

**Dialogue with Riyadh still best way to end impasse: diplomat** **2**

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## Sepehri artwork breaks record at Tehran Auction



Auctioneer Hossein Pakdel takes bid for the sale of a painting from Sohrab Sepehri's Tree Trunk series during the Tehran Auction at the Parsian Azadi Hotel on July 7, 2017.

## Iran's 2016 oil exports up over 77%: OPEC

**ECONOMY DESK** TEHRAN — Iran's oil exports in 2016 reached 1.921 million barrels per day (bpd), a 77.6 percent rise compared to 2015, according to OPEC's latest Annual Statistical Bulletin report. The country's crude exports stood at 1.081 million bpd in 2015 which indicates that the 2016 figure is 840,000 bpd more than that of the 2015 average. In the meantime, Iran boosted exports of oil products by 74.5 percent to 897,900 bpd year on year. The country sent 514,300 bpd of oil products to its target markets in 2015.

In 2015, Iran exported 1.423 million bpd of oil to its Asian buyers compared to 969,700 bpd in 2015. Meanwhile, 497,300 barrels of oil was sent to the European markets on a daily basis while the figure was 111,400 bpd in 2015. Iran was exempted from OPEC agreement to reduce output by 1.2 million bpd that began this year, as Tehran needs to regain the market share it lost under Western sanctions over its nuclear program. The country is planning to increase its production to five million bpd by 2021.

## Iraqi forces take over Mosul's Old City

Iraqi government forces have wrested complete control over the Old City of Mosul, which served as the last bastion of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists in the country's second largest city. The spokesman for the Iraqi Joint Operations Command, Brigadier General Yahia Rasoul, announced on Saturday that army troops had regained control over the strategic area, where ISIL Leader Ibrahim al-Samarrai aka Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the terrorists' self-styled "caliphate" back in July 2014. "We are seeing now the last meters and then final victory will be announced," Iraq's state TV reported on Saturday. "It's a matter of hours."

Fighting currently rages on in Mosul's densely-populated Old City, where ISIL elements have put up stiff resistance in the face of advancing Iraqi army soldiers and allied fighters. Iraq's state TV quoted a military spokesman as saying that the militants' defense lines were collapsing. Reports coming out of the city say ISIL terrorists are reported to be fighting for each meter with bombers, snipers and grenades, forcing Iraqi security forces to fight house-to-house in the Old City. "They (terrorists) never surrender. Old Mosul will be their graveyard," said Iraqi General Abdel Ghani al-Assadi, a commander in Iraq's elite Counter Terrorism Service. **->13**

## Arya Sasol Polymer Co. Receives British Safety Council's 5-Star Certificates

TEHRAN — Arya Sasol Polymer Co., as the first Iranian company active in the fields of oil, gas, and petroleum, has succeeded to receive two five-star certificates in occupational health and safety, as well as environment from the British Safety Council (BSC). According to the public relations department of Arya Sasol Polymer Co., the British Safety Council's auditors after conducting several qualitative and quantitative research on the safety, management and control systems of company in five sections, has recognized the Arya Sasol Polymer Co. capable of receiving the council's two five-star certificates in occupational health and safety, as well as environment for the year 2017. The company's Managing Director Amirhossein Bahreini, naming some of the world's largest oil companies such as

British Petroleum (BP), Royal Dutch Shell, and Foster Wheeler which have succeeded to receive the BSC's 5-star certificate so far, described the council's intl. reputation and 60 years professional relevant experiences as the main reasons behind choosing the British Safety Council to certify Arya Sasol company's HSE systems. Arya Sasol Polymer Co. with the annual production capacity of more than one and half million tons of ethylene and polyethylene (high, low, and medium) ranked first among Iran's best petrochemical companies in sale index in IMI-100 rating of the Iranian calendar year of 1395 (March 2016-March 2017) and is one of the best petrochemical companies in the Middle East in terms of HSE.

**For the first time in the oil industry, Arya Sasol Polymer Company, which was initially established by the joint investment between the Iran and S. Africa, managed to receive two five-star certificates in the occupational health and safety, as well as environment from the British Safety Council.**





**Five Star Occupational Health and Safety Audit — Five Stars —**  
Valid until 25 April 2018

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This is to certify that  
**Arya Sasol Polymer Company**  
after an extensive evaluation by a British Safety Council auditor, has been awarded a rating of Five Stars.

*Lynda Armstrong*  
Lynda Armstrong OBE  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

*Mike Robinson*  
Mike Robinson FCA  
Chief Executive

Certificate number: PHS01788  
Issue date: 28/04/2017





**Five Star Environmental Audit — Five Stars —**  
Valid until 25 April 2018

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This is to certify that  
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**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**Envoy: U.S. 38-year hostility has made Iran stronger**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to Britain in a message on Friday said Washington's 38-year hostility towards the Islamic Republic has made Iran stronger than ever.

"Interventionist forces in the U.S. don't need Ray Takeyh provocation and antagonistic advice. It's done so in 38 yrs but Iran is strongest ever," Hamid Baedinejad tweeted.

Middle East scholar Takeyh had earlier said, "The United States should be prepared for a transition of power there that may yet precipitate the collapse of the entire system."



**Iranian version of U.S. Phalanx weapon being tested**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran is working on a home-version of U.S.-made Phalanx, a close-in weapon system (CIWS) for defense against anti-ship missiles, the deputy commander of the Iranian Navy has said.

The system is still under test and general evaluation and has not been delivered to the Navy, Rear Admiral Mahmoud Mousavi said, Fars reported.

Consisting of a radar-guided 20 mm Vulcan cannon mounted on a swiveling base, the Phalanx has been used by multiple navies around the world.



**Ayatollah Amini: Letter was fake**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — An open letter allegedly written by Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is said to be fake.

"The letter was a sign of enemy's plot against good relations between the ulema and leadership," Amini told Tasnim news agency on Saturday.

"As time goes by, Ayatollah Khamenei's aptitude for leadership becomes more clearly known," he stressed.

The enemy cannot undermine good relations between ulema and the Leader, Ayatollah Amini said.



**Police find terrorist arms depot in southeastern Iran**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Police forces in southeastern Iran have discovered a large cache of weapons and an anti-aircraft cannon belonging to Jesh al-Adl terrorist group, Fars reported.

The cargo was discovered through complicated intelligence operations, Hossein Rahimi, police chief of Sistan-Balouchestan province, said on Saturday.

The local police official said the depot consisted of 35 Kalashnikov rifles, 4.5-mm anti-aircraft cannon with a 7-km range, two SPG9 heavy weapons and a large amount of ammunition.



**Ex-Iraqi president Jalal Talebani to visit Iran**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Jalal Talebani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and former Iraqi president, is due to make a visit to Iran next week, a statement by the party's media office said.

The news comes after Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), announced on June 7 that the date for the independence referendum has been set for September 25, 2017.

Iran and Turkey have voiced strong opposition to the decision.

KRG representative in Tehran, Nazim Dabagh, said he was "unaware" of the visit.



**Evin Prison to turn into temporary detention center**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran's minister of justice said on Saturday that Evin Prison in northern Tehran will probably turn into a temporary detention center.

Mostafa Pourmohammadi said although Evin inmates are planned to be transferred outside Tehran, the facility is needed as a temporary detention center to be used before suspects are given a final sentence, ICANA reported.

45 foreign ambassadors on Wednesday took a tour of the prison organized by the Human Rights Headquarters affiliated to the Judiciary.

# Dialogue with Riyadh still best way to break impasse: diplomat

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — A top Iranian diplomat has said Tehran is insistent on its opinion that dialogue with Saudi Arabia is still the "best way" to end a deadlock in bilateral relations.

"Dialogue is the best way to resolve the row, and the two sides require to get engaged in dialogue without any precondition," Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi said in an interview with Shafaghna news agency, published on Saturday.

"As neighbors, Iran and Saudi Arabia should resolve problems themselves."

Saudi Arabia and Iran haven't had diplomatic relations since early 2016 after the storming of the Kingdom's posts in Tehran and Mashhad by angry mobs, itself a result of Riyadh executing a prominent Shiite cleric.

Though Iran condemned that attacks, Saudi Arabia immediately cut diplomatic ties. Other Arab countries lying on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf also downgraded their diplomatic ties with Iran.

Also, the two are at odds over a number of regional issues, including the Syrian crisis and what Saudis see as Tehran's growing influence in the Kingdom's sphere of sway.

"Iran's approach is to reduce tension and promote dialogue," the top diplomat noted, underscoring that it was the Saudis who rejected Tehran's conciliatory overtures.



Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi

**Iran seeks reduced tension and dialogue with Saudi Arabia, while reminding that Saudis have rejected Tehran's conciliatory overtures so far.**

In a January press conference, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said at least 10 countries had offered to mediate in the escalating feud between Saudi Arabia and Iran, noting that Tehran would restore ties with Riyadh if Saudi Arabia changed its regional policies.

Rouhani also stated Iran is not seeking to eliminate Saudi Arabia from regional politics and will offer its help to Riyadh if "it takes the right decision" and ends its military intervention in Yemen and stops what he called its meddling in Bahraini affairs.

Ruling out any chance for dialogue with Tehran, now-crown prince Mohammed bin Salman claimed in May that the Shiite-majority Iran seeks "to reach the focal point of Muslims (Mecca)"

and "control the land of Muslims." The neophyte prince also threatened to take any fight for influence "inside Iran."

Referring to Salman's comments and condemning ISIS twin attacks in Tehran on June 7, Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif on June 8 pointed the finger of suspicion at Saudi Arabia.

"Terror-sponsoring despots threaten to bring the fight to our homeland. Proxies attack what their masters despise most: the seat of democracy," Zarif tweeted.

Also, just hours before the murderous attacks in Tehran, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir had claimed that Iran is the world's leading supporter of terrorism and must be punished.

Hopes for less strained ties between Tehran and Riyadh took a further blow on June 5 when Saudi Arabia, followed by the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Bahrain severed all diplomatic ties with Qatar out of the blue and even cut air, land and sea borders with the country.

In a list of demands handed to Doha after the crisis, the blockading countries required Qatar to downgrade its relations with rival Iran among others.

Responding to the demand last week in London, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said Doha had to live alongside Tehran since the two states shared an offshore gas field.

## Evidence submitted to UN proves diplomats were abducted in 1982: envoy

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Tehran's Ambassador to Beirut Mohammad Fathali has said that Iran had presented to the UN documents proving that Iranian diplomats were abducted in northern Lebanon in July 1982.

Iran has been holding Israel first and foremost responsible for the abduction of four of its diplomats in Lebanon. Tehran insists they are still alive and kept in Israeli prisons.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran regards the Zionist regime responsible for the kidnapping of the Iranian diplomats," Fathali said on Saturday as he addressed a ceremony in Beirut on the 25th anniversary of the abduction of the diplomats.

He noted that the documents presented to the UN were gained in cooperation with the Lebanese



government.

Ambassador Fathali also called on the international

community and human rights bodies to pressure Israel to free the diplomats.

On July 4, 1982, the year Israel invaded Lebanon, Ahmad Motevasselian, Seyyed Mohsen Mousavi, Taqi Rastegar Moqaddam and Kazem Akhavan (an IRNA reporter) were kidnapped by a group of Israeli-backed gunmen at an inspection post in northern Lebanon.

Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker, said in relevant remarks on Tuesday that the abducted diplomats are still alive and held in Tel Aviv's prisons.

"There is no evidence proving that they have been killed," Amir Abdollahian wrote on his Telegram account.

The senior advisor called on the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to boost its efforts to determine the fates of the kidnapped diplomats.

## Iran endorses treaty banning nuclear arms

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Reza Najafi, Iran's ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, said on Saturday that Iran as a victim of weapons of mass destruction fully supports the treaty banning nuclear weapons.

The remarks by Ambassador Najafi came after the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was signed at a UN conference in New York on Friday. It is the first multilateral legally-binding instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports the objective behind this treaty in banning possession or use of nuclear weapons," Nafai stated.

Pointing to dangers posed by Israel's nuclear weapons to the sensitive Middle East region, he said, "Iran's proposal for creating a region without nuclear weapons is an example of efforts being made by our country to remove threats from the region."

The treaty — adopted by a vote of 122 in favour to one against (Netherlands), with one abstention (Singapore) — pro-

hibits a full range of nuclear-weapon-related activities, such as undertaking to develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the use or threat of use of these weapons, the UN News Center reported.

The participants did not include any of the world's nine nuclear-armed countries, which conspicuously boycotted the negotiations, the New York Times reported.

Disarmament groups and other proponents of the treaty said they had never expected that any nuclear-armed country

would sign it — at least not at first. Rather, supporters hope, the treaty's widespread acceptance elsewhere will eventually increase the public pressure and stigma of harboring and threatening to use such weapons of unspeakable destruction, and make holdouts reconsider their positions.

"This treaty is a strong categorical prohibition of nuclear weapons and is really rooted in humanitarian law," said Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, a Geneva-based coalition of groups that advocated the treaty.

## Trespassing Saudi boat seized by Iran



**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has seized a Saudi fishing boat after it trespassed on Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf.

An informed source who spoke on condition of anonymity told Fars news agency that the boat was seized on Friday in the waters off the southern Iranian province of Bushehr.

The source noted that all of the boat's crew members were detained. The fishing boat had set off from the Saudi port of Daraan, the source added.

Lauding the IRGC for its watchfulness, the source said security forces of the Islamic Republic see it as a principle to safeguard the country's territorial waters and will not allow anybody to trespass on Iran's waters.

On Saturday, the Interior Ministry's director for border affairs Majid Aqa-Babaei told ISNA news agency

that all the crew members were of Indian descent, adding that they will be treated in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Islamic Republic.

The official also said that Iran will respond to the incident in a tit-for-tat manner. "We will treat the fishermen in the same way Saudi Arabia has treated Iranian fishermen."

The capture of the Saudi fishing boat came a month after Saudi Arabia seized three Iranian fishermen and killed another one. Saudi Arabia claimed they were IRGC personnel who intended to approach the kingdom's offshore Marjan oilfield.

However Tehran dismissed the claim as a "sheer lie" and demanded Riyadh to free the fishermen, pay compensation for shooting dead one of sailors and punish those behind the "irresponsible act".

"The fishermen were not armed... Saudi guards killed one of the sailors by opening fire on the boats," Fars quoted a statement published by Iran's Interior Ministry.

## Tehran sees ambiguities in OPCW report on chemical attack in Syria



**POLITICS TEHRAN** — An Iranian delegation attending an extraordinary meeting of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague believes that there are ambiguities in a report provided on a chemical attack on Syria's Khan Sheikhoun region, ISNA reported on Saturday.

The chemical attack took place on April 4, 2017 on the town of Khan Shaykhun in the Idlib province of Syria.

The U.S. claimed the attack was carried out by the Syrian government and on April 7 fired 59 cruise missiles at Shayrat airbase, where it said a Syrian fighter took off to drop the chemical weapon.

"The fact-finding committee's report on Syria's Khan Sheikhoun attack contains some ambiguities about

sources, way of receiving information, sampling without visiting the place where the attack was carried out," the delegation stated.

"We hope that ambiguities in this report would be clarified with the co-operation of the Syrian government," it added.

The Syrian government has announced readiness to cooperate with the OPCW to send a fact-finding committee to Khan Sheikhoun and al-Shayrat airbase; however, certain countries have refrained from dispatching a team and just agreed to "indirect sources" and samples, the Iranian team added.

Alexander Shulgin, Russia's permanent envoy to the OPCW, said on Thursday that Russia insists on a visit by a team of international investigators to the city of Khan Shaykhun and the Shayrat airbase in Syria.

# Trump and Putin find chemistry, draw criticism in first meeting

## U.S. and Russia agree new Syria ceasefire deal

In a meeting that ran longer than either side had planned, Russian President Vladimir Putin and the United States Donald Trump discussed alleged Russian meddling in the U.S. election on Friday but agreed to focus on better ties rather than litigating the past.

Trump, a Republican who called it an "honor" to meet with the Russian president, drew swift criticism from Democrats at home, who accused him of dismissing U.S. intelligence and giving Putin's denial, reiterated on Friday, of Russian interference too much weight.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told reporters at a summit of leaders of the Group of 20 major economies in Hamburg that Trump had "positive chemistry" with Putin during the meeting, which lasted some two hours and 15 minutes.

He opened their discussion by pressing Putin about "the concerns of the American people regarding Russian interference in the 2016 election" and had a robust exchange, Tillerson said.

The Russian president has denied any meddling in the U.S. democratic process last year and Moscow has asked for proof that it took place. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Trump accepted Putin's assertions that the allegations, backed by the U.S. intelligence agencies, were false.

Tillerson said they both sought to move on. "The presidents rightly focused on how do we move forward from what may be simply an intractable disagreement at this point," Tillerson said.

That explanation did not sit well with Democrats. "Working to compromise the integrity of our election process cannot and should not be an area where 'agree to disagree' is an acceptable conclusion," said U.S. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer in a statement.

**"Going very well"**  
The two leaders spent a lot of time discussing Syria, and after their meeting an agreement between the United States, Russia and Jordan on a ceasefire in southwestern Syria was announced.

The deal was reached during the two leaders' meeting in Hamburg on Friday on the sidelines of the G20 summit of industrialized and developing nations.

"Russian, American and Jordanian experts ... agreed on a memorandum of understanding to create a de-escalation zone" in the regions of Deraa, Quneitra and Suweida, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

"There will be a ceasefire in this zone from midday Damascus time on July 9," he added.

The face-to-face encounter was one of the most eagerly



anticipated meetings between the two leaders in years.

Trump and Putin spoke through translators with their respective foreign ministers present for six minutes before reporters were allowed into the room for their statements. Afterwards the reporters were ushered out and the meeting continued.

"President Putin and I have been discussing various things, and I think it's going very well," Trump told reporters, sitting alongside the Russian leader.

"We've had some very, very good talks. ... We look forward to a lot of very positive things happening for Russia, for the United States and for everybody concerned. And it's an honor to be with you."

Putin, through a translator, said: "We spoke over the phone with you several times," adding: "A phone conversation is never enough."

"I am delighted to be able to meet you personally, Mr. President," he said, noting that he hoped the meeting would yield results.

Both men sat with legs splayed. Trump listened intently as Putin spoke.

The encounter went longer than expected, and first lady Melania Trump came in at one point to urge them to conclude, Tillerson said. The two men later joined other G20

leaders at a concert. Mrs. Trump sat next to Putin at dinner.

Before the get-together, some feared the U.S. president, a political novice whose team is still developing its Russia policy, would be less prepared for the talks than Putin, a former KGB (Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti/Committee for State Security) agent who has dealt with previous U.S. presidents and scores of other world leaders.

Amid criticism of Russia's actions in Ukraine and Syria and the investigations into its role in the U.S. campaign, Trump has come under growing pressure to take a hard line against the Kremlin.

On Thursday, Trump delivered some of his sharpest remarks about Moscow since becoming president, urging Russia to stop its "destabilizing activities" and end its support for Syria and Iran.

But Trump stopped short on Thursday of any personal criticism of Putin and declined to say definitively whether he believed U.S. intelligence officials' assertion that Russia had interfered in the 2016 U.S. election.

"I think it was Russia but I think it was probably other people and/or countries, and I see nothing wrong with that statement. Nobody really knows. Nobody really knows for sure," Trump said on a visit to Poland.

(Source: agencies)

## Iran's UN envoy: Missile attack on Daesh was 'retaliation based on self-defense'

BY staff and agency

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has said that Iran's missile attack on Daesh strongholds in the Syrian town of Deir al Zour was "a retaliation based on self-defense".

In an exclusive interview with Press TV aired on Friday, Gholamali Khoshroo said Daesh terrorist attacks in Tehran was planned in Deir al Zour.

The attacks on Iran's parliament and the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's founder, on June 7, left 17 people dead and 56 injured.

On June 18, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps fired six missiles into the Deir al Zour region of eastern Syria targeting headquarters and gathering centers of Takfiri terrorists.

Elsewhere, Khoshroo slammed Saudi Arabia's hostility towards Iran and said that Iran's regional influence originates from its "wisdom" in dealing with its neighbors rather than its military power.

Iran is a "stabilizing factor in the region" due to its contribution to the fight against the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group, he added.

On the contrary, he said, Saudi Arabia has adopted "destructive" policies in the region over the past years through attacking Yemen, helping the emergence of militant groups such as Taliban and al-Qaeda, and supporting Daesh and former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

"They (the Saudis) are thinking that they are counter-balancing Iran's influence, but Iran's influence is not because of its military force, but because of its wisdom on how to deal with its neighbors and radicals in the region," Khoshroo said.

On Saudi's now Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud who said in May that the regime "will work to have the battle in Iran rather than in Saudi Arabia", he said the Saudis are organizing, supporting and providing logistics to some groups following the Wahhabi ideology, but they have been unable to do anything against Iran.

The Iranian diplomat also denounced bin Salman's statement as against international law and "clear intervention in Iran's affairs".

Bin Salman's remarks showed Riyadh's support for terrorism and extremism, Iran's top diplomat to the UN said.

The remarks indicate that "whatever is taking place ... under the ideology of Wahhabism has roots in Saudi Arabia in one way or another," Khoshroo noted.

## G20 communique agreed apart from climate issue: EU officials

World leaders meeting for a summit in Germany have agreed every aspect of a joint statement apart from the section on climate where the United States is pushing for a reference to fossil fuels, European Union officials said on Saturday.

The officials said aides had worked until 2 a.m. to finalize a communique for the Group of 20, overcoming differences on trade after U.S. officials agreed to language on fighting protectionism.

"The outcome is good. We have a communique. There is one issue left, which is on climate, but I am hopeful we can find a compromise," said one EU official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We have all the fundamentals."

"We have a G20 communique, not a G19 communique," he added.

The section that needs to be resolved by the leaders relates to the U.S. insistence that there be a reference to fossil fuels, the official said.

With the final statement almost nailed down, the summit marked a diplomatic success for Chancellor Angela Merkel as she finessed differences with U.S. President Donald Trump, who arrived at the two-day summit isolated on a host of issues.

Trump, who on Friday found chemistry in his first face-to-face meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, congratulated Merkel for her stewardship of the summit.

"You have been amazing and you have done a fantastic job. Thank you very much chancellor," he said.

Trump and Putin on Friday discussed alleged Russian meddling in the U.S. election but agreed to focus on future ties rather than dwell on the past, a result that was sharply criticized by leading Democrats in Congress.

For Merkel, the summit is an opportunity to show off her diplomatic skills ahead of a federal election in September, when she is seeking a fourth term in office.

She treated the leaders to a concert at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie on Friday night, where they listened to Beethoven while their aides began their all night slog to work out a consensus on trade that had eluded the leaders.

Trade policy has become more contentious since Trump entered the White House promising an "America First" approach.

The trade section in the statement the aides thrashed out read: "We will keep markets open noting the importance of reciprocal and mutually advantageous trade and investment frameworks and the principle of non-discrimination, and continue to fight protectionism including all unfair trade practices and recognize the role of legitimate trade defense instruments in this regard."

### Climate clash

However, climate change policy proved a sticking point, with the United States pressing for inclusion of wording about which other countries had reservations.

That passage read: "... the United States of America will endeavor to work closely with other partners to help their access to and use of fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently ..."

The climate section took note of Trump's decision last month to withdraw the United States from the landmark Paris climate accord aimed at combating climate change, and reaffirmed the commitment of the other 19 members to the agreement.

Merkel chose to host the summit in Hamburg, the port city where she was born, to send a signal about Germany's openness to the world, including its tolerance of peaceful protests.

As the leaders met on Saturday, police helicopters hovered overhead. Overnight, police clashed with anti-capitalist protesters seeking to disrupt the summit.

(Source: Reuters)

## Muslim leaders begin European tour to protest against terror



Dozens of religious leaders boarded a bus on the Champs Elysees in Paris on Saturday to kick off a European tour of the sites of recent extremist attacks to remember the victims and condemn violence. Imams from countries including France, Belgium, Britain and Tunisia were joined by representatives of other religious communities at the spot where French policeman Xavier Jugele was shot dead in April.

Tour stops will include Berlin -- where organizers say they hope to meet Chancellor Angela Merkel -- Brussels and Nice, with a return to Paris for July 14, the first anniversary of the Nice truck attack.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group claimed responsibility for the Nice attack when a truck killed 86 people celebrating Bastille Day on the seafront and a truck attack on a Christmas market in Berlin last December that killed 12. The Imam of Drancy and French writer Marek Halter were behind the initiative of the current tour.

"We are here to say that our religion and the values of Islam are opposed to those assassins," Hassen Chalghoumi, the imam de Drancy, told France Inter radio on Saturday.

Some 30 people boarded the bus on Saturday with more expected to join on the way bringing the total number of participants to 60.

(Source: Reuters)



TOCHAL TELECABIN Recreational and Sports Complex

## Tender notice for BOT of Tochal new Ropeway lines and Tochal Ski resort development and equipping

Tenderers are invited for provision of design, build and operate a new ropeway (telecabin) lines and Tochal Ski resort on a BOT (Build Operate Transfer) basis for Tochal Complex, in Tehran, Iran.

Companies meeting the eligibility requirements below can from **9 July (Date) to 16 July (Date)**. (Working hours: 8 AM – 3 PM) for collection of tender documents at CEO office of Tochal Telecabin Company in Tochal Complex, Velenjak St., Tehran, Iran, Tel NO: **+98-21-22421501**

Email: [tochal.ceo@gmail.com](mailto:tochal.ceo@gmail.com)

### Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible in participation in tender, a tenderer should meet the following requirements:

- Experience in operation of ropeway projects
- Financial capability
- Experience in construction of ropeway projects

Owners' Corporation of Tochal Complex  
Tehran - Iran

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Base metals account for 14% of IFB deals value in a week**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Base metals accounted for 14% of the worth of deals in Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), in the week ended on Friday, Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.

As reported, the worth of deals in the first market of IFB witnessed 88 percent growth in the mentioned week.



**Iran's customs, EU discuss facilitation of trade**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA)'s officials and the European Union's representatives gathered in Brussels to discuss expansion of customs cooperation and facilitating trade relations, IRIB reported on Saturday.

According to IRICA's official website, in this regard director general of Taxation and Customs Union of the European Commission and IRICA's president met and explored different areas of mutual cooperation.

**Trump expects trade deal with UK to be completed 'very, very quickly'**

The US president, Donald Trump, has said he expects a trade deal with the UK to be completed "very, very quickly" and confirmed he will be coming to London, ahead of a bilateral meeting with Theresa May on Saturday.

Trump and the British prime minister began a meeting as part of a series of bilateral discussions with leaders at the G20 summit in Hamburg aimed at boosting the UK's trade position after it leaves the European Union.

A UK official said that the meeting with Trump would focus on "progress with a post-Brexit US-UK trade agreement".

The US president also hailed the "very special relationship" he had developed with May as the pair met for talks on the margins of the G20. Trump said he expected an agreement on new trading arrangements with Britain to be a "very powerful" one that would be great for both countries.

However, it wasn't clear that he was referring to a full free trade agreement as he said trade would be a big factor. The US president also said he had a "tremendous" meeting with Russia's president Putin.

"There is no country that could possibly be closer than our countries," Trump said. "We have been working on a trade deal which will be a very, very big deal a very powerful deal, great for both countries and I think we will have that done very, very quickly."

He added: "Prime Minister May and I have developed a very special relationship and I think trade will be a very big factor between our two countries."

Trump's comments are unlikely to signal any confirmed trade deal being announced soon. The US president has consistently pledged to put American interests before those of any ally countries and a UK-US deal remains a long way from being agreed.

He also said he "will be going to London" and asked when, he replied: "We'll work that out."

As well as seeing Trump, May will meet the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the prime ministers of Japan and India, Shinzo Abe and Narendra Modi.

The prime minister is making a point of reaching out beyond her European counterparts, with officials repeatedly stressing the need for strong economic relationships after Brexit at the summit.

"The PM said as we get ready to leave, Britain would be wanting to build on its trade agreements with countries outside the EU," the UK official added.

May's discussions are not about details of an actual trade arrangement but more an opportunity to signal that she is looking beyond the EU for future economic relationships. But Trump's warm words are unlikely to shift his position on acting in the US interests.

His focus at the G20 has been to robustly assert his "America first" desire. During trade talks on Friday a western diplomatic source told the Guardian how Trump had crossed his arms as China's president, Xi Jinping, spoke during a session on trade, with a "face like thunder".

With Trump, May will also discuss North Korea, and raise the question of the US decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. The pair could also face some tension over free trade after May used a working lunch on the issue to warn that many citizens weren't benefiting from growth across the world but taking a very different tone to the US president.

"That is why G20 needs to go further and faster — the answer cannot be to retreat, turn to protectionism or abandon trade," she told the group. "In fact the answer must be to increase free trade because it is free trade that provides the best opportunity to driving global growth, it is free trade which combined with right domestic policies provides best opportunities to raise living standards."

On Friday, May met President Xi of China for 30 minutes, in which she raised questions over North Korea and steel dumping, but also talked of a "golden era" of relations between the two countries.

A senior No 10 official said the session began with the president saying that Chinese investment into Britain had increased since the Brexit vote, and that was a sign of confidence in the country.

"He said that Brexit was a very big event for the world but that he believed a prosperous and stable and open UK and prosperous and stable and open EU would be positive for the world and that China would work to further promote its interests with Britain and with the European Union," they said.

(Source: The Guardian)

# Gas exports to neighboring countries, India prioritized

**ENERGY TEHRAN** — Neighboring countries and India are Iran's top priority for gas exports and Europe is not one for now, Iranian Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs and Trading Amir-Hossein Zamaninia told IRNA.

The deputy minister believes since Europe receives gas even more than its demand so for the time being it is not considered a good market for Iran.

"Of course as the country with the most natural gas reserves in the worlds we should have a long term plan for gaining some share in Europe's market," Zamaninia noted.

According to the official, implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has provided an opportunity for energy diplomacy and paving the way for gas export to the neighboring countries.

In July 2015, Iran and the world's six major nations signed an agreement designed to eliminate most of its nuclear program. According to the deal, most sanctions against Iran would be gradually removed.

Iran has the world's largest natural gas reserves holding around 18 percent of total proven natural gas reserves globally, according to British Petroleum's (BP) Statistical Review of World Energy 2017 report.



## Market expansion Iran's top priority in post-sanctions economy

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Addressing a ceremony on the occasion of Iran's Industry and Mine National Day on Saturday, Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri referred to market expansion as administration's top economic priority in post sanctions era, IRNA reported.

"To overcome unemployment, the 80-million-people Iran should set other markets than its own", Jahangiri said in the ceremony held at Tehran's Summit Conference Hall.

Naming attraction of foreign investments as government's second priority, the VP added that sanctions removal has played a significant role in attraction of foreign investments.

He, elsewhere, referred to the newly signed agreement with the French company Total on the



expansion of South Pars gas field, saying that prominent international companies are inclined to commence their activities in Iran.

### Industrial sector grows above 6.5% in a year

During the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2017), Iranian industry sector grew more than 6.5 percent, the other Iranian senior official, Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh announced making remarks at the same ceremony.

As he added, during the past four years, 20,000 new industrial units have been established and within the past two years, exports of industrial products have surpassed their imports.

"During the past four years, more than one million jobs have been created in industry, mine, and trade sectors, and 450,000 new jobs are to be created by the end of the present Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018)," he added.

## Why Germany's current-account surplus is bad for the world economy

The battle-lines are drawn. When the world's big trading nations convene this week at a G20 summit in Hamburg, the stage is set for a clash between a protectionist America and a free-trading Germany.

President Donald Trump has already pulled out of one trade pact, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and demanded the renegotiation of another, the North American Free-Trade Agreement. He is weighing whether to impose tariffs on steel imports into America, a move that would almost certainly provoke retaliation. The threat of a trade war has hung over the Trump presidency since January. In contrast, Angela Merkel, Germany's chancellor and the summit's host, will bang the drum for free trade. In a thinly veiled attack on Mr Trump, she delivered a speech on June 29th condemning the forces of protectionism and isolationism. An imminent free-trade deal between Japan and the European Union will add substance to her rhetoric.

There is no question who has the better of this argument. Mr Trump's doctrine that trade must be balanced to be fair is economically illiterate. His belief that tariffs will level the playing field is naive and dangerous: they would shrink prosperity for all. But in one respect, at least, Mr Trump has grasped an inconvenient truth. He has admonished Germany for its trade surplus, which stood at almost \$300bn last year, the world's largest (China's hoard was a mere \$200bn). His threatened solution—to put a stop to sales of German cars—may be self-defeating, but the fact is that Germany saves too much and spends too little. And the size and persistence of Germany's

savings hoard makes it an awkward defender of free trade.

### Imperfect harmony

At bottom, a trade surplus is an excess of national saving over domestic investment. In Germany's case, this is not the result of a mercantilist government policy, as some foreigners complain. Nor, as German officials often insist, does it reflect the urgent need for an ageing society to save more. The rate of household saving has been stable, if high, for years; the increase in national saving has come from firms and the government.

Underlying Germany's surplus is a decades-old accord between business and unions in favour of wage restraint to keep export industries competitive. Such moderation served Germany's export-led economy well through its postwar recovery and beyond. It is an instinct that helps explain Germany's transformation since the late 1990s from Europe's sick man to today's muscle-bound champion.

There is much to envy in Germany's model. Harmony between firms and workers has been one of the main reasons for the economy's outperformance. Firms could invest free from the worry that unions would hold them to ransom. The state played its part by sponsoring a system of vocational training that is rightly admired. In America the prospects for men without college degrees have worsened along with a decline in manufacturing jobs—a cause of the economic nationalism espoused by Mr Trump. Germany has not entirely escaped this, but it has held on to more of the sorts of blue-collar jobs that America grieves for. This

is one reason why the populist AfD party remains on the fringes of German politics.

But the adverse side-effects of the model are increasingly evident. It has left the German economy and global trade perilously unbalanced. Pay restraint means less domestic spending and fewer imports. Consumer spending has dropped to just 54% of GDP compared with 69% in America and 65% in Britain. Exporters do not invest their windfall profits at home. And Germany is not alone; Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and the Netherlands have been piling up big surpluses, too.

For a large economy at full employment to run a current-account surplus in excess of 8% of GDP puts unreasonable strain on the global trading system. To offset such surpluses and sustain enough aggregate demand to keep people in work, the rest of the world must borrow and spend with equal abandon. In some countries, notably Italy, Greece and Spain, persistent deficits eventually led to crises. Their subsequent shift towards surplus came at a heavy cost. The enduring savings glut in northern Europe has made the adjustment needlessly painful. In the high-inflation 1970s and 1980s Germany's penchant for high saving was a stabilising force. Now it is a drag on global growth and a target for protectionists such as Mr Trump.

### The shift from thrift

Can the problem be fixed? Perhaps Germany's bumper trade surplus will be eroded as China's was, by a surge in wages. Unemployment is below 4% and the working-age population will shrink, despite strong immigration. After decades

of decline, the cost of housing is rising, meaning that pay does not stretch as far as it used to. The institutions behind wage restraint are losing influence. The euro may surge. Yet the German instinct for caution is deeply rooted. Pay rose by just 2.3% last year, more slowly than in the previous two years. Left to adjust, the surplus might take many years to fall to a sensible level.

The government should help by spending more. Germany's structural budget balance has gone from a deficit of over 3% of GDP in 2010 to a small surplus. Officials call this prudence but, given high private-sector savings, it is hard to defend. Germany has plenty of worthwhile projects to spend money on. Its school buildings and roads are crumbling, because of the squeeze on public investment required to meet its own misguided fiscal rules. The economy lags behind in its readiness for digitalisation, ranking 25th in the world in average download speeds. Greater provision of after-school care by the state would let more mothers work full-time, in an economy where women's participation is low. Some say such expansion is impossible, because of full employment. Yet in a market economy, there is a tried and trusted way to bid for scarce resources: pay more.

Above all, it is long past time for Germany to recognise that its excessive saving is a weakness. Mrs Merkel is absolutely right to proclaim the message of free trade. But she and her compatriots need to understand that Germany's surpluses are themselves a threat to free trade's legitimacy.

(Source: The Economist)

## Years into recovery and with full employment, U.S. wages still lag

The U.S. economy is now a decade on from the start of the global financial crisis and at what most economists view as full employment, yet when it comes to wage rises, the answer seems to be forget about it.

Government data on Friday showed that average hourly earnings in June rose just 2.5 percent on the year and have slowed in the past two quarters rather than accelerating even as workers become scarce due to continued economic strength.

The lack of wage growth is mirrored across the developed world, most of which has staged a slower recovery than the United States.

For decades, higher wages had been driven by gains in worker productivity, but there are few signs now of an investment boom or of innovations fundamentally changing the way work is done. Productivity growth in the U.S. has averaged just one percent since 2005, half the level of 1990-2004; in the past five years the annual growth rate has been a dismal 0.5 percent.

"There is no shortage of explanation as to why wage growth remains tepid — shadow slack, reduced bargaining power due to globalisation, de-unionization, automation, etc. — but what is puzzling is that wage growth, at least according to the average hourly earnings measure, was



clearly accelerating in 2015 and 2016," JPMorgan Economist Michael Feroli wrote after the data release.

"Why it would slow only in the last two quarters is a mystery."

While most economists say the jobs numbers alone are enough to keep the Federal Reserve on a path to hike rates again this year, the slow wages growth implies limits to how high the Fed can push rates and raises questions about the longer-term health of the U.S. economy, which depends on consumer spending for 70 percent of its activity.

International Monetary Fund data shows that across the

developed world, the share of national income paid out to workers had fallen to less than 40 percent by 2015 from close to 55 percent in 1970, driven largely by technological change and globalisation.

"You can't continue to get all this job growth but there is no wage pressure. So something is not adding up at all," said JJ Kinahan, chief market strategist at TD Ameritrade in Chicago.

In March 2014 Fed Chair Janet Yellen said she believed that "perhaps 3 and 4 percent wage inflation would be normal." Now the level appears to be stuck lower.

"The new benchmark for what we call good is lower than what we historically thought," said San Francisco Fed chief researcher Mary Daly, one of the Fed system's top labour economists.

"I would suggest the landing place doesn't seem surprising to me given that we have very low productivity growth and inflation that's not up to 2 percent," Daly said in an interview last month.

Fed Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said on Thursday the government could take some steps to boost productivity. Among these would be investing in basic research, infrastructure, education and public health, including clean air and drinking water.

(Source: Reuters)

# This is the reason oil could jump up to \$120 a barrel, expert says

Oil supply could easily be threatened by geopolitical risks, and such a disruption could cause oil prices to skyrocket, experts tell CNBC.

Neil Dwane, global strategist and chief investment officer of European equity at Allianz Global Investors, warned that oil production supply is looking threatened around the world.

"Venezuela's 2 million barrels of oil a day could literally go any day. Mexico looks poor. Azerbaijan's in trouble. China's own production is collapsing rapidly," he told CNBC's Squawk Box on Friday.

"One only has to have one mistake and the only thing you'll be talking about all morning is oil at \$120."

Dwane said geopolitical risks could cause prices to skyrocket as several oil producing states are fragile, and oil prices are currently too low for anyone to want to drill fresh wells which may be needed in the future.

Herman Wang, OPEC specialist at S&P Global Platts, agreed that there is significant geopolitical risk to oil supply.

"There are plausible scenarios where you could see, perhaps not \$120 a barrel, but an elevated oil price, say \$70 to \$80 on some of these geopolitical and some of the supply concerns. Venezuela certainly is a mess right now," he told CNBC's Squawk Box on Friday.

## ■ The 'million barrel question'

Even without these geopolitical concerns, OPEC must face the "million barrel question" if it ever hopes to rebalance the global oil market.

U.S. oil production increased by 88,000 barrels per day (bpd), or more than 1 percent, to 9.34 million bpd, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Meanwhile, OPEC's output rose by 220,000 bpd to 32.49 million bpd in June, according to the S&P Global Platts survey published on July 6.



However, U.S. crude oil stockpiles did fall sharply by 6.3 million barrels in the week to June 30. Whether or not stockpiles will fall faster in the coming months is the "million barrel question" according to Wang, but he thinks a rebalance by 2018 is unlikely.

"U.S. production is already half a million barrels above where it was when this production cut deal from OPEC started. You've got Libya and Nigeria, they're militancy seems to be calming there now," he said.

"Their production is up about 400,000 bpd combined above where it was from October levels. So you combine U.S. with Libya and Nigeria, that's almost a million

barrels per day, undoing more than half of this combined 1.8 million bpd OPEC and non-OPEC production cut."

The S&P Global Platts survey found Libya and Nigeria increased oil production by 80,000 bpd and 50,000 bpd respectively last month. Both are exempt from the OPEC production cut agreement, and that's becoming a problem for OPEC.

"Libya and Nigeria were given a free pass when the deal started in Jan 2017 because civil unrest meant their production was significantly down on what they have historically achieved," said Spencer Welch, director of oil markets & downstream energy at IHS Markit, told CNBC via email.

"Both were also given a free pass for the roll-over of the deal through to end 1Q 2018, it was always a big risk that either or both would find a way of increasing production."

In May, several OPEC and non-OPEC nations agreed to extend production cuts of 1.8 million bpd until March 2018. Welch says this coalition of supply cutters is now being hit by a "double whammy" of increased production from OPEC members and the U.S.

"This plus the U.S. effect is neutralizing the impact of the supply cuts and keeping a firm lid on crude prices. This is a worry for the supply cutting coalition," he said.

(Source: CNBC)

## Dentons advises Total on \$5b Iranian oil deal in first long post-sanction contract

Dentons has taken the lead advising French oil and gas company Total in signing a £4bn (\$5bn) contract with Iran's national oil company, the republic's first energy deal with a foreign enterprise since sanctions eased 18 months ago.

The Dentons UKMEA and Europe teams acting for Total were led by Paris-based partner Ramin Hariri and London-based partner Alistair Black with support from partners Charles Wood and Andrew Cheung.

Total will work on the development of one of the largest offshore gas fields in the world, to supply the Iranian domestic market from 2021 with a capacity of 400,000 barrels a day.

The French company will have a 50.1 percent stake in the project. Petropars, a fully-owned subsidiary of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), will hold a 19.9 percent interest and Chinese state-owned oil and gas company CNPC 30 percent.

Total is a longstanding client of Dentons. In 2014, Dentons advised Total

on \$48.1m UK shale gas licenses at a time when the unconventional method of extracting shale gas was becoming more widespread a phenomenon in the UK. Total was the first major oil company to invest in UK shale.

The Chinese oil company and NIOC were advised by internal lawyers.

The deal is the first long-term agreement the Islamic Republic of Iran has signed since it negotiated a 2015 plan with China, France, Russia, the UK, U.S. and EU to ease its nuclear program in exchange for relaxing sanctions. This took effect from January 2016.

In 2015, Total cut its legal panel roster to increase price competition between law firms.

The reluctance of banks to be involved with money coming from and going to Iran remains an issue for potential investors in the area, but Legal Business understands Total had sufficient cash flow to be able to invest in the project without requiring additional funds in the initial phases.

(Source: Legal Business)

## OPEC considers capping oil output of exempt Libya, Nigeria

OPEC is thinking of putting a ceiling on the crude oil outputs of Libya and Nigeria, as rising production from these two OPEC producers exempt from the cuts is further complicating the cartel's efforts to draw down oversupply and boost oil prices, The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday, citing OPEC delegates.

"Nigeria is definitely becoming a worry for us," a delegate to OPEC from a Persian Gulf Arab country told The Journal, while OPEC delegates from a few other nations have expressed similar concerns.

According to a Platts survey from July 6, Libya and Nigeria are expected to continue to increase oil production in the coming months. The two countries' combined output is currently some 380,000 bpd above October levels, the month which OPEC used as a benchmark to base its production cuts. Militancy, attacks on oil infrastructure, and port terminals blockades have quieted in both African countries, therefore further increases in production are likely,

according to Platts.

Last week, a new militant group in the oil-rich Niger Delta said it was calling off the war it had threatened to start on June 30, and has decided to "give peace a chance", in what could be a relief for Nigeria, which had started to recover its oil production that was crippled by militant attacks last year.

Nigeria's crude oil production increased to 1.68 million bpd in May, up by 174,200 bpd over April—the highest level in more than a year—after the restart of Forcados loadings for the first time since October 2016, according to OPEC's latest Monthly Oil Market Report.

Libya, for its part, is reaching a 1-million-bpd production—the highest in four years—and in line with its target to have that output reached by the end of July.

In May, Libya's average daily production was 730,000 bpd, as per OPEC secondary sources, up by 178,200 bpd compared to April.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## At OPEC's critical moment, no sign of Saudi 'whatever it takes'

Now is the time to maximize the impact of OPEC's oil production cuts, yet the market is still waiting for the group's biggest member to show it's doing "whatever it takes" to eliminate the global oversupply.

OPEC's best chance to make a big dent in the lingering glut in the U.S., and with it reverse oil's three-year slump, lies in the remaining weeks of peak summertime demand. That's already become harder because of the resurgence in output from OPEC members exempt from cuts, while there are no signs yet that Saudi Arabia, the group's de-facto leader, is willing to cut as deeply as it did earlier in the year.

"Saudi Arabia has gone quiet on the solution of 'whatever it takes' to force the market into rebalancing," said Oliver Jakob, managing director at consultants Petromatrix GmbH in Zug, Switzerland.

Echoing a famous pledge by the European Central Bank, Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih has repeatedly vowed to do what's necessary end the oil rout. While the kingdom is still cutting slightly deeper than required -- as it has done all year -- it increased production in June to the highest level since the accord began, boosted exports

by even more, and this week cut prices for Asian buyers.

Given the current state of the oil market, that may not be enough.

"For some time we've been saying OPEC needs to step up," said Amrita Sen, chief oil analyst at Energy Aspects Ltd. "Saudi Arabia's exports were up in June, and this is not what the market wants to see at all. Exports need to come down further."

Saudi production increased by 90,000 barrels a day to 10.02 million a day in June, according to a Bloomberg survey. It was the biggest increase in almost a year and leaves their output 150,000 barrels a day higher than in January, when the kingdom explicitly cut more than needed as a symbol of commitment to the deal.

While output typically climbs during the summer months as crude is burned to meet surging domestic electricity demand for cooling, the kingdom's exports jumped even more, by 320,000 barrels a day, according to ship tracking by Bloomberg.

Saudi Arabia reduced prices for most of its crude sales to Asia in August, showing that it doesn't want to surrender market share in the region despite the commitment to cut output, Sen said.

### ■ Keeping Faith

"I do still believe they mean 'whatever it takes,' but the market is impatient and wants to see larger stock draws," said Torbjorn Kjus, chief oil analyst at Oslo-based bank DNB ASA. Saudi exports have been falling and will continue to do so in the third quarter, he said.

Monthly fluctuations in output or exports matter less than overall compliance for the duration of the deal, which remains on track, said Jason Bordoff, director at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University.

Over the first half of the year, the 11 OPEC members bound by the output curbs were fully compliant with their pledges, the Bloomberg survey showed. However, a big part of that effort was undone by the resurgence of Libya and Nigeria, OPEC members exempt from the cuts that together have added 440,000 barrels a day of production in the last two months.

This problem was becoming apparent when OPEC met in Vienna in May, but the group went no further than agreeing to prolong the existing cutbacks to the end of March.

### ■ Little help

It's the reluctance of Russia and OPEC-member Iraq to curb their out-

put further that's probably holding Saudi Arabia back, said Bob McNally, president of consultants the Rapidan Group LLC.

"Their commitment to the letter of the Vienna deal has been exemplary," said McNally. "A real supply manager would be cutting supply further, but Riyadh understandably refuses to do so without collective contributions."

Russia would oppose deeper curbs if they were suggested when producers meet in St. Petersburg this month, according to four government officials. Iraq sees no need for steeper reductions for now, Oil Minister Jabbar Al-Lu-aibi said this week.

By not cutting deeper, Saudi Arabia may be serving its other objectives, particularly as the country grows increasingly wary of giving any more price support to the resurgent U.S. shale-oil industry, said Helima Croft, head of commodity strategy at RBC Capital Markets LLC.

"Was there really a lot of urgency in Riyadh to rescue the price -- and investors and U.S. producers -- this summer?" said Croft. "I just have the sense that Khalid al-Falih thinks he has done enough and has a different timeline."

(Source: Bloomberg)

## China built a solar farm shaped like a giant panda

Last week, Panda Green Energy Group Limited flipped the switch on the world's most adorable solar panel facility.

The group announced last Friday that its Panda Power Plant was officially connected to the grid in Datong Shanxi, China. While a photo of the plant has been difficult to find, a past artist rendering shows panels in the shape of a bright-eyed, smiling Giant Panda.

The design of the plant was possible using black single crystalline silicon solar cells from a Chinese company and white thin-film solar cells supplied by First Solar in the U.S.

"By designing the solar power station into the pattern of a panda, we aim to stimulate teenagers' interest and enthusiasm for solar energy application," Alan Li, CEO of China Merchants New Energy Group said last year. "To cope with the climate change, we should not only appeal to the governments and companies, but also need to motivate every household, getting the next generation involved in, thus making joint efforts for a green future."



China Merchants New Energy Group, Panda Green Energy's largest shareholder, worked with the United Nations Development Program last year to involve youth in innovation design contests.

Plus, there's more pandas on the way. Panda Green Energy's Panda 100 Program plans to build many more adorable green energy sites — enough to power 3.2 billion kWh of green electricity over 25 years, according to a release. That's comparable to saving 1.056 million tons of coal, or reducing 2.74 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions, the project notes.

(Source: USA Today)

## Cash-strapped Venezuela offers India's ONGC oil stake: sources

Cash-hungry Venezuela has offered Indian oil company ONGC Videsh an increased stake in an oil field, according to two sources close to the proposal, as the country seeks to shore up its bruised energy industry and strengthen ties with New Delhi.

State oil firm Petroleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA) has proposed selling a 9 percent stake in the San Cristobal field to ONGC Videsh (OVL), a subsidiary of India's state-owned top explorer Oil and Natural Gas Corp, the sources said this week.

ONGC Videsh already holds a 40 percent stake in the field, which produces around 22,000-23,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil. While the amount of the sale would be relatively modest, according to analysts, any extra income would be welcome for PDVSA.

Venezuela, struggling under triple-digit inflation and Soviet-style product shortages as its socialist economy unravels, has been hit hard by the falling price of oil, its economic lifeline.

The OPEC nation's oil output has slipped and PDVSA is struggling to maintain investment in its oilfields, which hold the world's largest crude reserves.

The state company already offered Russian oil major Rosneft a stake in a joint venture in an extra-heavy crude project in the Orinoco Belt, sources told Reuters in March.

The sources, who asked to remain anonymous because they are not authorized to speak about the negotiations, said PDVSA was still negotiating with ONGC and no deal was certain.

Under Venezuela's hydrocarbon law, the state must maintain more than 50 percent of all oil ventures, hence PDVSA can only offer up to 9 percent to the Indian firm.

(Source: Reuters)

## Pakistan orders Shell subsidiary to pay \$2.4 million for tanker blast

Pakistan's oil and gas regulator ordered a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell to pay about 257 million rupees (\$2.4 million) in damages and compensation for a tanker explosion that killed more than 200 people.

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has held Shell Pakistan Ltd (SPL) responsible for the blast in Punjab province on June 25 after the tanker carrying gasoline for the company rolled over, and villagers rushed to collect leaking fuel.

The road accident was caused by "non-professional driving/vehicle being lesser than required specs", the authority said in a report seen by Reuters.

"The report shows that they have completely ignored the safety standards of the vehicles procured from the contractors," OGRA spokesman Imran Ghaznavi told Reuters, referring to Shell Pakistan.

Shell Pakistan said in an email the company was reviewing the report, adding "we respect the role of the regulator and will consider the report as we cooperate with investigations by authorities and as we conduct our own investigation".

Shell Pakistan has said the tanker was owned by a contractor it hired to transport its fuel.

(Source: Reuters)

## The next phase of Middle East conflict

With the battles of Mosul and Raqqa dislodging the Islamic State (ISIL) from its strongholds in Syria and Iraq, and the Syrian civil war becoming a war of attrition, the Middle East's most acute conflicts are evolving fast. But that doesn't mean they will soon be resolved.

ISIL's self-proclaimed caliphate was never a state that could be driven to unconditional surrender, meaning that the battles of Mosul and Raqqa were never going to be decisive, even if they did eliminate ISIL sanctuaries. As ISIL's spread into Libya and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula underscores, there are plenty of loosely controlled areas available to be penetrated.



For now, ISIL has shifted its strategy to planning and inspiring terrorist attacks in the Middle East, Europe, and even Southeast Asia. Its next step could be to destabilize Arab regimes from within – a strategy that cannot be countered by the international coalitions now closing in on Raqqa.

This is all the more true, given those coalitions' incoherence and fragility. U.S. President Donald Trump has based his entire Middle East strategy on Saudi Arabia's fears not just of ISIL, but also of Iran. The region's Sunni powers, emboldened by Trump's approach, have now closed ranks against both ISIL and Iran, even though they themselves are often mortal enemies.

The U.S., too, is doing its part to block Shia powers from achieving territorial contiguity from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, including by launching airstrikes in the border region shared by Iraq, Jordan, and Syria.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is on record explicitly supporting ISIL's challenge to the 100-year-old Sykes-Picot order, created by the British and French after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

The Kurds – key U.S. allies in the fight against ISIL – also want changes to the Middle Eastern map, though certainly not in the same way as Turkey. They want their own state, and to some extent, they even expect it, given their contributions to defeating ISIL. Masoud Barzani, the president of Iraq's Kurdistan autonomous region, has already announced that an independence referendum for Iraqi Kurds will be held in September.

For Turkey, preventing that outcome is a higher priority than defeating ISIL. Erdoğan worries that, if the Iraqi Kurds gain independence, they could inspire Turkey's own Kurdish rebels, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), to revive their decades-old fight for independence. The respect that the PKK-affiliated Syrian Kurdish militias have earned on the battlefield, Turkey fears, could also legitimize the group internationally; hence Turkey's attempts to suppress it.

### ■ The fall of Raqqa

Given these concerns, Turkish forces already deployed in northern Syria are likely to remain there even after the fall of Raqqa, to serve as a buffer between the Kurds there and those in Turkey. But, while Turkey's concerns about Kurdish resistance are not unfounded, the chances of actual Kurdish statehood remain slim, because such a state would be wedged between four countries – Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria – that bitterly oppose it.

In this complex context, there is little patience for added uncertainty. That is why Saudi Arabia – along with Bahrain, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates – recently cut diplomatic ties and trade links with Qatar, which they accuse of destabilizing the region by supporting both the Sunni militants of al-Qaeda and ISIL.

For now, however, Qatar is getting by with a little help from its remaining friends. Both Iran and Turkey stand ready to fill the trade void left by the Saudi coalition. Turkey has also deployed troops to its military base in Qatar.

In any case, Qatar isn't Saudi Arabia's real problem. Using external enemies to divert attention from unresolved domestic problems is a tactic straight out of the autocrat's handbook. To turn a feudal kingdom into a modern nation-state, Saudi Arabia needs to address its internal weaknesses; it does not need more combative alliances and colossal arms deals like the one its leaders signed with Trump on his recent trip to Riyadh.

Egypt, too, needs to focus on easing severe domestic social and political strain. Only then can it assert control over the Sinai Peninsula, from which terrorist groups, including ISIL, are operating.

America's Sunni allies are drawn to Trump, partly because he has little interest in the kinds of democratic reforms that his predecessor Barack Obama used to push. But if they continue on their current path, they may end up facing sociopolitical explosions at home – and deepening conflicts abroad.

(Source: project-syndicate.org)

# The European Union must decide

In an interview, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau discusses free trade, climate change and his country's delicate relationship with its neighbor to the south: Donald Trump's United States.

Justin Trudeau, 45, has been Canadian prime minister for 18 months, and he is the polar opposite of U.S. President Donald Trump. Inviting. Unafraid. Funny. Liberal. He is an advocate of climate protection and migration; when Trump announced his intention to build a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico, Trudeau said that Canada welcomes the world with open arms. He is in favor of free trade and is pursuing the difficult reconciliation with Canada's indigenous population. When he presented his cabinet that was half men and half women, he was asked why – and responded with the now-famous sentence: "Because it's 2015."

Trudeau is the oldest son of Pierre Trudeau, who was prime minister of Canada from 1968 to 1979 and again from 1980 to 1984. Little Justin grew up playing in the government quarter of Ottawa, and perhaps that explains why the grown-up Trudeau of today is so sure of himself, and never nervous.

After finishing his studies (education and literature), he taught French and social studies in addition to theater. And he taught snowboarding at Whistler, the ski resort outside of Vancouver.

He rose to prominence in part due to the eulogy he delivered for his father 17 years ago: His speech was both so controlled and so moving that his political career began soon afterwards, entering parliament in 2008 and taking over leadership of the Liberal Party in 2013.

Trudeau enters the room. He doesn't eat or drink anything. Just a radiant "Hello." And the interview begins.

■ **Mr. Prime Minister, half the world regards you as the "anti-Trump." Do you and Donald Trump have anything in common?**

A: Yes. I got elected on a commitment to Canadians that I was going to make growth work for everyone. I was going to focus on the middle class and those working hard to join it. I was going to make sure that the people who felt that the growth in the economy had left them behind would be included. That's similar to the promise that got Trump elected. Now, our approaches to the same problems are somewhat different. But in my conversations with him, we've very much been able to agree that we want to help the citizens of our countries in tangible ways.

■ **Following Trump's election, one gained the impression that Canada is a somewhat more liberal version of the United States. Whereas the U.S. has sealed itself off from refugees, you have brought Syrian refugees to Canada to help them. What's your strategy**



for dealing with Trump?

A: As prime minister, Canadians expect me to do two things: To stand up for Canadian interests and project Canadian values; and to have a good, constructive relationship with our largest trading partner and closest neighbor, the United States. Those two things are not incompatible. It requires a very deliberate strategy and approach, but I think we've done that.

■ **What was your first thought when you learned that Donald Trump had won the election?**

A: It was a surprise. I don't think a lot of people expected him to win. But there was also a recognition that the anger and concerns that many Americans had was real. That this was going to be both a challenge in the relationship, obviously -- a president who comes in with an ideology that doesn't always align with mine, but also the challenge of really needing to deal with this anger, this expression of frustration with the ruling institutions, parties and structures that, for many years, have demonstrated that they haven't done a good enough job of listening to ordinary people.

■ **Do you believe this anger poses a serious threat to democracy?**

A: We had an election in Canada in 2015 in which the conservative incumbent used the politics of division, the politics of fear -- of immigrants and Muslims, specifically -- and of class envy and security to try and drive what is resonating very much in some of the right-wing populism movements. We countered it with an inclusive vision. Instead of trying to say we were going to protect people from the worst among us, let's try and bring out the best in all of us and a positive vision of working together to solve big problems, to recognize that, yes, all is not right, things need to be fixed. We're better off solving things by working together than by pointing fingers at other people. Emmanuel Macron and Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London,

took a very similar approach. They said: We're stronger together. And it worked.

■ **People are expecting a lot from you, from Macron and from Merkel. You have been romanticized and idealized. What do the three of you really have in common?**

A: First and foremost, what we have very much in common -- as happy as we are to be positively engaged on the world stage -- is that our focus is on our own citizens and making sure that we are supporting them and that we are creating solutions. We're seeing a lot of frustration, fear and anger. There will always be people who say, we should just tear things down, they simply don't work and we should just fold inward. The three of us -- Angela, Emmanuel and I -- are trying to show that we can work with existing systems and that we need to make sure that they work for all citizens and that they create the freedoms and the opportunities without having to be more fearful, which the right is always pushing, or angrier, which the left seems to push.

■ **Is there such things as good and bad, or legitimate and illegitimate populism?**

A: One of the most important things in any leader or in any successful approach is to focus on connecting with people and really listening to them. We shouldn't just be saying, oh yes, the people are protesting. We need to ask them why they are protesting and try and figure out if there is something we can do to bring them in and respond to those concerns. That's not populism -- that's being thoughtfully open to the fact that our citizens are allowed to have, and are even justified in having, very real concerns and questions for the people responsible for serving them. Excluding citizens' voices from politics leads down a very bad path.

■ **The U.S. has announced its intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. Is there a way forward for climate protection?**

A: My predecessor Stephen Harper did not care much for the fight against climate change. For 10 years under that government, what we saw was tremendous leadership from our provinces, from our cities, from our big companies -- despite the federal government at the time. What I've seen in the U.S. is that big city mayors step up, small municipalities want to be part of it, states step up and, of course, the significant players in the American economy are saying they are still going to live up to our Paris commitments, even if the federal government won't.

■ **Should the United States be isolated, meaning a G-19 rather than a G-20?**

A: The 20 major global economies come together in the G-20 to talk about economic issues. Climate change is one of the biggest economic issues we all face. The world is moving forward on our Paris commitment. But we must recognize that, for now, the U.S. holds a different position.

■ **Leaders like Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Trump are promoting isolationism, but you champion free trade. Do you still truly believe in CETA, the free trade agreement between Canada and the EU?**

A: Trade is good for the economy. Trade creates growth. The problem is that it creates growth but it does not think about distribution of the benefits of that growth. And over the last years, particularly, we've seen a very small minority of people benefit from the increased growth and a lot of people wonder what's going on and why it's not working for them. But if the European Union can't sign a free trade deal with a country as like-minded as Canada, then which country will it sign a trade deal with?

■ **But it appears as though CETA has already collapsed. How do you intend to deliver a success on the deal?**

A: We have been seeing the "CETA is about to collapse" headlines for years now. We in Canada have done just about everything we possibly can. The European Union must decide whether you believe in trade with Canada or not.

■ **What can Europe learn from Canada about migration?**

A: First, we're very different. Canada is lucky enough to be protected both by oceans and by a southern neighbor that is, you know, very careful about its migration and its borders. So, we don't have the irregular flow that Europe has been having to deal with. But because of that, people here have seen that welcoming people, helping them to integrate, is actually a tremendous benefit to local economies. It creates jobs, innovation and opportunity. One of the things that comes with that, though, is stemming the flow of irregular migration. But you can't just create barriers -- you also have to work with the countries of origin.

(Source: Spiegel)

## Trump and Putin enjoy successful 'first date'

The U.S. president and his Russian counterpart talked for more than two hours in Hamburg on Friday – and the pair seemed to have established a warm rapport

By David Smith

It is a blossoming romance. In what one U.S.-based critic called a "first Tinder date", Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin talked for two and a quarter hours on Friday instead of their scheduled 30 minutes.

"I think there was just such a level of engagement and exchange, and neither one of them wanted to stop," U.S. secretary of State Rex Tillerson said afterwards. "Several times I had to remind the president, and people were sticking their heads in the door. And they sent in the first lady at one point to see if she could get us out of there, and that didn't work either."

There were sighs of relief in Washington that Trump, an erratic and volatile president with little foreign policy experience, had avoided a major gaffe. The news website Axios summed it up: "Trump survives the Putin meeting."

But diplomats and experts said this was hardly cause for celebration. Thomas Countryman, former U.S. acting undersecretary for arms control and international security, commented: "It's an indication of how rapidly our standards are falling when we're reasonably pleased that President Trump has not made an obvious error."

Pre-meeting hype had focused on whether Trump would confront Putin over Russia's interference in the U.S. election. He delivered, according to Tillerson, pressing the issue repeatedly. But Putin denied it and Tillerson later admitted that the two leaders had focused on how to move on from here. There seemed little indication that Trump had held Putin's feet to the fire.

### ■ Putin's assurances

Trump had accepted Putin's assurances, Countryman said: "It certainly was the minimum that any U.S. president should have done in this situation. I'm glad he brought it up. What we don't know – and may never know – is what he replied when Vladimir Putin looked him in the eye and falsely said: 'It was not us.'" Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov claimed Trump had accepted Putin's assurances, although the U.S.



**There were sighs of relief in Washington that Trump, an erratic and volatile president with little foreign policy experience, had avoided a major gaffe.**

disputed that.

Failure to address what has been described as the political crime of the century would have fuelled criticism and dominated the news agenda, overshadowing other matters such as a ceasefire deal in south-west Syria. Sean Guillory, a blogger and podcaster on Russia, said: "The whole thing is theatre for domestic consumption."

Alina Polyakova, director of Europe and Eurasia research at the Atlantic Council, a Washington thinktank, agreed that raising the issue of election meddling was merely "pro forma". She said: "There was political awareness that they had to bring it up. Not doing so would have been politically deaf and suspicious in a way."

More significant was the body language between the leaders that, in Polyakova's view, offered a "night and day" contrast with Barack Obama's frosty meetings with the Russian president.

"The sense I'm getting from the way they interacted

on camera – they seem to have a very good rapport. Trump seems friendly to Putin. Putin seemed reserved but he always has on camera, except when he was with Silvio Berlusconi."

She added: "Obama and Putin over time developed an uncomfortable and contentious relationship. This was obviously the first meeting so it would be expected to be more friendly and cordial."

As journalists were ushered from the room, Polyakova noted, Putin appeared to lean in and asking if these were the ones who've been hurting Trump's feelings, then chuckle. "It was a clever move to show he was on his side. It was a deft move on the part of Putin to build trust."

What was also significant was who was in the room – or rather who wasn't. Trump and Tillerson were not accompanied by national security adviser HR McMaster or Trump's senior Russia adviser Fiona Hill. "That was an interesting omission given that Fiona Hill is the Russia expert on the National Security Council."

Trump's handling of the issue of Russian meddling was condemned by Democrats and the liberal Center for American Progress Action Fund, which declared that he had "just unilaterally surrendered to Russia".

Morgan Finkelstein, its press secretary, said: "After a bilateral meeting that sounded like a good first Tinder date, based on the official readout, Trump is rewarding Putin's egregious behavior by giving Putin the platform he so desperately craves without getting anything in return."

"Trump is unilaterally surrendering American sovereignty and the right to fair elections free of foreign interference."

She added: "It makes you wonder: what does Putin have on Trump that could make Trump act like a supplicant on the international stage? How deep in trouble is Trump that he couldn't even perform the most basic task – asking Putin not to interfere in our elections?"

(Source: The Guardian)

# The G20: Is the West governed by psychopaths?

By Peter Koenig

"Welcome to Hell!" is the slogan with which G20 protesters greet the self-appointed leaders of the world to their summit on 7 and 8 July 2017 in Hamburg, Germany, under Madame Merkel's auspices to discuss the calamities of our globe and how to resolve them. Never mind that the distress of Mother Earth has been mostly caused by those who represent the West, and now pretend to fix it.

How utterly arrogant – and hypocritical! In the wake of the summit, police were beating on aggressively against the demonstrators, most of them peaceful, unarmed; but some of them violent and hooded, as old tradition dictates, so they will not be recognized as police themselves or patsies of the police. Many people were hurt, several to the point of hospitalization. And the meeting just began.

At the onset of the summit, Donald Trump, the chief-psychopath, is running amok declaring with echo, "America First" – "America First" – trying to justify his decision for the U.S. to quit the Paris Climate Accords. In a cheap attempt to hit Russia under the belt, he offered Europe gas sales, so Europe would no longer be 'hostage' to Russia. How arrogant, again. The Donald doesn't seem to have a clue what he is doing, other than thinking the world is his puppet. By far most Europeans rather buy hydrocarbons from Russia than being in the bloody and ruthless claws of the United States of America – and those dark forces that pull the strings behind Washington.

It remains to be seen to what extent the psychopath-in-chief will have his European, Australian and Canadian vassal-psychopaths lined up and dancing to his tune.

Before the summit, 'informal' talks between the odd couple, Donald Trump and Angela Merkel, took place. They apparently focused on North Korea, Syria, and Ukraine – all countries where the U.S. is intent to destabilize and push for 'regime change' – the sort of interference in sovereign nations' affairs Trump promised during his campaign he would abandon as President. The dark one-eyed Masters didn't allow it. And he isn't man enough to stand up for what he was elected. Well, let's face it – he could lose his job, or worse.

Nobody has elected the G20, nor the G7. 'G' stands for Grand or Great. That's how they see themselves. Everybody takes them for granted, the self-appointed megalos. Nobody seems to question their legitimacy. People only protest against what they stand for. That the G20 are sidelining the official body, the United Nations, is of no concern. Perhaps, because the UN has itself become a puppet of the invisible Masters, manipulated by their executioners, the U.S. of A. So, has any international court that otherwise could hold them accountable for the crimes they committed over the century, or longer and keep committing. The G7, embedded in the G20, are the aggressing driving force for wars, destruction, merciless killing and perpetual chaos.

The G7 – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK and the U.S. – all western nations (Japan follows the western game plan), are also the main creators of terrorism. They fund, feed, train and arm such reputed terror groups as ISIS, Al Qaeda, Al Nusra – and others that fit the model of their war strategy (sic) of the moment.

Yet, it just emerged – would you believe – that the number one item on the rather fuzzy Hamburg agenda was fighting worldwide terrorism. How hypocritical: you create them, fund them, and you fight them. Lying to the people. How much

longer will they swallow the lie?

This reminds of the prominent former German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt's words, shortly before his death, in an interview on terrorism to the German paper "Die Zeit", on 30 August 2007: "I suspect that all terrorists, whether they represent the German RAF, the Italian Brigade Rosse, the French, the Irish, Spanish or Arabs, are relatively modest in their disdain for humanity. They are largely surpassed by certain forms of state terrorism." – When the journalist asked back, "Are you serious? Whom are you referring to?" Schmidt: "Let's leave it at that. I really mean what I say."

Only western megalop-psychopaths could have thought of 'creating', of nominating themselves into an alliance, of which the ultimate goal is to forge a New World Order (NWO), at times also called, One World Order, referring to an unspoken One Anglo-Zionist Government. That's where we are headed; towards military oppression and financial subjugation of a small Zionist-headed financial and military elite.

It's still time to wake up, to take our lives into our own hands, shed the mainstream propaganda and blood-thirsty lie-media, ignore them; get out from under the fraudulent privately owned fake dollar monetary system.

There are alternatives available. We have to see them, then choose them. It is up to us to let go of the ever oppressing west. But each one of us, has to see the light, the little spark, that tells him or her – that there is something drastically wrong with the life we live, have been living for the last hundred years, that peace is just around the corner, but we have been duped into wars, after wars, after bloody conflict – and wars again. We are dozed with the idea that conflict and aggression is the Big Normal, as it is always inspired and provoked by 'others' – mostly by the east. Yes, we believe it. It's comfortable, and it would be inconvenient having to admit

there are Russia and China at the table, and Trump with all his arrogance, may have to watch out for not becoming the laughing stock of the summit.

**The G7, embedded in the G20, are the aggressing driving force for wars, destruction, merciless killing and perpetual chaos, as well as the main creators of terrorism.**

that we have been living a lie – a blatant lie all or most of our lives. Admitting it, and standing up for justice, would be saving ourselves and civilization – maybe even humanity.

## What and who are these G20?

They are the G7 enlarged and disguised in their evil intentions, by 13 other economic power brokers, also often referred to as "threshold countries", including Russia, China, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, Australia, South Korea, Turkey and the EU. Spain is a permanent observer. Of course, the (western) world's key financial enablers and political institutions, like the IMF, World Bank, Federal Reserve and the UN with its regional sub-hubs, are not missing in Hamburg.

The G20 control two thirds of the world population, 90% of the globe's economic output and 80% of world trade. Their agenda in Hamburg is semi-secret, except for the items that might interest the populace at large, like fighting terrorism. But certainly, under the guise of 'security and terrorism', they will also discuss, led by the Trump team, how to subdue renegades, such as Iran, Venezuela, Bolivia and, of course, the eastern most link of the new axis of evil, North Korea. Fortunately,



there are Russia and China at the table, and Trump with all his arrogance, may have to watch out for not becoming the laughing stock of the summit.

NATO, economy and terrorism go hand-in-hand. Without terror no wars. Without wars no production of weapons, and without military-security industrial complex, the western world's economy has reached a dead-end. The U.S. depends for more than 50% of its economic output on the war and security machinery with its associated services. Europe, if she continues her status as a U.S. vassal, will in no time march along the same footsteps. Hence, terrorism is a must. Peace is a no-go.

Soon NATO forces facing the Koreans? – Why not. NATO sounds good; the alliance of the willing – led by Washington, hiding behind the NATO emblem. In the land of the lawless, impunity is borderless.

Did you know, that at the opposite end of the globe, Washington's foremost neocron vassal, the President of Colombia, has asked NATO for support in the fight against 'delinquency' – i.e. the FARC, with whom

they signed a fake, make-the-world-believe peace agreement, largely disarmed them as part of the deal, and now FARC has been tricked. President Santos (the Peace Nobel – sounds like Obama and Kissinger!), and his Washington Masters want to completely wipe out that important peasant movement, the only resistance against the U.S. supremacy over their land, and against Washington's continuous support of the drug cartels.

Never mind that NATO has nothing to do with South America, or with Asia, or the Middle East, for that matter. The atrocious NATO killing machine will do their work in the process of subjugation anywhere in the world, while most people just close their eyes and ears, and remain mute. As the illegitimate G20 and G7 – NATO is just taken for granted. But be aware – it's a criminal institution made for killing societies and subordinating sovereign nations. Washington's current plan is controlling Russia, via NATO's eastern European border aggressions, and China, by constantly provoking and threatening North Korea's sovereignty.

That's why the G20 will not miss talking about NATO prerogatives in war and conflict resolutions and, of course, in fighting

terrorism. Surely, Russia and China will not fall for it.

After debating supportive mechanisms like wars and the lie-propaganda – Goebbels would be proud – economy and finance will have center stage. How to speed up financial globalization to attain in the shortest span of time 'Full Spectrum financial and monetary Dominance'? – The western economy is running on empty – its main thriving force is greed and instant profit by a few. Privatization of all state assets is part of the final run. The people are left behind. The people, the lot that needs to consume to fulfill for an ever-tinier elite the abject target of greed for 'more and more', the insatiable appetite. These people will soon vegetate in a sucked-dry space, robbed of social infrastructure and welfare.

What's left is the enslavement by debt. To survive, people may commit to the 'debt-row', gradually converting into the death-row. As un-behaving countries are forced to do – swallowing debt against being fed minimal rations for survival. Greece is the epitome of this razors-sharp knife that slashed throats as well as the last goblet of the lifeline to survival. Solidarity is nowhere.

The dying beast is lashing out, right and left and above and beneath. It is desperate; itself on death-row, but if it must die, then dying we must all – the deadly grip of the rabies-diseased dog that won't let go. And won't let go. And won't let go to the last minute – or until death reigns over us all. That's the risk we are running. A nuclear holocaust where, as Mr. Putin said already on a number of occasions, nobody will survive. The G20 know it.

But never forget – whatever the G20 do and decide is without legitimacy, as they themselves are not legitimate. The police in Hamburg has no right to suppress a movement against the illegitimate power of insane dictators that formed a conglomerate of illegitimate gangsters.

The oppressive police in Hamburg, ordered by Merkel, to suppress dissent, is but a forewarning for what is to come when Europe is being fully militarized. For those who are not aware, there is currently a 'ghost town' being built by the Bundeswehr in collaboration with NATO, for hundreds of millions of euros, in one of Germany's most modern military training camps, in Sachsen-Anhalt, not far from Hamburg. Starting in 2018, the artificial town will be ready for training NATO and EU military forces for urban warfare, to suppress possible upheavals and protests in the wake of neofascist economic measures – à la Greece – being forced upon Europe. Merkel and the NATO 'leaders' (sic) predict that the people may not just take it.

Therefore, the preparation to suppress possible dissent in European cities. Police and military will not shy away from killing their own brothers. We are witnessing how this is done, and has been done for the last seven years to an entire nation – beautiful Greece, the land that has given us the philosophers, mathematicians and scientists we still laud and admire – and the true concept of democracy which the west has used and abused for its trickery and deceit. Today, what's left is a pipe-dream; and a powerful slogan being used by the most undemocratic tyrannical nation and her vassals to accuse those who do not bend to their dictate.

The G20s are playing the game as long as they are allowed to. Most of them are aware that it may be their end-game, that the future is in the East, that the West is passé, that it is just a matter of time before the West completes its suicide with greed, aggression and lies.

(Source: global research)

## Double standards in United States' human right practices

By Robert Fantina, Journalist and peace and human rights activist

(Part Two)

So the United States doesn't need to 'work cooperatively' to resolve issues, and is able to make 'unilateral incursions', causing unspeakable suffering, but encourages other nations to use restraint.

The United States is currently considering declaring Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a 'terrorist' organization. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is a powerful branch of the Iranian military, responsible for, among other things, protecting the nation in the event of an attack by the U.S. or Israel, the two nations most likely to attack Iran. Like the U.S. military, there are some situations when the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is called upon to quell unrest. Unlike the U.S. military, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps does not invade other nations. Its role is to protect the human rights of Iranian citizens from enemies foreign and domestic. The role of the U.S. military, despite the lofty proclamations that country's leaders may make, is to ensure the capitalist advantage of the U.S. around the world. This includes the overthrow of nations with governments considered too leftist, or those with natural resources (e.g. oil) that the U.S. wants to control. Based on this information, it certainly seems that the U.S. military, and not the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, is, in fact, a terrorist organization.

Keeping in mind that 'The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government', we will look at one example, among many, where, in the eyes of the U.S., political expediency trumped human rights.



In Chile, Salvador Allende became the first Marxist democratically elected in a Latin American country, in 1970.

Richard M. Nixon, a rabid anti-communist, was president at this time, and under his direction, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) spent \$3 million in anti-Allende propaganda during the campaign, and invested another \$2.6 million into the campaign of Mr. Allende's opponent. Please note again the U.S. anger about the possibility of Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Once Mr. Allende was elected, the U.S. attempted to prevent him from coming to power.

Yet Mr. Allende became president and began implementing the socialist program he'd promised, including the nationalization of several industries, reforming education, and increasing land distribution that had begun under his predecessor.

But the U.S. could not countenance a Marxist as the president anywhere. The U.S. supported radical, right-wing groups and publications, and funded major workers' strikes. All this eventually led to the overthrow of the government, and Mr. Allende was replaced by General Augusto Pinochet. With his ascent to power, democratic rule in Chile ended after 41 years, and tens of thousands of Pinochet's opponents were kidnapped, tortured and murdered. But this rule, in the view of the United States, was preferable than that of Mr. Allende.

In a memo from Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to Mr. Nixon after the overthrow of the Allende government, we read the following:

"Nixon: Nothing new of any importance or is there?"

Kissinger: Nothing of great consequence. The Chilean thing is getting consolidated and of course the newspapers are bleeding because a pro-Communist government has been overthrown.

Nixon: Isn't that something. Isn't that something.

Kissinger: I mean instead of celebrating – in the Eisenhower period we would be heroes.

Nixon: We didn't – as you know – our hand doesn't show on this one though.

Kissinger: We didn't do it. I mean we helped them. \_\_\_\_\_ created the conditions as great as possible.

Nixon: That is right. And that is the way it is going to be played. But listen, as far as people are concerned let me say they aren't going to buy this crap from the Liberals on this one."

Millions of people in Chile were deprived of basic human rights for a period of decades, due to the deliberate actions of the United States.

The United States' double standard on human rights is seen no more clearly, and is no more blatant, than in its dealings with Palestine and Israel.

In the U.S. there is a law referred to as the 'Leahy law', so named after its sponsor Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy. The basic provision of this law is as follows: "No assistance shall be furnished under this chapter or the Arms Export Control Act [22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.] to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights."

(End of Part Two)



# Spain's looming constitutional crisis: Why America should care

By David Marti

These are uncertain times for the European Union. The economic and political consequences of Brexit are still unforeseen. The rise of far-right populist parties in several countries — even if contained, as France most recently has shown — is normalizing extremism in political discourse.

Secessionism is another reason of uncertainty. Scottish nationalists lost the independence referendum in 2014, when 55 percent of voters opted to stay within the United Kingdom, but Brexit has spawned talks of a second independence vote in overwhelmingly pro-EU Scotland. The stakes also run high in Catalonia, where the region's pro-independence government set October 1 as the date for a referendum on independence from Spain — a referendum the central government considers illegal. Madrid's reluctance to negotiate with Barcelona is leading the country to an unprecedented constitutional crisis.

The EU has repeatedly discouraged the secessionist aspirations of Catalonia and Scotland by claiming that, in case of independence, both would lose their EU membership and be forced to apply from scratch.

Like the EU, the United States has insisted that the conflict between Barcelona and Madrid is a Spanish internal issue

and that it is not the role of foreign countries to lobby for Madrid to open constitutional negotiations with Barcelona. In 2015, then President Barack Obama expressed the U.S. position when he stated that the United States was "deeply committed to maintaining a relationship with a strong and unified Spain." The Trump administration has yet to weigh in on the issue.

The current international acquiescence in favor of Madrid's position is doing nothing to help resolve the secessionist crisis in Spain. Opinion polls have consistently shown that nearly 80 percent of Catalans — regardless of their personal views on independence — believe that there should be a vote on the issue.

## ■ Catalans' peaceful demand

Instead of ignoring the peaceful demands of the Catalans, the United States and the EU should play a more active role in helping the two parties end the stalemate and negotiate a democratic solution.

Madrid's hardline opposition toward demands to expand Catalonia's autonomy is a major reason why support for independence has skyrocketed in recent years.

Catalonia comprises one sixth of Spain's population and represents around a quarter of the country's gross domestic product. Many Catalans believe that the region contributes

too much to the central government's budget and doesn't get enough investment in return, particularly when it comes to public infrastructure like rail and roads.

Most importantly, the region has its own different language — Catalan — and many people share a strong sense of a differentiated national identity from the rest of Spain. It is the denial of the legitimacy of this unique Catalan identity, as seen in Madrid's efforts to diminish the current role of Catalan as the main language in schools that has radicalized many Catalans previously uninterested in independence.

In the United Kingdom, demands by the people of Scotland for a referendum on independence led to a negotiated solution between London and Edinburgh that resulted in an orderly referendum whose result was accepted by all parties. By contrast, in spite of the growth of support for independence in Catalonia, the Spanish government has not made a single move to discuss how to hold a vote legally or devolve more power to Barcelona.

Unsurprisingly, the central government's inability to compromise pushed even more Catalans to embrace independence, with support jumping from 15 percent in 2010 to around 50 percent in 2015. Pro-independence parties ran on a platform of moving toward independence if they

obtained a majority in the 2015 regional election, but even though they secured a majority of seats in parliament, they just got 48 percent of the vote.

Lacking a clear democratic mandate to declare independence, the Catalan nationalists' next move was to call for a referendum on the issue. The referendum is being cast as the ultimate practice of democracy: the way for Catalans to decide whether to be part of Spain or not is through a vote on the issue. However, if the vote proceeds on October 1, it would be unconstitutional according to the Spanish government because the constitution establishes the "indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation." Madrid insists that the people of Catalonia can't vote on independence by themselves because this decision belongs to the Spanish electorate as a whole, and that there can be no democracy without the rule of law.

## ■ Spain's central institutions

Spain's central institutions are acting to prevent any independence vote taking place in Catalonia, including by banning all the Catalan Parliament's resolutions affirming Catalonia's right to self-determination and taking legal action against pro-independence Catalan politicians. This year, a Spanish court fined and banned former Catalan prime minister Artur Mas ➔13

# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

## Apartment

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

Beautiful Apt in Zafaranih  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, 350 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., nice  
furn, unbelievable view, balcony  
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# Can your blood pressure be too low?

Recent findings raise concerns about lowering diastolic blood pressure — the second number in your blood pressure reading — too far.

More of us than ever before are taking medications to lower our blood pressure. Longstanding guidelines suggest that most people should aim for a systolic blood pressure (the first number in a reading) no higher than 140 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). But in 2015, the results of the Systolic Blood Pressure Intervention Trial (SPRINT) suggested that reaching a target of 120 mm Hg could further reduce the risks associated with high blood pressure, including heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and death.

Yet reaching that lower target often requires three blood pressure medications, which can increase the likelihood of side effects. Two observational studies and one clinical trial have raised concerns about lowering blood pressure — particularly diastolic pressure — too far. Diastolic blood pressure (the second number in a reading) represents the pressure between beats when the heart relaxes. «When your systolic blood pressure gets too low, it can manifest as lightheadedness, fainting, and weakness. But low diastolic pressure by itself doesn't have any symptoms,» says Dr. Paul Conlin, professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and chief of medicine at the VA Boston Healthcare System.

## What the studies found — and what they mean

In one of the observational studies, published Oct. 16, 2016, in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, researchers analyzed the medical records of more than 11,000 adults collected over a period of three decades as part of the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study. They found that people who had low diastolic blood pressure (60 to 69 mm Hg) were twice as likely to have subtle evidence of heart damage



**If you have heart disease, you may want to check that your diastolic blood pressure doesn't fall too far below 70 mm Hg, which can happen when you try to reach a low systolic number.**

compared with people whose diastolic blood pressure was 80 to 89 mm Hg. Low diastolic values were also linked with a higher risk of heart disease and death from any cause over 21 years.

For the second, published Oct. 29, 2016, in *The Lancet*, researchers analyzed data from CLARIFY, a registry of more than 22,600 people with heart disease from 45 countries. They determined that, compared with people who had systolic blood pressure of 120 to 139 mm Hg and diastolic pressure of 70 to 79, people with a systolic blood pressure of 140 mm Hg or higher were more likely to experience heart attacks or strokes, to be hospitalized with heart failure, or

to die within a five-year period. But the same was true for heart attacks, heart failure, and death in people with low blood pressure (systolic pressure below 120 mm Hg and diastolic pressure under 70 mm Hg).

In an analysis published online April 5, 2017, by *The Lancet*, German researchers pooled data from two clinical trials involving 31,000 men and women ages 55 or older who had cardiovascular disease or advanced diabetes. Participants were assigned to take either ramipril (Altace), telmisartan (Micardis, Actinon), both drugs, or neither drug for about five years. The researchers determined that systolic pressures below

120 mm Hg and diastolic pressures below 70 mm Hg were associated with an increased risk of dying from heart disease or any cause compared with systolic pressures between 120 mm Hg and 140 mm Hg and diastolic pressures between 70 and 80 mm Hg. Diastolic pressures of less than 70 mm Hg were also associated with an increased risk of having a heart attack and hospitalization for heart failure.

## Why diastolic pressure is important, too

The findings about low diastolic blood pressure are intriguing, and they make sense intuitively, Dr. Conlin says. Diastolic pressure is measured during the point in the heart cycle when blood flows into the coronary arteries that feed the heart. When those arteries are clogged with fatty deposits, blood pressure beyond the narrowed areas will drop as blood works its way through the narrowed channels. As a result, part of the heart muscle may not get enough blood. Starved for oxygen and nutrients, the heart may become weak and prone to damage.

## What to do if you have high blood pressure

If you have heart disease, you may want to check that your diastolic blood pressure doesn't fall too far below 70 mm Hg, which can happen when you try to reach a low systolic number. «For a systolic blood pressure goal, I tend to be comfortable with a value of around 130,» Dr. Conlin says. Going lower than that carries an increased risk of side effects and other adverse events.

Everyone is unique. Your medical history, current state of health, lifestyle, and willingness to take additional medication and accept certain risks all play a role in determining your blood pressure goal and how to achieve it. Talk to your doctor about the strategy that makes the most sense for you.

(Source: [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu))

## 5 food swaps to reduce your cancer risk

By Joy Bauer

I'm willing to bet that there's not one person reading this who hasn't been touched by cancer in one way or another—and likely more than once. And yet, while cancer can tear apart and shorten lives in devastating ways, today there's more cause for celebration than ever when it comes to medical breakthroughs and cancer prevention.

While it might seem initially odd to frame the subject of cancer in a positive light, numerous studies continue to show that, for example, the "psychological stance which patients adopt in response to cancer can, in some cases, influence the course of their disease."

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is an organization that's leading the cause. They recently launched the #RealHopels campaign, which brings to life amazing stories of survival, courage, and hope. Their project reminds us all of the great strides the medical and research communities have made in regard to cancer research and treatment. And the AACR Foundation welcomes anyone who has experienced promise while facing cancer's challenges to post their own videos to help others facing similar plights.

### Back to basics

Thankfully, cancer is a very different diagnosis today than it was years ago. We have better detection and prevention, as well as encouraging new treatments. And from the lifestyle perspective, there are plenty of things we can do to lower our risk, including:

- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight. Experts estimate that we can avoid a third of all cancers simply by eating healthier and moving more often.
- Stop smoking and drinking.



**Psychological stance which patients adopt in response to cancer can, in some cases, influence the course of their disease.**

- Be smart about sun exposure (and don't forget the sunscreen—even on non-pool or beach days).
- Get screened, especially for cervical and colorectal cancers. I suggest talking with your primary physician and setting dates for appropriate cancer screenings. Remember that what might seem like a tedious chore could actually save or extend your life.

### Friendlier foods

You're not going to be surprised to hear me discuss food and nutrition as a way of possibly preventing cancer (and staying healthy in general). I know a lot of

this information can be overwhelming. So here I'll share five simple food swaps that have the potential to go a long way in helping you cut you and your family's cancer risk.

- Instead of tossing plain meat on the grill, try marinating it first in a flavorful seasoning blend. Cooking meats at high temperatures produces chemicals called heterocyclic amines (HCAs), which have been linked to many forms of cancers. Studies have shown that marinating your meat before grilling can reduce HCA formation by up to 96 percent.
- Instead of topping your baked potato with butter and sour cream, try adding warm marinara sauce and a sprinkle of Parmesan. Lycopene (a powerful antioxidant that's concentrated in tomatoes) has been linked to reducing the risk of certain cancers.
- Instead of serving celery sticks and cucumber slices with hummus, try broccoli and cauliflower florets. Both contain phytochemicals called glucosinolates, which produce the protective enzyme sulforaphane (packing a one-two punch against cancer because it can help detoxify harmful substances and act as an antimicrobial).
- Instead of adding granola to yogurt, try pomegranate seeds (loaded with polyphenols like tannins, which just might inhibit cancer cell growth and deactivate cancer-causing compounds). Plus the seeds add a great crunch factor!
- Instead of enjoying a popsicle or ice cream, try frozen purple grapes. The grapes' red skin is rich in an antioxidant called resveratrol (the same beneficial compound found in wine), which may help keep cancer from forming and spreading.

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

## Here's why you should be eating more kale

By Shereen Lehman

Kale used to be that dark green stuff used to decorate salad bars. Sadly, it was just used for a couple of days and then discarded. I mean, the kale was probably the most nutritious thing on some of the old salad bars.

Today, you'll find kale as the main ingredient in salads and side dishes. And for good reason. Kale is an excellent source of vitamins A, C and K, and a good source of calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium and vitamin C while being low in sodium.

It's low in calories too -- one cup of chopped kale has 34 calories and a little over one gram of fiber.

Kale also contains significant amounts of phytochemicals. Lutein and zeaxanthin are related to vitamin A and may help lower your risk of developing cataracts and macular degeneration, and lutein may help prevent atherosclerosis. Like all cruciferous vegetables, kale contains bitter substances called glucosinolates, some of which may have health benefits.

Studies on large populations of subjects suggest that eating cruciferous vegetables may help to prevent some forms of cancer, although the results are not conclusive.



It's difficult to determine if particular foods truly prevent (or cause) cancer and other diseases because there are so many potential confounding factors. For example, people who eat more cruciferous vegetables may also eat more vegetables in general or be more health-conscious.

However, lab studies may help us understand how sulforaphane may contribute to cancer prevention. Sulforaphane is synthesized from two compounds

found in cruciferous vegetables called glucoraphanin (one of the bitter glucosinolates) and myrosinase, which are released when kale or other cruciferous vegetables are prepared and when they're chewed.

Sulforaphane may reduce your risk of some cancers by detoxifying carcinogens (substances that cause cancer) and by increasing the activity of antioxidants. Sulforaphane may also have a direct effect on cancer cells themselves (at least, it does in lab studies).

### Choosing and preparing kale

You'll find kale in the produce section of your grocery store. Look for dark green bunches of leaves that are crisp and not wilted. You can freeze kale or store it in the refrigerator in a covered container.

Kale can be served raw, but cooking reduces the bitterness and tenderizes the leaves.

To prepare, rinse the kale and remove the stems. Slice the leaves into strips and use in salads. Kale can be chopped and boiled or steamed or used as an ingredient in a hearty soup or stew. You can also make dehydrated or baked kale chips, which make a nutritious snack that's low in calories.

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

## Can nightmares be good for you?

By Carina Storrs

After a traumatic event, people often relive the experience in their dreams.

Survivors of serious car and motorcycle accidents still have nightmares about them months later, one study found, and these recurring dreams were linked to long-term sleep problems. Another study reported that about 21% of women who were victims of sexual or physical assault experienced nightmares three months later, and those who were having such dreams were more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder.



It doesn't sound helpful, but there is a flip side to these findings: Nightmares in the first few weeks after a traumatic event have not been associated with health problems, and experts think they could actually be beneficial.

«We think nightmares are so common that they have some purpose to process stressors,» said Anne Germain, director of the Sleep and Chronobiology Center at the University of Pittsburgh.

In the overall population, about 85% of adults report having at least one nightmare in the past year, and 8% to 29% have monthly nightmares.

«That's OK, but if you have them once a week or more, it usually bothers people, and it can be a problem,» Germain said.

There is no evidence to support specific benefits of nightmares, she said, and nightmares that continue can have some ill effects on health.

«There are plenty of data supporting the idea that nightmares that become chronic are very detrimental to well-being: Sleep is disrupted; we think about dreams during the day and become distressed,» Germain said.

In the motor vehicle accident study, 25% of victims were having nightmares two weeks later, but in the time relatively soon after the accident, they were not associated with long-term effects on sleep quality. By three months after their accidents, 19% of survivors still had bad dreams; that's when they were linked to problems falling and staying asleep and not functioning well during the day up to one year later.

### Nightmares: The body's check-engine light

«Nightmares are a replay of a traumatic event, so it is kind of like your body's own exposure therapy,» said Michael Nadorff, assistant professor of psychology and sleep behavior medicine specialist at Mississippi State University. Exposure therapy involves having patients confront situations or things that scare them to help them overcome their fears.

«(But) within a month of trauma (which could be anything from a physical assault to the loss of a loved one), nightmares are healthy. ... It's helping you come to terms and (realize) that's over and done with; it's making that memory less jarring,» similar to the goal of exposure therapy, Nadorff said.

«After a month, nightmares are not healthy, (and) usually for the people that still have nightmares, it's not going to get better on its own. ... It's like a broken record.»

Research suggests that chronic nightmares can actually keep people from recovering from trauma, Nadorff said.

«For a lot of people, it's an early warning sign, like a check-engine light,» that you may need help recovering from a trauma and that you may potentially have a bigger problem, such as depression or anxiety, he added.

### Treating chronic nightmares

When nightmares become a problem, there's evidence that a practice called image rehearsal therapy can banish bad dreams, Nadorff said. The therapy is based on thinking about nightmares during the day and recasting them with events, people and places that are less threatening. People think through these edited nightmares for about five minutes twice a day, which can be done on their own or with a therapist. The goal is to stop having nightmares or even to substitute them with a new dream.

One study showed that image rehearsal therapy helped women who had been sexually abused, and who had been having nightmares for about the -ast 15 years, reduce their nightmares, improve their sleep and and reduce their post-traumatic stress disorder.

Alternatively, a blood pressure medication called prazosin is as effective as image rehearsal therapy at reducing nightmares and improving sleep quality.

It is up to patients whether they would like to use therapy or medication to treat their nightmares, Germain said.

Even in cases where nightmares become chronic, they have a bright side, and that is to reveal things that may bother you that you didn't even know about.

«If somebody starts having bad dreams, and didn't go through a trauma, maybe there is something that we are actively avoiding that is really bothering us, so that might be a cue to pay attention,» and to be more aware of emotions during the day, Germain said.

(Source: CNN)

## CHTHO to introduce disable-friendly tourist sites

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — The Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Iran is working on a website that will provide information on destinations across the country which are suitable for disabled persons.

The service will be available by the next two weeks, ISNA quoted CHTHO Director Zahra Ahmadipour as saying on Friday.



"We are preparing a system that enables disabled people and mobility impaired travelers to be easily informed of well-equipped facilities for various destinations," she said.

Reminding a global motto of "Tourism for All", the official explained that the new service is being launched in line with the fundamental citizenship rights.

Everyone should be able to enjoy tourism capacities of the country regardless of his or her physical abilities, the official stressed.

"Tourism for All" was chosen by the United Nations World Tourism Organization in 2016 to bring awareness to accessibility issues facing many travelers whether they are disabled, a family with children or senior citizens.

With countless natural beauties, deeply-rooted-in-time history and culture, as well as abundance of tourist sites, 21 of which have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, Iran seeks to acquire greater share of the global tourism industry.

## New tunnel discovered under ancient pyramid

Archaeologists have discovered a secret tunnel under a famous and massive pyramid in the ancient city of Teotihuacán, northeast of Mexico City.

The tunnel was found under the Pyramid of the Moon, the second-largest structure in the ancient city (the largest is the Pyramid of the Sun), according to the International Business Times.

The archaeologists who discovered it believe that it mirrors the Teotihuacán's great monuments and may represent the underworld in the belief system of the pre-Colombian, 2,000-year-old civilization that built it (a civilization thought to pre-date the Aztecs, who later occupied the site).

The tunnel is long, extending from the central square known as the Plaza de la Luna to the nearby pyramid. It is about 33 feet (10 meters) deep, and is similar to other tunnels that have been discovered recently, like the tunnel that was found under the Temple of the Plumed Serpent.

(Source: National Geographic)

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Summer Palace in Beijing

The Summer Palace in Beijing integrates numerous traditional halls and pavilions into the Imperial Garden conceived by the Qing emperor Qianlong between 1750 and 1764 as the Garden of Clear Ripples.

Using Kunming Lake, the former reservoir of the Yuan dynasty's capital and Longevity Hill as the basic framework, the Summer Palace combined political and administrative, residential, spiritual, and recreational functions within a landscape of lakes and mountains, in accordance with the Chinese philosophy of balancing the works of man with nature.



The Summer Palace in Beijing

Destroyed during the Second Opium War of the 1850s, it was reconstructed by Emperor Guangxu for use by Empress Dowager Cixi and renamed the Summer Palace. Although damaged again during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 it was restored and has been a public park since 1924.

The central feature of the administrative area, the Hall of Benevolence and Longevity is approached through the monumental East Palace Gate.

These are linked by roofed corridors which connect to the Great Stage to the east and the Long Corridor to the West. In front of the Hall of Happiness in Longevity a wooden quay gave access by water for the Imperial family to their quarters.

As the culmination of several hundred years of Imperial garden design, the Summer Palace has had a major influence on subsequent oriental garden art and culture.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Qeshm cisterns nominated for UNESCO prize

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — An innovative approach to revive ancient water structures on the Persian Gulf island of Qeshm in southern Iran has been nominated for the 2017 UNESCO Prize for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

"The project attained the highest national rank in comparison to other pilot projects due to its comprehensive views that offer education about the sustainable development," IRNA quoted the project manager as saying on July 5.

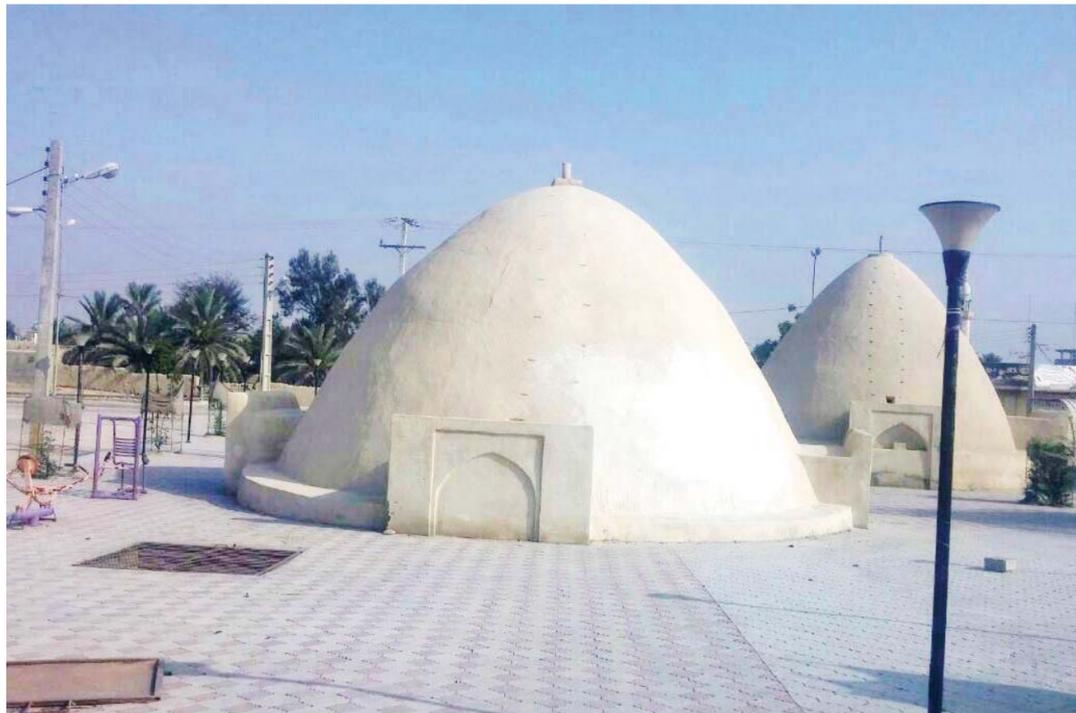
The scheme also entails revival of ponds and ancient ab-anbars -- water reservoirs and cisterns -- across the island, Mohammadreza Farzaneh added.

"Safeguarding potable water is of other goals the mission pursues yet it paves the way to pass the indigenous knowledge of building and conserving them for the future generations," he explained.

The prize and award winners recognize the role of education in connecting the social, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, according to the ESD.

Funded by the government of Japan, the prize consists of three annual awards of \$50,000 for each recipient. It was awarded for the first time by the Director-General of UNESCO in November 2015.

The term ab-anbar is common



Centuries-old cisterns on Iran's Qeshm Island

throughout Iran as a designation for permanent springs or on seasonal roofed underground water cisterns. It associates with water management system in arid areas that are reliant on rain water.

## African tourists emerge as powerhouse for tourism on the continent

Four out of 10 international tourists in Africa come from the continent itself, according to the new UNCTAD Economic Development in Africa Report 2017: Tourism for Transformative and Inclusive Growth.

In sub-Saharan Africa, this number increases to two out of every three tourists whose travels originate on the continent. Data backing this key finding show that, contrary to perception, Africans themselves are increasingly driving tourism demand in Africa.

Dealing with trade, investment, and development issues, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body.

Tourism in Africa is a flourishing industry that supports more than 21 million jobs, or 1 in 14 jobs, on the continent. Over the last

two decades, Africa has recorded robust growth, with international tourist arrivals and tourism revenues growing at 6 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively, each year between 1995 and 2014.

Focusing on tourism for transformative and inclusive growth, this year's report encourages African countries to harness the dynamism of the tourism sector.

By collecting and comparing data from two different periods, 1995-1998 and 2011-2014, the report reveals that international tourist arrivals to Africa increased from 24 million to 56 million.

Tourism export revenues more than tripled, increasing from \$14 billion to approximately \$47 billion. As a result, tourism now contributes about 8.5 per cent to the continent's gross domestic product (GDP).



The First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of the African Union's Agenda 2063 aims at doubling the contribution of tourism to the continent's GDP. To meet this target, tourism needs to grow at a faster and stronger pace. (Source: unctad.org)

## The dark side of wildlife tourism: Thousands of Asian elephants held in cruel conditions

Thousands of elephants being used for entertainment across Asia are kept in cruel, abusive conditions fueled by the growing tourism industry. World Animal Protection has found.

Three out of four elephants surveyed in south-east Asia's popular tourist destinations are living in harsh conditions where they are being used for rides, with mostly steel or wooden saddles, and tied in chains less than three meters long.

The scale of suffering experienced by elephants is "severe", according to the animal rights NGO which assessed almost 3,000 elephants living in 220 venues in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and India between mid 2014 and late 2016.

The majority of captive elephants are taken from the wild, where just 50,000 remain in Asia. Animal rights groups say elephants are made to submit to humans by going through a process known as "the crush" -- where baby elephants are taken from their mothers and forced into a training process that, at its worst, can include being restrained in a pen and beaten for several weeks.

At least 77% of the captive elephants surveyed in the re-

port, which was released on 6 July, are chained day and night when not being used for entertainment purposes and experienced very little social interaction with other elephants. The animals are fed poor diets, have no access to proper veterinary care and are often exposed to stressful environments with loud music and a large number of tourists.

These conditions go against elephants' most basic needs. Elephants are intelligent, socially developed animals, which form complex hierarchies within herds. But in captivity elephants are forced to unnaturally submit to humans; they have been found to live shorter lives, experience behavioral problems, are more likely to develop chronic diseases and are less likely to reproduce.

The captive elephant population is now thought to make up one-quarter to one-third of the remaining elephants in the region.

Despite conservation efforts, Thailand has seen a 30% increase in elephant entertainment venues -- from circus performances to riding or bathing with elephants. As many as 40% of tourists from the top 10 countries visiting Thailand said they

had been on or were planning to do an elephant ride, which translates as a demand for around 12.8 million elephant rides in the country, according to the report.

This coincides with the growing number of foreign visitors to Thailand which reached 32.6 million last year -- a rise of 9% from 2015.

Elephant tourism remains popular because it can be "a hidden form of cruelty," said Chiara Vitali, a wildlife expert at World Animal Protection. The process of the crush "will happen before any tourist sees an elephant, so they might see an animal that's quite chilled out -- but it had that beaten into it when it was an infant," she said.

The organization believes the best place for captive elephants are genuine sanctuaries, where the animals can roam free, bond and have their herd structure -- and where tourists can see the elephants in a respectful way.

"There is an urgent need for tourist education and regulation of wildlife tourist attractions worldwide," said Dr Jan Schmidt-Burbach, global wildlife and veterinary advisor at World Animal Protection. (Source: The Guardian)

## Narenjestan garden, a tourist hotspot in Shiraz

**TOURISM** An undated photo released by Farda News depicts people visiting an enormous mansion set within the well-manicured Narenjestan garden, itself a major tourist destination in Shiraz, southern Iran.

The majestic mansion was built between 1879 and 1886 upon the order of the wealthy merchant Mohammad Ali Khan Qavam al-Molk. Its basement houses an archaeological museum, a collection that was once put together by Arthur Upham Pope, an American scholar who taught at the Asia Institute in Shiraz between 1969 and 1979.

The greenish surroundings epitomize the genuine concept of Persian Garden, a UNESCO-inscribed element that interweaves natural elements with manmade components to embody the paradise on Earth through a patchwork of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.

The mansion is connected to another nearby traditional house called Khaneh Zinat ol-Molk via an underground passage that is not open to the public.



FARDA NEWS/Hadi Kalhor

# Don't waste time brushing your own teeth — Amabrush does it better, faster

Everyone enjoys an extra few minutes of sleep. With Amabrush, brushing your teeth takes only a fraction of the time.

Most people spend a few minutes brushing their teeth before starting their day and after the day is through. While it may not seem like a lot of time wasted, it adds up to over 100 days' worth during a lifetime. Amabrush is the first fully automatic toothbrush that finishes the job in just 10 seconds, giving users more time to do more important things.

The traditional brushing method takes time. People have to squeeze, scrub, gargle, spit, rinse, and floss every morning and night, every day. Because of this, many people don't brush as often as they should or leave out flossing whenever possible. Amabrush is a device three years in the making, designed to make toothbrushing faster, more efficient, and automatic. All users have to do is press a single button, wait 10 seconds, spit, and rinse.

## Flexible mouthpiece

To keep clean, the flexible mouthpiece is made from antibacterial silicone that kills more than 99 percent of all bacteria. Bristles are arranged at 45-degree angles on both sides to clean every tooth at once. This simulates the Bass method, which is recommended by dentists. The bristles are soft enough to prevent dam-



age to the gums but strong enough to clean teeth precisely.

Microchannels built into the mouthpiece transport the toothpaste through-

out the device. Cleaning is as easy as rinsing off in the sink and just like a regular toothbrush, the mouthpiece should be replaced every three to six months.

**Microchannels built into the mouthpiece transport the toothpaste throughout the device. Cleaning is as easy as rinsing off in the sink and just like a regular toothbrush, the mouthpiece should be replaced every three to six months.**

All the complex technology sits inside the handpiece along with the toothpaste capsule. At the touch of a button, a built-in mechanism foams and delivers the liquid toothpaste. The toothpaste comes in three FDA-approved varieties: Blue for extra fresh, white for whitening, and rose for sensitive. Simultaneously, the handpiece creates strong vibrations to oscillate the bristles and clean the teeth. Because each tooth is cleaned at the same time, the process is done after just 10 seconds. With a normal toothbrush and the recommended 120 seconds of brushing, each surface gets brushed for only 1.25 seconds.

## Single charge

The battery within the handpiece uses just enough power to last for 28 sessions on a single charge. This means users can go on vacation and still brush their teeth twice a day for two weeks without using the charging station.

For sharing purposes, multiple mouthpieces can use the same handpiece. A strong magnet connects the two together, so when it is time to share, simply remove and swap the current mouthpiece.

Amabrush is currently available for pre-order via Kickstarter. The basic model goes for about \$90 and comes with a handpiece, mouthpiece, toothpaste capsule, and basic charger.

(Source: Digital Trends)

## New star images captured by Hubble telescope with help from gravity

Scientists have looked back in time, further than they usually can with the instruments available to them, at a faraway galaxy composed of bright clumps of newborn stars. The great distance and the time it takes light to travel that far mean the galaxy appears to these Earth-bound humans as it was 11 billion years ago, or just 2.7 billion years after the Big Bang.

"When we saw the reconstructed image we said, 'Wow, it looks like fireworks are going off everywhere,'" astronomer Jane Rigby of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, said in a statement.

Astronomers have used the Hubble Space Telescope, taken advantage of a natural phenomenon and applied new computational methods to capture closer-up and more detailed images — about 10 times sharper than they could with the telescope alone.

The findings were published in three papers: One in The Astrophysical Journal Letters and two in The Astrophysical Journal.

## Direction of galaxies

Hubble was aimed in the direction of galaxies that would normally appear "smooth and unremarkable," according to NASA. But from this angle, the clusters of stars in between Hubble and the galaxy in question have

so much mass that they act as a second, natural telescope, magnifying it and making it brighter.

The "gravity from all that mass has distorted the image that we see of the background galaxy," like a telescope or a "funhouse mirror," Rigby tells Newsweek, explaining that it's an effect that Albert Einstein predicted and that has been proven over and over again since. All of the red and orange clusters in the images are the intermediaries that act as a gravitational lens to make the blue-tinged clusters visible. The main target here — which appears as an arc, like a smile flipped on its side — is magnified by a factor of 28, Rigby says.

## Double telescope

However, the double telescope also warps the image. In this case, it stretches out the arc and makes it appear multiple times. A new computational technique developed by Traci Johnson, a doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan and lead author on two of the three papers, helped researchers figure out how the galaxy was warped and undo it. They've reconstructed what they believe the image would look like without the distortions.

The new images provide a view of the faraway stars as they would appear with a telescope nearly 33 feet in diameter; Hubble is 8 feet in diameter, Rigby says. She



adds that it helps offer a "sneak preview of what universe would look like if we could build a much larger telescope than Hubble."

The James Webb Space Telescope, which has a 21.3-foot diameter and is scheduled to launch in October 2018, will offer views even farther out and through dust that may be obscuring Hubble's view.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Baker's yeast can help plants cope with soil contamination

Most plant species, including crops, cannot tolerate the toxic effects of soil pollutants, which dramatically impair their growth and development. In a study now published in Scientific Reports\*, a research team led by Paula Duque from the Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciencia (IGC; Portugal) discovered that two genes from baker's yeast can increase plant resistance to a broad range of toxic substances, enabling their growth in contaminated soils.

Heavy metals and organic pollutants released into the environment by the industry, as well as the misuse of herbicides and pesticides commonly used in agriculture, negatively affect the quality of soils. Some plant species are able to remove soil contaminants and grow normally, but

these are a small minority.

"Current strategies to decontaminate soils are very expensive and not so effective. The scientific community has been looking for alternative strategies to make plants more resilient to toxic compounds. A possible solution may lie in Saccharomyces cerevisiae, a species of yeast used for baking, brewing, and winemaking," says Paula Duque.

## Yeast genes identified

In fact, it was known that *S. cerevisiae* can resist herbicides and other chemicals. Isabel Sa-Correia's team at Instituto Superior Tecnico, Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal), who collaborated in this study, had identified two yeast genes playing a role in this

mechanism.

The Duque research group analyzed the ability of those genes to confer multidrug resistance on Arabidopsis thaliana, a small flowering plant used as a model organism to understand biological processes common to other plants.

After inserting either of the two yeast genes into this plant, the researchers found that it became more resistant to herbicides, fungicides and heavy metals. Plants carrying the yeast genes grew significantly better than wild-type plants in contaminated soils.

Paula Duque explains: "These two yeast genes produce proteins that are able to expel molecules from cells. So we hypothesized that they could play a sim-

ilar role in plants, eliminating toxic molecules and allowing normal growth."

The IGC researcher adds: "To extrapolate these results to crops, we will need further experiments in Arabidopsis to understand the mechanisms underlying plant resistance as well as studies in other plant species."

But our results, obtained with genes of the yeast species that makes bread or beer, hold much promise to help solve a difficult environmental problem."

This study was conducted at the IGC and the Institute for BioEngineering and Biosciences (iBB) at Instituto Superior Tecnico, Universidade de Lisboa (Lisbon, Portugal).

(Source: EurekAlert)

## Great Barrier Reef not 'in danger' despite evidence of massive coral bleaching

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee says Australia's Great Barrier Reef is not "in danger" despite mounting evidence that back-to-back massive coral bleaching events have threatened the survival of the site.

In a decision released Thursday, the United Nations organization did say it has "serious concerns" about the devastating bleaching that wiped out much of the reef in 2016 and 2017, adding that it "welcomed" continued efforts to conserve the world heritage site.

The report was generated after the Australian government provided updates on the state of the reef, along with an update on the progress on the implementation of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan, which outlines "concrete management measures for the next 35 years to ensure the Outstanding Universal Value of the Reef is preserved now and for generations to come."

The "World Heritage Committee ... strongly encourages (Australia) to accelerate efforts to ensure meeting intermediate and long-term targets of the plan, which are essential to the overall resilience of the property, in particular regarding water quality," the organization said.

The report noted that authorities were making "slow" progress in meeting water-quality targets, which include an 80 percent reduction nitrogen runoff and 50 percent reduction in sediment runoff by 2025.



Government officials, including Josh Frydenberg, Australia's minister for the environment and energy, lauded both the decision by UNESCO and the progress on 2050 LTS.

Frydenberg called the announcement a "big win for Australia and a big win for the Turnbull Government," referring to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, according to the Sydney Morning Herald.

## Severe bleaching

Climate scientist Will Steffen noted that if the severe

bleaching "isn't enough to put the Great Barrier Reef in danger, I'm not sure what is."

"We've had 67 percent mortality on the northern section of the reef, the most pristine section," Steffen, a professor at Australian National University, told ABC. "There is only one reason why that happened and that was the high ocean temperatures caused by the burning of fossil fuels."

To be listed "in danger" by UNESCO, a natural site must show a "serious decline in the population of the endangered species" or "severe deterioration of the natural beauty or scientific value of the property," among other things.

There are currently 54 properties, including natural sites and structures, listed in danger. Natural sites on the list include Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve in Côte d'Ivoire and the Rainforests of the Atsinanana in Madagascar, among others.

Earlier this year, researchers at the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University said the site was so damaged by back-to-back bleaching events that affected more than two-thirds of the reef is effectively doomed unless drastic measures are undertaken to curb carbon emissions that lead to global warming.

(Source: weather.com)

## An easier way to screen for birth defects may be in our future

Wayne State University researchers have developed a test that may be able to screen for birth defects as early as five weeks into pregnancy.



An experimental test that relies on an old-fashioned screening exam — the pap smear — may someday allow doctors to easily detect birth defects sooner than ever.

On Tuesday, Wayne State University (WSU) researchers revealed the latest encouraging findings on their creation, called "Trophoblast Retrieval and Isolation from the Cervix," or TRIC for short. Using a pap smear, they scraped trophoblasts — the cells that eventually help form a fetus' placenta — from pregnant women's cervixes and genetically sequenced the fetal DNA found inside with next generation technology. They then compared these samples to those obtained from the mother, placenta, and fetus via conventional means.

Not only were the TRIC samples mostly made out of fetal DNA, indicating the low risk of contamination, but they matched up perfectly with the other fetal samples, validating the test's overall accuracy. Even more importantly, the samples were taken as early as 5 weeks into pregnancy, blowing past the limit of other, invasive screening tests, such as amniocentesis, which can only be given starting at the end of the first trimester, 14 to 16 weeks in.

"We used next-generation sequencing and accurately determined the nucleotide sequence down to a single base," said senior author Dr. Sascha Drewlo, an associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at WSU, in a news release by the university.

In addition to finding single gene mutations in fetal DNA, earlier research performed by the WSU team suggested that measuring the level of select proteins in trophoblasts could also be used to detect other conditions.

(Source: IBT)

## In-ear device made to mitigate migraines

There may be new hope for migraine sufferers, in the form of a gadget that gets shoved up the ear. Developed by U.S.-based Company Scion NeuroStim, it alternately heats and cools the inside of the ear canal, and was recently shown to be effective in a study carried out by Britain's University of Kent.

Using a technique known as caloric vestibular stimulation (CVS), the device delivers thermal currents that activate balance-related organs in the inner ear. It is believed that these organs in turn affect activity in the brainstem, which is associated with the onset of migraines.

It was tested in a randomized, double-blinded, placebo-controlled trial carried out on 81 test subjects throughout the US and UK. All of the people typically experienced four to 14 migraines per month. Subjects in the non-placebo group used the device to administer CVS for 20 minutes a day, over a three-month period.

The setup consisted of aluminum earpieces that delivered the actual currents, mounted in padded headphones and powered/controlled via a handheld remote.

At the end of the three months, it was found that the treatment group experienced an average of 3.6 fewer migraine days per month, while the placebo group had a reduction of just 0.9 days.

Additionally, the treated subjects experienced less headache pain, and required less in the way of medication.

A paper on the research was recently published in the journal Headache.

(Source: newatlas.com)

## Scientists sending a probe to Mercury in an attempt to solve a mystery

Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and even Uranus are getting lots of attention these days, with probes and rovers getting up close and personal with our planetary neighbors, but if we look in the other direction — towards the sun, rather than away from it — we find a planet that is just as interesting, and perhaps even more mysterious: Mercury.

Now, a joint partnership between the European Space Agency and Japanese space program Jaxa will see a new probe launched to the tiny planet in the hopes of solving a very curious anomaly.

The probe, called the BepiColombo, has a whole laundry list of things it aims to accomplish. The spacecraft will study Mercury's volcanos and also attempt to shed some light on the apparent existence of water ice on the planet. With a surface temperature that ranges between a boiling 800 degrees and a frigid -290 degrees Fahrenheit, Mercury is an extremely interesting place to study.

Because of its hostile climate, it's been difficult to actually study the planet. Any spacecraft that hopes to actually get close enough to observe it needs to be extremely well suited to the intense heat of the sun at that distance, while also accounting for the glare that our star produces and its effects on cameras.

(Source: BGR)

## Birds in Mexico City have taken up cigarettes to protect their young

Urbanization has all sorts of side effects. Birds have been shown to adapt their calls, their nesting places and activity rhythms to fit the urban environments. In Mexico City, urbanization is forcing birds to use what they can find to help build their nests and keep parasites away.

One abundant material, the lowly cigarette butt, is showing a surprising benefit.



Cigarette butts are the most common form of litter. It is estimated that two thirds of the 6 trillion cigarettes smoked worldwide end up on the ground and pose a threat to smaller organisms. Scientists in 2012 first conducted a study in which they found that urban birds, mainly house finches, were using cigarette butts to help build their nests.

It is known by scientists and outdoorsmen that nicotine in tobacco can be used as a pesticide. The researchers from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, were not sure whether birds were intentionally using the butts as a pesticide or if it was simply a coincidence since the material was abundant in their urban environment.

Either way, it's working. "One possibility is that birds extract the cellulose fibers from discarded butts simply because they resemble feathers," the researchers theorized.

To test this theory, the researchers watched several house finches build their nests. Once the chicks had hatched, the team replaced the used cigarette butts with felt. In describing their process for testing whether the cigarette butts were actually being used to ward off parasites, the researchers went through a simple process.

"We removed the bedding of nests when chicks had recently hatched, and randomly assigned each nest to one of the following treatments: 1) addition of live ticks, 2) addition of dead ticks and 3) simulation of tick addition. Females in the live ticks' treatment added more butt fibers to their nests than parents in control treatments," the researchers reported.

What they found was stunning: Birds added cigarette butts to their linings once they saw that they were being infested with a parasite. This showed a deliberate attempt by the birds to use cigarettes as insect repellent.

The improvised insect repellent came with a cost. In 2014 another study was done to see what affect the presence of cigarette butts does to the chicks of the finch. The results were predictable.

"We found that hatching and fledging success and chick immune response were all positively correlated to the proportion of the nest that was made up of butts. However, the signs of genotoxicity in the blood cells also increased with the proportion of butt cellulose in the nests."

While the lower parasite counts were beneficial in helping the chicks hatch, and they also had healthier immune systems, however they showed a large percentage of chromosomal abnormalities. These abnormalities did not show until they left the nest and reproduced. The scavenging practice showed that it helped the birds in the short term but that it was detrimental in the long term.

Throwing your cigarette butts on the ground is not helping the house finch or any other animal life in either the urban or rural environment. (Source: Nature World News)

## LEARN ENGLISH Daily Life - Telephone Services

A: Telco Mobile, how can I help you?  
 B: Yes, I'd like to **activate** my voice mail service please.  
 A: Certainly sir, we currently have a special **promotion** where we include voice mail services, call waiting and also **three way calling**.  
 B: Sure that sounds great! Are there any other **fees**?  
 A: Not at all. No hidden fees or **surcharges**, it is a **flat** monthly rate.  
 B: Perfect. I also wanted to know if there is any call forwarding service. I am usually out of town and would like my calls to be forwarded to a local number.  
 A: Yes of course. We can activate all these services in about an hour.

■ **Key vocabulary**  
**to activate:** to cause a device to start working  
**promotion:** something done to make people aware of a product  
**three way calling:** a way of adding a third party to your conversation without the assistance of a telephone operator  
**fee:** an amount of money that you pay to do something or that you pay to a professional person for their work  
**surcharge:** money that be paid in addition to the regular **flat:** a flat rate, amount of money etc. is fixed and does not change or have anything added to it

■ **Supplementary vocabulary**  
**ringtone:** the sound made by a cell phone when it receives a call  
**smartphone:** a phone that has more features than a traditional cell phone, including web browser, in-phone cameras, and different applications  
**headset:** worn on the head to help you speak and listen while not holding your phone  
**rebate:** a partial refund, a discount  
**contract:** an agreement between two or more sides that has specific terms  
**hands free:** something that makes you able to use it without hands

(Source: irlanguage.com)

# Average children per woman rises in Iran

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** average number of children born per woman has increased in Iran thanks to the implementation of proper policies, a health ministry official said on Saturday.

The figure has risen from 1.8 to 2 in the wake of population growth policies outlined by the Supreme Leader, IRNA quoted Mohammad-Esmaeil Motlaq as saying.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei outlined general policies of the country's population plans on May 20, 2014. The Supreme Leader stressed the need for making comprehensive plans to promote the country's economic, social and cultural situations based on the new population policies.

"In order to live up to the standards the number should go up to 2.1 children



per woman and that's what we are trying to achieve," Motlaq added.

Intensifying infants care particularly infants in critical condition are of the effective measures taken by the Health Ministry, he highlighted.

He went on to say that other schemes set up by the ministry such as marriage initiatives to empower young couples by providing them with jobs and housing, lowering the risks of divorce by giving couple therapy, preventing premature deaths, and improving critical care in pregnancy are of the other plans to increase population.

Lower marriage rate, increasing average age of first-time moms, higher divorce rate, addiction, abortion, infertility, and dysfunctional family relationships can ultimately shrink the population.

## UNESCO delivering ethics teachers' training course in Iran

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — UNESCO **d e s k** and the Iranian university of environment will co-host an ethics teachers' training course in the city of Karaj, west of Tehran, from July 9-13.

The course, which is to be held for the first time in the country, are aiming at advancing quality ethics education by building professional capacities of ethics teachers in the country and the wider region, unesco.org reported.

The course will be based on one week training module developed by UNESCO in collaboration with the global experts in ethics education.

The module contains key components including global perspective on ethics teaching such as trends, challenges and opportunities, the UNESCO

core curriculum as a tool for promoting quality ethics education.

It also highlights ethics teaching in action as to what and how to teach (a model lesson), ethics teaching and inter-faith dialogue by sharing experiences in ethics teaching in different religious contexts, classroom communication on pedagogy and psychology of ethics teaching, and simulated teaching presentations by participants followed by feedback from the course instructors.

The course is conducted by a team of experts with extensive experience in ethics education and cooperation with UNESCO. Due to the interactive nature of the course, the number of participants is limited to 30 persons. There is no tuition fee for participating in the course.

## Woman pleads guilty to voting twice for Donald Trump

An Iowa woman charged with voting twice for Donald Trump last fall has pleaded guilty to election misconduct.

Court records show Terri Lynn Rote entered a plea on 27 June to the felony charge and a district court judge in Des Moines accepted the plea. Sentencing is set for 15 August.

Rote, who is 56 and lives in Des Moines, told police she turned in two absentee ballots before the November election because she believed Trump's unsubstantiated claims that the election was rigged and that her first ballot would be changed to a vote for Hillary Clinton.

She was arrested on 21 October at a satellite voting station in Des Moines attempting to vote the second ballot.

Rote hadn't planned on voting twice but said it was "a spur-of-the-moment thing" when she walked by the satellite

voting location, she told The Washington Post after she was charged.

"I don't know what came over me," she said.

She added she has been a supporter of Donald Trump since early in his campaign, after Republican candidate Mike Huckabee dropped out of the primary race.

Court documents show attorneys are recommending two years of probation and community service.

In addition to Rote, the Polk County Auditor's Office reported two other people to police on suspicions of voter fraud, the Des Moines Register reported.

In the other two cases, those people cast mail-in ballots and also voted in person at one of the state's early-voting locations, according to the paper.

(Source: Independent)

## How to network for a better job without feeling awkward

Networking is one of the most effective ways to secure a new and hopefully more satisfying, job - or so the stats suggest.

One 2010 study involving 50,000 people in the US found that over 40 per cent of workers found new jobs from simply talking to people, which chimes with an often-cited piece of research from the 1950s into white collar workers in the US, and more recent assessments by a US academic in the Harvard Business Review. Networking as a way to get a leg up in the world is undeniable.

But that doesn't make it any less painfully awkward. Even the most gregarious among us will have at some point stood uncomfortably with a drink in hand, trying to pluck up the courage to make eye contact - let alone chat to - important-looking strangers in the room. Or worse still, we'll head out to a careers event with a friend and end up chewing the fat with them at the nibbles table for an hour before heading home.

■ **Read more**  
 "There are many different types of net-working events and it's important to find the right fit," advises Serena Simmons, a psychologist at Nottingham Trent University. "There might be a reason that after the sixth time of attending an event you still feel awkward, and that may be because how the event is being run is not something you feel you are getting any value from. Don't be afraid to try different types of events, whereby



you feel that the people attending are more your 'tribe or community'. This means that you are more likely to build genuine connections with people which may lead to good business."

"One of the main things that can change your mindset and help with any nerves or feelings of awkwardness is to go with a mantra that has you focus on how you can help, in other words 'how can I serve' the people I meet?" says Simmons. "With this focus, the pressure isn't on you to deliver anything or be someone you think you should be in this type of environment. This instead becomes all about how you can help the other person which often can end up with you naturally being able to talk about what you offer versus crow-barring it into a conversation."

### ■ Check how people are standing

"Sometimes, you can see people adopting open stances, where they have one eye on the rest of the room and are standing at a slight angle to the person that they are speaking to," says Carl Reader the author of The Startup Coach and The Franchising Handbook.

"The hidden message is often 'come and join us!' At most events, people expect you to come over and say hi. You should however be aware of situations where two people may be attempting to have a confidential discussion - often they will appear guarded, perhaps in a corner - for these situations, it's best to move on and approach someone else."

### ■ Listen more than you speak

"As tempting as it is to tell someone all about your own business journey and products, try listening to more to the other person," says Simmons. "Basic emotional intelligence research tells us that listening has a powerful effect on the person speaking. When we allow someone to feel heard, they feel more willing to trust, open up and generally 'feel good' about talking to you. As Walt Disney said, 'people spend money when and where they feel good', so just making someone feel good, by feeling heard, can again have the added bonus of people wanting to be involved with you and or your business."

(Source: The Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Mother-baby room set at Tehran subway stations

The eighth mother-and-baby room designated for breastfeeding and changing babies' diapers was set up at the Tajrish subway station, northern Tehran, on Monday.

In line with baby-friendly-city policies introduced and adopted Tehran City Council and municipality so far eight mother-and-baby rooms have been set up at subway stations, an official with Tehran Urban and Suburban Railways Company Ali Abdollahpour said, IRIB reported.

"Currently some 16 people are working at the eight rooms and now we are planning on setting up places to take care of babies for some hours," Abdollahpour added.

## افتتاح اتاق مادر و کودک در ایستگاه مترو

هشتمین اتاق مادر و کودک به منظور شیردهی و تعویض پوشک کودکان در ایستگاه مترو تجریش آغاز به کار کرد.

به گزارش خبرنگار خبرگزاری صدا و سیما علی عبدالله پور قائم مقام مدیر عامل شرکت بهره برداری مترو تهران احداث اتاق های مادر و کودک را در راستای فرآیند شهرسازی تهران و مصوبات شورای شهر در خصوص شهر دوستدار کودک دانست و گفت: تاکنون هشت ایستگاه مترو مجهز به این اتاق شده است.

عبدالله پور در ادامه با بیان اینکه در این هشت اتاق مادر و کودک ۱۶ نفر مشغول به کار هستند تصریح کرد: مکانی برای نگهداری چند ساعته کودکان در مترو مد نظر است و کارهای اولیه آن نیز در حال انجام است

### ENGLISH PROVERB

## A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse

■ **Explanation:** you cannot get people to take a hint if they are determined not to  
 ■ **For example:** Jill: I keep hinting to the boss that I deserve a raise, but he doesn't seem to get the point. Jane: I'm not surprised. A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse.

### PHRASAL VERB

## Crank something up

■ **Meaning:** to make the sound of something, especially music, louder  
 ■ **For example:** We cranked up the volume.

### ENGLISH IDIOM

## Ring a bell

■ **Explanation:** if something rings a bell, it is vaguely familiar to you, but you can't remember the exact details  
 ■ **For example:** John Bentley? The name rings a bell but I don't remember him.

# Two U.S. bombers hold firing drills with South Korean forces

## U.S. plans to test THAAD missile defenses as N. Korea tensions mount

Two United States supersonic bombers conducted live-fire drills on Saturday in South Korea in a show of force following North Korea's test-launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), the South's military said.

The pair of B-1B Lancer strategic bombers flew from a U.S. base on Guam and were joined by U.S. and South Korean jet fighters to conduct the simulated destruction of an enemy ballistic missile launcher and underground facilities, the South's air force said.

North Korea announced on Tuesday it successfully test-launched an ICBM, saying the missile was capable of carrying a large and heavy nuclear warhead.

Some experts believe the missile has the range to reach Alaska and Hawaii and the test signaled a significant advance in the North's declared intent to build a nuclear-tipped missile that can hit the U.S. mainland.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in said the test indicated a quicker than expected pace of the North's ICBM program.

The B-1B bombers conducted the live-fire exercise at a range in South Korea's eastern Gangwon province, dropping weapons in a simulated attack on a missile launcher, the South Korean air force said in a statement.

South Korean and U.S. fighter jets conducted precision strike drills aimed at attacking enemy targets hidden underground, it said.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency said the bombers then flew west, hugging the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) border between the two Koreas, before leaving South Korean airspace.

The drill follows a joint artillery and missile exercise by South Korean and U.S. forces a day after the North's ICBM test.

### ■ Plans to test THAAD

Meantime, the United States plans to carry out a new test of its Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system against an intermediate-range ballistic missile in the com-



ing days, two U.S. officials told Reuters on Friday, as tensions with North Korea climb.

Despite being planned months ago, the U.S. missile defense test will gain significance in the wake of North Korea's launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on July 4 that has heightened concerns about the threat from Pyongyang.

The test will be the first of the THAAD to defend against a simulated attack by an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), one of the officials said. The THAAD interceptors will be fired from Alaska.

The United States has THAAD interceptors in Guam that are meant to help guard against a missile attack from a country such as North Korea.

The officials who disclosed to Reuters the precise nature and timing of the upcoming test spoke on condition of anonymity.

Asked by Reuters, the U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) confirmed that it aimed to carry out a THAAD flight test "in early July."

Chris Johnson, an MDA spokesman, said the THAAD weapon system at the Pacific Spaceport Complex Alaska in Kodiak, Alaska, would "detect, track and en-

gage a target with a THAAD interceptor." "The test is designated as Flight Test THAAD (FTT)-18," Johnson said. He did not elaborate.

Still, in recent testimony to Congress, Vice Admiral James Syring, then the director of the Missile Defense Agency, said FTT-18 would aim to demonstrate THAAD's ability to intercept a separating IRBM target.

MDA said THAAD had a 100 percent successful track record in its 13 flight tests since 2006. After previous tests, the U.S. military has publicly disclosed the results.

### ■ South Korean deployment

THAAD is a ground-based missile defense system designed to shoot down short-, medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles.

Lockheed Martin Corp, the prime contractor for the THAAD system, said it has the ability to intercept incoming missiles both inside and outside the Earth's atmosphere.

This year's U.S. deployment of THAAD in South Korea to guard against North Korea's shorter-range missiles has also drawn fierce criticism from China, which says the system's powerful radar can probe deep into its territory.

Earlier this month Moscow and Beijing, in a joint statement, called on Wash-

ington to immediately halt deployment of THAAD in South Korea.

The statement said Washington was using North Korea as a pretext to expand its military infrastructure in Asia and risked upsetting the strategic balance of power in the region.

THAAD's success rate in testing is far higher than the one for America's Ground-based Midcourse Defense system (GMD), the system specifically designed to shoot down an ICBM headed for the U.S. mainland.

That GMD system has only a 55 percent success rate over the life of the program. But advocates note that the technology has improved dramatically in recent years.

In a key development, the GMD system successfully shot down an incoming, simulated North Korean ICBM in a test in May.

That led the Pentagon to upgrade its assessment of America's ability to defend against a small number of ICBMs, according to an internal memo seen by Reuters.

MDA told Congress in June that it plans to deliver 52 more THAAD interceptors to the U.S. Army between October 2017 and September 2018, for a total of 210 since May 2011.

In a sign of U.S. congressional concern about missile defense, several lawmakers filed amendments to a sweeping defense policy bill on Friday that addressed North Korea. Republican Representative Don Young, whose home state Alaska is seen as especially vulnerable to the North Korea threat, asked for more ground-based interceptors for his state, and a study of potential additional sites on the East Coast or Midwest.

Democratic Representatives John Conyers and Sheila Jackson Lee, along with Republican Walter Jones, filed an amendment to the annual National Defense Authorization Act saying that nothing in the bill should be construed as authorizing the use of force against North Korea.

The full House of Representatives is due to consider the bill, and its amendments, next week.

(Source: agencies)

## Iraqi forces take over Mosul's Old City

### Countdown begins to ISIL collapse in Iraq

→ The media bureau of the Iraqi Defense Ministry also stated that government forces had killed 35 ISIL terrorists and wounded six others while they were sneaking from the western flank of Mosul into the east side.

It noted that Federal Police forces finished their combat missions in the Old City by retaking Nujaiifi Street as well as al-Toub and Souk al-Sagha neighborhoods, which had all previously been marked as the last pockets remaining in ISIL's grip.

Iraqi army soldiers and volunteer fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units (Hashd al-Sha'abi), have made sweeping gains against ISIL since launching

the Mosul operation on October 17, 2016.

The Iraqi forces took control of eastern Mosul in January after 100 days of fighting, and launched the battle in the west on February 19.

An estimated 862,000 people have been displaced from Mosul ever since the battle to retake the city began nine months ago. A total of 195,000 civilians have also returned, mainly to the liberated areas of eastern Mosul.

### ■ ISIL chief judge, 11 terrorists killed in airstrikes west of Mosul

Meanwhile, a local source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Arabic-language al-Sumaria television

network that a dozen ISIL terrorists died in three Iraqi Air Force strikes that targeted their convoy in the city of Tal Afar, located 63 kilometers west of Mosul.

### ■ ISIL burns self-proclaimed Diyala governor to death

Separately, the ISIL terrorist outfit has reportedly burned its self-proclaimed Diyala governor to death on charges of dereliction of duty.

A local source, requesting anonymity, said the top-ranked extremist was killed in al-Hawjah district, situated 45 kilometers west of the oil-rich northern city of Kirkuk on Friday.

(Source: agencies)

## Trump isolated at G20 summit, Ivanka sits in for Trump

The United States, under President Donald Trump, was isolated on everything from trade to climate change during this year's G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany.

For years the United States was the dominant force and set the agenda at the annual gathering of the leaders of the world's 20 largest economies.

But the growing international isolation of Washington was clearly apparent on Friday as the leaders of major world economies mounted a nearly united opposition front against the U.S. on a range of issues, including climate, trade, security and migrant policies.

During Friday's meeting, there were tough clashes with the United States and even talk of a possible transatlantic trade war. The tensions were a result of Trump's sharp break with previous U.S. policies.

Trump's isolation was more evident on the issue of trade. The Trump administration has proposed imposing high tariffs on steel and other imported goods from several major trading partners.

European officials at summit reacted harshly, threatening to retaliate with their own tariffs. "If global trade rules are not upheld, the EU will retaliate, but I cannot say now exactly how and when," Cecilia Malmstrom, the European trade commissioner, warned on Friday.

"We will respond with countermeasures if need be, hoping that this is not actually necessary," the European Commission president, Jean-Claude Juncker, said on Friday. "We are prepared to take up arms if need be."

The comments show that European officials do not fear Trump and see much to

gain politically from opposing him. Trump is deeply unpopular in Europe, and politicians there can get a political boost when they highlight their differences.

In a joint communique, Brazil, Russia, India and China - the so-called BRICS countries - called on the G20 to push for implementation of the Paris climate deal, ratcheting up pressure on Trump to compromise on the treaty.

"The Paris agreement on climate change is an important consensus that doesn't come easily and must not be given up easily," said Chinese President Xi Jinping.

On Thursday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, hosting the meeting, said she was committed to an open international trading system, despite fears of U.S. protectionism under the Trump administration. "Compromise can only be found if we accommodate each other's views," she pointed out.

Merkel, who faced the difficult job of bridging the differences, made little attempt to minimize the disagreements after the first day of meetings. "The discussions are very difficult. I don't want to talk around that," she said.

Meanwhile, thousands of protesters from around Europe have poured into Germany's second largest city to join big demonstrations during the July 7-8 summit.

Trump's unpopularity in Europe, as well as his apparent disregard for international treaties and human rights have helped mobilize a massive protest movement this year.

### ■ Ivanka sits in for Trump

Meanwhile, for a moment at the G20 summit on Saturday the United States



was represented by another Trump, when the president's daughter Ivanka took a seat at the table of world leaders.

The 35-year-old former fashion model sat around the table with Xi Jinping, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Angela Merkel and Theresa May, diplomats and the White House confirmed.

The incident fuelled long-standing allegations of nepotism against the U.S. leader, who has put family members in top White House positions.

A White House official told AFP that Ivanka had been at the back of the room but "briefly joined the main table when the president had to step out."

That occurred when "the president of the World Bank started talking as the topic involved areas such as African development -- areas that will benefit from the facility just announced by the World Bank."

The official emphasized that "when other leaders stepped out, their seats were also briefly filled by others."

But Trump's already vociferous detractors

were enraged.

Historian Anne Applebaum took to Twitter to denounce what she described "an unelected, unqualified, unprepared New York socialite" being seen as "the best person to represent American national interests."

Earlier in the day Trump waxed lyrical about his daughter before a bevy of world leaders, gathered to boost a fund to encourage female entrepreneurs.

"I'm very proud of my daughter, Ivanka -- always have been, from day one -- I had to tell you that, from day one."

"She's always been great," he said. "A champion. She's a champion."

Trump then prompted some nervous laughter when he mused about whether he had made her life more difficult.

"If she weren't my daughter, it would be so much easier for her. Might be the only bad thing she has going, if you want to know the truth."

(Source: agencies)

## Palestinian baby dies after inhaling Israeli teargas

A Palestinian baby has died of asphyxiation two months after inhaling fatal volumes of teargas fired by Israeli forces at Palestinian protesters.

Abdul-Rahman Mohammad al-Barghouthi, 1.5 years old, died at a hospital in the city of Ramallah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Palestinian Safa news agency reported.

He had been exposed to the toxic substance during confrontations between Israeli forces and Palestinian demonstrators in the village of Aboud, north of Ramallah.

On July 31, 2015, Israeli settlers killed another Palestinian baby, when they threw firebombs and Molotov cocktails into two Palestinian houses in the Duma Village, some 25 kilometers southeast of the city of Nablus in the West Bank, setting them ablaze while their inhabitants were asleep.

The arson attack killed an 18-month-old baby, Ali Dawabseh, and critically wounded his father and mother, Sa'ad and Riham, who later succumbed to their injuries.

Ali's four-year-old brother, Ahmad, who was also wounded in the assault, remained the sole survivor of the family.

On January 3, 2016, an Israeli court indicted two, including a 21-year-old West Bank settler, as having been responsible for the killings.

### ■ EU slams Israel's plans to set up new settlement

Meanwhile, the European Union has denounced the Israeli regime's plans to advance the construction of some "1,500 new settlement units" in the occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem), saying the controversial decision will "undermine" the so-called two-state solution.

In a statement released on Friday, the EU further said it expected Tel Aviv "to reconsider these decisions."

It also noted that the EU "expects both sides to engage in a meaningful process towards a negotiated two-state solution, the only way to fulfill the legitimate aspirations of both parties."

The EU statement came a day after French President Emmanuel Macron also strongly criticized the Israeli move, which he said "threatened" the so-called two state solution.

"France has always condemned and continues to condemn the ongoing colonization process, which remains illegal with regards to international law," he added during a joint press conference with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

On Monday, Israeli NGO (non-governmental organization) Peace Now said in a report that the Israeli regime was planning to discuss the advancement of some 1,800 settlement units in the area.

After approval, the new units will become the first to be constructed since the United States President Donald Trump called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to limit settlement activities, and will also hinder the so-called peace talks.

Such construction constitutes a blatant violation of international law. The Geneva Conventions ban construction on occupied land. About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

(Source: agencies)

## Spain's looming constitutional crisis: why America should care

→ from serving in an elected office for holding a non-binding vote on independence in 2014, sending a warning signal to Catalan politicians. More ominously, particularly in a country with a history of authoritarianism, Mariano Rajoy, the Spanish prime minister, stated that the government would use "all the means within its reach" to stop the referendum. Other senior Spanish government officials have argued that the referendum would be a "coup d'état."

No one is interested in the Spanish Army or police preventing the people of Catalonia from voting. The most plausible scenario is that the vote will go ahead somehow, but won't have the widespread legitimacy it needs. First, given that anti-independence parties have encouraged their supporters to boycott the referendum, it is likely that many of them will stay away. Second, there are concerns about the organization of the vote, including how the electoral registry is going to work, since it is now managed by the Spanish government. Madrid has also challenged in court the Catalan government's purchase of ballot boxes. Third, the Spanish government will certainly not accept the result if it favors Catalan independence.

A win for the independence camp — even given all the caveats listed above — will energize the pro-independence movement. Catalans overwhelmingly support holding a referendum to settle the question of independence. But instead of presenting a positive case for being part of Spain's future, the central government is insisting that it is not for the Catalans to decide what their future will look like. This is counterproductive and ill-advised. Support for independence is not going to just magically vanish, as Madrid seems to think.

Constitutional negotiations should be opened on whether to have a vote legally to settle the issue once and for all. In parallel, Catalonia should be offered more regional powers, especially on economic matters, to show independence backers that their demands are being heard and to give them a positive incentive for Catalonia to remain part of Spain. These measures would go a long way to signaling that Madrid recognizes Spain's internal national diversity and respects meaningful regional self-government. If such proposals were on the table, there is a chance that support for Catalan independence would not prevail at the ballot box. Instead of engaging in scaremongering, it is the ultimate responsibility of the Spanish ruling elites to make a positive case for Spain. The EU and the United States should encourage the politicians in Madrid to do so.

(Source: nationalinterest.org)

## U.S. sprinter Coleman to run only 100 at world championships

American Christian Coleman will run only the 100 metres at the world championships in London next month, his management company said on Friday.

Coleman had qualified for the 100 and 200 with runner-up finishes at last month's U.S. championships. The 21-year-old, who set the fastest time of the year in the 100 by running 9.82 seconds in June, and his coach decided to concentrate on the shorter race after a lengthy collegiate season.

With 48 races indoors and out, Coleman had run more often this year than Usain Bolt, Justin Gatlin and Andre De Grasse combined, HSI Sports Management's Emanuel Hudson told Reuters.

Coleman, who has not competed since the U.S. championships, wanted to make his European professional debut in the 100 at the Monaco Diamond League's meeting on July 21, Hudson said.

"We have requested a lane for him in the men's 100 metres, but as of today have not been given a spot," Hudson said by telephone.

World record holder Bolt has already been announced for the meeting's 100m in his last competition before the Aug. 4-13 world championships.

Coleman will be in Monaco to train and run with the U.S. 4x100 metres relay team.

"If not the Monaco 100, we will go to worlds as is," Hudson said. (Source: Reuters)



## Mayweather-McGregor to begin media tour July 11 in LA

Undefeated boxer Floyd Mayweather and mixed martial arts champion Conor McGregor will begin a four-day international media tour next week to promote their Aug. 26 boxing match in Las Vegas.

Mayweather and McGregor, two of the most popular athletes in their respective sports, will hold their first public meeting in front of the media on July 11 in Los Angeles followed by stops in Toronto, New York and London over the next three days.

Each event, likely to provide plenty of humorous and heated exchanges, will be open to the public.



Mayweather, who came out of retirement for this fight, is widely regarded as one of the best defensive fighters ever and the 40-year-old American prides himself on his ability to evade punishment with his movement and to make adjustments on the fly.

Boastful Irishman McGregor, the UFC's reigning lightweight champion and former featherweight champion, is known as much for his bravado as for his explosive knockout power inside an MMA octagon.

There is expected to be plenty of interest in the fight, which will be held inside T-Mobile Arena, even though there is also scepticism about how competitive it will be given that McGregor has never boxed professionally before. (Source: Reuters)

## Trent Alexander-Arnold signs new long-term contract at Liverpool

Liverpool teenager Trent Alexander-Arnold has signed a new long-term contract with the club.

The 18-year-old defender made his first-team breakthrough last season and went on to make a total of 12 appearances for Jurgen Klopp's side.

Liverpool said on their official website: "Trent Alexander-Arnold has committed his future to Liverpool by signing a new long-term contract at Melwood."

"The 18-year-old penned the deal at the training ground - where he has been part of the group that began pre-season training on Wednesday - after agreeing fresh terms with the club."

Alexander-Arnold made his senior debut in the League Cup against Tottenham in October last year and made seven Premier League appearances.

Alexander-Arnold said: "It's not a good thing if you ever are satisfied in football, you've always got to strive for better. There is always room for improvement."

"I'll get back into training, I'll work hard and I'll try to fight for a place in the team." (Source: dailymail)



# Romelu Lukaku close to potential £90m world record transfer

Manchester United have confirmed they have agreed a potential world record £90million deal with Everton for the transfer of Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku.

The transfer would see Everton receive £75million up front, with £15m due in potential add-ons based on the player's performances at United.

The potential fee would trump the £89million they paid last summer to bring Paul Pogba back from Juventus.

Lukaku will make the switch from Goodison Park to Old Trafford and join up with his former manager Jose Mourinho - who he played for at Chelsea.

In a short statement United confirmed: "MUFC is delighted to announce a fee has been agreed with Everton for the transfer of Romelu Lukaku, subject to a medical & personal terms."

The Red Devils have also revealed they will make a further announcement in due course.

Chelsea had also lodged a bid for their former player but United look to have scuppered the Blues' chances of bringing Lukaku back to Stamford Bridge by stealing a march on the Premier League champions.

As revealed by Sportsmail Conte was unwilling to give up on his main target, though Chelsea refused to pay what is thought to be an eight-figure fee, believed to be £12m, to Lukaku's agent Mino Raiola, which is a key part of the United package.

Before United stepped in with their concrete bid, Lukaku was in contact with Conte and made it clear he was enthusiastic about a return to the club who brought him to England from Anderlecht as a teenager in 2011.

However, the Belgium forward has formed a close bond with United midfielder Pogba and they are currently on holiday together in Los Angeles - both are Raiola clients.

United captain Wayne Rooney will move the other way, with the former Everton man sealing an emotional return to Goodison Park on a free transfer.

United have agreed to pay a portion of Rooney's wages despite the 31-year-old initially being prepared to take a 50 per cent salary cut on his current deal - which sees him earn upwards of £300,000 a week.



Despite Mourinho agreeing to sell Lukaku to Everton three years ago, the United manager wants to work with him again.

Lukaku is still expected to have a United medical this weekend and join Mourinho's squad for their tour of the United States when all the details with Everton are completed.

Following the official confirmation from United, midfielder Pogba took to social media to post a video of

himself and Lukaku, simply captioned: "See you in the training tomorrow."

The duo could be seen laughing and joking about the news, with Pogba standing in mock disbelief as the Belgian told him of the news.

United are expected to officially complete the deal in its entirety within the next 24 hours. (Source: dailymail)

## Jamaica's Livermore tests positive says anti-doping panel chief



Jamaica's Commonwealth Games 200-metres bronze medalist Jason Livermore tested positive for a banned substance in December, the chairman of the country's Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel said on Friday.

Kent Gammon, who heads the independent three-member panel, told Reuters that the 29-year-old Livermore had returned the positive result in an out-of-competition test on Dec. 16.

Livermore, who could face a four-year ban, declined to comment on Gammon's statement when contacted by Reuters.

Gammon would not name the alleged banned substance but said Livermore had violated Article 2.1 of the Jamaica Anti-Doping Commission's (JADCO's) rules, which refer to the "Presence of a prohibited substance or its metabolites or markers in an athlete's sample".

Livermore, who also won gold at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in the 4x100m with Usain Bolt, Kemar Bai-

ley-Cole and Nickel Ashmeade, had a preliminary hearing on Friday in front of the disciplinary panel at the Jamaica Conference Centre.

He will start the fight to clear his name at a full hearing on Sept. 11 to be attended by JADCO and his representatives.

Sources close to the case told Reuters Livermore had not asked for his 'B' sample to be tested. Livermore declined to comment when asked by Reuters if he had requested such a test.

Livermore, a 200m semi-finalist at the 2013 world championships in Moscow, did not compete at Jamaica's senior trials last month and will not be part of the national team at the worlds being held in London next month.

Livermore, who has a personal best of 10.03 seconds in the 100m and 20.13 in the 200m, was also a member of Jamaica's gold-medal winning 4x200m team at the World Relays in 2015. (Source: Reuters)

## Florida police say Venus Williams entered intersection lawfully before crash



Florida police said on Friday that a newly surfaced video shows that tennis star Venus Williams was acting lawfully when she drove her sports utility vehicle into an intersection before a fatal crash with another car on June 9.

Jerome Barson, 78, who was a passenger in a sedan that collided with the vehicle Williams was driving, was fatally injured. His family filed a wrongful death suit against Williams last week.

Williams, the former top-ranked tennis player in the world, on Friday won her third-round match at the Wimbledon tournament in England.

A statement from the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department said a video, taken from the entrance to the gated community where Williams lives, indicates she acted lawfully in entering the intersection before the crash.

The statement said the video showed that a car not involved in the collision stalled Williams' progress, causing her

to linger in the intersection. When the traffic light changed, an approaching car driven by Barson's wife, Linda, collided with Williams' vehicle.

The initial traffic report said Williams, 37, was at fault for failing to yield the right of way to Barson. But on Friday, Major Paul Rogers of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department said a fuller investigation began after Barson's death on June 22.

He said police have not made a final determination of fault in the investigation.

The Barson family attorney, Michael Steinger, in a statement issued Friday, said the video "continues to support the fact that Ms. Williams remained in the intersection at a red light, violating the Barsons' right of way."

Williams' attorney, Malcolm Cunningham, on Friday did not immediately reply to an email requesting comment. (Source: Reuters)

## Vettel tops final practice as Hamilton suffers brake issue

Sebastian Vettel set the fastest time in final practice for the Austrian Grand Prix as title rival Lewis Hamilton encountered more problems with his Mercedes.

Vettel set the fastest times in all three sectors of the lap as he went on the attack with ten minutes of the session remaining with a series of quick laps on the ultra-soft compound tyres. On his fastest lap he came across Hamilton in the final sector, but managed to negotiate his way past the Mercedes to light up the timing screens and set the fastest lap, 0.269s quicker than his title rival.

Valtteri Bottas was third fastest for Mercedes, 0.423s off Vettel, while Kimi Raikkonen was 0.519s off his teammate in the second Ferrari.

Hamilton was on a quick lap when he suffered a right front brake issue and continued straight at Turn 3 and into the run off. A puff of black smoke came from the front right wheel and the team later confirmed that an issue on the «team's side» -- not from the brake supplier -- had caused the problem. Mercedes will be able to fix

the issue in the break before qualifying.

The issue is just another stumbling block in an already difficult weekend for Hamilton, who is facing a five-place grid penalty after Mercedes detected a problem with his race gearbox following the Azerbaijan Grand Prix and was forced to replace it this weekend. The change broke the six race cycle a gearbox must last, meaning the highest he can hope to qualify on Sunday's grid is sixth (assuming other cars in the top five don't also receive a penalty).

Max Verstappen set the fifth fastest time with a lap 0.692s off Vettel and 0.112s quicker than Red Bull teammate Daniel Ricciardo. Both Red Bull drivers made up for lost time on Friday afternoon by completing a heavy-fuel run on the ultra-soft tyres on Saturday morning, but their times were roughly 0.5s per lap slower than the pace Hamilton had shown in FP2.

Haas finished the session seventh and eighth, with Kevin Magnussen beating teammate Romain Grosjean by 0.079s. The two Toro Rossos of Daniil Kvyat and Car-

los Sainz were ninth and tenth as once again Mercedes' customer teams failed to feature in the top ten at what is considered to be a power circuit. Sainz's car came to a halt exiting Turn 1 early in the session, but the Toro Rosso was recovered to the pits and sent back out later in the session.

Esteban Ocon was 11th in the Force India ahead of Nico Hulkenberg in the Renault and Stoffel Vandoorne in the McLaren. Jolyon Palmer's Renault was 14th ahead of Fernando Alonso's McLaren, which developed an MGU-H problem on Friday forcing the team to remove the new «spec three» Honda power unit from his car overnight and replace it with a less powerful «spec two» unit.

Williams drivers Lance Stroll and Felipe Massa were 16th and 17th ahead of Sergio Perez who continued to struggle in the Force India down in 18th. Marcus Ericsson beat Pascal Wehrlein by 0.090s in the battle of the Saubers, which is likely to make up the back row of the grid. (Source: ESPN)

# Iran drawn with Germany in FIFA U-17 World Cup

**S P O R T S** Iran have been drawn with Germany, Costa Rica and Guinea in Group C of the FIFA U-17 World Cup.

Two teams from each group along with the four best third placed teams in the preliminary phase will move to the round of 16, to be held from October 16.

The Official Draw for the FIFA U-17 World Cup, which will be played in six venues across India between 6 and 28 October 2017, took place on Friday in Mumbai.

The draw revealed that Iran will take on Germany, Costa Rica and Guinea in Group C.

Perhaps the most intriguing quartet of teams can be found in Group D, where FIFA tournament debutants Niger were drawn with Korea DPR, Brazil, and Spain.

The draw ceremony was held in the presence of Sunil Gulati, FIFA Council member, Praful Patel, President of the All India Football Federation and Vijay Goel, Indian Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports. Assisting in the draw ceremony were FIFA Legends Esteban Cambiasso and Nwankwo Kanu, as well as Indian national team legend Sunil Chhetri and Indian badminton star Pusarla Venkata Sindhu.

One of the highlights of the ceremony was the performance of the tournament's Official Song. Pritam and Babul Supriyo revealed 'Kar Ke Dikha De Goal' for the first time, much to the delight of the assembled audience.

FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017 Draw

**Group A:** India, USA, Colombia, Ghana

**Group B:** Paraguay, Mali, New Zealand, Turkey

**Group C:** Iran, Guinea, Germany, Costa Rica

**Group D:** Korea DPR, Niger, Brazil, Spain

**Group E:** Honduras, Japan, New Caledonia, France

**Group F:** Iraq, Mexico, Chile, England



## Esmail Ebadi wins gold at Asia Cup archery meet



**S P O R T S** Esmail Ebadi from **d e s k** Iran claimed a gold medal at the 2017 Asia Cup-World Ranking Tournament- Stage III which is being held at the National Taiwan Sports University in Taiwan on Saturday. Ebadi defeated Malaysian archer Kin Lip Lee 148-141 in the men's compound.

The bronze medal went to Hsiang-Hsuan Chen from Chinese Taipei who defeated Ruslan Zulfadhli from Malaysia.

In the women's compound, Iran's Fereshteh Ghorbani claimed a silver medal after being defeated against Indian Divya Dhayal in the final match.

Iran grabbed a bronze medal in the compound women team as well.

The Iranian team consists of Fereshteh Ghorbani, Parisa Baratchi and Afsaneh Shafiei beat Malaysia 224-223 in the bronze medal match.

The gold medal went to Chinese Taipei who defeated India in the final match.

## Iran fail to advance to World Polo Championship 2017



**S P O R T S** Iran came third **d e s k** at the World Polo Championship 2017 qualifiers which took place in Tehran's Kanoon Chogan, Qasr Firoozeh & the Army Polo Club.

The Iranian team finished in third place in the five-day competition.

India defeated Pakistan 8-7 and booked a place in the competition as champion.

A total of eight teams will participate at the World Polo Championship 2017

in Sydney, Australia.

Australia (host), Chile (reigning world champions), Uruguay and New Zealand have already qualified for the World Polo Championship 2017.

Six days of world-class polo will commence on Saturday 21st October, with the final to take place on Sunday 29th October.

Polo originates from ancient Persia. Its invention is dated variously from the 6th century BC to the 1st century AD.

## Iranian athletes win three gold medals at Asian championships

**S P O R T S** Three Iranian athletes claimed three **d e s k** gold medals at the 22nd Asian Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar, India.

Discus thrower Ehsan Haddadi won a gold medal with a best throw of 64.54m while Malaysia's Muhammad Irfan took the silver with 60.96m.

The bronze medal went to Vikas Gowda from India with a best effort of 60.81m.

Ali Samari won the gold medal in the Men's Shot Put with a throw of 19.80 meters.

The silver medal went to Indian Tajinder Pal Singh Toor who threw 19.77 meters.

Kazakhstan's Ivan Ivanov won the bronze medal with a throw of 19.41 meters.

Hassan Taftian seized Iran's third gold medal in the



Men's 100 meters, clocking 10.25 secs. He defeated defending champion of Qatar Femi Seun who came second with 10.26 secs.

Yang Chun-han from Chinese Taipei claimed the bronze medal with a time of 10.31secs.

Moslem Niadoost from Iran claimed a bronze medal at the men's 1500m final.

Niadoost came third with a time of 3:48.53 in the event. The gold medal went to Ajay Kumar Saroj who clocked 3:45.85. Jamal Hairane from Qatar claimed the silver medal with a time of 3:46.90.

The 2017 Asian Athletics Championships are the 22nd edition of the Asian Athletics Championships. It got underway from 6 July to 9 July 2017 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, India.

## Snooker team bids farewell to Little Swan World Cup quarters

The Iranian men's national snooker team has dropped out of the 2017 Little Swan World Cup in China after losing to the strong Thai side in the quarter-final round of the professional non-ranking team tournament.

On Saturday, Iranian cueists Hossein Vafaei and Soheil Vahedi, who had blanked the Maltese pair 5-0 in their last Group D fixture at the Wuxi City Sports Park Stadium in China's eastern-central city of Wuxi the previous day, lost to their strong-minded Southeast Asian counterparts 1-4.

The 2017 Little Swan World Cup, which is the 15th edition of the event, kicked off in Wuxi, China, on July 3 and will run through July 9.

The tournament uses the same format as that used in the 2015 edition. There are 24 national teams, and the entrants were divided into four groups of six in the initial round.

During the group stage, every national team played a best-of-five frame match against each of the other sides in their pool. All matches consisted of five frames, two singles, a doubles frame, and two reverse singles. The top two teams from each group advanced to the knockout stage.

The teams that claimed the fifth, fourth and third spot in the group stage received \$10,000, \$15,000 and \$22,500 respectively.

During the quarter-finals, semi-finals, and championship final, the eight qualifying team are paired off in a head-to-head knockout.

The teams that advance to the quarter-final and semi-final round are awarded \$40,000 and \$60,000.

The winner and runner-up of the tournament will earn \$200,000 and \$100,000 respectively.

(Source: PressTV)



## Brazilian footballer shot and killed

A BRAZILIAN footballer has tragically been shot and killed after an attempted mugging went wrong.

Johnson Kendrick Costa was just 24 when he died after being shot in the face in Guarujá, a city within Sao Paulo.



According to local police, he was assaulted by a motorcyclist passing by, who attempted to rob him.

As he fought back, Kendrick was inadvertently shot in the face. He was rushed to hospital, but his injuries were too severe and they were unable to revive him.

The police are still searching for the killer.

Kendrick was a forward, playing for Al-Gharafa in Qatar and was holidaying in his native Brazil.

He was due to return the next day.

(Source: Sun)

## Iran, Russia football teams to play friendly: report

Russia's national football team is scheduled to play a friendly match against Iran as part of preparations for the 2018 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko said.

"There will be two games and the coach wants (to face) teams from Asia and America. We need to explore different styles. We plan to play with Iran this fall, but the contract is yet to be signed," Mutko, who is also the president of the Russian Football Union, told reporters.

"This game (against Iran) will not be held at (Moscow's) Luzhniki stadium, we will find a place to play," he added.

On June 13, Iran head coach Carlos Queiroz said that the match had been scheduled for October 10 in Russia.

Iran secured a berth in the 2018 World Cup after defeating Uzbekistan 2-0 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Iran cemented its position at the top of Group A with 20 points. South Korea is second with 13 points. Uzbekistan sits third with 12 points.

The top two teams in each of Asia's two qualifying groups advance automatically to the finals while the teams in third place go through a series of playoffs.

(Source: Tass)

## Reza Alipour claims gold at IFSC Climbing World Cup

Reza Alipour from Iran claimed a gold medal at the IFSC Climbing World Cup (L,S) - Villars (SUI) 2017.

The Iranian climber finished in first place at men's Speed with a time of 5.63 seconds.

Russian Stanislav Kokorin won the silver medal, clocking 6.11 seconds. His countryman Vladislav Deulin came third.

Alipour scaled 15 meters in an unprecedented 5.48 seconds at Nanjing, China in late April.

International Federation of Sport Climbing IFSC entitled him as an "Asian Cheetah". Reza Alipour who was named Usain Bolt of speed climbing.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Iran suffer fifth loss at FIBA U-19 World Cup

Iran suffered fifth defeat in a row at the 2017 FIBA U-19 World Cup in Cairo, Egypt on Friday.

The Iranian team were defeated against hosts Egypt 57-53 at the Cairo Stadium Indoor Halls Complex, Cairo.

Iran have previously lost to the U.S., Italy, Angola and Spain.

Omar Farag scored 11 points for Egypt and Amirhossein Khandanpoor from Iran had 15 points and 12 rebounds. Iran will play the loser of South Korea vs. Japan on Saturday for 13th place.

The nine-day event has brought a total of 16 teams together.

The 2017 FIBA U-19 Basketball World Cup started in Cairo on July 1 and will conclude on July 9.

## Wolfsburg bring in teenage Arsenal striker Kaylen Hinds

Wolfsburg have announced the signing of teenage Arsenal striker Kaylen Hinds, who has signed a three-year contract with the Bundesliga club.

Hinds, 19, has not made a senior appearance for Arsenal and spent part of last season on loan at League Two Stevenage, for whom he started four games.

The move will see him link up again with former Arsenal academy coach Andries Jonker, who is now in charge at Wolfsburg.

A statement on the official Wolfsburg website said he had "been taken on as a possible prospect for the professional team and will participate in training activities with the side."

Reports in the British media suggested that Wolfsburg would pay around £2 million for Hinds, who has represented England at under-16, U17 and U18 levels.

(Source: Soccernet)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Tehran center to review Auster's "New York Trilogy"

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — A Persian translation of d e s k American postmodern author Paul Auster's series "The New York Trilogy" will be reviewed today during a session at Tehran's Andisheh Cultural Center.

The series is composed of the three novels of "City of Glass", "Ghosts" and "The Locked Room", all of which represent a new kind of detective story.

Translated by Shahrzad Lolachi and Khojasteh Keyhan, the collection has been published by Ofoq Publications in Tehran.

Iranian scholar Amir-Ali Nojumian is scheduled to deliver a speech at the meeting.



"Alan" to go on screen at Lille festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — Iranian director Mostafa d e s k Gandomkar's "Alan" will go on screen at the 17th International Short Film Festival of Lille, which will be held in the French city from September 23 to October 1.

The film is about a Kurdish man in Syria who has lost his home and family in ISIS attacks.



Iranian films to compete in Traverse City festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — "Retouch" by Kaveh d e s k Mazaheri and Asghar Farkhadi's Oscar-winning movie "The Salesman" from Iran will be competing in the various section of the Traverse City Film Festival in the United States.

"Retouch" will be screened in the short film category and "The Salesman" will be shown in the official competition.

The Traverse City Film Festival is a charitable, educational, nonprofit organization committed to the idea that "One Great Movie Can Change You: Just Great Movies", the organizers wrote on their official website.

It will be held from July 25 to 30.

Lebanon kicks off renowned Baalbek music festival

**BEIRUT (Reuters)** — Thousands of music fans poured into the stadium of the Roman Temple of Bacchus in Lebanon's Baalbek on Friday night for the opening performance of the oldest music festival in the region.

On opening night, the festival celebrated the 60th anniversary of its «Lebanese Nights» concert, which has given voice to the country's music and heritage for decades.



Lebanese singer Rami Ayach performs at the opening of Baalbek International Festival, in Baalbek, Lebanon July 7, 2017. (Reuters/Mohamed Azakir)

This year, the event will showcase Lebanon's younger generation of pop stars, including Rami Ayach, Aline Lahoud and Brigitte Yaghi, performing classic Lebanese hits as well as their modern repertoires.

The internationally renowned Baalbek music festival will host a wide array of Lebanese and global artists for six nights at its historic venue among Roman ruins in the Bekaa Valley.

The eastern town of Baalbek is home to some of the best preserved Roman temples, in which acclaimed musicians including American jazz vocalist Ella Fitzgerald and British singer Sting have performed.

It is one of scores of international and local summer cultural festivals in Lebanon, held mostly in the open air, including one in Beiteddine Palace in the pine forest of the Chouf Mountains and another in the Phoenician port of Byblos.

Founded in 1956 by then-President Camille Chamoun, the Baalbek festival is considered the most prestigious of the country's annual festivals, having welcomed the Arab world's musical legends such as Um Kulthoum and Fairouz.

Sepehri artwork breaks record at Tehran Auction

**A R T** TEHRAN — An d e s k untitled work from Sohrab Sepehri's Tree Trunk series sold for 31 billion rials (over \$800,000) at the Tehran Auction Friday evening, breaking a record at the annual sale of national contemporary art.

A selection from the series that sold for 30 billion rials last year held the record at the auction.

"Poet and Cage", a bronze sculpture by Parviz Tanavoli, fetched 25 billion rials (over \$650,000), was the second most expensive item sold at the auction, which was held at the Parsian Azadi Hotel Friday evening.

The third most expensive items sold at the auction were "Blind Eagle", a painting by Bahman Mohasses, and another painting from Sepehri's Tree Trunk collection. The works each were sold at 12 billion rials (over \$310,000).

Seventy-two works went under the hammer at this year's auction that broke the records of previous editions by grossing over 261 billion rials (about \$6.9 million). Only a miniature painting by Javad Rostam Shirazi with an estimate of 600 to 800 million rials failed to find a buyer. The art sale grossed 253 billion rials last year.

The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance purchased an untitled painting by Behjat Sadr and "The Royal Lodge" by Kamalolmolk to showcase at the Tehran



Auctioneer Hossein Pakdel takes bid for the sale of "Poet and Cage", a bronze sculpture by Parviz Tanavoli, during the Tehran Auction at the Parsian Azadi Hotel on July 7, 2017. The piece fetched over \$650,000, was the second most expensive item sold at the auction. (Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA), Ali Moradkhani announced at the auction. The Tehran Auction was established by former TMCA director Alireza Sami-Azar who is also the director the art sale.

Photographers showcase works in memory of Abbas Kiarostami



An art lover visits an exhibition photos at Tehran's E1 Gallery on July 7, 2017. (Honaronline/Alireza Farahani)

**A R T** TEHRAN — Seventy-seven Iranian photographers are displaying their works in an exhibition at Tehran's E1 Gallery to commemorate the death anniversary of legendary artist Abbas Kiarostami.

The exhibit titled "A Piece of Life" also aims to raise funds for the Child Foundation, an international charity organization that helps poor talented school children.

A number of artists and cineastes

including Reza Kianian, Roya Nonahali, Mahnaz Afshar, Saber Abar and Mahtab Keramati attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition on Friday.

Kiarostami, who also was a prominent poet and photographer, died of cancer last year on July 5 at the age of 76.

The exhibit will be running for two weeks in the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebbeh St., off Mahdiah St., in the Elahieh neighborhood.

Illustration exhibit to celebrate Iran Children's Literature Day

**A R T** TEHRAN — d e s k The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in Tehran will celebrate Children's Literature Day today by organizing an exhibition of illustrations.

About 180 illustrations from 90 books will be displayed at the exhibition, which will run until July 19.

The organizers also plan to pay tribute to late Iranian children's book writer Mehdi Azar Yazdi during a ceremony on the sidelines of the exhibition.

Azar Yazdi, who is famous for his series "Good Stories for Good Children", passed away on July 9, 2009. His collection won a UNESCO prize in 1966 and was selected as Iran's best book of the year in 1967.

Children's Literature Day will also be observed at IIDCYA branch offices



in other cities across the country by various programs including book reading and storytelling.

Tehran Game Convention honors top domestic productions

**A R T** TEHRAN — Top d e s k domestic game productions were honored during the closing ceremony of the Tehran Game Convention on Friday.

"Engare" designed by Mehdi Bahrami was picked as the Most Innovative PC Game and received a prize worth 250,000,000 rials (over \$6,500).

"Live TV Tycoon" was selected as the Most Innovative Mobile Game and the Best Mobile Game Award was given to "Run Dehghan Run". In addition, "Khaleh Ghezi" was named the Best PC Game.

Iran's National Foundation for Computer Games organized the TGC in collaboration with the Game Connection, a major



Mehdi Bahrami (2nd L) holds his award on the closing day of the Tehran Game Convention on July 7, 2017. The international jury holds the check of the cash prize worth 250,000,000 rials.

international exhibition of computer games in Paris.

The exhibit ran for two days on July 6 and 7 at the IRIB International Conference Hall.

The games were selected by a jury composed of 21 game developers from several international companies.

Among the jurors were Samuel Gatte from Bandai Namco, Phil Elliot from Square Enix, Victoire Fouquet from Orange, Pawel Ksiazek from Ceneqa and Adam Wroblewski from Muve.

Also included were Martine Spaans from Tamalaki, Robert Pontow from Active Gaming Media, Sylvain Cunzi from Next Games and Wolfgang Walk from Walk Game Productions.

Swiss museum readies for Nazi-era art trove show, seeks works' heirs

**BERN (Reuters)** — A Swiss museum director preparing for a Nazi-era art collection's long-awaited public unveiling later this year said Friday that her goal remains finding heirs to any works that may have been looted from Jewish owners.

Bern Museum of Fine Arts head Nina Zimmer, who took ownership of 150 drawings, lithographs and paintings this week ahead of an exhibition slated to begin in November, said research shows none of these were stolen by National Socialists.

But questions linger over the provenance of some of the collection's pieces still in Germany, where a 2012 raid by authorities on a Munich apartment produced a sensation: 1,500 long-lost works by modern masters, including Pablo Picasso, Otto Dix and Henri Matisse.

"Every restitution is a victory for us," Zimmer said in an interview, while acknowledging such provenance sleuthing remains unpredictable. "I cannot make any promises."

In addition to Zimmer's exhibition in Bern, the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn, Germany, is also planning to display items from the collection, which to date has produced only five works confirmed to have been stolen by the Nazis.

Four have been returned to heirs, so far, including a Matisse portrait, "Sitting Woman," that belonged to Paris-based collector Paul Rosenberg.

Before its discovery five years ago, the massive trove was hidden for years in the German and Austrian homes of



A man uses his mobile phone as he takes a picture of the painting "Maschka" by late German artist Otto Mueller during a news conference, after the arrival of the first artworks from the Dossier Gurlitt, at the Kunstmuseum Bern art museum in Bern, Switzerland July 7, 2017. (Reuters/Arnd Wiegmann)

Cornelius Gurlitt.

His art-dealer father, Hildebrand, amassed it after being enlisted by the Nazis to sell so-called "degenerate" modern art they had seized from German museums.

Though original estimates for the collection's value topping \$1 billion were likely exaggerated, experts said, the

find is still spectacular. "It is the most important cache of art from the Nazi era to be found in private hands since the immediate postwar period," said Jonathan Petropoulos, a Claremont McKenna College history professor in California.

When Cornelius Gurlitt died aged 81 in 2014, he named the Bern museum as beneficiary.

It accepted, on the condition works whose lineage was unclear must remain in Germany.

The Bern museum is now working with the German Lost Art Foundation, which tracks Nazi era art thefts, to unravel the collection's murky past, though not everyone is pleased with the progress.

Christopher Marinello, a lawyer who helped Rosenberg's heirs recover their lost Matisse in 2015, said the pace of research has been glacial -- even after he provided German researchers with "full and complete provenance on a silver platter," he said.

"Internal and governmental bureaucracy in Germany is quite out of control," Marinello said in an email on Friday. "There is an inherent lack of sympathy for the victims of Nazi looting."

The German Lost Art Foundation, which took over from a previous task force last year, contends it is making "positive strides" including digitizing documents and making them available via the country's Federal Archives.