



Ukrainian president, PM back expansion of ties with Iran **4**



Females outnumber males in Iran's 2017 university entrance exam **12**



Para-archer Zahra Nemati reclaims gold medal at World Championships **15**



Iran festival secretary satirizes organizations' reluctance to join in green moves **16**



## Taliban spokesman: 'Saudi Arabia, Taliban like brothers'

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## Belgium says doesn't agree with all U.S. policies

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Siegfried Bracke, president of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, said on Saturday that Belgium does not agree with all U.S. policies, noting Belgium's ties with Iran are based on mutual interests. Differences have emerged between the European Union and the Trump administration over number of issues in-

cluding the Paris climate agreement, security cooperation within NATO, Donald Trump's disdain for the July 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and major powers, and Trump's rash behavior. Speaking at a joint press conference with Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larjani in Tehran, Bracke also highlighted the importance of expanding relations between Belgium and Iran. **->2**

## Iran's handicraft exports hit record high in March-July

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN — Handicrafts exports from Iran hit a record high over the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22, 2017) with 45.4 percent growth in contrast to the same period a year earlier, a tourism official says. The growth has also been tagged as the highest in exports of non-oil products

from the country, IRNA quoted Pouya Mahmoudian as saying on Wednesday. The value of handicrafts exports from Isfahan province topped any others in the country with 334 percent of growth, added Mahmoudian who presides over exports department of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization. **->10**

## Turkey not convincing over dams project: Iran

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran has not been convinced by Turkey's claim of having counted in the region's environmental concerns in its dam building mega-project called the Southeastern Anatolia Project known as GAP, a top Iranian diplomat has said. In an interview with ISNA published on Saturday, Abbas Araqchi, the dep-

uty foreign minister for legal and international affairs, who also has a 11-year history of activity in water diplomacy, warned of the environmental hazards of GAP and urged Ankara not to "commercialize" the project. In a July interview with the Tehran Times, Turkish ambassador to Tehran Riza Hakan Tekin had accused Iran of politicizing the issue. **->2**

## Mehr picked as best news agency at Ghadir media festival

The 11th edition of Ghadir Media Festival was closed on Saturday in Iraqi city of Najaf. At the closing ceremony of the 11th edition of Ghadir Media Festival, Iranian Mehr News Agency was awarded as the best news outlet, the news agency said on its website.

The three day event was opened on Thursday. Iran's Arabic Radio and al-Etjah network were also awarded at the event. The best cartoon awarded at the festival was picked from ad-Dostor newspaper of Egypt while Tunisian Maghreb was picked as the best daily. The

best essay was picked from new al-Bayyana. Competitions on audio visual productions of TV and radio channels as well as press and internet works was held at the event. Scholarly seminars, photo exhibitions and sessions for honoring top media figures were the sideline programs of the festival.

## APSCO chief: Iran ready for space development program

Following evaluating Iran's space achievements, General Secretary of Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization said that the Islamic Republic is ready for Space Development Program.

"With respect to the achievements of the government of Iran, we in APSCO are prepared to exchange our findings with one another," said Secretary-General Li Xinjun who has traveled to Tehran in order to attend the 11th APSCO Summit.

During a meeting between the Secretary General of APSCO and Iran's ICT Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi on September 13, they held talks on two programs with the members of this organization. These programs are aimed at utilizing international capacities the details of which will be disclosed at later time.

Concerning the methods of exchanging knowledge between Iran and APSCO, Li Xinjun said that all the members of APSCO are equal. When the member countries decide to cooperate, they share their technology equally.

The Secretary General further stressed that they will continue this cooperation with Iran, and added "I think Iran and APSCO can exchange their space knowledge and technologies." He voiced optimism that there will come a day when all members can work together at an equal level as part of an international space organization.

APSCO which is based in China started its space activities in 2008 focusing on educating and training human resources, executing joint programs in space and outer space and utilizing satellites. The eight members of this organization include Iran, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mongolia, Peru, Thailand and Turkey.

(Source: MNA)

## EU unlikely freeze Turkey accession talks: German expert

By payman Yazdani

**TEHRAN** — Recently tensions has risen between Ankara and Berlin. President Erdogan's call to German Turks not to vote for German main political parties in incoming election faced wide reaction by German officials.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel couple of days ago in a surprise remarks in her first televised electoral campaign vowed to stop Turkey's EU accession talks.

A day after Merkel's remarks, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, talking to Turkish FM at Bled Strategic Forum, said that talks with Turkey as EU important partner will continue.

Merkel's spokesperson also on Sep. 5 said that no decision would be made on Turkey before election in Germany.

Merkel has always been among the politicians defending talks with Turkey, why did she talk about freezing Turkey's accession talks?

Martin Schulz, the social-democrat candidate for chancellor and an even stauncher supporter of Turkey's EU membership, challenged Angela Merkel during the TV debate by announcing that he would put an end to the accession talks. So the actually reacted quite quickly during the debate by hardening her position without actually changing it.

Considering her spokespersons remarks just two days after her sharp remarks—maybe a kind of retreating, can we say



Merkel made those remarks just for election campaign as many believe the relation between Turkey and Germany will improve after election in Germany?

Few people believe that Turkish-German relations will improve anytime soon. In fact, from a growing general mistrust to very specific bones of contention - incarcerated journalists in Turkey, Turkish officials seeking asylum in Germany, death threats to German politicians of Turkish origin, and harassment of dual citizens by Turkish authorities - there's little prospect of a thaw regardless of who will be the next Chancellor in Berlin.

Can Erdogan's request from German Turks affect the result of the election in Germany?

President Erdogan's prompt to Turkish-German citizens not to vote for certain parties is not expected to have a great effect with voters. However, it is an unprecedented act of interference in another country's do-

mestic affairs, and thus an expression of the lack of trust between the two countries.

Considering the fact that both countries are NATO members, what will be the possible Turkey's reaction to possible freezing of accession talks by the EU? Can such a possible decision from the EU and Germany affect EU security and energy security?

The EU is unlikely to formally freeze the accession talks with Turkey, because it is Turkey that wants to become an EU member. If Turkey continues to backslide in terms of democracy and rule of law, the talks will simply not advance further. Ending them is more of symbolic value and would probably provide President Erdogan with ammunition for his nationalist-Islamist course. That said, economic relations - in particular energy trade - are not necessarily directly affected by this decision.

If Germany decides to stop talks with Turkey, will other EU members accept it?

Germany cannot stop the talks by itself, nor can any single EU country, for that matter. There would have to be a unanimous decision by all 28 members to do so. This is highly unlikely under the current circumstances. Turkey, in contrast, could unilaterally declare an end to the talks; however, it is also unlikely to do so, as it would leave the blame with President Erdogan and would rob him of an opportunity to blame the Europeans for allegedly mistreating Turkey.

## Iran, 5+1 foreign ministers to meet in New York

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The foreign ministers of the countries signatory to the landmark nuclear agreement will meet in New York next week.

The nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, was signed between Iran and the 5+1 countries (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) on July 14, 2015. It went into effect on January 16, 2016.

The meeting which also be attended by European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini will be held on the sidelines of the annual UN meeting.

The meeting will take place within the framework of the JCPOA Joint Commission which is tasked to verify each side's commitments under the deal.

Foreign Policy reported on Friday that the U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will sit down for the first time with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and other key dignitaries as the Trump administration weighs killing the nuclear pact.

The meeting mark the first time the Trump administration's top diplomat will meet with his Iranian counterpart.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has said there will be no direct talks between Zarif and Tillerson.

For months, the Trump administration has been sharply divided over whether to continue to certify that Iran is in compliance with the accord, or to break free of the Obama-era agreement, a move that would result in Tehran ramping up its nuclear program.

In July, Tillerson and other key national security advisors prevailed on the president to recertify the pact, which by law he has to do every three months. But Trump was reportedly unhappy with the decision and was hoping to scupper the accord in October.



## Iranian Muslims preparing for mourning season of Muharram

A man makes a banner with Islamic patterns at his shop in Tehran on September 16, 2017 in preparation for the mourning season of Muharram, which will start this year on September 22.

Shia Muslims mourn for 50 days during the lunar months of Muharram and Safar for Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions who were martyred in a battle against the oppressive Umayyad dynasty in Muharram in 680 CE. The mourning ceremonies reach their climax on Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram, upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred.

**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**Iran sends humanitarian aid for Rohingya Muslims**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Morteza Salimi, director of the Relief and Rescue Organization of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, said on Saturday that Iran's first humanitarian aid consignment for Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims has been sent to Bangladesh, Mehr news agency reported.

Salimi said since Myanmar is refusing to cooperate, the 40-ton shipment was delivered to Bangladesh on Friday.

"The aid was sent to Bangladesh with the collaboration of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iran's Air Force," he added.



**Rouhani to start tour of New York on Sunday**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani will leave Tehran for New York on Sunday to attend the 72nd annual session of UN General Assembly, where he is set to deliver a speech, IRNA reported.

Rouhani will be accompanied by his chief diplomat Mohammad Javad Zarif and some other cabinet members.

Rouhani will also hold bilateral meetings with a number of heads of state participating in the UN event.

He is also scheduled to meet with a number of Iranian nationals living in the U.S.



**Erdogan to visit Tehran Oct. 4**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will make an official visit to Tehran on October 4 for talks on bilateral and regional issues, Turkish media reported.

In an interview with a Turkish news channel on Friday, Erdogan announced his upcoming visit, saying during the visit the two sides will exchange views on terrorism and other regional issues.

"Prior to my trip, Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar will travel to Tehran to hold talks with Iranian officials," he added.



**IRGC says has infiltrated U.S. command and control centers**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has infiltrated the U.S. military command and control centers in recent years, IRGC Aerospace Force chief Ali Hajizadeh said on Friday.

Hajizadeh also said while the U.S. may possess the mother of all bombs, the IRGC is in possession of the "father of all bombs" that has been produced by the country's Defense Ministry.

The general added that such huge bombs are dropped from Ilyushin planes.



**New security order needed in post-Daesh era: envoy**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Iranian Ambassador to Beirut, Mohammad Fathali, said on Saturday that the region needs a new security order in the post-Daesh era.

In an interview with IRNA, Fathali pointed to the big challenges in the post-Daesh era, saying, "Inevitably (regional) countries will have to change their approach and accept the realities on the ground."

Even the state sponsors of terrorist groups now realize that their policies have been wrong and their chickens will someday come home to roost, the ambassador added.



**Myanmar must be taken to International Criminal Court: lawmaker**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Kamal Dehqani Firdouzabadi, the vice-chairman of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, on Saturday called on the international community to take the case of Myanmar's crimes against Rohingya Muslims to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Speaking with ICANA news agency, Dehqani Firdouzabadi called on the United Nations to take a firm stance on the issue, saying the case must be taken to the ICC.

The top lawmaker also said helping the displaced Rohingya Muslims is a priority for Iran.

**Belgium says doesn't agree with all U.S. policies**

**1 ->** Brussels is the capital of the European Union.

Bracke expressed hope that the EU would open an office in Iran soon.

Larijani expressed hope that Bracke's visit to Tehran would mark a milestone in ties.

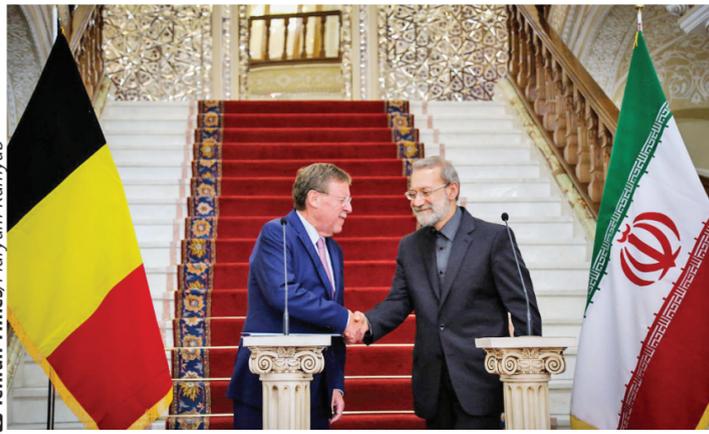
He also said that international cooperation is required to counter terrorism.

On September 22, 2016, three coordinated suicide bombings occurred in Belgium, two at Brussels Airport in Zaventem and one at Maalbeek metro station in central Brussels.

**Rouhani urges EU to send 'strong message' to U.S. on nuclear deal**

Also in a separate meeting with Bracke on Saturday Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the European Union is expected to send a "strong message" to the Trump administration on the nuclear deal and press Washington to abide by its commitments under the nuclear agreement.

Recently Trump and his UN ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley have toughened their rhetoric on the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). On September 5, Haley laid out a case for Trump to step back from the nuclear deal, arguing that Iran's technical compliance alone isn't enough for the U.S. to stick with the pact.



Iranian and Belgian parliament speakers shake hands in Tehran, September 16

Under the deal, which was struck by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama, Iran agreed to slow down its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of financial and economic sanctions. The deal which involves Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including the U.S. went into effect in January 2016.

"We expect the European Union to fully implement the JCPOA and press the U.S. to be committed to its obligations to the JCPOA and send a strong message to them [the U.S.]," Rouhani said during a meeting with Bracke.

Rouhani said that Iran has been committed to its obligations and this has been confirmed repeatedly by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations nuclear watchdog.

Therefore, he said, other signatories must comply with the agreement.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran is determined to use the post-JCPOA atmosphere and expand relations with European countries, especially Belgium.

He also said Brussels attaches great importance to compliance to the JCPOA. The EU will make any effort to implement its obligations under the international nuclear agreement, he noted.

He also called for expansion of banking ties between Iran and Belgium.

**'Unwise behavior'**  
Also, Iran's Supreme National Security Council secretary Ali Shamkhani, in a meeting with Bracke, said the "threatening language" by U.S. officials reveals Washington's "hostile approaches" toward Iran.

Shamkhani called on the signatories to the JCPOA to counter any "unwise behavior" and "illegal and extreme position" toward the nuclear deal.

Elsewhere, the security chief said Iran is ready to expand relations with the European countries in various areas.

Shamkhani also said an instrumental use of terrorism by some Western countries has led to spread of terrorist acts.

Bracke also said that Iran plays an important role in stabilizing the Middle East region.

**Russia to call on U.S. to stay in nuclear deal**

**POLITICS** Russia's UN ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, said Moscow's message to the United States during a likely meeting of the parties to the Iran nuclear deal next week on the sidelines to the United Nations General Assembly was to stay in the deal.

"That is not only our message, but the rest of the participants and those that are outside are trying to send this message across," Reuters quoted Nebenzia as telling reporters on Friday.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including Russia signed the nuclear deal in July 2015. It went into effect in January 2016.

On September 5, U.S. ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley laid out a case for President Donald Trump to step back from the nuclear deal, arguing that Iran's technical compliance alone isn't enough for the U.S. to stick with the pact.

Trump levelled sharp criticism at the agreement many a time during his election race calling it "the worst deal ever".

Trump is expected to recertify Iran's compliance to the deal before October 15 as required by the U.S. law.

"You'll see what I'm going to be doing very shortly in October," Trump told reporters on Thursday. "The Iran deal is one of the worst deals I've ever seen. The Iran deal is not a fair deal to this country. It's a deal that should not have ever been made."

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**Turkey not convincing over dams project: Iranian diplomat**

**1 ->** "We should work together and not politicize the issue. It should be done in an objective, factual way... It is not true that our dams on the Tigris and the Euphrates increase the chances of dust storms. However, regarding recent claims to that effect from Iran, we are ready to receive any argumentation that Iran has to justify their claims. We are always for dialogue," Hakan Tekin said.

Araqchi raised the possibility that future wars in the region would highly probably be triggered by water crisis.

In June, Hedayat Fahmi of Iran's Energy Ministry urged active diplomacy with Turkey towards tackling the problem of dust storms, which chronically blight regional states partly because of Turkey's massive dam building projects.

As part of GAP, Turkey has built 22 dams on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which also run across Syria, Iraq and Iran.

The project has reportedly reduced water flow in the rivers' basin by 34 percent and caused 94 percent of the Mesopotamia to dry up, kicking up dust storms in Syria and Iraq which head to Iran and cripple life in its southwestern and western provinces.

Expert projections, Fahmi said, hold that the Middle East would be losing as much as 10 percent of its water resources by 2045. Over the same period, the demand for water in the region would increase by 60 percent, he said, adding this could even lead to regional wars.

The dams hold back as much as 100 billion cubic meters of water, half of which is harnessed in the country's Ataturk Dam. The project, which is executed by U.S., German and Israeli firms among others, is due to provide water for up to two million hectares of arable lands in Turkey and boost the country's electricity production by 7,500 megawatts.

clear scientists have unrestricted access to the nuclear facilities of certain countries possessing nuclear weapons.

"This is while the nuclear scientists of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) member states are assassinated by terrorists hired by the Zionist regime," Najafi said, referring to the assassination of a number of Iranian scientists.

Israel is estimated to have 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal. The regime, however, refuses to either accept or deny having the weapons.

It has also evaded signing the NPT amid staunch endeavor by the United States and other Western states on international levels in favor of its non-commitment to the accord.

(Source: Press TV)

Iranian Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Reza Najafi has denounced the West's double standard approaches on the possession and development of atomic technology, urging a complete end to any nuclear cooperation with the Israeli regime.

Addressing a quarterly meeting of the IAEA's 35-member Board of Governors in Vienna on Thursday, Najafi warned that the Israeli regime's nuclear program is negatively impacting security of the Middle East.

He said the Israeli regime's nuclear program is a cause of serious concern for regional countries and the international community and called on the IAEA to closely attend to and address the issue.

The Iranian envoy added that the Israeli regime's nuclear scientists have unrestricted access to the nuclear facilities of certain countries possessing nuclear weapons.

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(Source: Press TV)

**'World must end nuclear cooperation with Israel'**

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(Source: Press TV)

**Obama administration is mobilizing to defend nuclear deal**

**By staff and agency**

Former U.S. administration is mobilizing to defend the 2015 nuclear deal as President Donald Trump threatens to blow up the agreement.

According to Politico, one-time aides to Barack Obama are holding meetings, contacting lawmakers and working the media in an urgent bid to prevent the dismantling of one of the former president's signature foreign policy achievements.

Wendy Sherman, a former State Department official who led the U.S. negotiating team pursuing the deal, confirmed that Obama is aware of his former aides' efforts.

The former president is "engaged, staying updated" on the debate, added a current Obama aide, who declined to elaborate.

Rob Malley, a former top adviser to Obama on Middle East issues, said that the nuclear deal is "something concrete that is



a target, something that a lot of us feel was a major achievement and strongly disagree with the critics about".

"And we care because of the consequences that could flow from unraveling the deal."

"Hard to see how abandoning [the

deal] doesn't lead to war," Obama's former UN ambassador, Samantha Power, tweeted Monday.

In response, some conservatives are complaining about the return of what they called an "echo chamber" of pro-nuclear deal talking points and media coverage

engineered by the Obama administration in 2015.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including the U.S. signed the nuclear deal in July 2015. It went into effect in January 2016.

Trump has called the agreement the "worst deal ever," and signaled that he's looking for a way out of it.

On Thursday, the president, facing a key deadline, chose to go ahead and keep waiving nuclear-related sanctions on Iran, meaning the deal stays intact for now.

But Trump has suggested that he may throw the issue to Congress by refusing to certify, by a mid-October deadline, that Iran is upholding its end of the agreement. Such "de-certification" would start a 60-day clock for Congress to decide whether to re-impose U.S. sanctions on Iran.

A vote by the Republican-majority Congress to re-impose sanctions would effectively kill the nuclear deal.

# Syria forces ignore U.S.-backed militants, advance past Euphrates

## Haley: U.S. won't be satisfied unless Assad leaves power



Russia says Syrian government forces have crossed the Euphrates River in their push to liberate the Dayr al-Zawr Province from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group, ignoring a warning by a ragtag group of militants that receives the United States backing.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that the Syrian army was already on the river's eastern side.

A commander with the SDF, Ahmed Abu Khawla, had earlier said that the group would not "allow" the Syrian forces to get to the eastern bank of the river.

Dayr al-Zawr is an important battleground. ISIL has mobilized its forces and moved heavy weaponry to the province to make it its main staging area in the face of increasing defeats elsewhere in the country. The liberation of a stretch of land in Dayr-al-Zawr that borders Iraq would be particularly important because it would stop the Takfiri terrorists' cross-border transit between Syria and Iraq.

Syria's ultimate control of the oil-rich province would also help revive its economy.

Earlier in the month, the Syrian army and its allies reached Dayr al-Zawr's provincial capital of the same name, which lies on the Euphrates' western bank, breaking a nearly three-year-old ISIL siege on government-held parts of the city.

Days later, and as the combined forces were building on their gains, the SDF said it was also launching an attack on the province from Euphrates' eastern side.

The Syrian military, which is receiving advisory military help from Iran and Russia and aerial cover from the Russian air force, has said any force seeking to fight terrorism in Syria has to coordinate with it. The U.S.-backed SDF is not.

Khawla, the SDF commander, has also threatened that if his forces came under fire on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, they would return the fire.

"We have notified the regime and Russia that we are

coming to the Euphrates riverbank, and they can see our forces advancing," he said on Friday.

The group thus risks a confrontation with the Syrian and Russian militaries.

Also on Friday, a top aide to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said Syrian government troops and allied forces would fight any force, including the U.S.-backed militants, in their push to fully liberate the country.

Last Saturday, Ahmad al-Ahmad, who heads the armed Syrian opposition's Syria Press center, said that the SDF did not have the manpower to control Dayr al-Zawr.

The army and its allies have already recaptured Dayr al-Zawr's airbase, power station, and the Teym oilfield near the city.

### ■ New gains

Elsewhere, on Saturday, the troops made further gains in their battle against ISIL pockets in central parts of the country.

The government forces managed to take full control of the villages of Duhour al-Khenzir, al-Shindakhia al-Janobia, and Abu Tarraha in Jub al-Jarrah in the eastern countryside of Homs Province.

In Hama Province, the army units, supported by allied forces, took control of the town of Qalib al-Thor.

### ■ Assad & U.S. position

Meanwhile, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) Nikki Haley has repeated Washington's opposition to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, saying that the U.S. will not be "satisfied" as long as the Syrian leader is in power.

"Well, I think we're not going to be satisfied until we see a solid and stable Syria, and that is not with Assad in place," Haley said when asked at a White House briefing on Friday whether Washington had been left behind in international efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis.

Iran, Russia, and Turkey have been leading efforts to bring about an end to the Syrian conflict. Acting as guarantor states for a regime of peace in Syria, they have been successfully bringing the warring sides to the negotiating table in a peace process in the Kazakh capital of Astana and have been brokering truces.

(Source: SANA)

## Putin's proposed UN Ukraine peacekeepers must have full access: Merkel

Any United Nations peacekeepers sent to eastern Ukraine must be granted access to the entirety of the region held by Moscow-backed separatists, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin floated the idea of deploying United Nations troops to eastern Ukraine in a Monday call with Merkel, suggesting that the UN mission could protect observers from the international Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) monitoring mission.

With growing calls in Germany for the lifting of European Union sanctions against Russia over its activities in Ukraine, Moscow has been keen to float proposals that would help soften export bans that have hit Russians' living standards.

"I find President Putin's proposal to send UN troops to protect OSCE observers interesting," she told the FUNKE newspaper group on Friday. "A few days ago I discussed with him that the UN troops must have access to everywhere where the OSCE is stationed, so the entire Donetsk/Luhansk region."

The conflict between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists has claimed more than 10,000 lives since it erupted in 2014. Russia denies Western accusations it fomented the conflict and provided arms and fighters.

The observers are there to monitor implementation of a peace deal agreed in Minsk in 2015, which has been largely unsuccessful in settling the conflict despite German and French urgings.

Some German politicians have said sanctions should be lifted if the peace deal is implemented. Christian Lindner, leader of the Free Democrats, a likely coalition partner for Merkel after Sept. 24 elections, even suggested Germany must accept Russia's occupation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula.

Merkel said Putin's proposals were "tender shoots" of progress, "which give no cause for softening sanctions" so far. She rejected Lindner's proposal.

"The annexation is against international law and must not be accepted," she said.

(Source: Reuters)

## Iraq announces offensive on ISIL in Syria border area

Iraqi armed forces said on Saturday they had started an offensive to dislodge the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists from an area on the border with Syria south of the Euphrates river.

The offensive in the Akashat region, which has natural gas reserves, is meant to pave the way for the seizure of militant-held towns in the Euphrates river valley, including the border post of al-Qaim, military statements said.

Iraqi forces attacked an ISIL desert outpost near the Syrian border in preparation for a drive up the Euphrates Valley towards the frontier, commanders said.

Al-Qaim and the Euphrates towns of Rawa and Anna downstream form just one of two enclaves still held by ISIL in Iraq after a string of battlefield defeats this year.

"The army, the Hashed al-Shaabi [Popular Mobilization Units] and the border guard launched a major operation to liberate Akashat ... and secure

the border to its north," said the head of Joint Operations Command, General Abdelamir Yarallah.

Iraqi commanders estimate there are no more than 300 civilian families left in Akashat, a former railhead that was once a major source of phosphate production.

Imed Meshaal, mayor of Rutba, a desert town further south recaptured from ISIL last year, told AFP the terrorists had turned the area into a major hub for arms caches, training camps and command centers.

Iraqi commanders say they estimate ISIL still has more than 1,500 fighters in its Al-Qaim enclave.

The terrorists also control a second enclave west of the ethnically divided Kurdish-held city of Kirkuk centered on the mainly Sunni Arab town of Hawija.

A promised offensive against ISIL there has been delayed by a row over a controversial referendum on Kurdish independence planned for later this month.

(Source: Daily Star)

## Entire Philippine city police force fired over killings

An entire city police force in the Philippines has been fired in metropolitan Manila after some of its members were suspected in the gruesome killings of three teenagers and others were seen on surveillance cameras robbing a house.

The 1,200-strong Caloocan city police force will be relieved in batches and replaced, said metropolitan Manila police Chief Oscar Albayalde.

The officers will undergo 45 days of retraining, after which those facing no charges can be reassigned to other stations.

The Department of Justice has started an investigation based on a murder and torture complaint against four Caloocan policemen allegedly linked to the killing of 17-year-old student Kian Delos Santos during an anti-drug raid last month.

The parents of two other teenagers - 19-year-old Carl Angelo Arnaiz and 14-year-old Reynaldo de Guzman - have also filed murder, torture and planting of evidence complaints against two Caloocan policemen.

Last week, security-camera video purportedly showed 13 policemen robbing a house during an alleged drug raid.

President Rodrigo Duterte's crackdown on drugs, which has left thousands of suspects dead, has come under renewed scrutiny since police shot Delos Santos.

The death of the 17-year-old triggered rare public outrage over Duterte's so-called war on drugs.

Police described Delos Santos as a drug dealer who fired at officers during a raid, but his family and witnesses said the student was shot as he pleaded for his life.

Witnesses pointed to evidence, including a village security video, which they said showed two police officers

dragging Delos Santos away shortly before shots rang out and he was found fatally shot in the head, holding a pistol with his left hand although his parent said he was right-handed.



Police officers testified at a Senate hearing that Delos Santos was not the man seen being dragged in the video, although several witnesses doubted the police statement.

Delos Santos's death was followed by another outcry over the killing of former University of the Philippines student Carl Angelo Arnaiz.

Police said he was killed when he shot it out with police after robbing a taxi driver last month. A government forensic expert, however, said Arnaiz apparently was handcuffed, tortured and shot five times.

Arnaiz's parents say he went out with de Guzman to buy a snack on the night of August 17 but never returned home. They found Arnaiz in a morgue 10 days later.

And Reynaldo de Guzman's body was found floating

in a creek in a city north of Manila last week. The boy's head was wrapped with packing tape and his body bore about 28 stab wounds.

Human Rights Watch, citing figures from the Children's Legal Rights and Development Center, estimated earlier this month that at least 54 children had been killed by police and "unidentified gunmen" in Duterte's war on drugs since July 2016.

The rights group said that "most of those children had been shot while in the company of adults who were the apparent target of the shooting".

It added that officials, including Duterte, "have dismissed those killings as collateral damage".

The teen's killing puts focus on Duterte's repeated promises to police administering the crackdown that he would insulate them from any legal consequences. Critics say his rhetoric is tantamount to giving police a license to kill.

Activists have said that more than 13,000 people have been killed in Duterte's war on drugs.

Government figures said that 3,451 "drug personalities" had been killed in gun battles with police from June 30, 2016 to July 26, 2017.

Another 2,000 more died in drug-related homicides, including attacks by motorcycle-riding masked gunmen and other assaults, while 8,200 homicide cases are "under investigation", the data said.

Last month, Duterte took a softer tone on his drug crackdown, telling police to arrest suspects and kill only if their lives were in danger. He said he would not protect those who killed unarmed people.

He added though, that his crackdown on drugs will not stop.

(Source: agencies)

## Egypt's Morsi gets 25 years in Qatar spy case



An Egyptian court on Saturday sentenced ousted president Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood to 25 years in prison in a final ruling over a case accusing him of spying for Qatar, judicial sources said.

Morsi, democratically elected after Egypt's 2011 revolution, was overthrown in mid-2013 by then-general Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, now the president, following mass protests against his rule. He was immediately arrested.

Egypt's Court of Cassation reduced Morsi's sentence in the Qatar case to 25 years in its final ruling, from an original 40 years.

Morsi is already serving a 20-year sentence after being convicted for the killing of protesters during demonstrations in 2012.

Since toppling Morsi, Sisi has clamped down on dissent. Mass trials have been held for thousands of Muslim Brotherhood supporters, and hundreds have received death sentences or lengthy prison terms.

In 2014, Egypt charged Morsi and nine others with endangering national security by leaking state secrets and sensitive documents to Qatar. Egypt's relations with Doha were already troubled by Qatar's backing of Morsi.

Egypt is one of four Arab states in a Saudi regime-led bloc that cut relations with the Persian Gulf state on June 5, accusing it of backing terrorists, an allegation Doha denies.

(Source: Daily Star)

## UAE, U.S. ground forces to launch joint military drill

The ground forces of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States are to begin a joint military exercise in Abu Dhabi later on Saturday.

Code-named Iron Union 5, the war game is part of a series of exercises that the UAE organizes with its allies to upgrade its military power, the UAE's official WAM news agency reported.

The drills come amid a rift between several Persian Gulf Arab states and Qatar.

Back in June, the House of Saud regime, Egypt, Bahrain and the UAE imposed a trade and diplomatic embargo on Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism.

Separately on Saturday, Qatari and French naval forces concluded a two-day exercise in Qatar's territorial waters.

A number of boats and the French Frigate Jean Bart reportedly took part in the drill.

Lieutenant Colonel Falah Mahdi Al Ahababi, Qatari naval formation commander, said the marine exercise had two stages, which focused on combating terrorism and piracy as well as protecting facilities, and marine shipping lines.

(Source: Press TV)

## Merkel vows to restrict trade with Turkey over arrests

Germany will have no choice but to restrict its economic ties with Turkey to pressure its NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) partner into releasing German citizens it imprisoned on political grounds, Chancellor Angela Merkel said in remarks published on Saturday.

Relations between the two countries are strained by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's crackdown on opponents after a failed coup last year. Germany and its partners in the European Union say the crackdown undermines democracy.

Turkey and Germany are also at odds over Berlin's refusal to extradite asylum seekers Erdogan accuses of involvement in the botched coup against him.

"We will have to further cut back our joint economic cooperation with Turkey and scrutinize projects," Merkel told the Passauer Neuen Presse newspaper in an interview when asked how she wants to secure the release of Germans held in Turkey.

The simmering tensions have seeped into campaigning for a federal election in Germany, especially after Erdogan urged German Turks to boycott the main parties in the vote on Sept. 24.

Home to some 3 million people of Turkish descent, Germany has traditionally had good relations with Turkey, which is also a major trade partner and tourist destination for German sun-seekers.

German officials have been enraged by Turkey's arrest of around a dozen German citizens, including the German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yucel, who has been held for more than 200 days.

Merkel, whose conservatives are expected to win the election and secure her a fourth term in office, said on Tuesday Germany would restrict some arms sales to Turkey.

Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel of the center-left Social Democrats (SPD) who are trailing the conservatives in opinion polls, had earlier said that all major arms exports to Turkey had been put on hold.

Merkel said during a televised debate earlier this month that Turkey should not become a member of the European Union - Turkey's largest trading partner with which it has a customs union.

She said she would talk to Germany's EU partners to reach a compromise on ending Turkey's accession talks with the bloc.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



**French trade delegation to visit Iran on Sept. 19**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — A high-ranking French trade delegation is due to visit Tehran on September 19 to explore avenues of mutual cooperation.

According to a report by Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the delegation will be comprised of French businessmen and entrepreneurs active in various areas including transport, infrastructure, energy, environment, services, agriculture, medicine, aerospace and marketing.

Accordingly, an Iran-France business forum has also been scheduled for the said date in which the two sides will get together to discuss cooperation.



**Iran-Bulgaria business forum slated for early Oct.**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — An Iran-Bulgaria business forum is scheduled to be held at Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s building in Tehran on October 3, ICCIMA portal reported.

In this regard, a trade delegation comprised of renowned Bulgarian business people and entrepreneurs active in various areas including pharmaceuticals, food industries, agriculture, transportation and logistics, lighting supplies, telecommunications, auto parts, construction and safety equipment will be visiting Tehran on the mentioned date to meet with their Iranian counterparts and discuss mutual cooperation.



**Tehran, Mashhad to host Belgian businessmen in early Nov.**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — A group of Belgian businessmen will embark on a four-day visit to Iran on November 5 to meet with Iranian counterparts in the cities of Tehran and Isfahan, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

The members of the visiting delegation are active in construction, oil and gas, manufacturing machineries, glass, textile, marketing, technology development and etc.

**France and Italy open to German ECB chief, but not Weidmann: Spiegel**

France and Italy have signaled to Germany that they are open to a German becoming president of the European Central Bank but not if it is Bundesbank chief Jens Weidmann, Der Spiegel reported on Friday.

The German magazine said that representatives from France and Italy had informed German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble and his officials of their position.

Paris and Rome fear Weidmann, a long-time critic of the ECB's quantitative easing program, would oppose a flexible and pragmatic monetary policy in times of crisis, but Der Spiegel suggested Berlin was unlikely to agree with that view.

"We have just one qualified candidate on offer, and it is Weidmann," it quoted an unnamed source close to the German government as saying.

Asked about the report, a spokesman for the German finance ministry, Daniel Fehling, told Reuters: "These are personnel questions. We do not comment on them."

France's finance ministry also declined to comment when contacted by Reuters, but a French government source said there were no such discussions at this stage.

An Italian government spokesman said the Spiegel report was "completely false".

The term of the current ECB president, Italy's Mario Draghi, expires in late 2019.

(Source: Reuters)

**EU seeks a digital tax to stem the 'bags of money' lost to loopholes**

European Union finance ministers are developing a new way to tax digital companies such as Amazon.com Inc. and Facebook Inc. to raise money from an industry that they say provides less than it should to public coffers. French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told colleagues at a meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, that the bloc should agree to a tax on revenue -- rather than profits -- of the digital industry by mid-2018. Ten countries, including Germany, Italy and Spain, back the initiative. They're concerned that taxing profits is too complicated under international rules, allowing companies to skirt traditional levies.

"We are responsible to our taxpayers to deal with it, we can't just watch how bags of money are transferred elsewhere," Slovak Finance Minister Peter Kazimir said in an interview. "I favor imposing immediate levies, similar to sales tax, but only as a temporary solution before we reach a global agreement."

Traditional taxation practices have failed to capture business from an industry where value added tends to be virtual rather than material and digital companies have sought to take advantage of loopholes created by uncoordinated European regulation.

(Source: Bloomberg)

**Ukrainian president, PM back expansion of ties with Iran**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — "Ukraine's president, prime minister, and minister of energy back development of bonds with Iran," the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) quoted the eastern European country's Deputy Minister of Energy and the Coal Industry Galina Karp as saying on Friday.

In a meeting with ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, who took a trip to Kiev leading a high-ranking delegation, Karp said that regarding the available wide range of fields for boosting common cooperation, Ukrainian economic enterprises are inclined to collaborate with Iranians on establishing gas and oil pipelines or on renovating, maintenance and establishment of new power plants.

Shafeie, for his part, announced that Tehran has been expanding cooperation with Kiev and considering Ukraine as a gateway to Europe; adding that "expanding economic ties with Ukraine would guarantee Iran's access to Europe."

Despite the 30-percent growth experienced in bilateral trade between the two countries last year, the figure can be improved dramatically considering the available potentials and capacities for the two sides.



**Iran to export polyethylene to Vietnam in 2018**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — An Iranian petrochemical complex plans to export near 8,000 million tons of polyethylene to Southeast Asia on a monthly basis in 2018, Platts reported quoting a director of the complex.

According to Amir Kabir Petrochemical Company (AKPC)'s Sales and Marketing Manager Diako Abbasi, the company aims to ship 5,000-8,000 mt/month of polyethylene to Southeast Asia in 2018, with Vietnam expected to be the main target

market.

"We see great opportunities in Vietnam, as the packaging and film grade consumption is increasing [in line] with its young population," Abbasi said Friday on the sidelines of VietnamPlas 2017.

Grades that are expected to see good demand include general purpose and heavy-duty linear low density PE, high density PE film, and HDPE pipe grade, he added.

"Our strategy is to bring large volumes

of PE directly from Iran to Vietnamese traders, distributors and end-users, without going through intermediaries" he said.

AKPC had sold smaller quantities of PE to Vietnam about two years ago, Abbasi noted.

AKPC operates a petrochemical complex at Bandar Imam with a nameplate capacity of 300,000 mt/year of LLDPE, 300,000 mt/year of LDPE, and 140,000 mt/year of HDPE, and is currently operating at "full rates" according to the company.



**Monthly car output stands at 100,565**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Iranian carmakers manufactured 100,565 vehicles in the fifth Iranian calendar month, Mordad (July 23-August 22), IRIB news reported on Saturday.

Iran manufactured 1.3 million cars in

the past calendar year, which ended on March 20.

Former Industry Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh has expressed hope that the annual car output will reach 1.6 million by the end of the cur-

rent calendar year (March 20, 2018).

The share of Iran's auto industry in the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to rise by 70 percent in the current Iranian year.

Producing more than one million of

automobiles in 2016, Iran could rank first among the world countries regarding the growth in its car production, according to the report released by the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers in March 2017.

**Oil caps best week since July as demand forecasts improve**

Oil had its biggest weekly gain since late July as Texas refineries recovering from Hurricane Harvey processed more crude and global demand forecasts brightened.

Futures rose 5.1 percent this week in New York, settling just below the \$50-a-barrel threshold that's kept the industry in thrall. The increase was buoyed by higher demand forecasts from the International Energy Agency and expectations OPEC and its partners will extend output cuts beyond the March expiration date of their deal.

"The narrative in the market is that demand has really picked up," said John Kilduff, a partner at New York-based hedge Again Capital LLC. "As a result, we've gotten this push higher."

Nearly a quarter of U.S. refining capacity was shuttered in the wake of Harvey. Two weeks later, only three Gulf Coast refineries remain shut, according to the Department of Energy. The rest -- including Motiva Enterprises LLC's Port Arthur refinery, the nation's largest -- are gradually coming back online, helping boost crude demand.

At the same time, the Paris-based IEA said on Wednesday it expects global demand to climb this year by the most since 2015 while the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners were said to be discussing an extension of its deal to cut output beyond its March expira-

tion. "People are looking for the price to go ahead and settle above \$50 a barrel, but they need some more than just the current news," Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy & Economic Research in Winchester, Massachusetts, said by telephone. "We need a couple good inventory reports or perhaps some bearish supply data from Libya or from the U.S. shale patch."

West Texas Intermediate futures for October delivery ended the session on the New York Mercantile Exchange at \$49.89, unchanged from the highest close since July 31 on Thursday.

Brent for November settlement closed 15 cents higher at \$55.62 a barrel on the London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange. Prices advanced 3.4 percent this week. The global benchmark crude traded at a premium of \$5.18 to November WTI.

Meanwhile, the U.S. oil rig count fell for the fourth time in five weeks, according to Baker Hughes data released Friday. Rigs decreased by seven to 749. The decline included drops in Texas' Permian and Eagle Ford shale basins.

"The feel-good factor appears to have returned to the oil market," said Stephen Brennock, an analyst at PVM Oil Associates Ltd. "Underpinning the prevailing sentiment is the positive afterglow of this week's frenzy of bullish oil demand forecasts from the leading energy agencies."

(Source: Bloomberg)

**Venezuela publishes oil prices in Chinese currency to shun U.S. dollar**

Venezuela published the price of its oil and fuel in Chinese currency on Friday in what it called an effort to free the socialist-run country from the "tyranny of the dollar," echoing a plan recently announced by President Nicolas Maduro.

Maduro last week said his government would shun the dollar after the United States announced sanctions that blocked certain financial dealings with Venezuela on accusations that the ruling Socialist Party is undermining democracy.

The global oil industry overwhelmingly uses the dollar for pricing of products.

A weekly Oil Ministry bulletin published on Friday listed September prices in yuan, while including prices from previous weeks and months in dollars.

"This format is the result of the announcement made on Sept 7 by the president ... that Venezuela will implement new strategies to free the country from the tyranny of the dollar," the ministry wrote in a statement released after the bulletin.

Venezuela's yuan-based prices appear to be the result of multiplying dollar prices by the dollar/yuan exchange rate.

The price per barrel for the week ending Friday was 306.26 yuan, equivalent to \$46.76 based on the exchange rate listed in a footnote. That is up from the previous week's price of 300.91 yuan, or \$46.15 based on the corre-

sponding exchange rate. The ministry did not respond to an email seeking additional details.

"Nobody is changing contracts for now," said one oil trader consulted about the issue who asked not to be identified.

"Oil is a commodity that is traded almost exclusively in dollars. PDVSA's debts, for example, are still denominated in dollars ... and that's how they'll have to pay bondholders," the trader said, referring to the state oil company.

Venezuela's Dicom currency system on Wednesday temporarily suspended the sale of dollars in order to incorporate other currencies.

Late socialist leader Hugo Chavez during his 14-year rule repeatedly vowed to back away from the dollar, which he said was being printed indiscriminately and was destined to lose its place as the world's dominant currency.

But Venezuela remains dependent on the greenback given that it conducts ample commercial trade with the United States both through exports of oil and imports of U.S. food and consumer products.

Sanctions by the administration of President Donald Trump blocked U.S. citizens from buying new debt from Venezuela or its state oil company, but did not directly interrupt import and export operations.

(Source: Reuters)

**Two reasons why the dollar keeps tumbling**

Donald Trump has continued to tout the surging stock market (^GSPC), which continues to flirt with new highs each day, ever since he took office. But over that same period, the US Dollar has continued a steep downtrend. Economists say there are two key reasons behind the plummeting dollar: Trump and the Fed.

**Donald Trump hasn't delivered**

Following Trump's inauguration, there were high hopes for fiscal action in the US, Societe Generale analysts said, which would give the economy a boost.

As shown in the chart below, the dollar rose significantly following Trump's November 2016 election in anticipation of progress on items like infrastructure reform and tax reform.

But with increasing signs of discord, expectations have lessened and the dollar has sold off, as can be seen in the move in the currency since the January inauguration and continuing recently as agenda items get

pushed off further.

Uncertainty sparked most recently by distractions, a long agenda list for Congress, and confusion around the future of key players behind the proposals like economic adviser Gary Cohn have added to existing question marks.

**The Federal Reserve**

And some of the uncertainty and delays surrounding the Trump agenda could be contributing to the recent slower pace of rate hikes at the Fed, according to Societe Generale.

To put this in context, the dollar had a strong run for six years, as shown below. This was largely driven by strong economic performance in the US following the 2008 recession but then propelled significantly higher in 2015 when the US became the first central bank to talk about tightening (raise rates).

However, since then, two things have happened. First, the pace of tightening in the US has been slower

than originally anticipated. At the time of the first rate hike in the US in December 2015, the Fed projected four hikes in 2016. We ended up getting just one. In December 2016, it projected three hikes in 2017. We have gotten only two with now minimal expectations for another before the end of the year.

Second, other central banks have gotten more aggressive about tightening policy.

"The rest of the world hasn't been standing still," according to Societe Generale's Kit Juckes.

In fact, the Bank of Canada has hiked rates twice this year, the European Central Bank (ECB) has communicated its intent to wind down asset purchases, and the Bank of England has also started to talk about rate hikes soon.

In other words, the policy divergence (US in tightening mode while rest of the world not) that was supporting the dollar through the first quarter of this year has ended.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

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## Kurdish referendum: A recipe for disaster

Except for the Israeli regime, no country in the world openly backs the upcoming Kurdish referendum. Far from it, the international community wants Iraq to be preserved as a unitary state - just like Syria. However, this does in no way mean that the United States is also forcibly opposing the independence referendum by the Iraqi Kurds.

Disapprove though it may of the referendum, it is hard to see America abandoning the Kurdish autonomous enclave it fostered in 1991 and has backed ever since. By contrast, Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish officials sound increasingly anti-referendum. Many fear the Kurdish bid may even lead to Turkey's break-up in the long run. They say this referendum is a first step that will also set the stage for Turkey's disintegration.

The United States and some of its allies are known to have plans since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 to create a Greater Kurdistan that would extend to several countries in the region, while the emergence of a Kurdish state is widely perceived as an existential threat to Turkey with a Kurdish population of nearly 20 million. Turkey would suffer the most from the Greater Kurdistan project.

### ■ Turmoil-hit region

Some Kurdish parties are against the move. This referendum is not a development that would work in their favor, much less Turkey or Iraq. The referendum result itself will not mean an automatic declaration of independence as voters are simply being asked about their views on independence from Iraq. The danger is that a "yes" vote will give the KRG the green light to declare independence when circumstances are deemed suitable in the future. Whatever this is, it will lead to further instability in the turmoil-hit region.

The Iraqi parliament has rejected the proposed referendum as unconstitutional and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has vowed the government would never allow the country to be divided. KRG President Massoud Barzani says, however, that he does not recognize the parliament's decision. Still, Baghdad will never allow its Kurdish citizens draw their own borders.

The Turkish government may be a little silent about the referendum, but the risks for regional clashes to take place, which would result in an existential threat for Turkey, are getting increasingly higher. Yet, regional experts and pundits as well as officials in Iraq all anticipate the toughest response from Ankara as they believe that Turkey would be the first to stage even a full-scale war on Kurdistan if the KRG decides to declare an independent state. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has in recent months voiced opposition to the referendum, had chosen to apparently ignore any question about the issue. Any such move by Kurdistan to declare a new world state could even be palatable to Ankara in ways, as it will provide an excuse for Turkey to wage war on Kurdish regions in Southern Turkey and Northern Iraq and occupy parts of the war-ravaged country for an unspecified period of time. The dissident Kurdish population - who conducted an armed insurgency for decades before giving up arms to give politics a chance - has always been a pain in the neck for Ankara. When the Kurdish parties won a meaningful minority in parliamentary elections last year to force Erdogan's party to start a coalition government according to the Constitution, the President and his prime minister resorted to every possible means enshrined in the Constitutional law to dissolve the parliament to have re-elections. Leaving the referendum issue unanswered will not make it go away.

To make things worse, the Kurds are also laying claim to some territories, including oil-rich Kirkuk, which are designated as disputed in the Iraqi Constitution.

Under Washington's directive, the Kurds plan to break ties with Turkey in about 10 to 15 years and move to establish a Greater Kurdistan after getting Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast. Israel's interest in Kurdish independence is the most striking evidence for that. Nobody in Washington or Tel Aviv who seriously knows the history of the region as well as the U.S.-Israeli plans regarding the region would ever bother to discuss such a thing.

### ■ Divide and rule

The pre-planned agenda is to sidestep the unity government in Baghdad and provide further arms and assistance to Kurds after ISIL is fully defeated. This, in turn, will lead to the de facto partitioning of the country. This kind of colonial policy could only mean one thing: Divide and rule. That is precisely what they expect to get from this referendum.

At any rate, Iraq could only exist if their ethnic groups and communities remain politically united as a unitary state. The disintegration of the country and the ramping up of ethnic/religious hostilities will never do that. The U.S. and Israel intend to keep a foothold in the very volatile and vitally important region after ISIL. They want the Kurds to break up Iraq into denominations in line with their strategic aims. If this doesn't happen, Washington and Tel Aviv won't be able to redraw new borders, create easier access to vital resources, and eliminate rivals to their hegemony.

This leads us to the conclusion that the upcoming Kurdish referendum is in fact a preplanned agenda to redraw the map of the Middle East. To fulfill that illusion that will fail certainly, the regime changers are now advocating the referendum unlike the public statements. As per the radical scheme, they want to make sure some allied politicians will continue to weaken the central government in Baghdad by triggering sectarian bloodletting and division.

The good news is that not only Prime Minister al-Abadi and religious/political leaders, but the entire international community have denounced the plan as an attempt to rip the country apart. These are dangerous times for the people of Iraq. They should never allow Washington and Tel Aviv to coax some politicians into ripping their country to shreds under any pretext. The upcoming Kurdish referendum is a recipe for disaster.

(Source: FNA)

**The Iraqi parliament has rejected the proposed referendum as unconstitutional and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has vowed the government would never allow the country to be divided.**

# Has Trump become a leader of Arab nationalism?

By Hassan Nafea

The developments of the crisis with Qatar have revealed the depth of the abyss the entire Arab world is descending into. New aspects and dimensions are being added to it daily. Since this crisis, which surprised the PGCC, the only fort left of the crumbling Arab system, has gone on for more than three months; it seems that it is heading for more complications and escalations rather than towards resolution. This raises fears of the Arab world growing gradually closer to the moment it hits the bottom of the abyss.

Perhaps the strangest thing revealed by the developments of the crisis over the past week was the emergence of Donald Trump's role as the puppet master and his keenness to appear as the only person who can find a way out of the crisis. When the Kuwaiti Emir was hosted at the White House, Donald Trump picked up the phone and made several calls to the leaders of the PGCC countries.

### ■ Globalization of the crisis

Immediately after the outbreak of the crisis, there was a belief, that was prevalent for some time, that the crisis was purely a Persian Gulf crisis and that looking for a way out of it must remain in the hands of the Persian Gulf states. They had also believed that all of the parties' interests would be served by making every effort to prevent the globalization of the crisis. This explains the immediate and automatic welcoming of the Kuwaiti mediation by the official and popular level, followed by the official and popular support for all of the Omani diplomatic measures to support the Kuwaiti mediation in order to make sure all of the efforts to resolve the crisis remained within the Persian Gulf house. However, things unfortunately quickly began to take another turn.

Some began to talk about possibilities of resorting to a military solution and in preparation for this possibility, Qatar decided to activate an old joint defense agreement with Turkey. Symbolic Turkish forces began to fly into Doha. The U.S., Russia, and some Euro-



U.S. President Donald Trump at the Arab Islamic American Summit in Riyadh on May 21, 2017.

## Any resolution of the crisis must reflect the international and regional balances of power fighting on the ground.

pean countries began to actively interfere in the crisis, and each party tried to steer it in their favor.

Despite everyone's keenness to highlight their support for the Kuwaiti mediation and their conviction that the solution should remain in the hands of the Persian Gulf states, all of the evidence suggested that the crisis had actually been globalized and its resolution had been organically linked to all of the conflicts in the region. Therefore, any resolution of the crisis must reflect the international and regional balances of power fighting on the ground.

No one doubts the fact that Kuwait did everything it could to find a Persian Gulf solution to the crisis, as well

as no one doubts that Oman was keen to provide genuine and serious help in this regard. Moreover, the involvement of international and regional parties in the crisis was not a source of new facts as much as it revealed the nature of the crisis as a completely regional and international crisis.

When a crisis this serious breaks out between oil-wealthy countries that have enormous financial reserves, and when this happens at a time when the Arab regional system seems completely naked and unable to preserve its modesty with even a fig leaf, the globalization of such a crisis would not only become extremely easy, but inevitable.

The Kuwaiti Emir headed to the White

House in the context of his efforts to resolve the crisis and this act in itself revealed the impossibility of resolving the crisis by any other means than through the U.S. and its effective participation.

However, the manner in which Trump treated the Kuwaiti Emir's visit sent an implicit message to the concerned parties that the U.S. is keen on some PGCC countries remaining united more than other PGCC countries.

When Trump appears in this manner, he acts like a leader of Arab nationalism who is keen on the unity of the Arabs. This in itself is ironic and expresses the magnitude of the tragedy experienced by the Arab world.

(Source: middleeastmonitor.com)

## Britain's terror challenge will last a generation

By Shashank Joshi

Friday's attempted bombing in London marks a year of rising terrorism in Britain after a long period of relative calm.

It is the fifth terrorist attack in England in 2017, coming on top of three incidents in London and one in Manchester from March to June, with a combined death toll of 36.

Of course, this is still small, relative to the Irish Republican Army campaigns that caused thousands of deaths across Ireland and England through the 1970s and '80s. Even so, you have to go back a quarter century, to the IRA's burst of bombings in 1992, to find a year with as many attacks as this one.

For Britons, who had reason to feel insulated from the recent wave of terror on continental Europe, this is a deeply troubling development.

This period includes both far-right attacks, such as last year's murder of Jo Cox, a member of Britain's Parliament, and radical incidents, such as the bombing of the Manchester Arena.

It comes amid a challenging environment for intelligence and law enforcement officials. According to the UK Home Office, a record 379 people were arrested on terrorism-related offenses in the past 12 months up to June, a 68% rise on the previous year.

The number of prisoners held for terrorism has also swelled by more than one-third to 204, with the vast majority made up of terrorists. Importantly, there have been 19 plots foiled since 2013, six since March -- one a month, on average.

### ■ Upsurge in terrorist activity

One reason for this upsurge in terrorist activity and arrests is the international environment. As early as June 2014, half of the casework of MI5, Britain's domestic intelligence agency, involved Britons who had traveled to Syria to fight alongside ISIS and other radical groups.

More recent data suggest that somewhere between one-half and three-quarters of the 850 Britons who have made that trip have since left the battlefield. This would still leave more than 200 fighters yet to return. As ISIS loses its grip of cities in Iraq and Syria and its so-called caliphate crumbles, the flow will increase across Europe.

The burden on border control, surveillance, interrogation and prosecution will continue to grow. MI5 -- with a staff of 4,000 or so -- has more than 3,000 "subjects of interest."

Of these, only a small minority, 500 or so, are under active investigation, and an even smaller number under active surveillance.

It would be wildly expensive, incredibly demanding and politically difficult to maintain round-the-clock surveillance on several thousand suspects. It would



## As ISIS loses its grip of cities in Iraq and Syria and its so-called caliphate crumbles, the flow will increase across Europe.

take at least two dozen people per suspect, which adds up to more than 72,000 personnel -- almost as many as the number of soldiers in the entire British army. In fact, no modern democracy could tolerate such bloated and intrusive security forces.

However, even if this were possible, we should remember that all of this year's attackers -- in Manchester and on Westminster and London bridges -- might not have been designated for surveillance anyway, as they were either in a larger, 20,000-plus category of past subjects of interest, and in some cases entirely unknown to authorities.

If constantly monitoring 3,000 people is impossible, doing so to 20,000 is doubly so. Mass surveillance is therefore both implausible on democratic grounds and of limited use in practice.

### ■ Explosive device

In addition, this year's terror events have often involved rudimentary and unsophisticated means of attack, such as cars, vans and -- in the case of Friday's attempt -- what appears to be a crude explosive device.

Britain benefits from tight gun control laws and -- thanks to its status as an island -- stronger control than other European states over the cross-border flow of firearms. But ISIS has exhorted its followers to

lower-tech plots.

Also, in at least three cases, the attacker operated alone. These factors together make it hard for intelligence agencies to detect plotting, because there are fewer points of vulnerability, such as contact with a trained bomb-maker or large numbers of fellow plotters.

The challenge for Britain's police officers and spies is in prioritizing between a large number of threats, accepting that some will always slip through the cracks.

It is also to address the broader, ideological environment in which radicalization takes place, and the international context that allows plotters to seek training, contacts and inspiration from abroad.

Contrary to what was claimed by President Donald Trump hours after the attack at the Parsons Green station, Britain has been "proactive" in both these areas. The annual counterterrorism policing budget rose 10% from 2016 to 2017, while the intelligence agencies will have received 1,900 additional staff by 2021.

Even so, the government will be looking to do more. As MI5 Chief Andrew Parker has noted, this is a "generational challenge" that will remain for years to come.

(Source: CNN)

## Taliban spokesman: 'Saudi Arabia, Taliban like brothers'

Taliban spokesman Zabihollah Mojahed said Saudi Arabia was like a brother to the Taliban militants.

By Javad Mohammadi

TEHRAN — MNA — In an interview with the International Desk of Mehr News Agency (MNA), Mojahed shared his views on political issues in Afghanistan as well as position of the Taliban insurgent group in the country.

When asked whether the time was ripe to put an end to ongoing wars in Afghanistan to prevent more bloodshed, the official said "people of Afghanistan are bound to fight since war, rather than being their own choice, has been imposed upon them by foreigners. Afghan people has suffered most from miseries of war. The battle, more than being a means of satisfying personal interests, remains a responsibility and a duty."

"Aliens and outsiders, upon intruding any country, will be naturally confronted with as proved by history," highlighted Taliban spokesman adding that nations of the world are aware that people will fight against foreign military forces in their country in order to regain their freedom and solidarity.

In response to another question on nature of ties between Taliban and Saudi Arabia, especially given that Saudis, as an ally of the U.S., support the militant group who, in turn, claims to be in fight with the US, Zabihollah Mojahed said "we



comment on the issue as far as it is related to us since the Taliban possess their own specific strategy in relation to Islamic countries."

"We never intend to oppose or disagree with any Islamic country, either with a country like Saudi Arabia or other Muslim countries of the region or beyond, because we believe that Muslims are our brothers and we want the Islamic world to move towards unity, not towards war and displacement," he continued.

He explained that some issues pertain to internal affair of countries and never seek conflicts with any Islamic country;

rather, we are after a kind coexistence among Muslims in order to thwart conspiracies hatched by Americans and occupiers.

He was later asked to explain the reason for unchanging policy of Taliban towards Saudi Arabia even though they join hands with the U.S. in the fight against terrorism. In response, the official said "we must make it clear that we are not a terrorist power."

"The U.S. claims Russia's close ties to the Taliban; assuming authenticity of the issue, is it possible to unite these two against the United States in Afghanistan,"

asked the official underlining that Taliban would take advantage of any initiative that helps liberate Afghanistan.

"We explicitly state that we will use all positive options for independence of our country," reiterated the Taliban spokesman.

In reaction to recent statements of President Trump who declared U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and called Pakistan a 'supporter of terrorism' by taking a tougher stance toward Islamabad, Zabihollah Mojahed said "Trump's remarks against Pakistan aim at pleasing India and intend to destabilize the region.

Despite tensions between Pakistan and India, Trump threatens Pakistan to bring itself closer to the Indian government; Because Pakistan is an atomic force in the region and Americans are after its breakdown."

"America's threats are of no value to the Taliban since all U.S. threats are doomed to fail," he emphasized.

On Taliban's solution to end the war and settle peace, the official said Americans are the ones who can answer how long the battle will linger since they have invaded our country and we are merely standing against intruders.

"All we ask is for occupying forces and foreign troops to leave our country since Afghanistan belongs to us," he maintained.

## What is the U.S. seeking in Iraqi Kurdistan?

By Hossein yari

U.S. officials have expressed their opposition to the recent referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan. This opposition comes at the back of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's support for Kurdish independence. The coordination of US and Israeli regional policies is not overlooked. This coordination has reached its peak during the Trump presidency. Therefore, the real US-Israeli approach to Kurdistan's independence is the same. It seems that another complex game is being developed by Washington and Tel Aviv in the region.

An overview of recent US officials' positions on Kurdistan independence can solve the hidden dimensions of the recent puzzle. The White House has called on the Kurdistan Region to "call off" the independence referendum scheduled for September 25, saying that the vote is "particularly provocative and destabilizing" in the disputed areas.

The statement comes as the Kurdistan parliament voted Friday evening to back the referendum at its stated time in the Kurdistan Region and the disputed or Kurdistan areas claimed by both Erbil and Baghdad such as the oil-rich Kirkuk province.

"The United States does not support the Kurdistan Regional Government's intention to hold a referendum later this month," the statement read published on Friday attributed to the press secretary of the White House.

It said that the have repeatedly stated that the vote is "distracting" the efforts to defeat the ISIS group and stabilize the liberated areas. The Kurdish officials, including Peshmerga commanders, have said that the vote would not affect their contribution to the war against the ISIS group.

There are some points about the recent statements by US officials about Kurdistan's independence that need to be addressed.

The dangerous game of Massoud Barzani in Iraqi Kurdistan is still ongoing. The Kurdish independence plan should be analyzed in line with the United States' general plan for the collapse of the countries of the region and the Muslim world. In any case, the independence of the Iraqi Kurdistan is not for the benefit of domestic stability in Iraq and the region. It is not unreasonable that the authorities of the occupation regime of Quds in their latest position have supported the independence of Kurdistan.

Netanyahu's support for the Kurdish independence referendum is highly debatable. Despite of all international oppositions to Iraqi Kurdish region illegitimate plan to hold independence referendum, Netanyahu said in a statement, " Israel supports the legitimate ef-

forts of the Kurdish people to achieve their own state," The controversial referendum on Kurdish regional independence slated for Sept. 25 will see residents of northern Iraq's Kurdish region vote on whether or not to declare independence from the Iraqi state. Baghdad, however, rejects the planned poll, saying it will adversely affect the ongoing fight against ISIL.

It can be concluded that the referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan seems to mean a new turmoil in Iraq, because the issue is disturbing the political situation in Iraq.

This would be the most important opportunity for the continuation of the US presence in Iraq. This is the same demand that Israel is seeking. However, US officials prefer not to express their explicit stance on Kurdistan independence.



Independence of Kurdistan will bring a huge shock to Iraq, and this is the goal that the United States is considering.

The first issue in the implementation of this plan would be to determine the status of Kirkuk. Barzani seeks the annexation of Kirkuk to the Kurdistan region. On the other hand, disputes over the oil fields and the Ceyhan port of the Turkish seaport to the Mediterranean, the problems of the water of the lakes and rivers, as well as the status of ethnic and religious minorities, will lead to a long and deep crisis in Iraq.

This political unification is an opportunity for the United States to regulate its military presence by using the weakness of Baghdad. Hence, in recent months, we have witnessed the expansion of military operations in some parts of Iraq and the prevention of intensification of ISIS operations under various excuses. Meanwhile, the aforementioned crisis puts the United States in perspective about the possibility of Iraqi political leadership. Barzani, on the other hand,

will raise US support for this issue. Because political turmoil is Washington's main concern in the region. The acquisition of America's companionship to Barzani, who faces many opponents in Kurdistan, can lay the groundwork for his rule.

In addition to these issues, Barzani will be able to increase his share of the public budget and reach a new oil agreement, threatening Baghdad with a referendum.

Barzani well knows that the implementation of the referendum without the consent of the Kurdish parties, the approval of the central government and the satisfaction of its neighbors and international powers is impossible. Hence, he has raised the plan with the aim of boosting bargaining and getting a concession from the United States and the central government of Iraq. While Iraq has not yet announced the end of ISIL's work, it must wait for another political crisis!

Another point is that the White House spokesman pointed to the U.S. campaign with ISIL. Is U.S. really trying to destroy ISIL? The answer to this question is negative.

American theorists and strategists have repeatedly told White House officials, whether Democrats or Republicans, that Washington needs "destructive agents" in pursuit of their political and cultural strategies in the Muslim world and the Middle East. Distracting factors are groups or individuals whose ultimate outcome is to benefit the United States. ISIL's operations in Iraq can also be analyzed in the same vein. The symmetry of the ISIL operation in Iraq with the victory of its Syrian army and the defeat of Saudi Arabia's rivals is not coincidental.

Also, the issue of Kurdish independence is not accidental at this time! The issue of the independence of Kurdistan was raised at the same time as ISIL's defeat in Iraq.

Under such circumstances, America's claim to help the Iraqi government to confront ISIL remains a bitter satire. In the eyes of US officials, ISIL should eliminate Muslims in the Muslim world and themselves be destroyed in the same geographical area. The United States has only one red line in its face with ISIL, which is the expansion of ISIL's operations from the Middle East to the West. European officials fear the return of thousands of ISIS members to the EU and the Schengen area.

Therefore, the United States does not seek to eliminate ISIL. Washington is targeting ISIL in the Middle East. As noted above, there is a common approach between the United States and Israel. In analyzing the recent speeches by White House officials, this issue should be considered.

## Germans' Dissatisfaction with the Electoral Sstructure

By Ali Alemi

While there is short time remaining to the German general elections in September, there is this general discontent of the German citizens about the electoral structure in Germany. The indirect election of the Chancellor by German citizens is the subject of most of their dissatisfaction. This issue is not focused solely on the upcoming elections in Germany, but has been a subject of controversy in all the elections held in this country, since the chief executive and executive body is determined by the Party or the victorious coalition in the election.

The results of the latest Yugo poll show that most German citizens are calling for the electoral system to be reformed in their country, in which the Chancellor is directly elected by citizens. On this basis, German citizens are calling for the immediate correction of their electoral structure. Recent polls indicate that 62 percent of German citizens also welcomed the German Chancellor to be directly elected by citizens. Twenty-six percent of the citizens saw such reforms in their electoral system with suspicion.

In accordance with the current situation, the German Parliament (Bundestag) must convene and endorse the chancel-

lor after the end of the election and a maximum of one month thereafter. At this meeting, the main candidate of the party that won more than the other parties is elected as the Chancellor.

However, there seems to be no intention at present to reform the electoral structure in Germany. Currently, the main competition for the chancellorship in Germany is going on between Angela Merkel and Martin Schultz. Some German citizens oppose the establishment of the Christian Democrats in power while demanding Merkel's continued presence at the top of their country's political and executive equations.

The opposite is also true. Some German citizens are Angela Merkel's opponents and demand the presence of Martin Schulz in their country's top chancellor, but at the same time they believe that the Social-Democratic Party can't overcome the economic and social crises in their country.

Germany's electoral structure is also defined in such a way that the presence of Merkel at the head of the pyramid entails the victory of the Christian Alliance coalition and the presence of Martin Schulz in the Supreme Council requires the victory of the Social Democrats and the Greens in the German general election.

## Malaysia 'hard place' for Shia Muslims

By Mohammad Sajad Vaez Livari

An eyewitness has given an account of the dire situation governing the lives of Shia Muslims in a country where, as the writer would agree, religion is a matter of political as well as state interference.

Respect for other people's beliefs and religious rituals is one of issues that should be observed by all humans and one of the major goals of international organizations, especially the United Nations. Despite all the investments going into the international organizations specializing on human rights, each year, we hear deplorable news of certain governments spoiling their people's rights and bounding them. Normally, when speaking about a country like Malaysia, general public opinion inclines to think about a peaceful and lovely nation that respects everyone regardless of their ideology.



That is how this country looks like at the first glance, however, when one starts to dig a little deeper, soon you will realize that not everything is as good as what was initially thought. It might be hard to believe that there are very harsh consequences for preaching faith. In addition to limitations of preaching, there are also limited religious freedoms for certain sects as well as limitations on propagating religious practices. Malaysia is an Islamic country with a population of 30 million, where almost 60 per cent of the population are Muslims and more than 300,000 people are Shia.

From 1984 to 1986, the Shias in Malaysia enjoyed social rights and were recognized by the law and the government. However, in 1996 the Islamic Sects Council of Malaysia recognized Shi'ism as a diversion from true Islam and therefore, discrimination against Shias was given a legal face and things started to get bad. It was clearly announced that the Muslims in Malaysia were only allowed to follow the Sunni school of thoughts, effectively forbidding and subjecting to punishment by law promoting any other religion as by books or other forms of media. Almost 11 out of 14 states of Malaysia have implemented this law, causing a wretched life and destitution for the Shias in Malaysia.

With the law in effect, the Malaysian government officials are fully invested with authority to show hostility to Shia religious campaign as well as religious clergies. In Malaysia, Shias are being monitored every day by the Malaysian intelligence and security agents, which give mandate to the police or the Salafist/Wahhabist extremists to brutally suppress any religious gatherings by the Shias. Conversion from any Islamic sect to Shi'ism is not accepted and the person is prosecuted under the law. Shias are not even allowed to keep their own religious books in their homes.

They have even been denied government subsidies. Since Malaysian government worked laboriously to prevent the growth of Shia Islam in this country, they have planned several conferences in research centers and educational departments that have led to clashes and violence among the audience. The Shias have been proclaiming to be followers of the Shafe'i sect to avoid prosecution by the government, the Salafists and the Wahhabists. Since the law has been in effect, the Salafists and the Wahhabists have been given strong voice in the Malaysian politics.

It was after these fatwas that the United Malays National Organization, the largest political party in the Malaysian parliament announced that they were waging attempts to get the approval of a law that mentions that the only Islamic sect should be recognized by the Constitution should be Sunni'ism. The harsh conduct of the Malaysian government has rooted in many reasons. The rise of Salafist and Wahhabist ideologies and fanatics in South East Asia and especially in Malaysia in this decade, funded by Saudi financial resources is one of the main reasons of religious profiling of Shias in this country. Many Shias have been arrested and tortured by the government. The Saudis have significant influence on Malaysia and its officials. Earlier this year, it was revealed and not long ago, the Panama Papers were published which provided the documents that the Saudi king had given \$700mn to the Prime Minister of Malaysia 'as a gift'. This huge lump sum of money shows how tight the relations are between the heads of these states. Another strong campaign against Shi'ism in Malaysia is being waged by the media. Anti-Shia propaganda has been in rise during present decade thank to the Saudi - Wahabist clerics and the free flow of cash. Religious programs on television have been portraying Shias as a minority which is the fan of bloodshed, militancy and homosexuality. Meanwhile some Sunni clerics have condemned such reactions to Shias and have called for unity, however it had not found eager audience to help bring a halt to the government's conduct.

It seems that if the international community fails to get involved actively in this humanitarian case in Malaysia, we will sit to see other tragedies like that in Myanmar, this time not in a country that Muslims are in minority, but rather in a society where 60 per cent of population are Muslims and is being ruled under so-called Islamic law and claims to be one of the countries with freedom of expression and human rights. The situation looks quite different than they appear from the outside. This is certainly the case with Malaysia.

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# 7 ancient beauty secrets

Thousands and Thousands of years ago, women had no lavish choice of products and so had to depend solely on mother nature to maintain their beauty. While we can attribute beauty to mostly genes, there are also a few ancient beauty secrets that have been passed down from one generation to another and that have remained popular within countries until today. Suijing perfectly the recent movement of "Going Green", here are a few highly effective ancient beauty secrets and the countries they are mostly known for.

## ■ Egypt: Ground lupin bean (Termes) and rose water for face

This one is very rarely known outside Egypt and it dates back to the Pharaohs time. One of the easiest and cheapest recipes you can ever use for your face and which ensures an increased glow as well as lightening dark spots and evening facial color.

### ■ How do I use it?

Mix 1 table spoon dried/ground lupin with half a table spoon of rose water and put immediately on your face evenly. Wait until it dries completely and start removing with luke warm water. Hello fresh face!

## ■ Iran: Kiseh and sefidab as a body scrub

Kiseh and sefidab are an essential part of the Iranian bath time routine. Sefidab is a white-colored substance made of animal fat and naturally occurring minerals. Paired with a kiseh, scrubbing glove or mitt, sefidab is an excellent exfoliator and peel for the entire body.

### ■ How do I use it?

While showering, rub some sefidab on to your scrubbing mitt and thoroughly scrub the body removing dead skin and dirt. Use sefidab before washing up with soap or the effects will be diminished. The result is beautiful, smooth skin without spending a trip to Tehran!



## Neutral henna is applied on hair for strength and shine.

### ■ Jordan: Dead Sea Mud for skin cleansing

Mud contains minerals, and minerals are very good for skin clarity and cells renewals, but the Dead Sea Mud in particular is renowned for its rich mineral content which makes it highly effective.

### ■ How do I use it?

Women in Jordan cover their bodies with mud from the Dead Sea and follow it with a dip in the salty water. If you don't have the luxury of jumping right into the Dead Sea, you can purchase the mud (Mostly dried) from anywhere in the world. Simply mix it with rose water and use it on face or body.

### ■ Morocco: Argan oil for hair (and just about everything)

I can't speak highly enough of this

one. Used widely by Moroccans as well as many celebrities, Argan oil is called the Liquid Gold for a reason. It is obtained by crushing the kernels of the argan tree and it is only produced in Morocco. The fatty acids and vitamin E seeps into the hair and make it lustrous and smooth.

### ■ How do I use it?

Simply apply 100% natural Argan oil as a moisturizer all over your body or as a deep nourishing hair mask before bed. Allow to seep into the scalp overnight before shampooing in the morning.

### ■ Turkey: Red henna for hair

Red Henna is an ancient sacred secret for Turkish women. While red henna is used to paint on hands and feet with designs during traditional weddings,

Neutral henna is also applied on hair for strength and shine.

### ■ How do I use it?

Mix Dried Henna with lemon juice and apply to the scalp about an hour before shampooing your hair thoroughly. Add coffee for a darker tone, or cinnamon for a lighter shade. If you are applying for the first time, best to consult an expert though.

### ■ Lebanon: Almond oil for stretch marks

Almond as well as Olive oil are widely used in Lebanon for multi-purposes. Almond oil is rich in vitamin A, B and E, which are great for skin health. In fact, most skin care products have these vitamins loaded in them. The oil helps maintaining moisture levels of the skin and gets absorbed quickly without blocking the pores.

### ■ How do I use it?

Apply on skin, face or hair as a moisturizer especially if you are pregnant, it will help widely with reducing as well as preventing stretch marks or scars.

### ■ Egypt: Sugar waxing for hair removal

Another one from Egypt is this ancient beauty tip. This actually is a lot easier than it sounds to create, and is so effective at not only removing unwanted body hair, but also at exfoliating dead skin.

### ■ How do I use it?

Simply mix together 2 cups sugar (white), with 1/4 cup lemon juice and 1/4 cup water, then boil in a pan. Let cool and when safe enough to use on your body (make sure you test it first with your fingers, then again if your inner wrist), just spread on an area until nice and thin, and pull off in the opposite direction of the hair growth. This will leave you with less in grown hairs and less irritation.

(Source: curlsandglows.com)

## A simple way to balance your emotions and revitalize your body

By Pippa Biddle

The concept of turning a human into a pincushion makes some people squeamish, but the practice clearly appeals to many—after all, acupuncture has been around for more than 3,000 years and is currently practiced almost everywhere in the world. Rooted in key principles of traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture is based on the idea of creating and sustaining balance within the body.

The two sides are yin, which is nourishing, receptive, and protective, and yang, which is hard, dominant, and energetic. The circulation between these forces is the qi. Traditionally, an acupuncturist inserts fine needles into acupoints to affect the qi and find balance.



### ■ A growing interest

The practice's prevalence in the West has been on the rise in recent years: Between 2000 and 2012, the number of people receiving acupuncture in the U.S. increased by 50 percent, and the number of licensed acupuncturists doubled. Despite this steady climb in popularity, the science behind acupuncture still isn't well understood by the nonmedical public.

While the points touched by an acupuncturist might seem random to most of us, researchers have found acupoints are packed full of neurovascular structures, which means that inserting a small sterile needle into a specific point in your leg actually can trigger a reaction in your eye.

### ■ A difference in perspectives

Because of its far-reaching impact and medical difference in perspectives applications, the practice of acupuncture in the U.S. is tightly controlled. Licensed acupuncturists go through years of education and often pair their studies with other forms of traditional medicine and therapy.

The practitioner observes a patient's breath, posture, and how they interact with their environment in order to come up with a plan for helping the body run more efficiently. He says the process is similar to "the way that a naturalist learns to see the tree in relation to the surrounding forest."

The language acupuncturists and traditional medical practitioners use to describe their work often follows this model of tying into greater forces and systems, but the actual mechanisms of the practice of acupuncture are pretty concrete.

For a long time, acupuncture was the weird thing mainstream medicine gave the side-eye, but deep study of why it works and where it works best has formed a link between the traditional and the contemporary.

### ■ Acupuncture and infertility

In vitro fertilization is often the best choice for people who are struggling with infertility but want to carry a child. However, IVF is also very expensive, and each cycle comes with an average

success rate that starts around 40 percent for patients under 35, then plummets steeply as the age of the patient climbs. IVF patients can go through multiple cycles, costing thousands of dollars each, and still not carry a child to term. So it should come as no surprise there is ample curiosity about traditional and alternative medical practices that may increase the likelihood of IVF being successful.

In a review of randomized controlled trials published by Fertility and Sterility in 2012, researchers found that acupuncture at key points in the IVF process can improve clinical pregnancy rates and live birth rates. Chen describes the process in less clinical terms, returning to a nature analogy: "Even if acupuncture cannot be used to plant the seeds," by which he means implanting fertilized eggs, "it can be used to create strong soil" by increasing blood flow and improving digestion, which increases the likelihood of a healthy pregnancy.

### ■ Acupuncture and pain relief

Acupuncture has been proven to help in other areas, as well, such as by reducing pain and potentially strengthening the immune system in patients suffering from chronic illness. In cases where significant medical intervention is the only way forward, acupuncture can help relieve some of the side effects. A 1997 National Institutes of Health panel found evidence of acupuncture working effectively to treat postoperative and chemotherapy-induced nausea. "While the acupuncture is not being used to treat the cancer, it is being used to treat the side effects," Chen says, which keeps patients more comfortable and can reduce their need for pain medications.

(Source: greatist.com)

## How much water do you really need to drink when you exercise?

By Robert J. Davis

We're always hearing how important it is to drink enough water. Among other things, we're told to down at least eight glasses of water per day and "to stay ahead of your thirst" before, during, and after exercise to avoid dehydration, which impairs performance and is harmful to your health. But it turns out all this advice lacks sound scientific backing.

Research shows we usually get enough water through foods (which supply about 20 percent of our water) and beverages (including coffee, soda, and alcohol)—and that for most of us, thirst is a reliable indicator of when we need more fluid, even during exercise.

Dehydration isn't always the threat it's portrayed to be. According to a recent study (and contrary to popular belief), it's generally not a cause of exercise-related muscle cramps or heat illness. And one study involving competitive cyclists found mild dehydration doesn't impair exercise performance. In fact, drinking only when thirsty resulted in better performance than chugging constantly. Makes sense since we're pretty sure no one loves the feeling of fluid sloshing around in their stomach mid-workout.

### ■ Hydration

Though you want to make sure to consume enough water, especially if you're older or exercising in the heat, a bigger problem may be drinking too much during exercise, according to some studies and this report authored by a panel of 17 experts. If you take in so much fluid your body can't get rid of the excess through sweating or urination, sodium levels can become dangerously low. The resulting condition, known as hyponatremia or water intoxication, can cause headaches, vomiting, confusion, seizures, and, in some (extreme) cases, death. Not ideal. In the past, hyponatremia occurred mainly in slower marathon runners, but it's also showing up in people who participate in activities such as hiking, half-marathons, and hot yoga.

One common method for determining your hydration status is to check the color of your urine. We often hear pee should ideally be pale yellow and that the darker it is, the more you're dehydrated. But this advice, too, is misleading.



**If you take in so much fluid your body can't get rid of the excess through sweating or urination, sodium levels can become dangerously low. The resulting condition, known as hyponatremia or water intoxication, can cause headaches, vomiting, confusion, seizures, and, in some (extreme) cases, death.**

In a review of the evidence, researchers debunked the notion that urine color is an accurate marker of hydration. Part of the problem is that some foods (such as beets and carrots) can affect the color of urine, as can certain vitamins. The same goes for some medications and dietary supplements. You also need to consider the amount of water present in the toilet bowl, especially considering the water-saving options popular today. Besides, striving for pale pee could prompt you to drink too much, overhydrate, and develop hyponatremia.

The experts who authored the report on hyponatremia say the best way to ensure you're properly hydrated

before, during, and after exercise is to "drink palatable fluids when thirsty." In other words, if you feel that sandpaper feeling in your mouth, just grab a drink.

If for you "palatable fluids" include plain water, that's your best bet. If not, you can opt for flavor drops or powders. One downside is these options often contain artificial sweeteners and other additives. If you're looking for something more natural, add slices of fruit such as lemon or orange, vegetables like cucumber, or sprigs of herb.

Sports beverages, which contain fluids, carbohydrates, and minerals known as electrolytes, can also be useful for athletes engaged in vigorous exercise for more than an hour, especially in hot weather. But for most of us, they offer no benefits over water and contain extra calories and sugar we don't need.

Coconut water, which has definitely had its moment as the trendy drink of choice and is often touted as an alternative to sports drinks, is high in the electrolyte potassium. But coconut water typically contains less sodium than sports drinks, making it less effective for anyone doing prolonged, vigorous exercise. While some people prefer coconut water's taste to that of regular water, coconut water also has more calories, and research shows it offers a minimal difference in hydration in humans.

Despite the hype surrounding other special waters storming the scene lately (alkaline, distilled, oxygenated, or vitamin-enhanced), there's little evidence they're more beneficial than regular water when it comes to hydration, athletic performance, recovery, or general health—for now.

### ■ The bottom line

Don't overthink it. Staying hydrated isn't rocket science. Listen to your body. If you feel thirsty, grab some water. One 20-ounce water bottle should do the trick for activities under 60 minutes. For longer efforts, shoot to sip seven to 10 ounces of fluid every 10 to 20 minutes to stay properly hydrated. If you do flavor your water for exercise, try fruits, vegetables, or herbs, or look for natural (and few) ingredients in electrolyte mixes. Most importantly, instead of stressing out over hydration, simply replace daily sugary drinks like soda with water.

(Source: greatist.com)

## The nutrition value in white raisins vs. black raisins

By Karen Curley

Black raisins and white raisins, derived from dried purple or white grapes, are top-notch snacks when it comes to nutrition. Not only are raisins healthy, they're convenient and inexpensive. Just 1/4 cup of these small, wrinkly fruits gives you a daily recommended serving of fruit. Black and white raisins yield about the same amount of nutrients. They are also low-calorie and contain antioxidants, fiber and minerals.

### ■ Raisins and antioxidants

Antioxidants play a role in slowing down the aging process by repairing cells in

the body and strengthening the immune system, according to the Harvard School of Public Health. The Oxygen Radical Absorbency Capacity score is a way of measuring antioxidants in fruits and vegetables. The higher the score, the more antioxidant activity is in the food. Raisins scored the highest amount of antioxidant potential with 2052 ORAC units in 1/2 cup, according to Doctor Tory Parker of Brigham Young University. According to a study published in "Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry" in October 2007, golden raisins have a higher antioxidant capacity than sun-dried black raisins do.

### ■ Calories and fat

The calories in 1/4 cup of white and black raisins are about the same, with 125 in white and 123 in black raisins. Both white and black raisins have negligible amounts of fat. Their low calorie and zero fat content make raisins a healthy, on-the-go snack option.

### ■ Fiber and carbohydrates

If you're counting carbs, raisins may not fit into your diet plan. Both white and black raisins have almost 33 grams of carbohydrates in 1/4 cup. They also provide 1.5 grams of fiber per serving, which can help you get your recommended daily fiber

intake. The American Heart Association recommends that adults eat a minimum of 25 grams of fiber per day to help prevent stroke and heart disease.

### ■ Serving ideas

When preparing breakfast, top your cereal or oatmeal with raisins to get one daily fruit serving. Flavor your garden salad and yogurt with them or add raisins to any muffin, cake or pancake batter for healthy antioxidants. Mixing raisins with peanuts, cashews, almonds and other dried fruits or seeds gives you a healthy, between-meal snack.

(Source: livestrong.com)

## Lorestan province's tourist numbers on rise

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — The number of tourists who visited natural and historical attractions in Lorestan province, western Iran, rose nearly 30 percent during the first four and a half months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2017) in comparisons to the same period last year, the province's tourism chief says.



People visit Falak-ol-Aflak Castle in Khorramabad, the capital city of Lorestan province.

Touristic, historical and cultural spots across Lorestan attracted some 4.2 million people during the above-mentioned time span, ISNA quoted Gholamreza Soleymani as saying on Wednesday.

The official put the number of night stays at province's hotels, guesthouses and eco-lodges at over 650,000, an increase of ten percent year on year.

The number comprises both foreign and domestic sightseers as a whole, he said without providing further details.

Bisheh Waterfall, Snow Tunnel, Poldokhtar ponds, Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, Soltani Mosque of Borujerd, Shapouri Bridge, and Shirez Canyon are amongst tourist sites of the mountainous province.

## 'Trump slump': Tourists numbers to the U.S. declining

More people are travelling than ever before, yet the number of people choosing the U.S. as a destination is declining — America is bucking the trend and not in a good way.

According to new insights from the U.S. Travel Association, visitor numbers contracted in four out of the seven months for which data is available this year, fueling fears that Donald Trump's policies are putting tourists off visiting the U.S.

The declines were steepest in February (6.8 percent) and March (8.2 percent) immediately after the so-called "Muslim ban" came into force, which prevented citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen) from entering the U.S.

They are hardly massive markets, but the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) reckons that in the week the order came into effect, the U.S. lost \$185 million in travel bookings. By the end of the year it predicts the policy will have cost the U.S. more than \$330 million in lost revenue from Middle Eastern travellers alone.

(Source: The Telegraph)



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Sagarmatha National Park

Sagarmatha in Nepal is an exceptional area with dramatic mountains, glaciers and deep valleys, dominated by Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world (8,848 m).

A World Heritage site, the Sagarmatha National Park is home to several rare species such as the snow leopard and the red panda.

Encompassing the infinitely majestic snowcapped peaks of the Great Himalayan Range, the chain of mountains including the world's highest Mt. Sagarmatha (Everest) and extensive Sherpa settlements that embody the openness of SNP to the rest of the world.



A view of the Sagarmatha National Park in Nepal

The carefully preserved natural heritage and the dramatic beauty of the high, geologically young mountains and glaciers were recognized by UNESCO with the inscription of the park as a world heritage site in 1979.

The property hosts over 20 villages with over 6000 Sherpas who have inhabited the region for the last four centuries. Continuing their traditional practice of cultural and religion including the restriction of animal hunting and slaughtering, and reverence of all living beings. These practices combined with indigenous natural resource management practices, have been major contributing factors to the successful conservation of the SNP.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Iran's handicraft exports hit record high in March-July

**T** She made the remakes during the opening ceremony of the 18th Isfahan handicrafts exhibition.

The value of handicrafts exports, excluding traditional jewelry and suitcase trade, added up to \$237m in the past [Iranian calendar] year, witnessing 36.3-percent year-on-year hike, Mahmoudian told the Tehran Times in August.

She expected that Iran's annual exports of handicrafts to reach \$1b by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021).

Traditional ceramics, pottery, handwoven cloths as well as precious and semi-precious gemstones were amongst the most handicrafts exported, she said, adding Iraq, Afghanistan and Germany were the main importers of Iranian handicrafts with the U.S. and the UK recently resumed their imports.

Based on the data released by Iran's Costumes Administration, the country's non-oil exports during the four-month period totaled \$13.459 billion.



Photo shows a collection of Iranian potteries that are meticulously inlaid with enamel

## Georgia's Pololikashvili to steer UNWTO as next secretary-general

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — Zurab Pololikashvili, the current ambassador of Georgia to Spain, has been elected as the forthcoming secretary general of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Pololikashvili was elected on Thursday by consensus at the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly, which was held in Chengdu, China from September 11 to 16.

He will assume office for a four-year period starting in January 2018, replacing

Taleb Rifai, who has held the position since 2010.

Pololikashvili secured nomination for the post at 105th UNWTO Executive Council held in Madrid in May, he was minister of economic development of Georgia in 2009-10 and deputy minister of foreign affairs in 2005-06, UNWTO website reported.

Over 1,300 delegates from more than 130 countries attended the biennial UNWTO meeting, which focused on sustainable development and tourism.



Zurab Pololikashvili (L front), newly-elected secretary-general of the UNWTO, hugs his predecessor Taleb Rifai, in Chengdu, China on Sept. 14, 2017.

## Boroujerdi-ha House lures travelers with plenty of traditional charm



**TOURISM** A photo collection depicts parts of the interior and façade of Boroujerdi-ha House, a 19th-century merchant mansion in Kashan, central Iran.

Locally known as Khaneh Boroujerdi-ha, the traditional house plays host to dozens of foreign and domestic travelers each day.

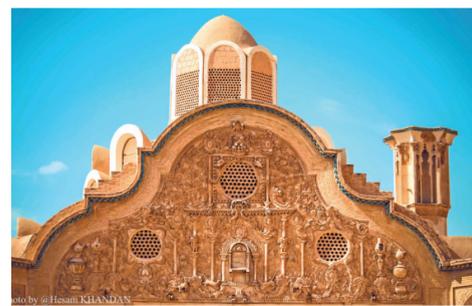
It bears aesthetic significance due to its rich architectural layout and designs that includes abundant molded ornaments, intricate plasterwork, murals, glasswork, mirrorwork, and woodwork.

Elaborately decorated, its courtyard is laid out around a central fountain pool which sits below ground level in order to help reduce the ambient temperature.

The mansion originally consisted of two sections, an inner part dedicated to only immediate family and an outer part where guests are entertained but today the latter is usually open to the public.

An alluring destination, Kashan boasts a bunch of architectural wonders, an atmospheric covered bazaar, boutique hotels and a UNESCO-registered garden.

Many travelers opt to bypass the delightful oasis city that is sprawled on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir on their journeys between Tehran and Isfahan provinces.



## How apps can make your vacation better

Forget just taking pictures with your phone's camera — there are far more creative ways for travelers to use technology to capture memories from their trips, says Dennis Crowley, the co-founder and executive chairman of Foursquare, a company behind two location apps that have 50 million global users a month.

"Between various apps and social media platforms, you can preserve experiences of your travels beyond the sights you see," he said.

Here, his tips on how:

### ■ Make a playlist

Find yourself wishing that you knew the name of that song playing during dinner on the last night of your weekend in New England? Next time you're traveling, said Mr. Crowley, use a music app such as Shazam or Spotify to pinpoint the songs you hear during your trip, and then make a playlist of those songs.

### ■ Allow your photo tools to access your location

Various photo tools, such as Google Photos, give you the ability to organize your photos by location. That way you'll always remember where you were and at what time — if you went on a multicity road trip, for example,



these tools will group photos by each city.

"It's easy for a vacation to become one big blur, especially as time passes, and organizing your pictures by location is a way to capture the individual parts," Mr. Crowley said.

### ■ Log your stops

Your friend is headed to Tokyo and wants your recommendations from your recent trip there on where

to eat great ramen, but you're struggling to remember the names.

It's a problem many travelers have, but you can have your best recommendations at the ready by using a check-in app during your trip, such as Foursquare Swarm, or using a notes app, where you jot down the spots you're hitting.

### ■ Stick to a single social media platform

Whether it's Instagram, Snapchat or Facebook, it's best to use only one social media platform, Mr. Crowley said. "After all, you should spend most of your time experiencing your own trip, instead of being distracted by creating content, which in some platforms disappears after 24 hours," he said.

### ■ Ask for help

Whenever he's traveling Mr. Crowley uses Twitter to ask friends, colleagues and the general public for their ideas on topics such as their favorite running apps or if they have tried the bike share program in the destination where he is.

"Looking back at my timeline and reading the responses I get brings me right back to that trip," he said.

(Source: The New York Times)

## Portugal heading for another record year for tourist arrivals

**LISBON (Reuters)** — The number of foreign tourists visiting Portugal jumped around 13 percent in January-July, putting the country firmly on track for another record year for tourism, which has been a key driver of its economic recovery since a 2011-14 debt crisis.

The National Statistics Institute said on Thursday in its monthly data on the hotel sector that over 7.1 million foreign visitors stayed in Portuguese hotels through July, which helped drive total hotel revenues over 17 percent higher to 1.8 billion euros (\$2.14 billion). Portugal's arrivals growth outpaced

those in neighboring Spain, which chalked up a 11 percent rise in the same period, according to official Spanish data.

Despite a deceleration in July from June levels, both the tourist arrivals and revenues so far this year maintained the pace of growth seen in 2016, when tourist arrivals

exceeded 10 million for the first time.

August is traditionally the strongest month by far for holiday-making in Portugal, which lures foreign visitors with its beaches, historic sites and some of the lowest prices for wining and dining in western Europe.

# Iranian professor, colleagues develop Google Glass app, helps ASD children

A prototype software application, to be used with the optical head-mounted display Google Glass, has been designed as a social-skills coach for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

A new study published in the open-access journal *Frontiers in Robotics and AI* finds that the wearable technology can recognize conversational prompts and provide the user with suitable responses in return. Moreover, children find it easy to operate and enjoy using it.

ASD is a life-long condition that affects 1 in 68 people. A defining feature of ASD is difficulties with social communication - which can include initiating and maintaining conversations with others.

## Autism disorder

"We developed software for a wearable system that helps coach children with autism spectrum disorder in everyday social interactions," says Azadeh Kushki, an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering at the University of Toronto, and Scientist at the Bloorview Research Institute, Toronto, Canada. "In this study, we show that children are able to use this new technology and they enjoy interacting with it."

Children with autism spectrum disorder are often drawn to technological devices and find them highly motivating tools for delivering interventions designed to help them. The problem with



Azadeh Kushki

existing technology, however, is that using human-to-computer interaction to teach social skills can have the opposite effect to its goal, in that the user becomes socially isolated.

The "interesting thing about our new technology is that we are not trying to replace human-to-human interactions; instead, we use this app to coach children who are communicating with people in

**The problem with existing technology, however, is that using human-to-computer interaction to teach social skills can have the opposite effect to its goal, in that the user becomes socially isolated.**

real-world situations," explains Professor Kushki.

## Everyday interactions

"Children can practice their skills outside of their

normal therapy sessions and it can provide them with increased independence in everyday interactions."

Professor Kushki and her colleagues developed the app, named Holli, to be used with wearable technology such as Google Glass -- a head-mounted display in the shape of eyeglasses. It listens to conversations and prompts the user with an appropriate reply.

For example, if the user is greeted by a person who says 'Welcome', Holli will provide various responses to choose from, such as 'Hey', 'Hello' or 'Afternoon'. When Holli recognizes the user's response, the prompts disappear and Holli waits for the next exchange in conversation.

To assess the usability of the prototype software, the researchers asked 15 children with ASD to be guided by Holli when interacting socially. They saw that Holli could complete most conversations without error, and that children could follow the prompts to carry on a social interaction. In fact, Holli was often able to understand what the user was saying before/he she finished saying it, which helped the conversation to flow naturally.

(Source: EurekAlert)

## Cats are liquid not solids, award-winning science study claims

An academic paper which argued that cats can be regarded as liquid and solid because of their ability to adopt the shape of their container has won a major prize.

The eye-catching work has been rewarded with an Ig Nobel prize.

The awards are handed out to scientists that come up with improbable research that make people laugh and think.

The paper, called 'On the Rheology of Cats' argues that household pets should be seen as both of liquid and solid because of their special skill.

It was written by French academic, Marc-Antoine Fardin, from Paris.

It was inspired by pictures of cats on the internet, showing the animals in any kind of container from sinks to sweet jars.

"This actually raised some interesting questions about what it means to be a fluid and so I thought it could be used to highlight actually serious topics at the center of the field of rheology, the study of flows," he said, reported the Guardian.

Other winners this year included one for a discovery that taking up the didgeridoo reduces snoring, and another for how contact with a live crocodile affects a person's willingness to gamble.

(Source: Yahoo News UK)

## Our ability to recognize letters could be hard-wired into our brains

Back in the 1960s, the linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky claimed that the human brain is hardwired with an innate understanding of language. This became known as the Universal Grammar theory, and was offered as an explanation of the speed at which children tend to learn their first language. Genetically, the human mind is predisposed to making sense of words and arranging them in a logical sequence as we overcome the initial disorder of learning a language.



Of course, not everybody agreed with Chomsky's linguistic theory, just as not everybody agrees with the political positions that he has latterly become better known for. One psychologist, Herbert Terrace, went so far in his opposition to Chomsky's ideas that he conducted an experiment in which he tried to teach American Sign Language to a chimpanzee.

But new research suggesting a link between written language and something more fundamental in our brains could mean we need to look again at Chomsky's ideas.

The study, published in the journal *Royal Society Open Science*, found that participants could guess what sounds were represented by letters from unfamiliar alphabets at rates better than you would expect from simple chance. If we have an innate ability to understand writing, then perhaps language more generally is something found much deeper in brains than other learned skills.

The new research considers how our minds work when we try to decipher the composition of sound, according to letters, like when we work out the difference between Chomsky and Chimpky. What is that causes us to associate the letter K with the sharp sound it represents? Is it because of the physical shape where sharp points protrude from a straight and upright stem? Does that visual representation touch upon something hardwired into our memories on a par with universal grammar? Or, on the other hand, is this just how we are taught to interpret the letter K?

(Source: The Conversation)

## How 230 endangered parrots survived hurricane Irma in Puerto Rico

When Hurricane Irma started barreling toward Puerto Rico, people across the island launched into their storm preparations. Edwin Muniz and Tom White were among them, but they had a somewhat different plan for dealing with the storm than most, seeing as they also had to ensure the safety of a bunch of bright-green individuals covered in feathers. That's because their jobs involve protecting 230 endangered Puerto Rican parrots.

The species, which has been protected for five decades, is the only parrot found on U.S. soil. Native residents nicknamed the foot-tall, red-foreheaded bird iguaca because of their chattiness. Muniz, a field supervisor at the Caribbean Ecological Services Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), called the parrot "an icon" of the island.

So the FWS began tending to the birds, which now make up three wild populations and two captive populations—including the parrots Muniz and White needed to get through Hurricane Irma's wrath at the aviary in El Yunque National Forest, in the northeast corner of the island.

Captive populations are a conservation tool because they produce birds to be released into the wild, and their success rates are higher than those of wild populations. The "captive population is a critical and integral component of our overall species recovery program," said White, an FWS parrot biologist who has worked on the island for 18 years.

(Source: Newsweek)

## NASA's Cassini vanishes into Saturn, after ending a journey of 20 years

NASA's Cassini spacecraft, the intrepid robotic explorer of Saturn's magnificent beauty, ended a journey of 20 years on Friday like a shooting star streaking across Saturn's sky.

By design, the probe vanished into Saturn's atmosphere, disintegrating moments after its final signal slipped away into the background noise of the solar system. Until the end, new measurements streamed one billion miles back to Earth, preceded by the spacecraft's last picture show of dazzling sights from around our sun's sixth planet.

The "signal from the spacecraft is gone and, within the next 45 seconds, so will be the spacecraft," Earl Maize, the program manager, announced in the control room at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory here, just after 04:55 A.M. local time.

## End of mission

His eyes tore and his voice wavered as he said, "I am going to call this the end of mission." During a news conference later, he said, "To the very end, the spacecraft did everything we asked."

Aseel Anabtawi, an engineer, reacts on Friday to confirmation of the Cassini spacecraft's final signal at mission control at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. Credit Pool photo by Jae C. Hong

The team members, some of whom had spent decades on the mission, started hugging each other when news of the spacecraft's demise arrived.

Never again would Cassini send home the images and data that inspired discoveries and wonder during the probe's 13 years in orbit around the ringed planet.

"For me, there's a core of sadness, in part in thinking of the breakup of the Cassini family," said Linda Spilker, Cassini project scientist. "But it's both an end and a beginning as these people go off and work on other things."

The mission for Cassini, in orbit since 2004, stretched far beyond the original four-year plan, sending back multitudes of striking photographs, solving some mysteries and upending prevailing notions about the solar system with completely unexpected discoveries.

## Quintessential mission

"Cassini is really one of those quintessential missions from NASA," said Thomas H. Zurbuchen, NASA's associate administrator for science. "It hasn't just changed what we know about Saturn, but how we think about the world."

NASA's two Voyager spacecraft flew through the Saturn system in 1980 and 1981. Voyager 1, in particular, provided a close-up look at Titan that was en-



thrilling and maddening. Larger than the planet Mercury, Titan was enshrouded in haze. The atmosphere was thicker than Earth's and contained methane and other carbon-based molecules. What lay below, no one knew.

The orbiter became Cassini, built and operated by NASA; the Titan probe was named Huygens, a project of the European Space Agency. The Europeans approved Huygens in 1988. A year later, NASA gave the go-ahead for Cassini.

(Source: The NYT)

## Binge drinking could trigger permanent brain damage among adolescent students: study

As per a new research by European researchers, binge drinking during adolescence and early adulthood can cause distinctive changes in the young still developing brain, and may even lead to brain damage.

The consumption of an excessive amount of alcohol in a short period of time is not recommended for anyone, but the detrimental effects of this popular behavior may occur in the young brain far more quickly than in older brains.

A study recently published online in *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience* found that binge drinking altered the resting brain activity of some college students and may

have led to cognitive difficulties.

## Effects of binge drinking

A "number of studies have assessed the effects of binge drinking in young adults during different tasks involving cognitive processes such as attention or working memory," said López-Caneda. "However, there are hardly any studies assessing if the brains of binge drinkers show differences when they are at rest, and not focused on a task."

Students who reported binge drinking within the last 30 days displayed higher measurements of activity known as beta and theta oscillations in the right tem-

poral lobe and bilateral occipital cortex brain regions compared with students who never binge drank.

In other words, binge drinking could lead to decreased response to stimuli, which means that students who gulp down copious amounts of alcohol in a short amount of time may not understand the information coming their way, especially compared with their alcohol-abstaining classmates.

Although we already know that alcohol abuse can cause brain damage, these results suggest that for some drinkers damage onset can begin after only a few

binge-drinking instances.

The key factor that seems to be contributing to brain changes in college drinkers is the plasticity of their young and still-developing brains. Some research has suggested that the brain continues to develop well into young adulthood and doesn't stop changing until an individual reaches 25 years of age.

## Devastating alcohol

The brain is especially susceptible to damage as it changes. This plasticity is why alcohol can be devastating to fetuses and completely alter their still undeveloped brains.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Brand of Aladdin Travel Services Registered Globally

The letter "R" is a part of identity of logo of Aladdin Travel Services according to the rules and regulations of World Trade Organization (WTO).

Commercializing brand with the globally registration is taken after according to WTO's rules and regulations and also Trips Agreement.

So far, more than 160 countries in the world signed and sealed Trips Agreement, so that Aladdin Travel Services registered its trademark in Switzerland. The global registration of Aladdin Trav-



el allows to use the characteristics of ® and also insert this sentence as identity of land and territory of the brand.

Statistics of the United National Conference for Trade and Development

(UNCTAD) show that the companies managed to register their brands globally are of successful companies.

The report put the valuation of Aladdin Travel brand up to the present time

at over five billion toman, the value of which has increased with the globally registration of its trademark.

It should be noted that Aladdin Travel is an independent travel management company that specializes in global consolidation of corporate travel needs, vacation travel, student travel, and meeting planning. Since 1973, Aladdin Travel has provided exceptional service, memorable experiences, and excellent value for corporate, meeting, student, and leisure travelers throughout the world.

## Parsian Bank, Exim Bank of Korea Sign Agreement on Cooperation

Exim Bank of South Korea signed an agreement with Parsian Bank of Iran on long-term financing the bank for occupation and aid to production and progress of the country.

According to the reports, Parsian Bank is one of 12 Iranian banks which signed agreement with the Exim Bank in the framework of the Central Bank of Iran's

agreement. The South Korean side is to provide 8-million-euro credit line for Iranian banks to finance developmental projects.

The agreement can have good and positive impact on the economic growth. It can provide mid-term financing for Iran to buy goods or services from South Korea to implement infrastructural projects in produc-

tion or industry sectors, and in return, Iranian bank can pay back the money in ten years.

The agreement also activated short-term FOREX facilities for the projects which are around \$100m. The credit can be used for buying essential goods.

According to the bank's communique, the interest rate of the credit will be around 18 percent

## Sepehr Sepehri Named NIDC Chief

By the order of Managing Director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Ali Kardor, Sepehr Sepehri was named as the Chief Executive and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National

Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC), the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

Given the above issue, Sepehri replaced Heidar Bahmani as the new chief

executive of NIDC.

Of his salient achievement, it should be referred to the planning and adopting necessary strategies in order to increase efficiency and output of drilling

industry, reducing the waiting times optimally and also adopting necessary measures to train skilled and the most experienced manpower, the report added.

## Iran's population is aging, take Alzheimer's seriously: expert

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — Iran's population is aging and within the next three decades one quarter of the population will be old, director of Iran Alzheimer's Association said on Saturday.

Estimates indicate that some 700,000 individuals are diagnosed with Alzheimer's in Iran so the disease should be taken seriously, Mehr quoted Masoumeh Salehi as saying.

Early detection of Alzheimer's disease would provide opportunities for early intervention, symptomatic treatment, and improved patient function, she added.



Therefore, Salehi explained, it is important to raise awareness about the disease and its causes in order to reduce, delay or prevent symptoms.

Iran Alzheimer's Association is a nongovernmental facility which offers people who suffer dementia or Alzheimer's diseases rehabilitation services to provide them and their family members with living conditions, she added.

"The association is now giving services to more than 4,000 patients," she highlighted.

Dementia develops when the parts of the brain that are involved with learning, memory, decision-making, and language are affected by any of various infections or diseases. The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, but there are numerous other known causes. Most of these causes are very rare.

Dementia is irreversible when caused by degenerative disease or trauma, but might be reversible in some cases when caused by drugs, alcohol, hormone or vitamin imbalances, or depression. Therefore, it is very important to evaluate dementia symptoms comprehensively, so as not to miss potentially treatable conditions. The frequency of "treatable" causes of dementia is believed to be about 20 percent.

Every 3 seconds someone in the world is affected by Alzheimer's. Worldwide there are some 50 million people who suffer from dementia, which includes Alzheimer's. This is more than the population of Spain and the number is steadily increasing. Within the next 20 years the number of people affected by dementia will likely double. More than 130 million people will be afflicted by 2050. This is according to data from the latest World Alzheimer's Report published annually by Alzheimer's disease International (ADI), the worldwide federation of Alzheimer's associations in London.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### 1960's English

A: Hey man... I really like your **pad**. Those lava lamps are **far out**! Thanks for letting me **crash** here tonight.

B: It's no problem, **brother**! I wanted a pad where people could come, listen to music and just **hang loose**, you **dig** what I'm saying?

A: I dig it man! We could **throw** a **bash** here and make it a really **happening scene**!

B: Yeah **man**, that would be **groovy**! Hey, I gotta **split** for a while, are you OK here by yourself?

A: Don't worry about me brother... You go take care of business.

B: Alright, **peace out**.

#### Key vocabulary

**pad**: a place where a person lives

**far out**: the latest, cool

**crash**: sleep (informal)

**brother**: buddy, informal way to call a close friend

**hang loose**: relax

**dig**: appreciate, like

**throw**: hold (a party)

**bash**: a big party

**happening scene**: an extremely exciting moment

**man**: an informal way to call a friend

**groovy**: really cool

**split**: leave here

**peace out**: see you later

#### Supplementary vocabulary

**a gas**: a really fun time

**hip**: very cool

**nifty**: cool, neat

**bitchen**: awesome, really cool

(Source: irlanguage.com)

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

# Females outnumber males in Iran's 2017 university entrance exam

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — As the final results for the Iranian university entrance exam, also known as Konkur, was announced on Saturday, it was revealed that females outnumber males in gaining admission to higher education by nearly 50,000, equaling 30 percent.

Out of 378,706 participants who were admitted to the universities nationwide 213,884 are females and 164,822 are males, YJC quoted Hossein Tavakkoli, an official with Sanjesh Organization which is in charge of holding the university entrance exam, as saying.

This year some 930,208 individuals including 548,434 females and 381,774 males took part in the exams. Students in the three main groups of mathematical sciences, experimental sciences, and human sciences and two other groups of arts and foreign languages compete against one



another for the best result possible as their future is mostly determined by how they perform at the exam. While by comparing the figures

pertaining to the number of females and males taking part at the exam over the past two years, female participants usually outnumber the male both in sitting the exam and gaining admission to the universities more males would often manage to be among the top 10 scorers in three main groups of mathematical sciences, experimental sciences, and human sciences.

The fierce contest which normally engage students since they start high school is one of the major scientific competition in the country. Many students and their parents spend four years of their resources and energies on getting ready for the university entrance exam.

Despite the fact that universities have grown in number considerably over the past two decades still the cut-throat competition heats up every year as the number of seats at the top public universities are limited.

## September 16: International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer

The ozone layer, a fragile shield of gas, protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the rays of the sun, thus helping preserve life on the planet.

The phase-out of controlled uses of ozone depleting substances and the related reductions have not only helped protect the ozone layer for this and future generations, but have also contributed significantly to global efforts to address climate change.

Furthermore, it has protected human health and ecosystems by limiting the harmful ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth.

Caring for all life under the sun This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Montreal

Protocol. As part of the anniversary celebrations, the Ozone Secretariat will launch a communication campaign ahead of World Ozone Day to be marked on 16 September 2017.

The #OzoneHeroes campaign to be launched on 14 September will seek to celebrate the major accomplishments of the Montreal Protocol in protecting the ozone layer and the climate, to increase public recognition of the success and impact of the Protocol, and to generate further support for the Protocol and its new mandate to phase down climate-warming hydrofluorocarbons under the Kigali Amendment, adopted in 2016.

(Source: un.org)

## \$6m allocated to improve life for people with disabilities

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — The Welfare Organization of Iran has allocated 230 billion rials (about \$6 million) to improve facilities for people with disabilities in the current Iranian calendar year, which started on March 21, 2017, the organization's deputy director Hossein Nahvinejad announced.

"We are planning to make houses and cars of 11500 people with disabilities more appropriate," he explained.

Making cities more accessible for people with limited mobility to have more social activities will inspire them and help them have a stronger presence in the society, he added.

The budget allotted to guarantee enhanced accessibility for people with disability living in urban areas was some 118 billion rials (nearly \$3.4m) for the past Iranian calendar

year (March 2015-March 2016).

"We provided facility for houses and cars of 8000 people with disabilities during the past year," he said.

He also said a comprehensive plan on protection of the rights of persons with disabilities is being implemented by the organization.

According to the plan, organizations and municipalities shall find solutions to mobility and accessibility challenges in order to create more facilities for the physically challenged.

The law enforce accessibility improvements for handicapped and wheelchair-bound citizens navigating sidewalks with providing sidewalk installations, repairs and curb cut-ins and handicapped parking availability for proximity to a building's entrance, space for loading and unloading wheelchair equipment.

## 'Alarm bells we cannot ignore': World hunger rising for first time this century

The number of hungry people in the world has increased for the first time since the turn of the century, sparking concern that conflict and climate change could be reversing years of progress.

In 2016, the number of chronically undernourished people reached 815 million, up 38 million from the previous year. The increase is due largely to the proliferation of violence and climate-related shocks, according to the state of food insecurity and nutrition in 2017, a report produced by five UN agencies.

The study also noted a rise in the number of people globally who are chronically hungry, from 10.6% in 2015 to 11% in 2016.

Cindy Holleman, a senior economist at the Food and Agriculture Organization, said it was hard to know whether the increase was a blip or marked the reversal of a long-term trend. However, she said the rise in conflict and climate change – factors that rank alongside economic slowdown, which makes food hard to access for poor people, as key drivers of food insecurity – was cause for concern.

"Whether it has been a blip and it's going to go back down again, we're not sure," said Holleman. "But we're sending warning signals. We are sending a message that something is going on."

"If you look at the 815 million [chronically undernourished] people, 489 million or 60% of them

are located in countries affected by conflict. Over the last decade we've seen a significant increase in conflict. We also see that conflict combined with climatic effects is having a significant effect."

A foreword to the report, written jointly by the heads of the five UN agencies, said: "Over the past decade, conflicts have risen dramatically in number and become more complex and intractable in nature."

"This has set off alarm bells we cannot afford to ignore: we will not end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030 unless we address all the factors that undermine food security and nutrition. Securing peaceful and inclusive societies is a necessary condition to that end."

Oxfam's head of food and climate change, Robin Willoughby, said:

"This must act as a wake-up call for international leaders and institutions to do more to resolve the catastrophic cocktail of climate change and conflict around the world. Global failure to tackle these issues affects us all, but it's the world's poorest who will suffer most."

The report is the first UN global assessment of food security and nutrition following the adoption of the sustainable development goals, which aim to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030.

Progress has been made on reducing global

hunger, which affected more than 900 million people at the turn of the century. Over the past year, however, hunger has reached an "extreme level" in many parts of the world, with famine declared in South Sudan in February, and Yemen, north-east Nigeria and Somalia considered on the brink.

People living in countries affected by protracted crisis are nearly two and a half times more likely to be undernourished than those living elsewhere, the report said.

Fueled partly by extreme weather patterns resulting from El Niño, food security "deteriorated sharply" in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and in south-east and western Asia, said the report.

Chronic child malnutrition continues to fall, but at a slower rate in some regions, the report found. Wasting remains a threat to the lives of 52 million children.

Overweight and obesity rates in children are rising in most regions, and in all regions for adults. Such "multiple burdens" for malnutrition is a "cause for serious concern", said the report.

Africa has the highest levels of severe food insecurity, affecting 27.4% of the population – almost four times that of any other region. Higher food insecurity was also observed in Latin America, rising from 4.7% to 6.4%.

(Source: The Guardian)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Average precipitation almost at normal levels

Iran's average precipitation has almost hit the normal levels since the beginning of the current water year (Sept. 22, 2016) up until April 2, director for drought and crisis management department of Iran's Meteorological Organization said.

Over the aforesaid period Iran got some 180.4 millimeters of rain while the long-term average precipitation levels are reported to be 183.8 millimeters and last year's precipitation levels hit 184.2 millimeters, ISNA news agency quoted Shahrokh Fateh as saying.

"Relatively speaking we are 1.9 percent and 2.1 percent short of long-term average precipitation and last year's precipitation levels respectively," Fateh said.

## بارش کشور به حد طبیعی رسید

رئیس مرکز ملی خشکسالی و مدیریت بحران هواشناسی کشور گفت: وضعیت بارشی از ابتدای سال آبی جاری به حدود طبیعی خود رسیده است. شاهرخ فاتح در گفت و گو با ایسنا وضعیت بارش کشور از تاریخ اول مهر ۹۵ تا ۱۳ فروردین ۹۶ را تشریح کرد و گفت: کل کشور در این بازه زمانی ۱۸۰٫۴ میلی متر بارش دریافت کرده و از آنجا که میانگین بارش بلند مدت کشور ۱۸۳٫۸ میلی متر و در سال گذشته ۱۸۴٫۲ میلی متر بوده است؛ نسبت به بلندمدت ۱٫۹ درصد و نسبت به سال گذشته ۲٫۱ درصد کاهش بارش داشته است.

## ENGLISH PROVERB

### An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth

■ **Explanation**: the idea that someone who has harmed another person should be punished by having the same thing done to them

■ **For example**: I cannot be placated by paltry excuses of reparation! An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; this I demand from all who have wronged me.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Doze off

■ **Meaning**: to go to sleep, especially when you did not intend to; drop off, nod off

■ **For example**: I must have dozed off.

## ENGLISH IDIOM

### Better late than never

■ **Explanation**: when someone does something late, this remark means that it is better to do it late than not do it at all

■ **For example**: Do you know what time it is? You promised you'd come early to help me - but better late than never I suppose!

# North Korea says seeking military 'equilibrium' with U.S.

North Korea said on Saturday it aims to reach an "equilibrium" of military force with the United States, which earlier signaled its patience for diplomacy is wearing thin after Pyongyang fired a missile over Japan for the second time in under a month.

"Our final goal is to establish the equilibrium of real force with the U.S. and make the U.S. rulers dare not talk about military option," North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un was quoted as saying by the state news agency, KCNA.

Kim was shown beaming as he watched the missile fly from a moving launcher in photos released by the agency, surrounded by several officials.

"The combat efficiency and reliability of Hwasong-12 were thoroughly verified," said Kim as quoted by KCNA. Kim added the North's goal of completing its nuclear force had "nearly reached the terminal".

North Korea has launched dozens of missiles under Kim's leadership as it accelerates a weapons program designed to give it the ability to target the United States with a powerful, nuclear-tipped missile.

After the latest missile launch on Friday, White House National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster said the United States was fast running out of patience with North Korea's missile and nuclear programs.

"We've been kicking the can down the road, and we're out of road," McMaster told reporters, referring to Pyongyang's repeated missile tests in defiance of international pressure.

"For those ... who have been commenting on a lack of a military option, there is a military option," he said, adding that it would not be the Trump administration's preferred choice.

Also on Friday, the United Nations Security Council condemned the "highly provocative" missile launch by North Korea.

It had already stepped up sanctions against North Korea in response to a nuclear bomb test on Sept. 3, imposing a ban on North Korea's textile exports and



capping its imports of crude oil.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, echoed McMaster's strong rhetoric, even as she said Washington's preferred resolution to the crisis is through diplomacy and sanctions.

"What we are seeing is, they are continuing to be provocative, they are continuing to be reckless and at that point there's not a whole lot the Security Council is going to be able to do from here, when you've cut 90 percent of the trade and 30 percent of the oil," Haley said.

U.S. President Donald Trump said that he is "more confident than ever that our options in addressing this threat are both effective and overwhelming." He said at Joint Base Andrews near Washington that North Korea "has once again shown its utter contempt for its neighbors and for the entire world community."

North Korea's latest test missile flew over Hokkaido in northern Japan on Friday and landed in the Pacific about 2,000 km (1,240 miles) to the east, the Japanese government said.

It traveled about 3,700 km (2,300 miles) in total, according to South Korea's military, far enough to reach the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam, which the North has threatened before.

"The range of this test was significant since North Korea demonstrated that it

could reach Guam with this missile," the Union of Concerned Scientists advocacy group said in a statement. However, the accuracy of the missile, still at an early stage of development, was low, it said.

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson called on China, Pyongyang's only ally, and Russia to apply more pressure on North Korea by "taking direct actions of their own."

Beijing has pushed back, urging Washington to do more to rein in North Korea.

"Honestly, I think the United States should be doing ... much more than now, so that there's real effective international cooperation on this issue," China's ambassador to the United States, Cui Tiankai, said on Friday.

"They should refrain from issuing more threats. They should do more to find effective ways to resume dialogue and negotiation," he said, while adding that China would never accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state.

North Korea staged its sixth and most powerful nuclear bomb test earlier this month and in July tested long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching at least parts of the U.S. mainland.

Last month, North Korea fired an intermediate range missile that also flew

over Hokkaido into the ocean.

Warning announcements about the latest missile blared in parts of northern Japan, while many residents received alerts on their mobile phones or saw warnings on TV telling them to seek refuge.

The U.S. military said it had detected a single intermediate range ballistic missile but it did not pose a threat to North America or Guam.

Global equities investors largely shrugged off the latest missile test by North Korea as shares on Wall Street set new highs on Friday.

## Differences over direct talks

Trump has promised not to allow North Korea to threaten the United States with a nuclear-tipped missile.

Russia's UN ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, said the United States needed to begin talks with North Korea, something that Washington has so far ruled out.

"We called on our U.S. partners and others to implement political and diplomatic solutions that are provided for in the resolution," Nebenzia told reporters after the Security Council meeting. "Without implementing this, we also will consider it as a non-compliance with the resolution."

Asked about the prospect for direct talks, a White House spokesman said, "As the president and his national security team have repeatedly said, now is not the time to talk to North Korea."

South Korean President Moon Jae-in also said dialogue with the North was impossible at this point. He ordered officials to analyze and prepare for possible new North Korean threats, including electromagnetic pulse and biochemical attacks.

The United States and South Korea are technically still at war with North Korea because the 1950-53 Korean conflict ended with a truce and not a peace treaty. The North accuses the United States, which has 28,500 troops in South Korea, of planning to invade and regularly threatens to destroy it and its Asian allies.

(Source: Reuters)

## Protesters clash with police in St. Louis

The United States Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets during clashes with protesters in St. Louis early on Saturday after a white former policeman was acquitted of murdering a black suspect.

A peaceful rally over Friday's not guilty verdict turned violent after police confronted a small group of demonstrators - three years after the shooting of another black suspect in the nearby suburb of Ferguson stirred nationwide anger and debate.

Officers fired tear gas as people broke windows at a library and two restaurants and threw bricks and water bottles at officers. Protesters also threw rocks and paint at the home of St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson, said Acting Police Commissioner Lawrence O'Toole.

Nine city officers and a state trooper were injured and at least 23 people were taken into custody, he said.

Former city policeman Jason Stockley, 36, was found not guilty of the first-degree murder of Anthony Lamar Smith, 24, shot to death on Dec. 20, 2011.

After the ruling, around 600 protesters marched from the courthouse through downtown St. Louis, chanting "No justice, no peace" and "Hey hey! Ho ho! These killer cops have got to go!" Some held "Black Lives Matter" signs.

### No progress since Ferguson

Ferguson became the focal point of a national debate on race relations after white officer Darren Wilson

shot dead black teenager Michael Brown on Aug. 9, 2014. Protests and clashes broke out after a grand jury cleared the officer, giving rise to the Black Lives Matter movement.

After Friday's verdict, one group of demonstrators tried to climb onto Interstate 40 but was blocked by police. Another group blocked an intersection by sitting down in the street for six minutes of silence.

After most protesters drifted away, a smaller group of people police described as "agitators" lingered on the streets in an upscale neighborhood near the mayor's house. The group taunted officers who arrived in riot gear by the busload.

"Reports of bricks thrown at police. That's not protest. That's a crime. We stand behind our officers. This violence won't be tolerated," Missouri Governor Eric Greitens said on Twitter. Smith was shot five times in his car after trying to flee Stockley and his partner, following an alleged drug deal, authorities said.

Prosecutors said that during the pursuit, Stockley could be heard saying on an internal police car video he was going to kill Smith.

At Stockley's direction, his partner, who was driving, slammed the police cruiser into Smith's vehicle and they came to a stop. Stockley then approached Smith's car and opened fire with his service weapon, court documents said.

The former policeman believed Smith was armed, defense attorneys said, and a gun was found in the car. But prosecutors argued Stockley planted the weapon



and that the gun had only Stockley's DNA on it.

Stockley's attorney, Neil Bruntrager, said his client was relieved at the verdict.

St. Louis prosecutor Kimberly Gardner called on protesters to avoid violence.

"I understand the verdict has created anger and frustration for many in our community," she told reporters at the courthouse.

Stockley waived his right to a jury trial, allowing the judge to decide. He left the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department in 2013 and was arrested last year.

Smith's family settled a wrongful death lawsuit against the city for \$900,000 in 2013, according to Al Watkins, an attorney for Smith's fiancée, Christina Wilson.

(Source: AP)

## Teen suspect arrested in London Underground attack

British police have made a "significant" arrest in the manhunt for suspects a day after the London Underground blast that injured more than two dozen people, authorities said.

Police said that an 18-year-old man was arrested by Kent police in the port of Dover on the English Channel on Saturday.

He is being questioned under the Terrorism Act. Dover is a major ferry port for travel between Britain and France.

"We have made a significant arrest in our investigation this morning," Deputy Assistant Police Commissioner Neil Basu said but he warned that the investigation was ongoing and the threat level remains at "critical," meaning a government task force that includes the security services believes another attack is imminent.

Basu's comments suggested that other suspects may still be at large.

The 18-year-old suspect has not been charged or identified. Police say he will be brought to a south London police station for more questioning.

Police have not said if he is suspected of planting the bomb or if he played a supporting role in a possible plot.

Authorities had increased the "terrorism" threat level to "critical" late on Friday, after a bomb partially exploded during the morning rush hour.

Police are combing through closed-circuit TV images and have extensively studied the remains of the device without giving details about it.

But images from inside the Underground car after the blast showed that the device was contained in a bucket with wires hanging out of it and that it was concealed in a plastic shopping bag.

The train hit by the bomber at Parsons Green station in southwest London had video cameras in each car, and the London Underground network has thousands of cameras at the entrances to stations and along the labyrinth of subterranean and aboveground passageways leading from the entryway to the trains.

Officials have hinted there may be

more than one person involved, but have not released details in what is termed an ongoing and covert inquiry.

Prime Minister Theresa May said raising the threat level to its highest point was a "proportionate and sensible step." Police called on the public to be vigilant.

The soldiers will add to the armed police presence on Saturday at public places to deter attacks after the Friday morning rush-hour blast on a District Line train. No arrests have been made.

The explosion and an ensuing stampede at the station injured 29 people. None of the injuries, some of them burns, were believed to be life-threatening.

The bomb went off around 8:20am on Friday as the train, carrying commuters from the suburbs — including many school children — was at Parsons Green station.

The station was reopened on Saturday, officials said, restoring some normalcy to London's transport network after a day of severe disruption.

There was no sign of panic among

Londoners and the weekend life of the city continued undeterred by the raised threat level.

Officials said the bomb was intended to do grave harm to commuters. Analysts said the injuries would have been far worse had the entire device exploded.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group, claimed responsibility for the attack, which it said was carried out by an affiliated unit.

Britain has endured four other attacks this year, which have killed a total of 36 people. The other attacks in London — near Parliament, on London Bridge and near a mosque in Finsbury Park in north London — used vehicles and knives.

In addition, a suicide bomber struck a packed concert hall in Manchester in northern England, killing 22 people. That attack in May also briefly caused the threat level to be set at "critical".

(Source: agencies)

## U.S. urges Kurds to call off independence vote

Borders and military forces would remain in their current positions, and Baghdad would authorize Kurdistan to continue exporting the oil that it currently ships through Turkey in breach of the federal constitution.

Finally, Kurdish parties would take part in the Iraqi government and the 2018 elections.

The vote, which was backed by 65 legislators out of 68 present, was to give a legal framework to the referendum that has also stirred protests from neighboring states, especially Turkey.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has warned the vote could prove "a very, very bad thing" for the Iraqi Kurds, whose economy is heavily dependent on oil exports via a pipeline running through Turkey.

Turkey's National Security Council will meet on September 22 to decide its official position.

The oil-rich province is disputed by Baghdad and Erbil and home to diverse communities including Arabs and Turkmens who oppose the vote.

Iraqi Kurdistan, whose people were brutally repressed under slain dictator Saddam Hussein, won autonomy following his removal in a U.S.-led invasion, under a 2005 constitution which set up a federal republic in Iraq.

(Source: agencies)

## Bangladesh protests Myanmar airspace violations

Dhaka has protested the repeated violations of its airspace by Myanmar as tensions escalate between the two sides on the crackdown on Rohingya Muslims, which has triggered an exodus of refugees into Bangladesh.

The Bangladeshi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Friday that it had summoned the charge d'affaires of Myanmar's embassy in Dhaka to complain about a three-time encroachment on its airspace over the last week.

"Bangladesh strongly protested the instances of violation of her airspace by Myanmar military drones and helicopter on 10, 12 and 14 September 2017," the ministry said in a statement.

"Bangladesh expressed deep concern at the repetition of such acts of provocation and demanded that Myanmar takes immediate measures to ensure that such violation of sovereignty does not occur again," it added.

The ministry also warned that any more "provocative acts may lead to unwarranted consequences."

Myanmar's presidential spokesman responded on Saturday that there was no evidence of any trespassing, and that the matter was, however, being investigated.

Ties between the two neighbors soured after Myanmar's military launched a deadly crackdown on the minority Rohingya community in Rakhine State, forcing hundreds of thousands of Muslims to flee to Bangladesh.

According to latest estimates, about 391,000 Rohingya refugees have crossed into Bangladesh since the violence erupted three weeks ago, making it one of the fastest growing refugee crises in recent years.

Since August 25, the Myanmar military has been attacking Rohingya Muslims and torching their villages in Rakhine since October 2016. The attacks have seen a sharp rise since August 25, following a number of armed attacks on police and military posts in the troubled western state.

There have been reports of massacres and ethnic cleansing by Myanmar's soldiers on the Muslim population in Rakhine.

### Humanitarian catastrophe

The Guardian reported on Friday that Myanmar's government has seized control of relief operations in Rakhine State.

The daily quoted senior Human Rights Watch officials as saying that the move could become permanent, putting an end to vital food and health programs run by international aid bodies.

"The humanitarian catastrophe" created by the Myanmar military "has been multiplied by the authorities' unwillingness to provide access to humanitarian agencies," said Philippe Boloquin, deputy director for global advocacy at Human Rights Watch.

"The United Nations, ASEAN, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation need to ramp up the pressure on Burma (Myanmar) and provide more assistance to Bangladesh to promptly help Rohingya and other displaced people," he added.

A World Food Program report concluded two months ago that more than 80,000 children may need treatment for malnutrition, and that there had been a sharp rise in "extreme" food insecurity.

Bangladesh is struggling to provide relief for the huge influx of exhausted and hungry refugees, some 60 percent of whom are children.

Myanmar's government brands more than one million Rohingya Muslims in the country as "illegal immigrants" from Bangladesh, launching a deadly and brutal crackdown on them. Rohingya Muslims, however, have had roots in the country that go back centuries. They are considered by the UN the "most persecuted minority group in the world."

Meanwhile, Amnesty International and border officials in Bangladesh say the Myanmar military has planted landmines on the path of the fleeing Muslims, causing many of them to sustain serious wounds or lose their body organs.

The government, which has come under intense international pressure over its brutal crackdown, claims 432 people have been killed in the military offensive, but the UN and rights groups have given much higher figures.

Three days into the outbreak of the violence, the European Rohingya Council said between 2,000 and 3,000 Muslims were killed in Rakhine state. The UN also said last week that 1,000 people may have died.

Myanmar's Leader Aung San Suu Kyi has so far ignored calls from the international community to stop the violence. The Nobel Peace Prize winner has done almost nothing to end the violence in Rakhine. She recently claimed that the widespread reports of killings and rape against the Rohingya were fake news.

(Source: Reuters)

## Messi secretly happy Neymar was sold to PSG - shock report

Barcelona star Lionel Messi is reportedly secretly happy Neymar was sold to Paris Saint-Germain this summer.

PSG pulled off the most shocking transfer deal in football history when they activated Neymar's £198million Barcelona buyout clause last month.

The Brazil international, despite being part of one of the world's most glamorous teams, had his head turned by the prospect of a new challenge in Ligue 1.

It was reported at the time that Lionel Messi was desperately sad to see Neymar depart, having struck up a close bond with his fellow South American.

But Spanish outlet Don Balon claims the 30-year-old is actually secretly happy Neymar left - as it is helping him rediscover his best form. Barcelona have bounced back from a stuttering start under new boss Ernesto Valverde to win their first three La Liga games.

And Messi also inspired them to a 3-0 Champions League victory over Serie A champions Juventus in midweek.

Don Balon acknowledge how sad the Barcelona No10 was when Neymar left.

But they say he now feels liberated knowing that he, rather than the Brazilian, is the club's most important asset.

Despite Neymar not quite reaching the same lofty heights at Messi, there was an expectancy that he would one day usurp the Argentinean as the club's main man.

Yet those fears are now no longer an issue with Messi flourishing as a result. The 30-year-old supposedly thinks Valverde would have opted for a different system had Neymar decided to snub PSG's advances. But Messi will never know with the Brazilian plying his trade in France instead.

(Source: Express)

## Ex-U.N. chief Ban expects safe Pyeongchang 2018 despite nuclear tension

Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is confident that next year's Winter Olympics in his native South Korea will be safe and successful, despite tensions surrounding North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Less than five months before the start of the Games in Pyeongchang, world powers are grappling for a response to a series of nuclear tests by the North and its repeated test-firing of ballistic missiles, of which the latest flew over Japan and far out into the Pacific on Friday.

"Even though there is heightened tension on the Korean peninsula, I'm sure that this Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games will be a great success, with a great deal of stability," Ban told the Olympic Channel in an interview.

"I'm quite confident that we will have a very safe, very peaceful and harmonious Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang next year," Ban was elected head of the International Olympic Committee's ethics commission on Thursday as the Olympic body strives to improve its image amid a string of corruption cases.

The Winter Olympics will run from Feb. 9-25 next year.

(Source: Reuters)

## Brazilian tennis player says no racist intent behind gesture

Brazil's Guilherme Clezar says there was no racist intent behind an offensive gesture he made during a Davis Cup match against Japan in Osaka.

After successfully challenging a line call during his match against Yuichi Sugita, Clezar stretched his eyes in the direction of a line judge.

The 24-year-old said later he "never had the slightest intention to be aggressive, racist, prejudiced".

Clezar lost 6-2 7-5 7-6 (7-5) and Japan lead the World Group play-off 2-0. In a post on the Brazilian Tennis Confederation Facebook page, Clezar said: "We have been extremely well received here and I have an excellent relationship with all tennis players from many different countries on the circuit."

"Even though I didn't mean any prejudice, I recognise the gesture doesn't ring true with the attitudes of respect, enthusiasm, solidarity, emotion and many other things that sport means to us and I want to express my regret and my most sincere apologies."

Earlier this summer, Premier League football club Chelsea apologised to "our Chinese fans as well as Chinese people" after Brazilian player Kenedy posted offensive social media comments before a pre-season match in the country.

(Source: BBC)

## Rooney decision was easy, claims Mourinho

Manchester United "legend" Wayne Rooney deserved the freedom to make the decision over his own future, according to Jose Mourinho.

Rooney left United in July, rejoining Everton having spent 13 years at Old Trafford and, over that time, becoming the club's all-time record goalscorer.

And though Mourinho has previously claimed he would have preferred Rooney stay at United, the former Chelsea manager has acknowledged it was an easy decision to let the 31-year-old - who is likely to start for the Toffees at Old Trafford on Sunday - return to Goodison Park.

"I think it is easy. When the legend decides. I think so [it is the legend's choice]," Mourinho told Sky Sports.

"That way it is easy because you don't have to think a lot."

"You just have to respect the player's desire, and what they decide. And when they're a legend they deserve that freedom of choice." While Rooney's return to Everton has yet to spark Ronald Koeman's side's start to the campaign, Mourinho's United sit atop the Premier League, having accumulated 10 points from a possible 12 on offer.

(Source: Soccerway)

# Russian athletes suspected in Sochi doping ring to face charges soon

The first charges against Russian athletes suspected of having been part of a doping ring at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi may soon be issued by the International Olympic Committee, the head of a committee investigation has said.

Denis Oswald, the head of one of two Olympic commissions looking into allegations of state-sponsored doping in Russia, said on September 15 that evidence gathered so far will be combined shortly with the results of tests conducted to determine whether urine- and blood-sample bottles had been tampered with at the Sochi Games.

"We feel we have found a number of elements to charge a certain number of athletes" as soon as the results from testing on some 50 drug samples are completed, Oswald said at a meeting of the Olympic Committee in Lima, Peru.

Oswald did not say how many athletes could be involved, but said the first hearings would start next month. He said his commission had authority only to ban athletes from the Olympics and cannot impose other sanctions.

"We can only disqualify athletes. We have been working closely with winter sports federations and they will be ready as soon as we have made our decision to go on with their own procedure," he said.

Oswald's investigation was triggered by a 2015 World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report that found widespread doping and cover-ups in Russian sports and revealed a scheme for covering up positive drug samples from Russian athletes in Sochi by replacing them with clean samples.

The report said the Russian doping activity involved 1,000 athletes in 30 different sports, both winter and summer.

The participation of individual Russian athletes at next February's Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, will depend on the results of Oswald's report, which he said would be completed before the end of the year.

Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach urged Oswald to act speedily. "We can't have the Winter Games overshadowed by an ongoing procedure with regard to Russia," he said.

Some members of the Olympic Committee were concerned about how long the investigations are taking.



"I understand it takes a lot of time, but we cannot have this discussion just before the Pyeongchang Games. It must be clear months before," said Camiel Eurlings, a committee member from the Netherlands.

Russian Olympic Committee chief Aleksandr Zhukov said he was confident most Russian athletes would be cleared and allowed to compete in Pyeongchang.

More than 270 Russian athletes were allowed to compete at last year's Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro despite a ban on Russia's athletics team at the event.

Oswald said his commission will first deal with six Russian skiers who were banned following the WADA report, and after that it will deal with Russians who are due to take part in Pyeongchang qualifiers.

WADA chief Craig Reedie said Russia's anti-doping agency, RUSADA, which was suspended for noncompliance

in 2015 following the doping scandals, had been working toward reinstatement and that could happen as soon as November.

"We are currently working through an agreed road map," Reedie said. "There has been much progress and it is really important that we try to get RUSADA compliant and deliver a proper, robust anti-doping test program."

Reedie criticized a group of 17 national anti-doping organizations who this week called for Russia to be excluded from Pyeongchang.

"The comments made...omit entirely all the work that's been done to develop proper anti-doping systems in Russia," Reedie said. "It looks backward instead of looking forward. I want to make it quite clear that most of what they say in their press release is not policy, and is not helpful."

(Source: AP)

## Hamilton surprised McLaren didn't split sooner

Lewis Hamilton says he's surprised his former team McLaren's split with Honda in Formula 1 didn't happen sooner.

McLaren's switch to Renault for 2018 was confirmed on Friday, bringing to an end its second partnership with Honda after just three uncompetitive seasons.

"I'm surprised it didn't happen sooner to be honest," said Hamilton.

"It's been a long, hard slog for the both of them."

"Hopefully this will spark a new start for McLaren, because they should be in the fight with us."

Looking at the on-track action in Singapore, Hamilton backed up Daniel Ricciardo's suggestion that Red Bull could be dominant on the Marina Bay streets this weekend.

"We've been thrown a seriously tough battle this weekend at this circuit, which is such a hard circuit to dominate, it's very track specific here with the car," he said.

"Whether or not we'll be dominating here, we shall see. The Red Bulls look like they are dominating at the moment."

"Clearly Red Bull were out there on their own, they just seemed to have an

extra bit of juice.

"I don't know where they got it from. Tomorrow it might close up a bit, but I still think they are going to be ahead."

"I don't know what we can do to close the gap with them, they are just rapid in the last sector, but that's how they always are."

"They always seem to be able to keep temperature up in their tyres, for whatever reason. We knew it was going to be a difficult weekend."

Hamilton believes that some set-up limitations may make it hard for Mercedes to improve the W08.

"The car feels OK in general, but we need a little more grip," he said. "It's a bumpy circuit, so the car could be better in some areas."

"There are some limitations with the car, so I could go faster if there were some things that we could fix."

"Whether or not we can do it with set-up - it might just be a fundamental thing."

"There are some big things, as I said I don't know whether or not we can fix the big things, but the small things we can definitely improve."

(Source: Eurosport)



## Doping-tainted weightlifting must reform or risk 2024 Games spot

Weightlifting will have to pass several hurdles to prove it is doping-free or it risks losing its established Olympic spot for the Paris 2024 Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Friday.

The IOC had said in July that the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) needed to provide a satisfactory report by December on how it plans to tackle the problem of doping in the sport.

It will now be monitored by the IOC and the World Anti-Doping Agency past December, until both organizations are satisfied that changes have been made, the Olympic organization said.

"If weightlifting stays compliant with the WADA code then we proceed with this formula for Paris 2024. If it is declared non-compliant this will be a totally different situation," IOC President Thomas Bach said at the body's session meeting in Lima.

"This is the idea behind this formula concerning weightlifting, that the decision to include them (for Paris) is subject to the compliance with the WADA code."

Around half of the 106 positive tests that emerged from re-tests conducted by the IOC in the past two years of samples

from the 2008 and 2012 Games in Beijing and London, came from weightlifters.

The sport, along with athletics, represented more than 80 percent of the positive cases from those re-tests, IOC member Denis Oswald said on Friday.

He said 75 medals had been stripped from athletes across many sports from those two Games after re-testing 1,100 samples in total.

In one case, the top eight weightlifters in a competition tested positive, Oswald said, without providing further details.

"We have made it very clear," IOC Vice President John Coates said. "We will continue to monitor this. This will not just be an IOC Executive Board monitoring."

"(WADA) will be involved with us to make sure we monitor implementation of any actions the IWF proposes to us."

The IWF, run by 78-year-old Tamas Ajan, who is in his fifth term, has previously taken action to try to eradicate doping from the sport.

Russia was banned from the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro by the IWF for "bringing weightlifting into disrepute", after a series of positive tests and several other countries are also facing potential bans.

(Source: Reuters)



## Chelsea boss Antonio Conte: Arsenal a big rival for the Premier League title

Chelsea head coach Antonio Conte is adamant Arsenal are a Premier League title contender.

The Gunners have lost two of their first four matches and the most recent away game prior to their trip to Stamford Bridge was a 4-0 loss at Liverpool, which reignited debate about Arsene Wenger's position as manager.

Arsenal have not won at Chelsea since October 2011 and have won two of 21 games against the established top six since the start of the 2013-14 season, but Conte feels the Gunners are a threat.

"For sure Arsenal is a big rival for the title," he said. "If you see their squad you can understand there are a lot of top players. I don't understand why they can't fight for the title."

"They lost only one player now, [Alex] Oxlade-Chamberlain. They kept all the players from last season. In their squad there are many top players."



"I think Arsenal is one of the six top teams in England. For this reason I think it's a massive game for us. It's the same when you play against (Manchester) City, against Liv-

erpool, (Manchester) United, Tottenham.

"In England there are six top teams and when you play against one of them it's always a massive game. We have to fight."

Conte rotated his options for Tuesday night's 6-0 Champions League win over Qarabag of Azerbaijan. He is likely to restore his leading players for the Arsenal clash, when Eden Hazard could make his first start of the season after recovering from a broken ankle.

"The best target is to try to make the best decision for every game and try also to win," Conte added. "The answer of all my players in the last game was positive. I'm pleased for the commitment, for the performance of my players."

"I have another day to check the physical condition of all my players. Then I'll try to make the best decision for the Arsenal game."

(Source: Soccernet)

# Para-archer Zahra Nemati reclaims gold medal at World Championships

**S P O R T S** Two-time Paralympic Champion Zahra Nemati reclaimed the world title she last won in Bangkok in 2013.

Iranian recurve archer Zahra Nemati united the Paralympic and world titles with victory at the 2017 World Archery Para Championships in Beijing, beating Merve Nur Eroglu of Turkey, 6-2, in the final and finishing with a perfect 10-10-10.

"This means that everything will be the way that I want," Nemati told worldarchery.org. "It proves that with hope and determination I can get whatever I wish."

Nemati has made a name for herself as a successful archer and rolemodel for women's empowerment through sport. She won the hearts of the local crowd in Rio in 2016, competing in both the Olympics and Paralympics, and won the Games for a second consecutive time.

She was winner of the Bangkok 2013 World Archery Para Championships, but did not compete at Donaueschingen 2015.

"I proved once more that what I want will happen," Nemati said.

Shortly before her gold medal match, Nemati won bronze in the mixed team open with Pouyiya Jalipour.

The individual gold medal match face-off with Turkey's Merve Nur Eroglu was intense. Eroglu lost the match with a miss after running out of time in the third end, fighting back tears throughout the medal ceremony.

It wouldn't have mattered if she had hit with that arrow, though, as Zahra finished with a perfect 30 for an emphatic victory.

"It was a very enjoyable match to be out there and competing," Nemati said.

The men's recurve open final saw China's Zhao Lixue and Thailand's Hanreuchai Netsiri go to an incredible single arrow shoot-off.



Both finalists put down 10s in the tiebreaker. Netsiri's 10 was good, but Zhao's 10 was just that little bit closer, and gave him the gold.

"It was crazy," Zhao said. "I've been training very hard

and am so happy to win gold. It is incredible."

Zhao won gold in the mixed team event at Rio 2016. The match was a repeat of the Para-Asian Championships final of 2015, which Zhao also won.

## Iran defeat Japan at FIVB Grand Champions Cup

Amir Ghafour topped all scorers with 23 points that boosted Iran's 3-1 (21-25, 25-19, 25-20, 25-14) win over Japan in the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup at the Osaka Municipal Central Gymnasium on Saturday.

Ghafour had a solid performance from the attack line as he scored 21 spikes. He also helped out on defence with two stuff blocks. Iran had a total of 13 blocks, including Saman Faezi's four and Seyed Mohammed Mousavi's three.

Issei Otake and Akihiro Yamauchi led Japan with 16 and 11 points, respectively.

Iran and Japan most recent meeting at world level



was in 2016, when Iran beat Japan in four sets in the Olympic qualifier. In their third encounter at the World Grand Champions Cup, Iran won again with the same scoreline of 3-1 against Japan.

Japan played a fast-paced game against their Asian rivals Iran in the opening set. As Masahiro Yanagida struggled on offence, setter Naonobu Fujii set up masterful plays for his other hitters, which resulted to a brilliant 25-21 win. Iran countered with solid blocks and strong spikes that rewarded them with the win. By the third set, Iran already established their ground on offence and defence that made it difficult for Japan to overcome.

(Source: FIVB)

## Japan, Iran off to flying starts in Ashgabat

Japan began their defence of the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games women's futsal title on an emphatic note as they beat China PR 5-2 in the opening Group A clash on Saturday.

Islamic Republic of Iran, seen as the greatest threat to Japan, were equally impressive as they beat Palestine in their opening Group B tie.

Japan are seeking a fourth consecutive women's futsal gold medal and they showed they mean business when Miku Sakurada gave them the lead as early as the first minute.

In fact, such was the Japan dominance that China PR's first attempt, which missed the target, only came in the fourth minute.

That was followed by a period of equal domination as both sides went in search of goal but it was Japan who widened their lead as Mio Fujita scored their second in the 12th minute.

China PR, to their credit, hit back almost immediately as Dong Jiabao kept them in the game by finding the back of the net in the 13th minute.

The one goal deficit, however, was to

last just seconds as Japan scored their third from the restart with Fujita hitting her second.

Akari Takao made it 4-1 in the 16th and Japan were in cruise control.

Fan Yuqiu pulled one back for China PR three minutes into the restart but Japan would have the final say as Eriko Hotta made it 5-2 for the reigning champions in the 24th minute.

Japan's Sakurada, who scored the first goal with just 53 seconds on the clock said: "It was a good timing for the goal. From that goal we could manage the rest of the match."

"But it was a team effort. It was a goal for the team not for me."

She was not happy with the two goals Japan conceded though.

"We need to improve more. There is plenty to correct," said Sakurada.

In the other Group A tie, there was no opening match cheer for hosts Turkmenistan as Hong Kong raced to a 6-1 win.

Chan Wing Sze starred for Hong Kong with a hat-trick (4th, 18th, 19th) while Wong Shuk Fan scored two (26th, 29th). Wong So Han (12th) was the other Hong

Kong scorer while Ejaz Amanmuhamedowa hit a consolation for Turkmenistan in the 22nd minute.

In Group B action, IR Iran showed they are genuine contenders for the gold medal after scoring a resounding 16-1 win over Palestine in their opening match.

IR Iran, who beat Japan 1-0 to clinch the inaugural AFC Women's Futsal Championship title in 2015, took an 8-0 lead as four players went on to hit hat-tricks.

Sohila Malmoulitarazi got the ball rolling with IR Iran's first in the fifth minute before completing her hat-trick in the 19th and 38th minutes.

Joining the hat-trick party were Pereshteh Karimi (11th, 27th, 29th), Sara Shirbeigi (7th, 11th, 25th) and Nasimeh Sadat Gholami (17th, 21st, 37th).

IR Iran's other goals were scored by Fatemeh Papi (15th), Fereshteh Khosravi (10th), Fahimeh Zarei (34th) and Fatemeh Etedadi (35th).

IR Iran coach Shahrzad Mozafar was pleased with the huge win.

"We needed a good goal difference



from this match because tomorrow Thailand play Palestine. So we needed to score as many goals as we could to secure first place in our group. We'd prefer to be first, that's why.

"I believe that not only Japan, but also Thailand have a strong team too."

"I think Japan, Thailand and Iran can be champions of this tournament. So we are thinking not just about Japan, but Thailand have the same chances."

Results - Women's Group A: Japan 5-2 China PR, Turkmenistan 1-6 Hong Kong; Group B: Iran 16-1 Palestine.

(Source: the-AFC)

## Majid Farzin ready to set new world record

With just over two weeks to go until the World Para Powerlifting Championships get underway in Mexico City is nearly here, Iran's Majid Farzin is fully prepared and focused on two clear aims for the competition.

"I hope that in the light of my trust in the Almighty God and with the prayers of my fellow citizens, I wish to achieve the gold medal and break the world record again in Mexico."

The Iranian athlete exceeded all expectations at last year's Paralympic Games in Rio, when he set a new World and Paralympic record in the up to 80kg category with a lift of 240 kg. Unsurprisingly, he describes this as his greatest sporting achievement so far.

"I am very satisfied with my performance in the 2016 Paralympic Games as I achieved both the gold medal and breaking the Paralympic record. I thank God for being able to lift three times more than my body weight of 80 kg. Now, my name is registered in the Guinness World Record Book, and after the winner of the over 107 kg category, I lifted the heaviest lift in the entire Rio games."

The winner of the over 107 kg category with a lift of 310 kg was Iranian teammate Siamand Rahman, who won Best Male at the 2017 Paralympic Sport Awards



and is known as the world's strongest Paralympian.

Despite this, Farzin does not see Rahman's achievements as a threat.

"Siamand and I have common goals, we give energy to each other and focus on our training and preparation to bring honour to our country. We always have synergy for each other and we both aim to achieve the best results in competitions."

"He is one of my best friends and teammates in the

Iran National Para Powerlifting Team and a respectable friend."

The World Championships are very near, but Farzin has his sights set a little bit further ahead.

"Currently, my main goal is to become fully ready for Tokyo 2020, as I want to win the gold medal and hopefully break the world record again in these games. After Tokyo 2020, I plan to participate in international refereeing courses, hopefully to be qualified for starting my career as an international referee to judge at world and Paralympic competitions as an Iranian delegate. Now I am a PhD student at Teheran University in Physical education and sports sciences," he explains.

Farzin has been powerlifting for 12 years, and it is safe to say the sport has turned into a lifestyle.

"For me, exercising the sport means getting a better spirit and mentality for better living and enjoying my life beside my family. I find motivation in competing in international arenas to bring honour to my lovely country and for my dear nation, and raising the holy flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran and playing the national anthem of my country to bring pride and glorification for our nation."

(Source: Paralympic.org)

## Iran claim Asian School Football Championship title

The Iranian students' national football A team recorded a landmark win over the Indonesian side, and deservedly picked up the trophy at the conclusion of the 45th edition of Asian School Football Championship.

The junior Iranian soccer players thrashed their Southeast Asian counterparts 3-0 in a title challenge staged at Be'sat Stadium in the south-central Iranian city of Shiraz.

Iranians started the match in a strong form, and their determination remained strong throughout the game.

The Persians' first scoring opportunity came in the 18th minute, when Mohammad Saberipour hit the ball in the back of the net.

But it wasn't enough for Saberipour as he scored a brace seven minutes later.

And in the dying moments of the first half, Hassan Nokhodkar tripled Iran's lead as he made no mistake and calmly put the ball under the Indonesia goalkeeper.

Even though the Iranian team had a vast array of scoring chances after the break, but it simply squandered the opportunities. The ball hit the post three times.

Iranian footballers Mehrdad Aalipour and Mohammad Saberipour together with Mohammad Hamad Bali from Indonesia were named the top-scorers of the tournament with four goals each.

Earlier in the third-place playoff, South Korea beat Malaysia 5-4 in a penalty shootout after the match ended 1-1 after extra-time.

The 45th edition of Asian School Football Championship began on September 6, and finished on September 16, 2017.

(Source: Press TV)

## Manchester City are ready to be a big team - Pep Guardiola

Pep Guardiola believes his Manchester City side are starting to show the sort of quality he saw at previous clubs Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

The Spaniard won six league titles in seven years of management in Spain and then Germany but could only finish third in his first season at the Etihad Stadium.

City are currently second in the Premier League -- behind Manchester United only on goal difference -- and, after scoring nine goals in two games against Liverpool and Feyenoord, he is excited how his team are starting to play.

"What we did against Feyenoord is what I like and tried to do at Barcelona and Bayern Munich," he told a news conference ahead of Saturday's trip to fourth-placed Watford.

"But sometimes I wasn't able to do it, even at Barcelona and in Munich, is to keep the ball high and press -- to control the counter-attacks. That is always the target and why I came here."

"But that is a process and with City, I feel now, they have good players that can become a big team."

Guardiola wants his players put in those types of performances on a consistent basis, starting with the visit to unbeaten Watford.

The City boss says that the biggest clubs in Europe are able to deliver even in a busy schedule, and he has challenged his squad to do the same.

"Tomorrow, for example, is a big test for us. The big clubs win the games and that is the big difference to the big teams," he added.

"In this situation, the teams I left at Barcelona, Bayern Munich, and the other big teams, like Madrid, and Juventus -- a game every three days -- they are there. They make a professional performance, score a goal in the right moment and win the game. That is the process we have to discover."

"When we are able to do that, then I will feel we have made a step forward to become a better team. Of course, when you have time to prepare, you can compete everywhere."

"Last season, we could compete in the games against the top six, but we were not able to win. That is the gap we have to achieve this season."

(Source: ESPN)

## Madrid expect more but Bale will come good, insists Zidane

Zinedine Zidane admits Real Madrid want Gareth Bale to "do more", but has no doubt the Welshman will soon hit top form for Los Blancos.

Bale's performances have come under intense scrutiny amid Madrid's stuttering start in LaLiga during which time Cristiano Ronaldo has been serving a five-match domestic ban for pushing the referee in the Supercopa de Espana against Barcelona.

The forward has been subjected to whistles from the Santiago Bernabeu crowd and missed two good chances in last weekend's 1-1 draw against Levante.

To emphasise Ronaldo's importance to the team, the Portuguese scored twice in the midweek 3-0 victory over APOEL in their Champions League opener.

But Zidane once again hit back at the critics of the former Tottenham star, who was hindered towards the end of last season by an ankle injury, and is backing Bale to give plenty for the team.

"Everything takes time, Bale needs time, just that," he said at a news conference previewing Madrid's trip to Real Sociedad.

"The dynamic for a player is to train normally and that is what he is doing. Then, of course, we want him to do more on the field, but we are calm because he is going to make sure that soon he will do very well."

(Source: Four Four Two)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

**Bogota festival to host "A Man of Integrity"**

**A R T** TEHRAN — Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof's "A Man of Integrity" will compete in the 3rd edition of the Bogota International Film Festival (BIFF), which will be held in the Colombian capital from October 12 to 18.



"A Man of Integrity" is about a goldfish farmer who is battling corporate oppression in northern Iran. Over 55 films from 32 countries will be screened during this edition of the festival.

**Taiwanese festival to screen Iran's "Breath"**

**A R T** TEHRAN — Iranian director Narges Abyar's acclaimed anti-war drama "Breath" will go on screen at the 24th Women Make Waves Film Festival in Taipei, Taiwan during October. The film is about four children whose mother had died a few years earlier and their father decides to join the Iranian volunteers on the warfront following Iraq's attack in September 1980. The festival, which promotes the achievements of outstanding female talents and supports them, will be held from October 13 to 22.

**Veteran actor Harry Dean Stanton dies at 91**

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Harry Dean Stanton, whose scruffy looks and off-beat demeanor made him a favorite of directors seeking a character actor to add eccentricity or melancholy to the screen, died on Friday from natural causes, his agent said. He was 91. Stanton, who appeared in some 70 movies and many television shows including "Repo Man," "Paris, Texas" and most recently David Lynch's reboot of television's "Twin Peaks," died peacefully at Cedars Sinai hospital in Los Angeles, his agent John Kelly said in a statement.

Stanton's final on-screen role can be seen in the upcoming film "Lucky." In a career spanning 60 years, Stanton's roles were not always big but were meaningful and could add a special quirk or flavor to a film. Sometimes he said very little in his roles, but with a long, craggy face highlighted by unkempt hair and sad, droopy eyes, Stanton had a strong physical presence and made a point of not over-acting.

"He's one of those actors who knows that his face is the story," his friend Sam Shepard, the playwright and actor, said in the 2012 documentary "Harry Dean Stanton: Partly Fiction," when Lynch asked him how he would like to be remembered, Stanton replied: "It doesn't matter."

Stanton credited Jack Nicholson with giving him vital professional advice. Nicholson had written a part for Stanton in the Western "Ride the Whirlwind" and told him, "Let the wardrobe do the acting and just play yourself."

"After Jack said that, my whole approach to acting opened up," Stanton told Entertainment Weekly.

Stanton worked with many of Hollywood's most notable directors, including Frances Ford Coppola ("The Godfather Part Two" and "One From the Heart"), Sam Peckinpah ("Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid"), Martin Scorsese ("The Last Temptation of Christ"), Ridley Scott ("Alien"), and Lynch ("Wild at Heart," "The Straight Story," and "Inland Empire").

Stanton could be taciturn to the point of mystery. In "Partly Fiction," when Lynch asked him how he would like to be remembered, Stanton replied: "It doesn't matter."

Two 1984 films cemented his reputation in Hollywood: "Repo Man" and "Paris, Texas." "Repo Man" became an independent cult film favorite with Stanton as a comically grizzled and paranoid car repossession expert trying to pass on his dubious code of ethics to his apprentice.

In "Paris, Texas," written by Shepard and directed by Wim Wenders, he played an emotionally broken, nearly silent man trying to put his life and family back together - a portrayal that many in Hollywood thought should have at least earned Stanton an Oscar nomination.

**Iran festival secretary satirizes organizations' reluctance to join in green moves**

**A R T** TEHRAN — The secretary of the 6th International Green Film Festival, Farhad Tohidi, jazzed up the closing ceremony of the event on Friday evening by his satirical remarks mocking those private and public commercial organizations over their unwillingness to take part in environmental movements.

He also chided governmental personalities over their disregard of the festival, saying, "We held a meeting with ministers after screening DiCaprio's 'Before the Flood', and some of the ministers were badly injured in a stampede of their colleagues!"

A handful of acclaimed films, including Leonardo DiCaprio's "Before the Flood", were screened at the six-day festival. The documentary covers his meetings with scientists, activists and world leaders to discuss the dangers of climate change and possible solutions.

The closing ceremony then went on with honoring winners at the Aseman Cultural Center in Tehran.

Chinese filmmaker Jiuliang Wang's "Plastic China", which is a portrait of poverty, ambition and hope set in a world of waste, received the Golden Gazelle for best feature-length documentary.

The film tells the story of a woman and her family that live next to a recycling plant in the midst of mountains of plastic waste from Asia, Europe and the U.S.

The award for best short documentary went to "Where Do We Go?" by Reza Majlesi, which warns about waste disposal and its environmental repercussions in northern Iran.

Iranian director Shirin Barqnavard's documentary "Poets of Life" won the Golden Gazelle for Best Film with National View.

The film is about Shirin Parsi, an Iranian graduate of French literature from the University of Paris who returns home to work on her rice farm in northern Iran, where many farmers are forced to sell their lands at very low prices to developers.

"Leaf of Life" by Ebrahim Mokhtari, about a man who agrees to plant and harvest saffron to supply the rest



The secretary of the 6th International Green Film Festival, Farhad Tohidi, speaks during the closing ceremony of the 6th International Green Film Festival at the Aseman Cultural Center in Tehran on September 15, 2017. (Mehr/Behnam Tofiq)

of the money he needs to buy a house, won the best feature film award.

"Animal", a story of a man who attempts to cross a frontier disguised as a ram, co-directed by Bahram and Bahman Ark, was named best short.

"Me + Her" by U.S. director Joseph Oxford was

picked as best animation. The movie is about Jack and Jill of Cardboard City who are separated by Jill's severe illness. Jack must think outside the box to assure they will be together again.

"We Can" by Gholamreza Yarkhalaji won the best experimental film.

**Theater scholar Christian Biet to visit Iran**



French theater scholar Christian Biet in an undated photo

**A R T** TEHRAN — French theater scholar Christian Biet who is a professor of the history and aesthetics of theater at Paris Ouest University Nanterre La Défense will give lectures and hold master classes in Tehran during October.

A French theater troupe will also accompany Biet during the master classes, which will be organized during Iranian Performance Week at the Molavi Hall.

"Performance and Urban Area" is the main subject of the weeklong event, which is scheduled to open on October 4.

The performance week will be organized in collaboration

With the Fanous Art and Culture House in Tehran.

Biet is also a member of the Institut Universitaire de France and a regular visiting professor at New York University.

**Iranian theater troupes to perform in Armenia High Fest**



**A R T** TEHRAN — Twelve troupes from Iran will be in Yerevan, Armenia during October to attend the 15th High Fest International Performing Arts Festival.

Director Reza Rafinasab's group will perform "Chaos" and Puria Qolipur's troupe is scheduled to stage "House of War" at the festival, which will be held from October 1 to 10, Albert Beigjani, a member of the festival's selecting board, told the Persian service of MNA on Saturday.

Javad Sedaqat and Elham Abni will codirect "If a Night of Tehran's Nights..." and "Bahador".

Zaman led by director Hadi Emami-Moqadam will perform "Narcolespy" while Deemak led by Beigjani will stage "Marshmallow".

"Living in a Glass Room" by Heidar Rezai and "Dance with the Sea" by Nazanin Valajam will be performed in the street theater section of the festival. Valajam will also stage "Regret".

"Identity" by Ehsan Kheirmand, "Rustam and Esfandiar's War" by Dariush Nasiri, "Down with the Death" by Mehran Solgi and "Silence in Wilderness" by Mandana Abqari have also been selected for the festival.

**Jamie Lee Curtis reprises famous horror role in 2018's 'Halloween'**

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Actress Jamie Lee Curtis will reprise her role as the resilient protagonist in 2018's "Halloween," Universal Pictures said on Friday, 40 years after she made her movie debut in the original horror movie of the same name and became Hollywood's "scream queen."

Curtis, 58, will once again play Laurie Strode, the babysitter who faced the deadly hockey-masked serial killer Michael Myers in John Carpenter's 1978 horror "Halloween." The 2018 film will see Curtis' Strode face "her final confrontation" with Myers, Comcast Corp-owned Universal said.



Actress Jamie Lee Curtis in Buena Park, California, U.S. May 25, 2016. (Reuters/Lucy Nicholson)

Carpenter will return to executive produce and consult on the new film.

"Halloween" has become one of Hollywood's most famous slasher film franchises, with nine sequels and reboots over the years, the last being Rob Zombie's 2009 "Halloween II."

Curtis' last appearance in the franchise was in 2002's "Halloween: Resurrection," in which her character was killed. Universal said the 2018 film "carves a new path from the events in the landmark 1978 film," suggesting that it will ignore the events in the 2002 film.

**YuMi the robot conducts Verdi with Italian orchestra**

**PISA, Italy (Reuters)** — YuMi the humanoid robot showed no signs of nerves on Tuesday night as it raised its baton to conduct the Lucca Philharmonic orchestra alongside Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli.

The two-armed robot, designed by Swiss firm ABB, made its debut at Pisa's Verdi Theatre to mark the First International Festival of Robotics in the Tuscan city.

"We basically had to find time to understand his movements. When we found the way, everything was pretty easy," said the orchestra's resident conductor, Andrea Colombini.

"It is absolutely fantastic. And the technicians were fantastic just to

make everything perfect, especially in the length and in the speed of the gesture, which is very important," he said.

YuMi, whose name is derived from the phrase 'you and me', was taught all the movements by Colombini, who held its arms in rehearsals so the computer could memorize the correct gestures. The robot is not able to improvise and any unexpected change in tempo from the musicians would have been ruinous.

The robot conducted three of the 18 pieces performed on Tuesday night, including the famous aria La Donna e' Mobile, from Verdi's opera Rigoletto.

**Two first-time authors make Man Booker Prize shortlist**

**LONDON (Reuters)** — Two first-time female authors feature on the 2017 Man Booker Prize fiction shortlist which comprises three women and three men including best-selling U.S. writer Paul Auster.

Subjects this year range from the struggle of a family trying to retain its self-sufficiency in rural England to a love story between two refugees fleeing civil war.

In the fourth year that the 50,000-pound (\$66,400) prize has been open to writers of any nationality, the shortlist is made up of two British, one British-Pakistani and three American writers. Auster's "4321" offers four versions of one young man's life while fellow U.S. author Emily Fridlund's debut novel "History of Wolves" is a coming-of-age tale of a teenage girl seeking a place to belong.

"Elmet," the first book by British author

Fiona Mozley, tells the story of a father and his two children who clash with landowners after they build a home for themselves.

UK/Pakistani author Mohsin Hamid is on the list with "Exit West" in which refugees can use doors to escape to other parts of the world.

George Saunders' first novel "Lincoln in the Bardo," is about Abraham Lincoln and the death of his eleven year old son, Willie, at the dawn of the American Civil War.

Scottish writer Ali Smith is on the shortlist for the fourth time, this year with "Autumn," a meditation on a world growing ever more bordered and exclusive.

The Man Booker Prize is awarded each year for the best original novel, written in the English language and published in the UK. The winner will be announced on Oct. 17 in London's Guildhall.