique on-set experience.



Iranian folk music ensemble Rastak gives a concert during the 32nd Fajr International Music Festival at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Jan. 14, 2017.

The expo opened on June 10 in Astana, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The expo, which is taking

place on a site covering 25 hectares, will be open to the public until September 10.

## Friends celebrate 77th birthday of novelist Mahmud Dowlatabadi

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — Friends and fans gathered in Hanuz Bookstore on Tuesday to celebrate the 77th birthday of short-story writer and novelist Mahmud Dowlatabadi, the most prominent Iranian novelist of the 1980s.

Self-educated and forced to work from childhood, Dowlatabadi had to spend part of his younger adult years as a stage actor in Tehran.

"Kalidar", "Desert Strata", "The Trip", "The Legend of Baba Sobhan", "The Cowherd", "Aqil", "Man" and "Missing Soluch" are among Dowlatabadi's credits.

"What made you gather here in this place was not me. However, I was the reason behind your gathering here," Dowlatabadi said at the ceremony.

"It was difficult to gather this number of people in this place, of course we could ask for a larger space, literati have the opportunity to hold gatherings," he said.

"I can assure you that I did what I could do about writing, reading and learning. I hope to live in a society where people won't be against each other and would have a chance to love one another," he added.

"One of the opportunities God has bestowed upon me is that I can like all the people in their own place. One of the secrets of creation is that people can love each other and respect one another," he noted.

Poet Mohammad Shams Langerudi also delivered a short speech.



Writer Mahmud Dowlatabadi blows candles during his 77th birthday at Hanuz Bookstore in Tehran on August 1, 2017.

"Thank you for your birth and I am happy you had a hard life. Art is not the child of pain but is its nephew and it was pain which made you Dowlatabadi. I am highly interested in you because you taught us life and helped us tolerate difficulties easier."

Art critic Javad Mojabi expressed his congratulations to his friend Dowlatabadi.

"Dowlatabadi is popular with all the individuals, ordinary and special. He had this chance that special people like his works, the ordinary people also do. So we can say this decade was the decade of Dowlatabadi", Mojabi remarked.

Several other friends also talked in the birthday ceremony followed by a performance by kamancheh virtuoso Ali-Akbar Shekarchi who played happy birthday song.

Tar virtuoso Hossein Alizadeh, composer Loris Tjeknavorian, actor Reza Kianian, and writer Hossein Sanapur were among the participating guests.



The Discovery Communications logo is seen at their office in Manhattan, New York, U.S., August 1, 2016.

(Reuters/Andrew Kelly)

around the world."

Scripps posted a 2.5 percent increase in ad revenue in its preliminary second-quarter results.

Jason Kanefsky, director of strategic investments at Havas Media Group, a marketing agency that works with clients in industries like luxury goods, spirits and banking, said his clients



British writer JK Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series of books, poses during the launch of new online website Pottermore in London, England on June 23, 2011.

(Reuters/Suzanne Plunkett)