

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iranian First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri plans to pay an official visit to neighboring Turkey to meet with senior officials of the country and participate in a conference of the D8 Organization for Economic Cooperation. Headed by a high-ranking delegation, Jahangiri will leave Tehran for Ankara on Thursday to participate in the 9th summit of the group due to be held on October 20 in Istanbul. During his two-day visit, Jahangiri will also hold talks with Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim on ways of boosting relations in all fields.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday the total termination of the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran is "a very real possibility." Speaking to reporters ahead of a cabinet meeting, Trump said, "I feel strongly about what I did. I'm tired of being taken advantage of." He added, "It might be total termination, that's a real possibility, some would say that's a greater possibility." The remarks came days after Trump announced he would not certify the international accord.

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At Least 34 People Killed in Portugal, Spain State of Emergency as Wildfires Ravage Europe

VOUZELA, Portugal (AFP) -- At least 31 people have died in fires ravaging forests in northern and central Portugal over the past 24 hours, rescuers said Monday afternoon, after three people were killed in Spain in blazes sparked by arsonists and fanned by Hurricane Ophelia. In Portugal, Prime Minister Antonio Costa declared a state of emergency as some 5,000 firefighters fought some 30 major fires. The 31 deaths, confirmed by Portugal's national civil protection agency, come four months after 64 people were killed and more than 250 injured on June 17, in the deadliest fire in the country's history. Even before the latest blazes, nearly 216,000 hectares (530,000 acres) had been consumed by wildfires across the country between January and September, according to estimates from the country's forest service. The 524 registered outbreaks of fire, by far the most since 2006, were caused by "higher than average temperatures for the season and the cumulative effect of drought," civil protection agency spokeswoman Patricia Gaspar said. As many as 51 people have been wounded in the fires, 15 seriously, Gaspar told AFP. One of the worst hit areas is near Lousa, in the Coimbra region, where 650 firefighters are battling blazes. "We went through absolute hell, it was horrible. There was fire everywhere," a resident of the town of Penacova told RTP

television. Two brothers in their 40s who were trying to put out the blaze there were among the fatalities. In a village in the commune of Vouzela, in the northern district of Viseu, residents used water hoses to try to fight the flames as several homes were consumed, an AFP reporter saw. Fallen electricity pylons and abandoned cars were left lying in roads, the area surrounded by burnt pine and eucalyptus trees, as thick smoke clogged the sky. "Most of the victims were killed in their cars, but we also found them inside their houses," said the mayor of the town of Oliveira do Hospital, Jose Carlos Alexandrino, on public television RTP. "The whole city looked like a ball of fire, surrounded by flames on all sides," he said. In the northwestern Spanish region of Galicia, on the Portuguese border, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy blamed arsonists for most of the deadly wildfires, which have caused three deaths. "What we are experiencing here does not happen by chance, this was provoked," he said after observing a minute's silence for the victims in the town of Pazos de Borben. He said a major wildfire broke out near the town in the early hours of Sunday in five different locations at the same time. Hundreds of firefighters backed by water-dropping helicopters and planes were battling 19 large wildfires in Galicia on Tuesday, the regional government said in a statement. (Continued on Page 7)

Iraq Retakes Kirkuk as Peshmarga Flee



Iraqi forces use heavy equipment to damage a poster of Iraqi Kurdish president Masoud Barzani on the southern outskirts of Kirkuk.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- Iraqi forces marched into the center of Kirkuk on Monday and flew the national flag as divisions among the Kurdish groups led to factions of peshmarga refusing to fight in an act described as "treason" by their superiors. Forces including the Popular Mobilization Units took key facilities around Kirkuk, including the K1 military base, the military airport and oilfields, before a convoy of elite Iraqi counter-terrorism unit forces took control of the governorate building in central Kirkuk in the afternoon, meeting no resistance. Iraqi forces also took control of the governor's office, which had been left deserted, the federal police chief said.

The peshmarga forces on frontlines to the south of the city, mainly from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) faction of the Kurdish Regional Government, refused to fight and fled, leaving the way open for the Iraqi side. Their withdrawal led to accusations of "treason" from peshmarga aligned with the ruling Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of the Kurdish president, Masoud Barzani, and statements Baghdad would pay a "heavy price" for its actions. Iraqi tanks were filmed destroying posters of Barzani in Kirkuk. But it is the loss of the city, and that of oil and military installations to the

north, that represents a huge setback for the KRG's plans of secession, as it loses key oil-producing territory it had held since three years ago. Baghdad and the KRG have been locked in a standoff after a controversial Kurdish referendum backed secession. The PUK has since supported UN-backed plans for negotiations with Baghdad in exchange for dropping the referendum result, while the KDP has refused negotiations. Thousands of peshmarga were reported to have fled Kirkuk in the face of the Iraqi advance, heading for Sulaymaniyeh and Erbil. Others were seen cheering on the Iraqi forces

as they entered Kirkuk's southern outskirts. "We're leaving because we're scared there will be clashes," said 51-year-old Chounem Qader. At least 10 Kurdish fighters have died in limited clashes, according to officials. Iraq's prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, gave instructions that the Iraqi flag be hoisted in Kirkuk and other territories claimed by both the Iraqi government and the KRG. Abadi said the military operations were necessary to "protect the unity of the country, which was in danger of partition" because of the referendum. "We call upon all citizens to cooperate with our heroic armed forces, which are committed to our strict directives to protect civilians in the first place, and to impose security and order, and to protect state installations and institutions," he said. Patrick Osgood, a former Kurdistan bureau chief at Iraq Oil Report, said focus would now fall on two oilfields still controlled by the KDP faction, and possibly decide the fate of the Kurdish push for secession. "Two large oilfields a bit further west of Kirkuk, Bai Hassan and Avana, are under KDP management and KDP peshmarga control," he said. "They contribute 280,000 barrels of oil a day to the KRG's total of 600,000 barrels a day." They are completely integral to the KRG's economy and the KRG would sink very rapidly without that of production."

Mogherini to Visit U.S. to Defend Iran Deal

LUXEMBOURG (Dispatches) -- The EU's chief diplomat Federica Mogherini announced Monday she will visit Washington early next month to defend the Iran nuclear deal after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to tear it up. Mogherini said she would "be in Washington in early November" to urge U.S. lawmakers not to pull out of the landmark 2015 deal. EU foreign ministers on Monday warned that the hardline stance on Tehran that Trump outlined in a belligerent speech on Friday undermined any chance of dialogue with North Korea over its nuclear weapons. "Clearly the ministers are concerned about the fact that messages on the JCPOA (the Iran deal) might affect negatively the possibility of opening negotiations or opening even the space for

negotiations with the DPRK," Mogherini told reporters after the bloc's 28 foreign ministers held talks in Luxembourg. The leaders of France, Britain and Germany gave a rebuke Trump in a joint statement which said the deal remained "in our shared national security interest." Russia and China also voiced their support for the agreement. UN inspectors have repeatedly certified that Iran is sticking to its technical requirements under the accord, but Trump has insisted that Tehran was not living up to the "spirit" of the deal. A Russian deputy foreign minister said the nuclear deal with Iran is working "quite efficiently" and requires no amendment, dismissing calls by the United States to address "flaws" in the deal. Sergei Ryabkov told Russian

news agency TASS that there was an American saying that goes "If it's not broke, don't fix it." "That's what I would like to address to the colleagues in the United States," the Russian diplomat said. The approach of calls for fixing the Iran deal "seems to be a wrong way to follow as the existing documents are working quite efficiently," he said of the deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran is fully compliant with the deal, while the U.S. is not, Ryabkov said. "What is to be improved in this context is the implementation of the existing agreements by the U.S. side," he added. He also noted that by fully upholding their end of the bargain, the Iranians "have passed the ball to the U.S. side."

UK Brings First Major Arms Fair to Bahrain

MANAMA (Middle East Eye) -- Geopolitical rivalries and accusations of human rights abuses were ignored on Monday, as the first international arms fair in Bahrain opened its doors, with pavilions from both the U.S. and Russia. The Bahrain International Defense Exhibition and Conference (BIDEC) 2017, which runs over three days, is being organized by British company Clarion Events. Clarion also organizes the Defense and Security Equipment International arms fair held biannually in London, and which the city's mayor, Sadiq Khan, has called to be banned. In an opening statement, the commander-in-chief of the Bahraini army, Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Khalifa, said the defense fair "provides an exclusive platform to meet and network with the right people, build partnerships and do business." But its opening was condemned

by human rights activists, who challenge Bahrain's years-long, violent campaign against dissent and protests against the government. "The UK public do not want our taxes to be spent promoting weapons sales to Bahrain and the other human-rights abusing regimes attending BIDEC," echoed the Campaign Against Arms Trade, in a statement. "The UK's promotion of arms exports at BIDEC will be seen as a show of support for the Bahraini regime. As well as jailing and torturing human rights and pro-democracy activists, the government of Bahrain is part of the coalition currently bombarding Yemen, leaving millions of Yemenis on the edge of starvation and at risk of cholera." Labor's would-be minister for peace, Fabian Hamilton, has told the Middle East Eye news portal that were the opposition party elected, arms sales to Bahrain

would be immediately suspended. "We should not be selling weapons to any state that uses, or could potentially use, weapons we supply for internal repression or for foreign wars," the MP said. The UK has sold at least \$85 million of arms to Bahrain between 2000 and 2016, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. From June 2016 to June 2017, Bahrain's government arrested, tortured, threatened or banned from travel at least 169 activists and opponents or their relatives, the Amnesty report said. "The most common tactic used by the authorities has been the judicial harassment of human-rights defenders and other peaceful critics, by way of relentlessly summoning them for interrogation, before either charging or releasing them," it said. Bahrain has repeatedly denied systematic rights abuses. (Continued on Page 7)